

Ars Magica

Mythic Locations



by Andersen,
Ferguson, Love, Post,
Ruan & Shirley

Mythic Locations

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Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen is a Danish engineer. He is a long time player but is gradually becoming more involved in writing for role-playing books, trying to give something back to the community.

Timothy Ferguson is a librarian from the Gold Coast, in Australia. He had the good fortune to travel to Bath in 2010, and to drive through the Mendip Hills. Thanks, again to Linda and Amelia for their help in this.

Richard Love lives on Florence Avenue with his partner Paula. He has not quite found the way out of the toy-market, but on the other hand he has not yet fallen through the Downside of Devil's Lane. He is still searching for the Temple of Mercury.

John Post lives in the Northern California Tribunal with his lovely wife and precocious son where he practices law. Although he has been told that truffles grow in the wild areas surrounding his home, he has never gone looking for them. He prefers to encounter the black ones sliced thinly over a piece of rare steak or the white ones garnishing his risotto. He would like to thank his troupe for letting him subject their characters to his crazy misadventures.

His troupe wanted to play a seafaring saga, so **Matt Ryan** read *The Odyssey* and *The Argonautica* looking for ideas. Bear Island grabbed his notice, and within a few sessions the magi were frolicking atop Mt. Dindymon's lofty pines. Those adventures were a mere shadow compared to the possibilities available in this finished version, and Matt would like to thank the many playtesters for their hard work and honest appraisals.

Mark Shirley's job description changes every time he writes one of these biographies; but it's all the same really: research in diseases and wildlife conservation with the help of mathematical models. He has spent a lot of time on the Farne Islands, having conducted a puffin survey there he can confirm their magical ability to cause laughter. He's also visited the Majorida Mountains, but didn't see any wolves. He's never been to Purgatory... yet."



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Chapter One

Introduction

Mythic Europe is honeycombed with supernatural locations. Many of these are famous and well known, and are frequently visited by the Order of Hermes. Many Tribunals keep accurate records of their area's fantastic sites, gathered by roaming magi of House Bonisagus, followers of Trianoma, and cataloged by the industrious Redcaps of House Mercere. Many of the more famous sites have been appropriated by the Order, farmed for their annual production, visited for mystical research and arcane experimentation, or claimed as covenants. Several legendary locales have been tracked down, explored thoroughly, and subsequently cultivated for the growth of the Order of Hermes. One might think that there is nary a magical spot left untrod and uncatalogued.

But Mythic Europe is large and vast tracks of land remain uncharted. Secret grottoes, forgotten caves, numinous temples, idyllic gardens, mysterious islands, and fog-covered moors lie just past the borders, sitting in anticipation of the eager explorer. Few sit vacant, and all manner of beasts, beauties, and baubles lie in wait for those clever enough to find the hidden places. Whether organized in teams or as an individual, the discoverer faces several challenges finding the site, and even more exploring its interior mysteries.

Mythic Locations offers ten such sites. Each chapter following describes a location in depth, explaining the site's mundane and supernatural features. Some locations are pulled from actual medieval legends, others from the history of the Order of Hermes, and others invented, using appropriate themes and elements to fit them into the imagined medieval framework of Mythic Europe. Each location suggests various ways to include it in your saga, offering multiple hooks to appeal to all types of play-

ers. Each location also suggests ways that the location can be used again, generating several stories and allowing a troupe to repeatedly use the location in their saga. While a troupe could base an entire saga in a location, using it as a starting point or a location for their covenant, each site is written as a stand-alone location. They are meant to be visited and explored, and their unconnected nature lets each member of the troupe act as a storyguide for the location that most appeals to him.

Bear Island

Geographic Location: The Sea of Marmara on the north coast of Anatolia.

Tribunal: Thebes Tribunal.

Overview: Bear Island lies off the coast of Anatolia, along the southern shores of the Sea of Marmara. Politically unimportant — a small province of the Byzantine Empire now ruled by a Latin king — Bear Island's history is vastly more interesting. 2,000 years ago, Jason and the *Argo* made an early stop here on their journey for the Golden Fleece. Intending simply to replenish their supplies and get directions, the Argonauts were hurled from one dilemma to another, including fighting savage giants, being trapped on the island by a raging storm, receiving advice from a magical bird, and searching for a sleeping titan, the mother-goddess. To escape, Jason brought a carved statue to honor and appease the mother-goddess. Her attendants, supernatural metalworkers and healers called the Idaian Daktyls, accepted the offering, the storms ended, and the Argonauts sailed away.

With the heroes gone, the island's super-

natural inhabitants slipped back into their previously undisturbed roles. As far as anyone knows, the mother-goddess, the Idaian Daktyls, the magical bird, and the savage six-armed giants still prowl the island's wild interior. The carved statue, fashioned by the same builder who made Jason's magic ship, has never been found. Magi wonder what its pre-Hermetic powers might be. Bear Island is easy to find, but its secrets are not easily extracted, and many suspect that more than lions, bears, and boars roam her forest-draped mountains.

The Baths

Geographic Location: The City of Bath, or wherever Romans were found.

Tribunal: Stonehenge Tribunal.

Overview: A city with links to Imperial and Celtic magic, and filled for centuries by hedonists attractive to the Infernal and Faerie powers. A city now dominated by the Church, and under the eye of the young King. A city sited, almost literally, on a magical powder-keg.

What could possibly go wrong?

Cursewood

Geographical Location: The remote forests of Pomerania, near the border with Novgorod.

Tribunal: Rhine Tribunal.

Location: More than a century ago a magus of House Tytalus sought to win great resources in a dark and forbidding forest, and

was never heard from again. The few magi who know of this have never gone looking. The place is shunned by locals and only spoken of in hushed voices as cursed and haunted. But now knowledge of the place has resurfaced. The cursed forest threatens the life of all but the most determined and skilled, and requires strength of will and leadership. Are the player magi up to the challenge of following in the footsteps of their long dead sodalis in search of greatness and treasure? Braving this place not only solves the mystery of the curse, it also offers a place of mystery to call one's own.

The Farne Islands

Geographic Location: A small archipelago of islands.

Tribunal: Stonehenge Tribunal.

Overview: Inner Farne was famously the home to a saint; according to his legend he drove out the demons who tormented the locals from Inner Farne to some of the islands lying further out to sea. Today, the influence of the saint is still very much present on the inner islands, whereas the outer islands are home to wilder forces.

There are several mysteries to solve amongst the islands, from the politics of the selkie courts to the identity of the mysterious inhabitant of Crumstone Rock. With stories drawn from all four supernatural Realms, these islands are sure to be of interest to members of the Order of Hermes.

The Poisoned Battlefield

Geographic Location: The Mendip Hills, or wherever Roman miners were once found.

Tribunal: Stonehenge Tribunal.

Overview: This site is no longer blighted, some magi say. The archnecromancer no longer lives here. The ghosts of dead druids no longer walk here. The miners all died scream-

ing centuries ago, so they are no threat. The poisoned soil is covered with a thin layer of verdant green.

A very thin layer of green.

The Purgatory of St Patrick

Geographic Location: A cave under an island on a lake

Tribunal: Hibernian Tribunal.

Overview: The Purgatory of St Patrick is one of Ireland's most important pilgrimage sites. According to legend, the saint opened up a gate to Purgatory in order to teach the pagan Irish what perils awaited their unbaptized souls. There are several reasons why characters may wish to enter the cave on the saint's island, and purgation of their sins is just one.

It is rumored that a fountain of eternal youth lies within Purgatory, as does a mirror that can find any soul, and a furnace that can

change Essential Nature. One can meet with the souls of those who are beyond the reach of Hermetic magic, or perhaps even bring a loved one back from the dead. Those surviving Purgatory may enter the Earthly Paradise; those getting trapped behind may be consigned to Hell.

The Temple of Mercury

Geographic Location: In a Magic regio. The entrance is located in any territory that was once part of the Roman Empire.

Tribunal: Any.

Overview: The fallen temple of Mercury is a large ruined temple complex the size of a small town. There were, of course, many temples to Mercury constructed when the Roman Empire was pagan, but the existence of this particular temple complex is relatively well-known as it was very large and built by Augustus. However, knowledge of precisely



where the temple actually was has been lost. The player characters might discover where the temple was by recovering Roman Empire era texts that describe it, discovering a Mercurian portal that leads to the temple, receiving a vision from Mercury, or discovering (and recognizing and tracing) parts of the temple complex re-used in the masonry of buildings such as churches. It is also possible that the location may have already been secretly discovered by a Mystery Cult, Seekers, or another group of interested magi.

The Roman Cult of Mercury is a well-known antecedent to the Order of Hermes, and Bonisagus is known to have based some of his Hermetic theory on Mercurian rituals. The obvious use of the fallen temple is therefore as a resource to aid the recovery of further Mercurian rituals, and to inspire refinements to Hermetic theory. Pagan magi may also wish to restore the temple as a functioning site of worship. The temple site could be used as the location of a covenant.

The Toy Fair in Devil's Lane

Geographic Location: In a faerie regio. There are entrances in many cities.

Tribunal: Any.

Overview: The toy fair is a faerie regio that has entrances in many cities, selling curious magical and miraculous toys to the city-folk. A Merinita covenant is built within the fair, but the toys are actually made by elves hidden in workshops in the basements of the shops. The player characters might stumble upon the fair while exploring a city, or find (and trace) magic items from the workshop in the hands of mundane characters. The covenant is not a secret and the Redcaps know how to get in.

The player characters might visit the toy fair to buy or commission items, or to take advantage of the regio to travel to a distant Tribunal. The multiple entrances in many Tribunals also create questions of Hermetic jurisdiction over the covenant. The player

characters could also decide to join, or usurp, the toy fair covenant.

The Truffle Matron

Geographic Location: A small forest near Dijon in Burgundy, the dense forests of Périgord in Aquitaine, the Istrian peninsula in Croatia, or the Bohemian Forest.

Tribunal: Normandy, Transylvania, or Rhine Tribunals.

Overview: Mythic Europeans do not know why the delicious, aromatic truffle only grows under certain trees. They only know that truffles propagate through some supernatural method and that harvesting them may result in interaction with supernatural powers. Truffle hunters use animals to locate their prize because supernatural forces might punish them for improperly harvesting a truffle. Truffle hunters may attempt to appease the truffle guardians, but if their efforts are unsuccessful, they hope that the animal will suffer the punishment. Hunters face these dangers because the truffles they collect are often worth their weight in gold.

This chapter discusses one of the sources of truffles in Mythic Europe. Characters visiting the Matron of the Truffles are presented with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and magical power through interaction with her subjects.

The Wolf's Court

Geographic Location: In the depths of a dense forest

Tribunal: Any, nominally Provençal Tribunal.

Overview: There is a cairn in a remote spot in a wolf-haunted forest. It is avoided by all locals, who consider the place cursed. However, sometimes when a man has been

wronged, and in his search for justice has been failed by the manor court, the bishop's court, and appeals to the saints, he will come to this cairn at the rising of the full moon and ask the wolves for the justice he has been denied elsewhere.

Characters might wonder at the wolves' capacity to enforce justice. Those who investigate might uncover secrets reaching back as far as Ancient Rome, and attract the unwanted attention of those dedicated to preserving those secrets.

What the Magi Know

There is a possibility that a character has heard something about a location before she visits. Exactly what she might know is determined by an appropriate Intelligence + Ability roll measured against a set Ease Factor. The Ability used depends on the location, and each location lists the appropriate Ability required for the roll. In some situations knowledge is gleaned by two rolls. For example, a character might have to succeed with an Area Lore roll, to see if she knows an area's legends, before determining if she can incorporate her understanding of the location's magic with a Magic Lore roll. Some locations allow more than one type of Ability check. Each location's specific rolls are explained in its chapter.

Information is divided into four categories: Known by All, Widely Known, Uncommon Knowledge, and Lost Secrets. Each category has a corresponding Ease Factor, and if the player achieves the required Ease Factor her character knows the information listed in that category. The specific information is listed in each location's chapter. The stated information is not necessarily true, it is just known. It could be misleading, partially true, or entirely false.

EASE FACTOR CATEGORY OF KNOWLEDGE

0	Known by All
6	Widely Known
12	Uncommon Knowledge
18	Lost Secrets

Chapter Two

Bath

The town of Bath, in Somerset, in the Stonehenge Tribunal has been a site for the healizing of the weary and sick since ancient times.

Myths, Legends, History, and Rumors

Places that have been used continually, not only over decades but through the course

of whole civilizations, gather many stories about them.

Myths and Legends

The town of Bath was founded by a Celtic prince called Bladud, who ruled wisely for twenty years. He studied in Athens, bought Greek scholars and books of learning to his kingdom, founded a university at Stamford which was later suppressed by the Church, studied necromantic magic, and died when his enchanted wings ceased working as he flew over the Temple of Apollo in New Troy

(now London). Some say he was a leper, healed by the local waters.

Bladud created the hot springs of Bath with his magic, and dedicated them to Minerva. He created balls of flame in her temples. These turned to stone after a time, but were replaced with fresh balls, again by magic. Geoffrey of Monmouth says he that named the baths after his consort, Alaron, because the waters are particularly beneficial to women.

Bladud was a potent wizard-king, and his baths have an aura of 5. The Realm this aura is aligned to depends on the role played by the baths in the saga. Bladud was the father of Leir, and thus arguably the grandfather of the magician-king Mannanan Mac Leir. Saint Patrick fought Mannanan when he Christianized the Isle of Man, and a faerie taking the king's name and form is one of the threats that has made a stable covenant on the Isle, thus far, impossible.

Rumors

The history of Bath is relatively well-known, as are many of its secrets. Players can make an Intelligence + Area Lore: Stonehenge Tribunal to see what their characters know. Organization Lore: Church is also possible, as the baths are now operated by monks, but characters who live near Bath have a -3 penalty on the roll, as Organization Lore: Church is not primarily about the area, and those who do not live nearby have a -6 penalty, because they are unlikely to have heard of the town in any detail.

WHAT IS KNOWN BY ALL

- The medicinal nature of the baths, in a general sense.
- The method of bathing.
- The role of the hospital.
- The myth of Bladud discovering the springs, and his death when he fell from the sky in London.

WIDELY KNOWN

- That the priory has only 40 monks,

which is far too small a number for the truly massive cloister placed here.

- Many people of learning can give a relatively accurate medical explanation for the effect of the baths on the humors.
- The story that the baths are heated by a magical stone, enchanted by King Bladud.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- Any secret rooms in the bath house or surrounds.
- The location and use of a fourth set of baths, if one exists.
- The detailed version of Bladud's history, including the suppression of a university of necromancers at Stamford for heresy.

LOST SECRETS

- The existence of the Fermenter of Bladud, if it exists.
- Bladud's necromantic teachings.

History

Bath has been rebuilt several times. Some myths say Bladud's reign began in 863 BC, but others disagree by many hundreds of years. When the Romans arrived, the hot springs of Bath were sacred to a goddess called Sulis. The Romans kept her name and called the rebuilt town Aqua Sulis, dedicating it to Minerva, with whom they identified the local goddess. On the orders of the Emperor Claudius, the buildings around the springs were rebuilt and extended, taking on the form of Roman bath houses.

After the Romans abandoned England, Bath Abbey grew to great prominence. It was founded as a nunnery, possibly on the site

of a pagan temple, in 675, but over time became a powerful monastery. Alfred the Great redesigned and expanded Bath, making it a borough. In the middle of the tenth century the abbey adopted the Benedictine Rule, under Saint Alphege. A king of England was crowned in Bath Abbey in 973. This Saxon settlement was again redesigned with the coming of the Normans.

William II sold the town to John of Tours, his physician, in 1088. He also appointed John Bishop of Somerset, the bishop's seat of which was Wells. Wells was an unimpressive little village, so John moved his seat to Bath and, using the great wealth he had gained from royal favor, started building a religious precinct there in 1091. This included a palace and a Norman cathedral priory, which replaced the Saxon abbey previously in Bath. Locals, confusingly, continue to call the priory "Bath Abbey." John also oversaw the

reconstruction of the baths. John's current successor, Joscelin of Wells, prefers the city of his birth, and has been gradually moving his administration there. In 1220, this process seems likely to be completed. Many of the richer residents in Bath chafe at the control of the bishop, and, if your saga's history follows the real world's, they convince the king to allow them to elect a mayor in 1230.

Within the religious precinct is the king's house, which was built by King John before 1201. If your saga's history follows real world history, John's son, Henry III, regularly uses this house, and spends lavishly on its decoration. It is recorded as being hung with green fabrics studded with gilt stars.

HOSPITALS

The first hospitals around Bath were outside the town itself. The baths were considered particularly beneficial for skin conditions, and so they were an obvious source of succor for lepers. They could not be housed in the town, so a leprosarium was endowed over the river, outside the city proper. Similarly, the hospitals which dealt with the sick were placed away from the town, to prevent the spread of sickness.

The hospital inside the town, Saint John the Baptist, was built about forty years ago. It caters for the infirm poor, rather than for the acutely sick, so many 'inmates' live for extended periods at the hospital, under the care of the master, the monks appointed by the priory, and two or three women "not noble, but suitable." The hospital follows the classic design of medieval hospitals, in that it is

Ancient Sites of Power: Story Seeds for King Bladud

Prince Bladud led a life filled with mystical events, and so many stories can be developed from his legend.

GREAT STONE OF BLADUD

Some writers suggest that the heat of the baths comes from a stone enchanted to be perpetually hot, placed deep within the Earth by the spirit familiars of Bladud. If this is true, then the stone is guarded by powerful cthonic spirits, to prevent tampering or removal by wizards of the following centuries. Recovering the stone might, however, prove valuable. A magus researching ancient cthonic magics, for example, might gain guaranteed Insight from the stone.

It is, of course, possible that the stone has already been found, and is used in the Ordeals of a Mystery Cult. Removing and keeping the stone is, then, even more dangerous, but InTe spells directed at the artifact may provide information about the rituals of the cult.

KAERBADON

In the time of King Bladud, his capital was called Kaerbadon. Some writers, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, suggest it as the location of the Battle of Mons Badonicus,

a great victory by King Arthur over the Saxons. This is not provable, but many people tell the story, so faeries enact it in the fields around Bath. Faeries also like the area around Glastonbury, which they conflate with Avalon.

THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO IN LONDON

The Temple of Apollo in London is lost, but is of particular interest to the Seekers. Many Seekers believe that Great Britain was a penal colony of the Atlanteans. They are not quite correct: the Temple of Apollo in London was originally founded by the Hyperboreans (SEE *Ancient Magic* for the Hyperboreans). Finding the temple is difficult, but King Bladud, who is buried there, was not buried with Christian rites. Characters who find things intimately bound to Bladud may develop Arcane Connections to his body, and use these to determine the location of the Temple.

UNIVERSITY AT STAMFORD

An obvious question which rises from the story of King Bladud is why he placed his university so far away, in Stamford. Some magi suggest it was so that he did not

need to share his place of power with his allies, but that, in itself, does not explain why he settled the allied group at Stamford in particular. Magi seeking the remains of the university of necromancers may be puzzled by many odd traditions in the town. Why do local men participate in a running of the bulls each year? Is a cthonic wizard-king, skilled in fire magic and interested in bull sacrifices, a follower of Mithra or Zoroaster? Is the local river, the Welland, named for the magician-king Weyland the Smith, who also made magic items and flew? How could all of these cthonic necromancers have had the Gentle Gift?

If, in your saga, a fermenting engine (described later) is the source of the bath's magical properties, then the player characters may first become aware of the Bladud myths when a second fermenter, at Stamford, malfunctions. It might cause strange effects in those who touch the water of a nearby well, or drag a lake off into a regio, or explode. If the fermenter incinerates the town, player characters may need to mitigate the effects of a crackdown by the Church and nobility. It's vital the player characters find the Bath engine, to ensure that it will not similarly malfunction, in a town where the young king often resides.

a long hall, with beds along either side, and a chapel at one end. The inmates are given blue robes to wear, so they are called the 'Blue Alms' by the people of the town.

Variant: It's Natural, so Faeries Have Flocked Here

In this variant, King Bladud was a wizard who was more than willing to use a bit of trickery to eke out his magical powers. Remember those balls of perpetual flame that turned into stone when they went out? He carved those from coal. He died trying to overawe people with a stunt: flying to the top of the Temple of Apollo isn't actually all that difficult, for a magician, and in this variant, he didn't fail because of wards or guardians, just incompetence.

The baths have a Faerie aura of 4, and perhaps contain a Faerie regio. The story of the almost-mad, flying, leper, swineherd, wizard-king, with his strap-on wings and perpetually

flaming balls, is the sort of thing that local faeries like. In this variant, local will-o-the-wisps are called the Balls of Bladud. Children are sometimes born with an odd variant of faerie blood that allows flight, but requires Concentration. Great faeries claim to be his familiars, or guardians set over places by Bladud during his decades of power. None of this is technically true, but that doesn't matter.

The baths themselves are a place outside the normal life of the bathers, a place where they can relax and let go of their worldly concerns. Bathing is a sort of ritual rebirth, and that means it lies close to the land of the dead. Some faeries pretend to be ancestral spirits and they come to bathers in dreams. They carry messages that, if followed, lead to adventure, terror, love, death, or some other state of heightened emotion.

Location and Description

Bath is found in Somerset, England. It lies on the River Avon, and has protected the crossing there against the Welsh for centuries. The south-east corner of Bath is filled with the Bishop's Quarter, which contains the palace, priory, and baths. Much of the city of Bath is built of a local stone, called Bath stone, which is very soft and creamy white or gray. Bath is a market town, and has, at times, housed a royal mint, so its craftsmen are relatively wealthy, and the local economy uses coin more often than other parts of England.

Variant: Alternative Locations

Although this section uses English town of Bath as its model, similar towns were found in many of the territories of the Roman West,

Anne, a Lady "Not Noble But Suitable"

Anne is a Forgotten God, the elemental goddess of the waters worshiped by the primitive peoples of Britain before the Romans came. After the rise of the Dominion, she took on human shape, to allow her to continue to care for the baths, and, over time, she has developed a desire to aid humans as well. Anne is one of the female servants of the priory of Bath. She is believed to be the spinster daughter — or perhaps the widowed wife — of a wealthy merchant whose name people can never quite remember. It just doesn't seem to matter. She's been here a long time. That's never really mattered either.

Magic Might: 30 (Aquam)

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

Size: 0

Season: Autumn

Virtues and Flaws: Wealthy, Unaffected by the Gift, Proud (Minor), Anchored to the Baths.

Qualities and Inferiorities: 2 x Focus Power (Control the Waters. Memory of the

Waters), Greater Power (Inconspicuousness), 3 x Ritual Powers (2 x Enliven the Gross Waters, Healing), No Fatigue, 3 x Improved Characteristics, 3 x Improved Abilities.

Personality Traits: Anne +5, Compassionate +3, Proud +3, Private +2

Reputations: That nice lady at the baths 9 (people from Bath) No-one notices that everyone knows Anne, but that what they know is incredibly bland.

Combat:

Improvised club: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +1, Damage +6

Soak: +0

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

Abilities:

Area Lore: Bath 5 (ancient sites), Animal Handling 1 (domestic pets and owls), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 3 (things out of their usual place), Bargain 4 (merchants), Brawl 2 (bludgeon), Carouse 3 (sobriety), Charm 2 (bathers), Chirurgy 6 (bathers), Concentration 3 (Aquam), Craft:

Weaving 3 (old fashioned designs), Dead Language: Latin 5 (devotees*), Dominion Lore 4 (local), Etiquette 2 (bathing), Faerie Lore 2 (aquatic), Folk Ken 5 (folk traditions), Guile 2 (monks), Infernal Lore 2 (sins of bathers), Intrigue 1 (bathers), Leadership 2 (devotees*), Legerdemain 2 (bathers), Living Language: English 5 (monks), Magic Lore 5 (Celtic spirits of place), Magical Meditation 1 (baths), Music 2 (for bathing), Organization Lore: Bath Priory Lore 3 (power), Penetration 3 (Aquam), Profession: Healer 3 (bathers), Ride 1 (pony), Stealth 2 (baths), Survival 1 (urban), Swim 5 (baths), Teaching 3 (healing).

* She doesn't have any of these anymore, in the technical sense. Frequent bathers still count at the troupe's discretion.

Powers:

Enliven the Gross Waters, 4 points, Init -9, Aquam: Anne can transform water into small elementals, which serve her. She can also use this power to take control of other elementals, although that use requires Penetration. The created elemental can be of any Might smaller than

and Roman style baths are still found in the Empire of the Romans around Constantinople. Baths can, therefore, be easily placed in many Tribunals. Storyguides may simply create ahistorical towns if they wish. If they would prefer a historical town, these rough guidelines may prove helpful.

In many areas, the presence of hot springs is noted in the names of towns. In French speaking areas, for example, towns with *Aix* (which means "waters") in their names have hot springs. Further, in German speaking areas, towns with *Bad* or *Baden* in their names are similarly blessed. One particular Baden, on the border of the Greater Alps and Rhine Tribunals, contains a Mercere House. Baths may be found even in those areas that the Romans did not conquer; the Church has embraced baths as a source of healing and, in some cases, revenue, while the horse nomads from the East often combine their own tradition of steam bathing with plunge bathing, once they settle into towns.

Towns with baths also exist outside the old Roman Empire. For example, in Sijilmasa, which is the staging ground for caravans about to cross the Sahara, there are no lepers. This disease, along with many others, is treated by a set of wonderful baths, built by a

mysterious benefactor, centuries ago. It takes very little invention to make him a wizard-king who died trying to fly to Heliopolis.

Troupes whose sagas are not in Stonehenge should just insert Bladud's story, with minor changes, into the region which their characters inhabit. Bladud's kingdom was little larger than a county, and has little bearing on modern England. Similarly, storyguides may place a minor, ancient king in the Alps, on the borders of the Pyrenees, on an individual island in the Mediterranean, or at an isolated oasis in North Africa, without stretching the credulity of players.

Inhabitants

The mistress of Bath has not abandoned her demesnes, although the silencing of the oracles has weakened her, and forced her to hide in plain sight. Storyguides seeking alternatives, either for this site of baths found elsewhere in Europe, may find the latter two creatures more suitable for their stories.

XAPHAN

Page 76 of *Realms of Power: The Infernal* includes a demon particularly suitable for bath-houses not heated by a spring, but instead warmed by boilers. Xaphan is the stoker of the fires of Hell. He is a lord of arsonists.

Introducing Bath into the Saga

Magi may be drawn to Bath for healing, by the society of others, by the presence of mystical creatures, or by the rumor of ancient artifacts.

Taking the Waters

Many characters suffer injuries, or are subject to the effects of Flaws, that can be soothed by the baths. Different bathing places are known to be useful for varying conditions, and there are at least three bathing places here. Storyguides can use this flexibility to make the baths a site desirable to the characters.

Anne, a Lady "Not Noble But Suitable," cont'd

Anne's. After she has no further use for the elemental her control of it lapses, but the creature remains. This is a Ritual Power and reduces Anne's Might pool for a time after its use. Her Might pool replenishes by 1 point for every month, at the rise of the full moon, and by 5 points on spring tides. Making sacrifices to her in the ancient Roman style also regenerates her Might, but no-one has done that in centuries, and she would not encourage it in these, more Christian, times.

CrAq 30 (Base 25, +1 Touch) Ritual Power x2 (20 levels, -2 Might Cost, +2 Init).

Focus Power (*Control the waters*), 5 points, Init -4, Aquam. Allows ReAq spells up to level 25.

Focus Power: (*Memory of water*), 2 - 6 points, Init -4, Aquam: Anne receives a mental image of a fragment of the past witnessed by the body of water she is touching. The memory has Concentra-

tion length. The use of this power has a variable cost, depending on the age of the memory. A memory up to Diameter old costs 2 points, up to Sun old 3 points, up to Moon costs 4 points, up to Year costs 5 points, and beyond this costs 6 points.

InAq 25 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +4 Special Effect), Focus power 25 levels.

Healing, 2 points, Init -9, Animal or Corpus: Anne can heal a person or animal in the bath of the worst level of a target's wounds, unless that target is from Bath, in which case she heals all wounds. This is a Ritual Power and reduces Anne's Might pool for a time after its use. Her Might pool replenishes by 1 point for every month, at the rise of the full moon, and by 5 points on spring tides. Making sacrifices to her in the ancient Roman style also regenerates her Might, but no-one has done that in centuries, and she would not encourage it in these,

more Christian, times.

CrCo 30 (Base 25, +1 Touch) Ritual Power x2 (30 levels -4 Might cost)

Inconspicuousness, 1 point, Init -2, Mentem:

With a single word, Anne can destroy the capacity to notice that she is unnatural.

(Base PeMe 5 (destroys the capacity to notice that Anne is unnatural, +2 Voice, -2 Might cost)

Equipment: Medicines, accoutrements suitable for a wealthy merchant's wife.

Vis: 6 pawns of Aquam, tears.

Appearance: Anne looks like a woman in her early forties, with dark hair and eyes. She is shorter than average. Her manner is friendly but reserved. She dresses like a wealthy woman of the merchant class, but over her clothes she wears a simple apron, like the other helpers from the monastery. She sounds slightly Welsh, but if asked, she says that she comes from Bath.

Alternatively, a non-payer character with resources useful to the player characters may seek treatment, with the player characters following her to the baths.

THE PROCESS OF ROMAN BATHING

The complete Roman ritual of bathing is not followed in most of the baths still found in Mythic Europe, but which features are excluded vary by site.

Roman bath-houses, called *thermae*, vary in elaborateness, but many have the following features. Passing by outer buildings or rooms,



Minerva Sulis

This Romano-Celtic goddess has not been active for many centuries, but if a person wakes her, she may return to her traditional duties. One way of waking the goddess (or convincing a faerie to take on the role of goddess) is finding, and then worshipping, the head of the statue that once presided in the temple of Minerva at Bath. This artifact was buried in a ditch by the Christians who smashed the statue, and lies five feet beneath the surface of the ground, but could be uncovered by a gravedigger, a builder laying foundations, or tradesmen excavating a cellar. Minerva Sulis is not designed as a player character.

Minerva Sulis has a very tenuous physical presence, and restricted powers. These may be an effect of her long sleep. Continued worship may allow her to develop new Virtues and shed Flaws.

Faerie Might: 25+10* (Aquam)

* Place of power – the Baths.

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

* Intangible.

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: External vis source, 6 x Focus Power, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Human Form, 6 x Improved Characteristics, 4 x Increased Faerie Might, Personal Faerie Power, Place of Power (the sacred spring of the bath); Traditional Ward (The Dominion); Incognizant, Intangible Flesh.

Personality Traits: Sleepy +3, Vengeful +2, Cruel +1

Reputations: None: long forgotten goddess.

Combat: Prefers to fight using her powers.

Brawl: Init +1, Attack 0, Defense +1, Damage +2

Soak: +2

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -2 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Area Lore: Bath 2 (history), Awareness 3 (mystical events in her realm), Bargain 2 (worshippers), Brawl 1 (escaping), Charm 6 (wise men), Concentration 3 (while fulfilling curses), Faerie Speech 6, Finesse 6 (Curses), Folk Ken 6 (people of Bath), Guile 7 (her enemies), Intrigue 7 (aiding mortals), Penetration 6 (when fulfilling curses), Swim 9 (baths)

Powers:

Extended Glamor, 0 points, Constant.

2 x *Focus Power* (*control of the waters*), (1 Might point per magnitude), Init -6, Aquam. Allows ReAq spells up to level 35 in the baths, or 25 elsewhere.

Effects up to level 35, +3 to Initiative.

4 x *Focus power* (*Requested Vengeance*), level of final effect / 5, Init -19, Corpus. The faerie may craft a punishment which causes startling and horrifying death or disfigurement, but only if requested to do so, either by prayer in a temple to the goddess, or by writing on a lead tablet, and dropping it in the bath. Sometimes the faerie, as an alternative, just grants a Flaw with an Until duration. This usually happens when the written request has a condition, like "May whoever stole my clothes be blind, impotent and have weeping boils on his buttocks until he returns them."

(Base 40 (can kill), +4 Arcane Connection, may have +1 Part. Is limited in that it can only be used on someone targeted by a human (no level adjustment, but allows Minerva Sulis to break the usual rule about not using effects with a Level higher than her Might score.)

Vis: 7 pawns Aquam, in severed head of buried statue.

Appearance: Sulis Minerva appears as a woman, dressed in classical robes and crowned. Her body appears to be made of bath steam. She is colorless and translucent.

which may house various entertainments, sporting facilities, temples and food sellers, the bather chooses to enter the male or female section of the baths. After either choice, the bather arrives in the apodyterium. In this room there are benches where the bather may wait for friends, places to store clothes, and slaves who are notorious for theft. The bather may choose not to follow the usual order of the rooms, heading directly to a swimming pool or sauna if he wishes.

The rooms are named for their water temperature. The order in which they are visited seems to vary by place. One usual sequence has the cold room (frigidarium),

warm room (tepidarium), hot room (caldarium), then a sweating room if the bather chooses, then the tepidarium again, perhaps for a massage. Following this, in some baths, the bather then goes to the laconium, or resting room, where he can either sweat further or relax. In many places, the visit ends with a plunge into a cold pool.

Soap was a luxury, so bathers were coated with oils instead. The precise time at which the bather is oiled varies; in some baths it occurs before the frigidarium, in others before the caldarium. The coating process may occur in the tepidarium, or in a special room. Perfumers had stores surrounding the baths or,

ins some cases, sold scented oils in the coating room itself.

The bath also has other rooms, which are not visited by bathers. One room contains furnaces to heat the hypocaustic floors, the walls of sweating rooms, and the bathwater itself if the bath is not supplied by a hot spring. Other rooms are used to store fuel, oil, and maintenance materials.

THE PROCESS OF BATHING IN BATH IN 1220

Bathing is less civilized than it was in Roman times. The baths are open to the sky, al-

Balneator: Lord of the Merry Devils

Balneator is a Merry Devil, a sort of demon that encourages the hedonism of groups. Balneator particularly encourages conspiracy and fornication. He takes the form of a young nobleman often found in the baths.

Order: Vessel of Iniquity (Merry Devil)

Infernal Might: 25 (Mentem)

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

Confidence: 2 (6 points)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics, Puissant Carouse.

Personality Traits: Depraved +6, Merry +6, Back-biting +5, Stimulated +2

Reputations: Reveler with a pack of mortal puppets 2 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 2

Combat:

Sharp Nails: Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +5

He prefers to get his humans to fight for him. Balneator's physically capable of battle, but only really enjoys it when he knows he's going to win and can string it out.

Soak: +9

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 6 (sport), Brawl 3 (claws), Carouse 6+2 (bath-house games), Charm 6 (bathers), Folk Ken 2 (rich people), Guile 6 (drunkards), Intrigue 5 (encouraging sexual misadventures)

Powers:

Form of Wickedness, 2 point, Init 0, Mentem:

Allows the demon to manufacture a solid form of pure sin. It forces those around the demon, if they lack sufficient Magic Resistance, to begin desiring to either have sex with or betray their neighbors. A Stamina stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is needed every hour, failure costing a Fatigue level, and a success breaking this Power's hold. The Power also ends when the victim falls unconscious. A botch causes temporary insanity and imposes a Minor Personality Flaw appropriate to the sin. This form may only be maintained for one round, after which the demon must take spiritual or human form.

Form of Man, 0 point, Init 0, Mentem: After assuming corporeal form (see Form of Wickedness, earlier) the demon can take solid, apparently mortal, form.

Contagious Obsession, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Uninhibited and at the next opportunity he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to prevent attempting to act licentiously. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently. Any human who becomes a victim of this demon's Obsession power becomes a carrier of that Power and can pass it on to anyone he is uninhibited toward, using the same series of rolls. Every added victim costs the demon 1 Might point, and the Power ceases to be contagious if either he runs out of Might or a day

passes without someone being infected. Once the power ceases being contagious, it continues to affect the afflicted as described earlier.

Pleasant Clouds in the Mind, 1 point, Init +0, Mentem: Allows the Merry Devil to cloud a single thing in illusion. Often the devil uses this power on two victims, so they do not recognize each other, and goad them to coitus or violence. It can also make corpses seem like willing sexual partners, and blood seem to be wine.

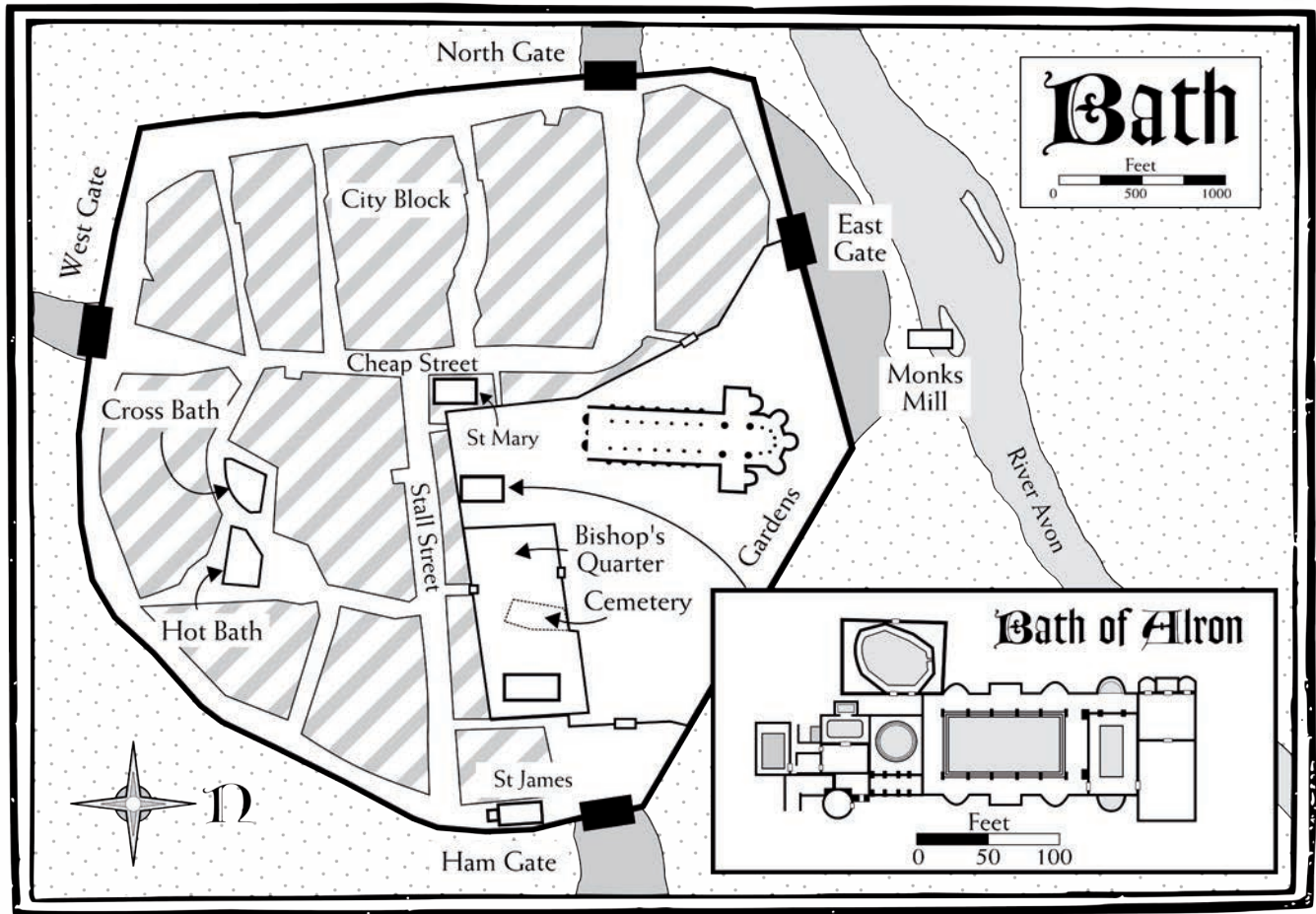
Possession, variable points, Init +2, Mentem: The demon stores some of its Might in a temporary pool in a victim, after overcoming Magic Resistance. When this pool is spent, the possession ends. The two pieces of the demon can only communicate if in sight of each other. The demon controls the actions of the host, but must spend Might to have the victim perform tasks he considers abhorrent. This requires the demon to make a roll of stress die + spent Might points against the victim's Personality trait roll. It also costs 1 might to use a Supernatural ability, or the same number of Might points a possessed supernatural creature spends to use one of its powers. This demon prefers not to use his possession power, as it is less fun than corrupting people.

Weakness: Protected Group (the priests who tend the bathers)

Equipment: Perfume, a smile and a large, fluffy towel.

Vis: 4 pawns Aquam, testicles.

Appearance: A handsome man, with a charming manner, a spare glass of wine, and a fascinating rumor to share.



though there are arched alcoves about each in which bathers may sit. There are no changing rooms: people simply remove their clothes at the bath, and place them on racks or seats. People bathe naked, which is considered shocking by distant religious people, and entirely normal by locals. Mixed bathing is not, technically, forbidden.

In Bath in 1220, although the Roman facilities are still used, they have been simplified and made smaller. The frigidarium has been filled in, as plunging into a freezing pool, while in a roofless room in England, has never been popular or, according to the common wisdom, sensible. Hot water from the springs fills the other baths so the old tepid and hot baths are at similar temperatures. This is cheaper to maintain.

When the sick use the baths, the process differs depending on how wealthy the bathers are. At the simplest, ill people just bathe with everyone else unless they have worrisome sicknesses like leprosy; then they bathe

separately. A sick nobleman might expect to fast or eat food that aids his condition, be bled or otherwise treated, pray, and be carried to the baths. He is then coated with the magical mud of the area or with oils suggested by his physicians. After a pause to allow the treatments to have effect, he stews in the water for a suitable time, then is lifted from the water and again coated with suitable medicines. He is finally swaddled in thick fabric and carried to bed. The bedclothes may be treated with strong-smelling herbs. Further treatment may follow under the care of his physician. Poor people may be bathed in a way similar to this, if monks are providing the services through a hospital.

Hermetic Meetings

Magi meet for many reasons other than Tribunals. These meetings are often held in places where the participants can do or see

something a little unusual or interesting. Thermal baths may host meetings such as Ceremonies of Welcome, Mystery Cult worship, the activities of the social societies of House Jerbiton, the planning meetings of Tremere vexillations and mutual meditation circles of Criamon magi. The characters may attend the baths deliberately, but initially as a venue for another story to which they are incidental.

Mercere Houses

Redcaps control many properties, spread in a loose network over Mythic Europe, and these may include thermal baths. The baths may have initially have been settled to provide facilities for traveling magi. Others may have been developed as sites to provide medical care for redcaps injured in their duties, or suffering age-related infirmities. Player characters may first encounter the baths casually, while on their way to another story.

House Tytalus and Bladud the Leper Magus

Bladud was a leprous, cthonic magus who was cured by some secret method. Later real-world myths say he bathed in magical mud while working as a swineherd. This is of particular interest to members of House Tytalus. Many Tytali are afflicted with leprosy. It cannot be treated by Hermetic means, as

Effects of the Baths

The baths grant bonuses to characters healing from sickness, by correcting the humors through application of heat, cold, and medicinal oils. A character attempting Disease Recovery rolls adds +5 if given a full course of care, +3 if she bathes regularly and cares for herself, and +1 if she simply bathes each day until the symptoms abate. See *Art and Academe* page 46. If using the rules on page 58, then apply this bonus to the Disease Recovery total as a form of stackable magical aid.

Alternatively, choose an effect or effects to tempt the player characters:

- Removal of the mechanical or cosmetic effects of a Flaw, for a set period of time (a week, a month, a year). At the whim of the troupe, even magical Flaws and faerie curses can be suppressed in this way.
- One Flaw deserves special attention: there are several wells in Mythic Europe that can treat lycanthropy. Bladud's name means "Wolf Lord," a useful clue for storyguides wanting to grace the baths with a werewolf pack. In this case, his leprosy story was misinformation he spread, to hide his condition.
- Bonus on Aging rolls, due to healthy environment.
- Bonus on rolls required to heal from injuries. The baths suck ill humors from lesions, or are surrounded by medicinal muds which can be used to salve wounds.
- A bonus on study totals. Some ancient writers suggest that vigorous physical training is more beneficial if performed in facilities similar to those of a full Roman bath. In such facilities, the student follows a special diet, to improve his health, and uses the baths and their staff to recover rapidly between training sessions.

it is closely tied to their cthonic powers, but Bladud shared these, and is said to have been easily cured by some method he discovered at Bath. It may simply be that the baths themselves suppress the illness, in which case it is imperative to some members of the House to claim the waters for their own use and examination. The Cross Baths are used by lepers; they are forbidden the other baths.

Researching Bath

The foundation of Bath is recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*The History of the Kings of Britain*). Geoffrey gives a little further information in *Vita Merlini* (*The Life of Merlin*). (Tractatus, Area Lore: Britain, Quality 9)

Details about the administration of the Church lands of Bath, including the accounts of the priory, are held in the library of the Priory at Bath. (Tractus, Organisation Lore: Bishopric of Bath and Wells, Quality 9).

Hooks for Using Bath Again

Most characters return repeatedly to Bath because the effects of its waters fade over time, or are needed again as the character incurs new injuries. Characters can be drawn back to Bath by the society which forms around the baths, as different people meet there. Beyond this, player characters may seek out the magical secrets of the baths, or indulge in local politics.

THE GREAT FERMENTER OF THE SEVEN SALTS

A little known local poem states that the springs are heated, not by an enchanted rock, but by a strange alchemical engine of Bladud's devising. It is fueled by seven salts, combined with brimstone, wine, and many other things, in four large barrels. Two of these are of brass and two are of glass. The way the salts are

A Fourth Set of Baths?

In the local language the three main baths here are called the Hot Baths, the Baths of the Cross, and the Baths of Alaron. The latter either means "foreign, old writing" and refers to the Latin inscriptions left by the Romans, or, if you accept Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, was the name of King Bladud's consort. If your saga follows real history, the Baths of Alaron are renamed the King's Bath in 1225. For many hooks, it is convenient to assume that in addition to the public baths, used by the mundanes and the sick, there is at least one additional set of baths maintained for Hermetic convenience.

The fourth set of baths are deep in the earth, and are lit with the ceaseless fires of King Bladud. The magi who know of these baths either call them the Baths of Bladud or the Greek Baths. The waters here suppress the negative communication effects of The Gift, for a week with each bathing. They also have minor healing powers and allow characters who have spent at a Confidence point during a story to regain it. No more than one point per story may be regained in this way.

The Gift sweetening effect allowed

Bladud to be a wizard king, able to use magic but still retain the trust of his vassals. Bladud and his followers knew Mysteries which allowed this effect to last for a year per immersion. This permitted his followers to form a university, despite living at some distance from the baths. There was once a Mystery cult, of a sort, among the hedge magicians of Somerset, descended from the university's survivors. It no longer meets, but Anne, the attendant of the baths, can begin it again at any time by teaching an acolyte.

When a Gifted person bathes a pawn of Vim vis seeps from his skin as a sort of black, oily scum marked with his sigil. This disgusting substance can be corralled for skimming off, for example by having the magus enter the water by stepping into a large wicker hoop floating on the water's surface. In Bladud's time, a magus anointed with the correct oils could produce other varieties of vis. Anne the serving-woman knows all of these recipes, and some local faeries have learned one each. The oil can only be drawn from a magus once after each time his Warping Score increases, and forms an Arcane Connection to the magus.

combined in the machine is not clear, but an alchemist or Learned Magician who sees the device, and has the opportunity to test its salts, gains Insight into effects that mask The Gift, and can replicate the device. Bladud probably left powerful elementals, or demons, guarding this machine.

The part of the poem that describes his magical device reads:

Two tunne ther beth of bras,
And other two imaked of glas,
Bladud, King of Britain*

Story Seed: Penitent Ghosts

Throughout the Empire the caparii — bath slaves — were notorious for stealing the personal effects of bathers. In Imperial Bath, however, theft was a terrible mistake. Minerva Sulis accepted the sacrifice of, or at least killed, thieves nominated on the lead curse tablets thrown into the waters.

The baths are, therefore, haunted by pitiful, disfigured ghosts, who are attempting to return spiritual versions of the things

which they stole. This is very difficult, because they cannot leave the baths and are most active at night when there are few visitors. Magi who aid these ghosts may be given secrets in exchange. The ghosts often overhear the conversations of the bathers, and can pass useful details to their allies. Some also know how things were done in Imperial Bath, and can locate lost structures, like temples, the causeway, and the library.

This chapter leaves open the ultimate Realm alignment of the baths, so the vis and auras found here vary depending on the creatures the storyguide chooses to include.

ST. KEYNE

To the northeast of Bath is a village called Keynsham. It is named for a pious virgin, St. Keyne, to whom the local abbey is dedicated. Saint Keyne is responsible for a type of vis that can be found locally, and a miraculous effect that some characters may wish to seek out, either for themselves or for patrons. The waters of her miraculous well are guarded by the monks of the Abbey of Saint Keyne, if currently only in an affable and indulgent fashion.

Saint Keyne's Well, the location of which is known to the monks and some locals, has the miraculous property that, of a married couple, whomever drinks of it first has the upper hand in the marriage. Saint Keyne presumably felt strongly about this, as she visited her brother, a saint living on Mount Saint Michael, and left a magical chair there with the same property. It's said that various other wells attract her intercession.

In the Somerset Moors and Levels, wild areas to the west, there are no living snakes or dragons. At a prayer from Saint Keyne, God turned them all into stone. The stone snakes, which strangely never seem to have heads, always contain a least one pawn of vis. The largest examples, some many yards across, contain up to 20 pawns.

STANTON DREW

To the west of Bath are a series of megalithic rings, one of the largest sets in

Britain. They were formed when a wedding party, held on a Saturday night, was visited by a demon in the guise of a musician. He charmed the dancers with is music, so they danced until dawn, and they were then turned into stone for profaning the Sabbath. They await the devil's promised return: his music could, perhaps, release them.

There are three rings of stones at Stanton Drew, and an added cove (small assembly) of stones. Two rings are the dancers, one the musicians, and the cove is the bride and groom, with a drunken priest lying at their feet. If a musician plays in the circles, when a Saturday night falls on the anniversary of the wedding, the stone people come alive for long enough to ask "Are you come to release us?" When it is clear that the musician is not able to, they turn back into stones, but continue to weep inconsolably until dawn. Their tears contain Terram vis, but it may be tainted by the Infernal.

PAGAN'S HILL

Slightly to the west of Stanton Drew is a small village called Chewstoke, which sits below Pagan's Hill. The hill was the site of a small Mercurian temple during the Imperial period. Pagan's Hill has a Magic aura of 2, and characters excavating the hill may find the altar stone. This slab of carved limestone prevents the evaporation of any quicksilver poured into the carvings on its surface. It slowly transforms this mercury into Intellego vis. The transformation only occurs within a Mercurian temple that retains its Magic aura.

Excavators also find a large statue of a dog, made of limestone and with a golden

collar, cut into pieces. If they put the pieces back together, while within the temple's aura, the guardian of the temple is summoned. The spirit takes the form of a huge dog, three feet high at the shoulder. It is fierce in defense of the temple, but recognizes The Gift, and is perfectly biddable by the Gifted. It even leaves the temple if commanded to do so by someone it considers likely to be a priest; it was used in Imperial times to find apprentices for the priests.

WILLOW WICKER DOLLS

In the marshy areas of western Somerset, willow trees grow. These are farmed by pollarding: that is, they are cut so that they set forth new shoots, which can be trimmed for use in wickerwork. Wicker is useful to peasants because its a cheap, strong, light material which takes a variety of shapes. In thanks for good harvests, the women of one of the villages make little dolls of willow and wheat that they fling into the sea.

The faerie who receives these tries to fulfill one wish. The local women no longer know this, and so they have, in effect, been wishing good harvests, year on year, for centuries. The faerie also gives one of these dolls back to the village, by allowing it to wash ashore in a particular cave. This part of the ritual, which is meant to involve the men bringing the doll home, has degenerated into escorting the women back from the cliff top.

The returned doll grants a particular building a ward against faeries of Might 10 or less. It also contains 1 pawn of Rego vis. The cave contains dozens of these dolls, although many have been damaged beyond use by the seawater.

Vis



Bath Staff

Baths traditionally had slaves who acted as barber-surgeons, masseurs, and entertainers. These roles are now either not performed, or are performed by monks. It is only at the most successful baths, which are visited by large numbers of people, that lay people can support businesses providing services to the bathers. Some nobles, knowing this, bring large numbers of their own servants to the baths.

Vendors of food and drink are an exception, they found at most baths, if not forbidden by the monks. They may be excluded for two reasons. Selling food to bathers is lucrative, so the monks use the baths to convert their agricultural rents into cash. In some baths, consuming food is forbidden because, like the Somerset Baths, they cannot be drained and cleaned, so any dropped food must be fished out or left to rot down in the heat of the water. The type of food available at a bath depends on local surpluses and the average wealth of the facility's visitors.

Bath staff are ignored by most people, who, in the relaxed circumstances of the bath, are more loquacious than usual. Player characters may bribe these staff, or plant agents among them, to spy on their rivals.

Seeking the Mystical Salts

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. It is made in quantity in many parts of Mythic Europe, but particularly Islamic areas and in Germany. There are some brassworkers who are willing to make strange items for magi, but many have links to the Church, so the characters need to be circumspect in selecting an artisan.

Glass is made, in finest quality, in Venice, but it is so popular in Hermetic laboratories that spells used to create glassware, using vis for permanence, are widely recorded. The characters can seek out a powerful covenant with an excellent library, and trade their services for the spell.

Quick brimstone is highly flammable sulphur. This is made in kilns, where stones high in sulphur are cooked. It is cheapest in Sicily, where some of the stones are one quarter sulphur. Areas high in sulphur tend to have Infernal auras, and be visited by demons. Brimstone burns and acts as a fumigant. It is a component of vitriol.

Wild fire is a weapon, used in the navy of the Empire of Constantinople. Its composition is a state secret, but magi with suitable spells, perhaps of the Mentem type, may find a way to discover it. It burns even when submerged in water.

Sal Gemme is made from transparent rock salt crystals: indeed this salt is so pure that it can be mistaken for diamond. It is mentioned twice in the recipe, once mixed with saltpetre and once mixed with wine. When mixed with wine, it is a preservative. When mixed with saltpetre, it dilutes it, so a certain volume of saltpetre

has a less powerful effect. Perfectly pure salt can be made by magi in most labs, or it can be mined in many areas. Such salt mines are usually haunted by odd faeries, the most famous of which are the Hallstadt faeries, from the Greater Alps Tribunal, which demand hearts carved of salt as sacrifices.

Sal Petre (Saltpetre) is made from decayed vegetable and animal matters, particularly their refuse. In Poland saltpetre is mined from mounds (called tumuli) which are actually the ruins of ancient human habitations. In some other areas it is made from street sweepings. The method is to find land that has been richly fertilized by decay, or, if this is unavailable, decaying matter, and put it in a barrel. This barrel has a tap in the base, and a pad of straw on the inside before the tap, to act as a filter. After the matter has completed its decay, a substance heavier than water, called lixivium, can be poured out, to evaporate in the sun, or over boilers. Saltpetre is a flux: that is, it encourages the components of glass to melt at lower temperatures, and combine more readily.

Sal Armonak (Sal Ammoniac) is made from the strong urine of camels, which carried pilgrims to the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Cyrene, which is now lost in the desert sands of Libya. A similar salt is thrown out in chunks by Mt Etna, but whether it is similar enough to replace the true Salt of Ammon is unknown. At the discretion of troupes, Sal Ammoniac might instead come from the pillars of salt found in the desert, near the site of the fallen temple,

*Seve salts** there beth inne,
And other thing imaked with ginne.***
Quick brimstone in them also,
With wild fire imaked thereto.
Sal Gemmce and Sal Petrce,
Sal Armonak there is eke,
Sal Albrod and Sal Alkine,
Sal Gemmce is mingled with wine.
Sal Conim and Sal Almelke bright,
That borneth both day and night.
All this is in the towne ido,
And other things many mo,
And borneth both night and day,
That never quench it ne may.
In your welsprings the tonnes lieth*

* A tun is a barrel. A tun of wine weighs a ton, non-coincidentally.

** Some versions say "seven seats."

*** Tempting as it is to say this is the alcoholic beverage called gin, this is unknown in Mythic Europe. It's a Middle English word the modern relative of which is "engine." It means a mechanical tool, as in "cotton gin."

Player characters may wish to replicate the device for several reasons:

- To create baths identical to those of Bath, sharing whatever positive traits have been assigned in your saga. For example if, in your saga, the baths suppress the magical air caused by The Gift, then a device which allows this is of great value. The characters can manufacture multiple copies, using one and selling the others.
- A recipe for eternally-burning Greek fire that requires no vis is valuable, both as a weapon and to create fuel for industries like metalwork.
- Bladud's engine may be a device used as part of the Initiation rituals of a Mystery cult. This is more likely to be true if the disputed line is read as "seven seats," suggesting that the virtues of the public baths are just a side effect of the machine's powers, which are focused on a smaller group of privileged users.
- The seven seats of the device may be for a group of operators, rather than beneficiaries. If this is true, then what does the machine do?
- The seven seats might also hold elements or demons, who power the device.

- The poem also suggests that whenever Bladud failed at anything, he returned to the baths and they restored him. This may mean they heal long-term Fatigue, or allow Confidence points to be restored after they are spent during a story.
- Once the player characters have replicated the Fermenter, it may be possible to change the salts within it, either creating baths which offer different virtues, or relief from different flaws.
- The Fermenter may be a more versatile device that it appears. For example, salts may be a potion which has a magical effect, the brass sections may give that effect an Until Duration, and the glass sections may spread the effect through the medium of the water. If this is the case then player characters may be able to replace the potion, allowing the bath to be tuned to individual needs.

Seeking the Mystical Salts, cont'd

or from camel dung. An artificial Sal Ammoniac can be purchased from Egyptian merchants, although its source is secret. It is probably made by Egyptian alchemists using a secret technique — out of seawater, vitriol and an artificial Sal Alkaline made from animal dung and straw — but in sagas interested in Mysteries, the existence of this salt may indicate that a community of worshipers of Zeus Ammon still exists. Sal Ammoniac makes tin bind into alloys with copper or iron more easily.z

Sal Albrod is presumably salarbrut, which is unprocessed "brut" or "gross" salt, which players may know as bay salt. This is insufficiently interesting, so storyguides should suggest that Albrod is a proper noun: the name of a place that produces, or a creature who guards, the salt.

Sal Alkine can be made out of most trees, if burned, but the finest and purest comes from Asia Minor. This substance is considered a strategic substance by the Venetians, since it is used in glass making.

Sal Conim is an odd ingredient. The

term conim appears in some versions of the Bible, to refer to the plague of lice sent against the Egyptians. The lice which produce mystical salts are presumably parasites on some greater, more terrible, beast, as suits each saga.

Sal Almelke (Sal al-Malki) means "salt of the king." What this refers to is unclear. It may be a salt of Bladud's own devising, and storyguides can send the player characters to the ruins of the Stamford University, or some other place, to look for its method of manufacture. It may refer to any number of other kings, the most difficult perhaps being King Melchior of Persia. In the Western tradition, Melchior was one of the three kings who came to witness the Nativity of Christ. He was probably a Zoroastrian, so this may be some secret kept by the priests of that religion. The relics of the gifts of the Magi were kept in the Royal Palace of Constantinople until 1204, but following the invasion of that city, their whereabouts are disputed.

Story Element: Secret Rooms

The bath-house or outer buildings may also contain other, secret rooms. These may include:

- Private rooms for patrons, sumptuously furnished and used for assignments, or meetings. Player characters may break into these rooms to steal Arcane Connections, or may be invited to them by a potentate who wishes to impress.
- Storerooms for criminals. The baths are an excellent distribution point for contraband items, as carts are expected to make deliveries to the baths, and many people are expected to visit them regularly.
- Religious rooms. The baths may have chapels, or even temples, to saints, pagan gods, demons, or spirits. These may be abandoned, converted to other functions, used for simple worship, or employed for Mystagogic Initiations.
- Living quarters. Creatures from most realms find it more comfortable to reside in auras of their realm. Such beings may have claimed rooms in the bath complex as domiciles.

Paths through the Material

It's best to tell stories which are closely bound to the goals of the player characters, and the themes negotiated through the covenant creation process. It's also good to be able to just pick up material and use it right away, without having to digest it. If you're short on time, try these paths through this chapter

The player characters lose a valuable informant in Bath. He was murdered by Balneator's followers. The story ends with a fight scene in the baths.

The player characters have an ally whose sanity is lost in the baths. They discover Minerva Sulis, and ask her to lift her curse. She counters that they must put right the theft their ally committed. They find proof he was not guilty, and implicate some

Infernalists. Minerva Sulis offers the characters some of her mysteries in exchange for aid against the Infernal.

The Stamford Fermenter (see earlier) explodes, destroying the town. Faeries implicate magi in the destruction, making reference to Bladud while mocking the servants of the Order. The player characters quieten the nobles, and then come to Bath seeking answers Anne can offer them, for a price: she wants the magi to aid the bishop. Anne's plan is for the bishop's reforms to succeed. This brings wealth to Bath, but also leads the bishop to either relocate permanently to Wells, or become the Archbishop of a larger see. A more easily swayed alternative replaces him, just as Anne wishes.

Politics

There are powerful people around Bath who need favors, and could prove useful allies to magi willing to accommodate them.

WILLIAM BREWER

William Brewer has many properties locally, and is one of the most powerful members of the royal court. As lord of the Exchequer he is responsible for the finances of the court's operations. He also labors under the lengthy title of High Sheriff of Berkshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Nottinghamshire, Somerset, Sussex, and Wiltshire. As sheriff, he is responsible for enforcing the law, which in the time of King John was altered to ensure many fines were levied, and passed on to the king. The common people loathe him as a grasper and a leech. Other nobles dislike him because his birth was relatively humble: his father was a hereditary forester, a task William also performed before coming to the royal notice.

Brewer has discovered that some people

in Somerset are collecting money to pay the king to remove him from office, or at least exclude him from sherrifdom in the county. Brewer cannot, however, discover who his enemies are. He has heard rumors either that one of the companions may be able to help him, or about the magi directly if they have been flagrant in their use of magic. Brewer is wealthy, has many small properties scattered around England, has political offices in his gift, and has the ear of the senior nobility and king, so he might make an excellent ally. He is, however, personally abrupt and grasping, so perhaps the player characters wish to aid his enemies?

JOSCELIN OF WELLS

The current Bishop of Bath took office in 1206. Although he is respected by the chapters of Bath and Wells, he has lost the support of the Glastonbury monks, and the title "of Glastonbury" was taken from him in 1218 by the Pope. Joscelin was born in, rose through all of the ranks of the clergy in, and loves, Wells. He has asked the Pope if he might take "of Wells" as a replacement for his lost title.

Joscelin had an adventurous life during the civil war under King John and in the early years of Henry III. In 1220, however, he plans to settle in Wells, state he would prefer not to go anywhere else again, and move his throne here from Bath. He has long wished to build a great cathedral in Wells, so that his home city could hold its head high against the claims of precedence made by the chapter of Bath. He anticipates resistance from the Bath Priory, and from wealthy crafters, who lose business if his court leaves the city (or town, as it will be then. A city is where a bishop has his cathedral.)

The Bishop of Wells makes a useful ally for magi. He can grant them the right to investigate many interesting Arthurian sites, to examine many pre-Roman sites (including Glastonbury Tor), and to seek the secrets of Bladud. In exchange he wants political and material support for his building scheme. His enemies inside the Church, the townsfolk and the nobility could all be distracted with other problems, and if the magi were sufficiently subtle, it would be untraceable. He cannot be seen to be accepting money, but donations to the building of the cathedral in materials or the pay of craftsmen would be most welcome. Players wishing to be more circumspect might build a small hospital and donate it to the Church.

SEEKING AN APPRENTICE

A Criamon magus has a vision which suggests that an apprentice found in Somerset will be like a new Bonisagus. He cannot give more information than suggesting that the apprentice has something to do with pigs. This allows the storyguide to send the player characters on a wild goose chase to fight Avera's Hogs (see Chapter Six: Lead). The child referred to is an eight year old boy who lives on a property held from Ilchester Priory. Living in Ilchester, under the strong Dominion of a county town filled with monasteries and nunneries, makes him difficult to find. His name is Roger Bacon.

Chapter Three

Bear Island

Within the Propontis there stands a beetling island, just offshore from the fertile Phrygian domain, sloping down to the sea, with sea-washed isthmus, and sheer on the landward side. Its shores possess double promontories. It lies north of the Aidepos River, and dwellers round about call it Bear Mountain."

— Apollonios Rhodios, *The Argonautika*, lines 936–941

Bear Island is one of several locations the Greek hero Jason visited during his quest for the Golden Fleece. According to the epic poem *Argonautica*, Jason and his 54 Argonauts set sail in the *Argo*, a magical ship built for his voyage. They set out from Thessaly, and the Fleece waited in distant Colchis, on the far eastern shores of the Black Sea. Early in the voyage the Argonauts sailed to Bear Island to replenish their supplies. Landing at the city of Artakia's harbor, Fair Haven, Jason built a stone shrine to Athena to thank her for their safe voyage. King Kyzikos, the ruler of Bear Island, arrived and greeted the heroes before inviting them to a royal feast at his capital city, also named Kyzikos. Mooring in Kyzikos' City Harbor, the crew constructed a second shrine to Apollo of Landings, an aspect of the god revered by sailors, before enjoying the king's feast.

In the morning Jason led a group to Mount Dindymon, the island's tallest mountain, intending to view the eastern sea ahead of them. The rest of the crew sailed from City Harbor to Chytus Harbor, on the island's northeast shore. Protected by the Argonaut Herakles and a small crew, the *Argo* waited for the overland explorers. Before Jason could reach the summit, a tribe of savage, six-armed giants attacked the *Argo*. Called "Gegenees," the giants burst from the forest's edge and charged across the beach toward the ship. Herakles fought back as Jason hurried down the mountain to assist. The

Gegenees tried to trap the *Argo* by clogging the harbor's exit with thrown boulders. The Argonauts fought the Gegenees with spear, bow, and sword, until all the Gegenees lay dead, their corpses littering the shore like felled trees.

Having regrouping at the ship, the Argonauts left the island. During the night fierce winds drove the *Argo* back to shore. As they landed in the dark, King Kyzikos thought the Argonauts were pirates and attacked them with the city guard. At the melee's climax, Jason ran a spear through King Kyzikos' chest. As dawn illuminated the beach, the men realized their error. The crew helped raise a mound to bury the king where he had fallen. After three days of mourning the Argonauts tried to leave, but the continuing tempest prevented their departure.

On the third night a halcyon, a mythical Greek bird, landed near the steersman and whispered the means of escape. The news was quickly reported to Jason. The Argonauts must climb Mount Dindymon and offer a sacrifice to appease the goddess Dindyméné, "mother of all the blessed gods." In the morning the crew climbed the mountain's forested slopes, ever watchful for more Gegenees. They found the mother goddess' sacred glen at the summit. Shipwright and carver Argos, builder of the *Argo*, sculpted a bust of the goddess from a massive vine stump, while the others built a stone shrine and decorated it with oak-leaf garlands. The crew danced and sang praises to Dindyméné, causing the goddess's assistants to appear. Called the Idaian Daktyls, renowned for their magic-craft, healing, and fantastical metalworking skills, the assistants accepted the bust and disappeared. The winds abated, Jason and his men returned to the *Argo*, and the crew rowed away from Bear Island.

Alternative Myth: The Isle of the Sleeping Fomóir

As part of Jason's legend, Bear Island is fixed in the Sea of Marmara and the Theban Tribunal. Since this might not work for every troupe, an alternative location is provided. Inserting Bear Island in another medieval legend is difficult but not impossible, managed by extra doses of inventiveness and out-right fiction.

In the early sixth century the Irish monk Brendan the Navigator set sail heading west of Ireland for the fabled Isle of the Blessed, also known as the Promised Land of the Saints. Accompanied by fourteen monastic brothers, Brendan spent seven years at sea, visiting one fantastic island after another. Rechristened with an appropriate name — "the Isle of the Sleeping Fomóir" — Bear Island is easily relocated west of Ireland and in the Hibernian Tribunal.

In this fictitious addition to the legend of St. Brendan, the monk and his party mistakenly landed on the Isle of the Sleeping Fomóir, where they visited a community of monks. Warmly received, Brendan then scaled the island's mountain to view the western sea, but his trip was interrupted by vicious giants, their unnaturally large mouths filled with razor-sharp teeth, who chased him and his fellows from the island. Blown back to the island in the night, his vessel was mistaken for a pirate ship. The island's monks resisted its landing and the abbot was accidentally killed in the scuffle. After the funeral, a magic dove told Brendan that he needed to baptize the Fomóir, a magic creature roused from his slumbers at the mountain's summit. Carving a baptismal font, Brendan met with the Fomóir's underlings, an enslaved band of Tuatha Dé

Story Seed: Ghost Stories

Ancient Greek, Doliónian, and Alexandrian ghosts haunt the ruins of Kyzikos. The particular ghost encountered depends on the situation and the troupes' needs. For example, a Doliónian ghost hampers the magi exploring the ruins, or the ghost of an Alexandrian engineer demands that the magi help him finish the bridge to the mainland. A ghost can act as the initial draw to get the players to the island. An elder magus asks the characters to travel to ruined Kyzikos to capture Thales of Miletus' ghost, one of the seven great sages of Greece, who died while vacationing there.

Danann faeries, and asked if he could meet the Fomóir. They agreed and Brendan baptized the entire group. The Fomóir went back to sleep and Brendan sailed away.

The Geography of Bear Island

The Greeks call the island Arktonnessos (Bear Island) and Oros Arkton (Bear Mountain), using both terms interchangeably. Bear Island is a misnomer — it is a peninsula instead of an island — but its actually physical nature does not stop people from calling it an island. Sitting on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, Bear Island is in the Cappadocian area known as the Troad. 17 miles long from east to west, and nine miles wide, the island has a variety of terrains, including mountains, forests, coastal shores, plains, and a marsh. The interior is densely wooded mountains, uninhabited by men. Most of the island's citizens live in the coastal city of Artakia, although a hundred or so fishermen and their families live around the island's shores. Harbors line the coast. The majority of the harbors are small, with room for one or two small fishing vessels, while the few larger harbors can hold many ships.

Civilization

Bear Island has a small population of natives, descendants of the original inhabitants, the Doliónes. Once a proud Greek city-state, the island was eventually conquered by Alexander the Great. He built two bridges to the mainland, hoping to increase the island's accessibility and importance, but this initiative was lost after Alexander's death. In the intervening years Kyzikos stayed unimportant and its population declined. In 1220, the city of Kyzikos is a ruin, its citizens having left and joined their neighbors in the city of Artakia. At one

time fishing villages could be found around the island's coasts, tucked in the many natural harbors, but by 1220 they have dwindled to small groups of single family dwellings.

The Greek citizens are currently ruled by Latin conquerors, victors of the siege of Constantinople. The Latin presence is weak because Bear Island is a minor jewel in the commercial crown of the formerly Byzantine-controlled Mediterranean Sea. It is light duty for the oppressors, and day-to-day Greek life continues with little Latin interruption.

What the Magi Know

Though the Quest for the Golden Fleece is a well-known legend, the events of Bear Island are missing from most western renditions. Players may make an Intelligence + Area Lore: Anatolia or Area Lore: Theban Tribunal Lore roll. The legend is more popular in the east than the west, and an eastern magus receives a +3 bonus.

A player may also make an Intelligence + Artes Liberales roll, because Jason's legend is repeated in books of classical poetry. This roll is penalized by -6, because the Legend of the Golden Fleece is not popular or readily accessible.

It is possible for a character to receive both the bonus (as an eastern magus) and the penalty (for using Artes Liberales instead of an Area Lore).

KNOWN BY ALL

Easterners know that Bear Island sits on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara, one of a small cluster of islands that used to be prosperous but are now incidental.

Westerners probably don't know Bear Island; it is not a popular trade spot or regularly used by sea vessels for provisioning.

The island is currently ruled by the Latins, but as the Nicaea Empire pushes north many believe it will soon return to Byzantine hands.

WIDELY KNOWN

Jason and his Argonauts visited Bear Island.

A tribe of savage giants used to live on Bear Island, a past it shares with several Mediterranean islands. Most firmly claim

that Jason and Herakles killed them all, but others assert that members of the tribe remain.

The fabled halcyon has been spotted in the area, making its nest on the ocean waves.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

Argos, the builder of the enchanted Argo, carved a statue of the mother-goddess and gave it to her. Some suspect that the statue is imbued with magic powers.

There are several shrines to the pagan gods on Bear Island, including shrines to Athena and Apollo near the shore, and a shrine to the mother-goddess Dindyméné atop one of the island's mountains.

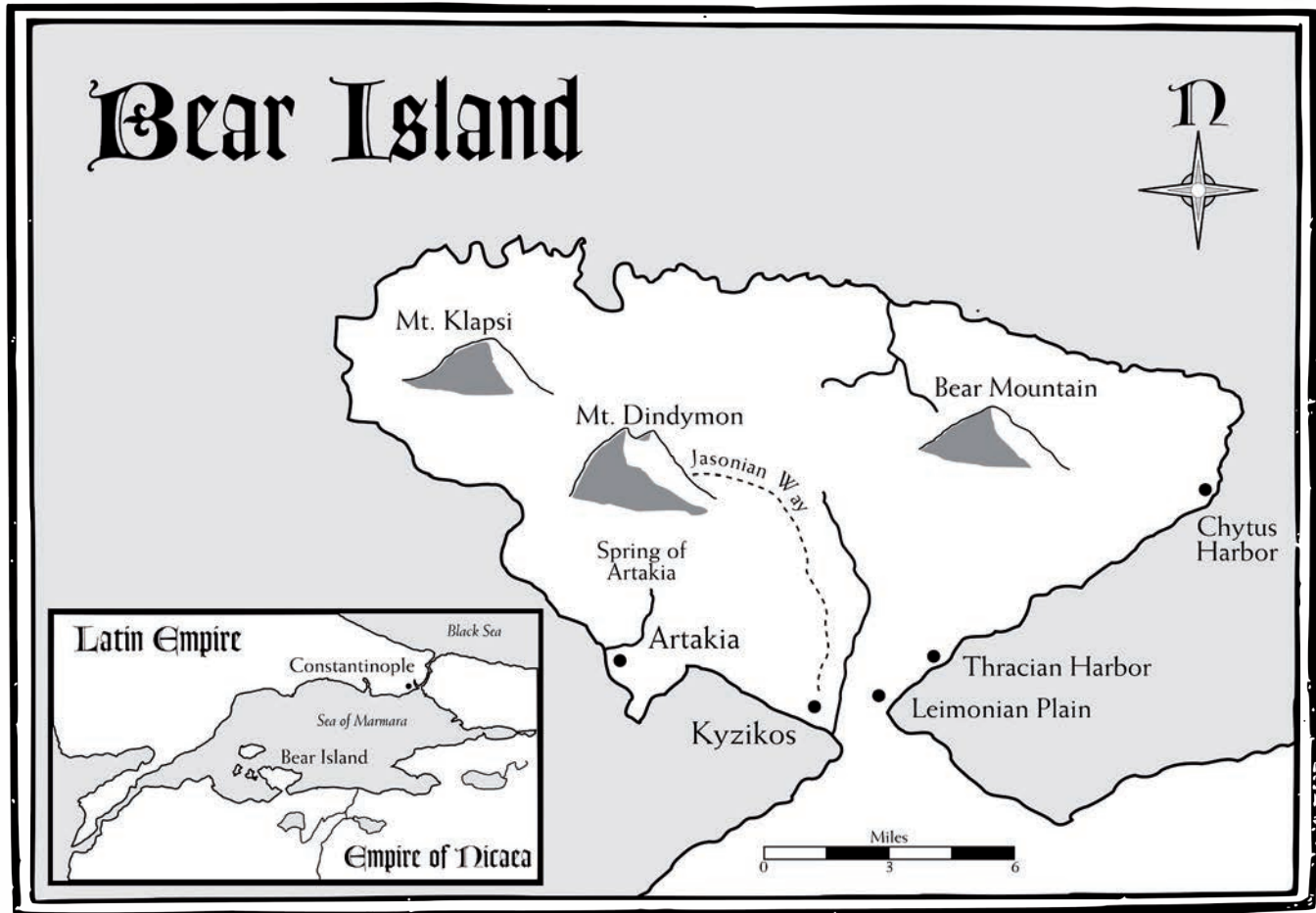
The easiest way to the top of Mt. Dindymon is along the Jasonian Way, the path Jason used when traveling from Kyzikos City to the summit.

Gold coins occasionally surface. These coins, called staters of Kyzikos, were a standard currency during the time of Alexander the Great, and treasure hunters still find secret caches of coins hidden on the island.

LOST SECRETS

The titaness Dindyméné is bound beneath Mount Dindymon, trapped by Zeus and his siblings at the end of the Titanomachy, the War of the Titans in which the Faerie beings overthrew their Magic predecessors.

The Idaian Daktyls are ten mystical figures, metal-workers and healers who serve Dindyméné. In past times Greek wizards sought the Daktyls for magical secrets.



ARTAKIA

The only inhabited town on the island, Artakia is a ghost of its former glory, having fared poorly since Jason's visit. The southern edge of town is protected by a high stone wall, which once circumvallated the entire town but has since been demolished elsewhere for other building needs. A large but ugly cathedral sits in the city center, home to the relics of St. Tryphaena of Kyzikos. A fortified stone tower stands nearby, home to the occupying force of Latin soldiers. Their leaders live in more luxurious nearby private residences. Artakia has a Dominion aura of 2.

Man-sized stones haphazardly dot the mouth of the bay that leads to Artakia's harbor, remains of a past attack by wandering Gegenees. Called Fair Haven, the harbor sees some commercial traffic as the city exports olives from the surrounding groves. Artakia's merchants have contacts throughout the Sea of Marmara, and their commercial

ventures bring a variety of goods to the island. Most of the bridge built by Alexander the Great has collapsed, although columns that once served as the substructure run for a short distance offshore. The handful of moderately successful merchants live in guarded villas just outside town.

KYZIKOS

Once an important commercial seaport, Kyzikos is in ruins in the 13th century. Proud and prosperous, the city once minted its own distinctive currency, a gold coin called a "stater." Now Kyzikos is tumbled columns, fallen walls, and broken marble arches. Kyzikos has changed hands many times in her tumultuous history, from independent city-state to Athenian and Spartan subsidiary; she was later held by Persians before being reclaimed by Alexander the Great. A shining jewel in the Roman-controlled Mediterra-

nean, she fell to Arab invaders in the seventh century. Byzantine soldiers wrestled her back into the Byzantine Empire, but the basileus' rule was short-lived.

These significant political upheavals pale in comparison to the more literal upheaval of the earth. Several major earthquakes have struck Kyzikos, the most recent in 1063, and the citizens have never been able to repair the damage. They stopped trying with the Latin invasion of Constantinople and Anatolia, and the meager population migrated to Artakia.

Explorers can discern the general plan of the city, and amid the stony debris can find remnants of forums, columned walks, arcades, temples, and an amphitheater. Eerily, one of the better preserved buildings is the necropolis that sits to the south of the city. The harbor, called City Harbor, is serviceable in an emergency, although careless pilots run afoul of submerged rocks and ruins. Alexander the Great's second bridge begins here and runs a few hundred feet out to sea before ending.



Auras and Vis Sites

Bear Island has all four types of supernatural auras. A large Dominion aura is centered on the cathedral dedicated to St. Tryphaena, set in the middle of Artakia. A powerful Infernal aura surrounds the Leimonian Plain's burial mound. Faerie auras are numerous and include most of the sites Jason visited. Magic auras can be found at the peak of Mt. Dindymon and at the source of the Spring of Artakia.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. TRYPHAENA

Found in the center of Artakia, the Cathedral of St. Tryphaena is large, squat, and ugly. It is the largest building on Bear Island, since earthquakes have reduced the larger, older buildings in Kyzikos City to rubble. Built on the traditional cross-pattern plan of most cathedrals, the altar stands in the east and the porch in the west. The relics of St. Tryphaena are located in several gold reliquaries along the nave. The cathedral has a Dominion aura of 5.

Tryphaena was a married woman who lived in Kyzikos City during the first century. Devoted to Christ, she refused to worship the Roman gods and was sentenced to death. Divine miracles repeatedly saved Tryphaena, first from an oven, then from

HARBORS

Besides the several dozen natural coves and anchor points along Bear Island, there are three main ports. City Harbor in Kyzikos was the first and most famous, but is now ignored and unused. Fair Haven in Artakia sees all the island's trade, serving as the sole point of commercial access. The infrequently used Chytus Harbor sits on the island's eastern tip and is large enough to hold several ships at once.

Most landings go unnoticed. Only at Fair Haven are incoming ships seen by the harbor-master. Bear Island's many unwatched harbors make the island a favorite hiding spot for pirates and other clandestine activities.

The Uncivilized Wilds

Past the beaches of white sand, the island's interior is rough and rugged. A thick forest mantle cloaks the mountain range that runs west to east. Mount Klapsi sits in the west, followed by the double-peaked Mount

Dindymon, with Bear Mountain to the east. The interior is dangerous wilderness. Mount Klapsi and Bear Mountain are tall, rising nearly as high in elevation as Mount Dindymon. Wooded and steeply sloped, both are home to wild boars, bears, and the occasional lion. Travelers are rare, and even the island's inhabitants refuse to enter the dense, deep forests. Mt. Dindymon is home to the titaness, is described in detail later.

THE ISTHMUS

Bridging the short gap to the mainland is a low-lying, swampy isthmus. Travel along it is difficult, and avoided. At one point in time a channel was cut through the isthmus to allow maritime passage, but it was blocked and filled in a thousand years ago. Since then the isthmus has served as a natural defense for the islanders.

Story Seed: The Initiation of Mithras

The Legion of Mithras is one of the Order of Hermes' more popular Mystery Cults (Mystery Cults Revised Edition, page 118). Several of the cults' Initiation Scripts require initiates to visit sites made famous by ancient heroes. The locations of Herakles' adventures are often exploited for these scripts. One script in particular requires an Initiate to travel to Chytus Harbor and slay a giant while there. A Flambeau magus asks the magi for help getting to the island, although they can't help him fight the sole giant he expects to meet. Of course, as a tribe of Gegenees inhabits the nearby wood, the magus will need assistance.

impalement on Roman spears, and later from drowning. Finally, the Roman soldiers threw her in the arena, where she was torn apart by an angry bull. The Church quickly canonized the martyr, and St. Tryphaena is the patron saint of Kyzikos and Bear Island. St. Tryphaena is a local saint, as described in *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 85–89. She is active in her worshipers' lives and is frequently called upon to aid those in need. Her most common miracles cure the sick and allow mothers who cannot produce milk to breast-feed their children.

THE SHRINE OF JASONIAN ATHENA AND THE ALTAR OF APOLLO OF LANDINGS

Jason built two shrines on Bear Island. The first, at Artakia's Fair Haven harbor, was dedicated to Athena, and the second, built at Kyzikos' City Harbor, was dedicated to Apollo of Landings, a particular traveling aspect of the god. Both shrines are waist-high piles of stacked stones, and at both Jason offered thanks and libations to his pagan protectors. The sites have been maintained over the years, and while no one worships at the sites, they serve as notable reminders of the island's past.

Anchors to Jason's story, just as they were once anchors to the Argo, both shrines have a Faerie aura of 1, which extends several paces in diameter from the shrines. The altar of Apollo of Landings at City Harbor marks one of the termini of the Jasonian Way (see later).

CHYTUS HARBOR

Also called Mole Harbor and Bar Harbor, this man-made harbor lies on the island's eastern-most shore. Here, several thousand years ago, Herakles made a stand against the attacking Gegenees, protecting the Argo until Jason's relief force arrived. One of the more violent episodes of Jason's voyage, Chytus Harbor has gained notoriety among those familiar with the legend.

The harbor is a focal point for the Gegenees' glamor and has a Faerie aura of 3.

Chytus Harbor is littered with large boulders, many visible along the shoreline and many more laying just below the surf. The remnants of the battle against the Argonauts, several of the boulders contain the external vis of the Gegenees, as do other boulders scattered around the island. There are a thousand boulders in Chytus Harbor, many of them hidden underwater. How many of these hold vis depends on how many Gegenees you need for your saga: 50 for a low powered saga, 200 for a medium powered saga, and 1,000 or more for a high powered saga.

The Gegenees are linked to the boulders, and instantly know if the rocks are moved or threatened, physically or magically. Molesting the vessels of their external vis produces an all-out assault as the forest erupts with howling, rancorous giants.

THE SPRING OF ARTAKIA AND THE FUGITIVE STONE

The Spring of Artakia lies northwest of Artakia city, on a promontory that overlooks both coast and town. A small stream flows from the spring, through the city, and enters the sea at Fair Haven Harbor. The spring is beautiful, crystal clear, and perfectly tucked beneath a stony cleft that highlights its visual appeal. The natural perfection has generated a Magic aura of 2 around the spring and the immediate pool of water. Two pawns of Aquam vis can be harvested from the spring on each equinox and solstice.

On the coast, where the stream empties into the sea, is the large rock that the Argonauts used as a mooring stone when first landing. Since their departure, this rock has roamed, rolling itself along the coast to new locations. The Doliónes routinely retrieved the stone, wanting to keep it in place as a memento of Jason's visit. Tiring of this activity, they eventually affixed it to a lead chain attached to Artakia's city hall.

The stone, which is called the Fugitive or Wandering Stone, is a Magic Might 10 creature, whose sole power is the ability to move. The knee-high, round boulder's only Ability is Area Lore: Bear Island 3, and characters who can talk to stone can ask questions about the

island. When loose, it rolls as fast as a quick walk. The stone is looking for Jason, longing to again anchor his magic ship.

THE LEIMONIAN PLAIN

Also called the Meadow, the Leimonian Plain is a large, grassy area between Kyzikos and the Thracian Harbor. A frequent battleground between the Doliónes and their enemies, its most famous battle was between the Doliónes and the Argonauts. The Doliónes erected a tumulus for their king and the Argonauts participated in the accompanying funeral feasts. During the second evening of the three-day feast the king's wife, Kleité, hanged herself from a makeshift pole stuck in the tumulus. Her suicide compounded the Doliónes' grief and ultimately intensified the Infernal aura created by the two deaths.

The tumulus rests near the center of the plain. King Kyzikos' burial mound is approximately 8 feet high with a diameter of 20–25 feet. The top is covered in grass and the sides show exposed stones, stacked and seamed with hard-packed dirt. The mound has an Infernal aura of 4, which extends 5 yards past the mound's circumference. Twice a year the stones seep black blood, on the anniversary of King Kyzikos's death (29 May) and the anniversary of Kleité's suicide (1 June). This blood can be collected and used as infernally-tainted Perdo vis. Each effluence generates four pawns of vis sordida (*Reams of Power: Infernal*, page 18).

THE THRACIAN HARBOR

One of the small, natural harbors found on Bear Island, the Thracian Harbor is where the Argo was blown back to shore after leaving, following the battle with the Gegenees. Located on the eastern side of the isthmus, the Thracian Harbor was a favorite landing point for the island's enemies. It is a short journey from the harbor, across the Leimonian Plain, to Kyzikos City.

Dindyméné calmed the winds for Jason and allowed the Argonauts to leave, but a lingering aftereffect in the Thracian Harbor is a

Story Seed: Like a Rolling Stone

While the magi are otherwise occupied, the city magistrate asks the grogs for assistance. The Fugitive Stone has broken its chain and left, and the magistrate would rather ask the player characters than his Latin overseers. The trail is easy follow. The Fugitive Stone has rolled into a small cove where a pirate ship has landed. The pirates are relaxing on the beach when the grogs arrive. Can the grogs defeat the pirates and return the Fugitive Stone before the Latin overlords notice its absence?

Story Seed: In Through the Backdoor

The faerie forest regio is large and uncharted, and could easily connect to any other faerie regio in the troupe's saga. Characters might accidentally wander onto the Jasonian Way while lost in another faerie forest. Since the faerie otherworld ignores mundane geography, characters from anywhere in Mythic Europe could find themselves lost on Bear Island.

stiff breeze that always blows. Consequently it is easy to sail into the harbor and impossible to sail out. All exiting traffic must row until it leaves the harbor. Over the centuries the constant, circling magic wind has generated a Magic aura of 2 in the harbor.

MOUNT DINDYMON AND THE TEMENOS OF DINDYMÉNÉ

Mount Dindymon is a two-peaked mountain, with peaks at the north and south and a small wooded hollow between. The highest point on Bear Island, both summits offer a commanding view. On a clear day a viewer can see the Hellespont to the west, across the sea to Thrace and the city of Rodosto, and east to the Bosphorus Straights and Constantinople. Mount Dindymon's steep slopes are covered in a dense forest of oak and pine trees. The forest's closed canopy hides the rough terrain in shadows, making the rocky

climb difficult and time consuming. Trails are nonexistent — except for the supernatural Jasonian Way — and explorers must forge their own arduous path up the mountain.

The Temenos of Dindyméné sits in the center of the hollow formed by the two summits. Temenos (plural temene) is a Greek word that means a piece of land reserved for a royal or religious purpose, like a sacred grove or holy sanctuary. Fifteen ancient oak and chestnut trees stand around a gravel circle, with a mound of small stacked stones in the center. The temenos has both a Magic aura of 3 and a Faerie aura of 3. The temenos' Magic aura is older and suppresses the Faerie aura most of the time.

The temenos is also the doorway to a Magic regio and a Faerie regio. Because the Magic aura overrides the Faerie aura, it is usually easier to enter the Magic regio than the Faerie regio. At certain times of the year, however, the Faerie aura increases to 4 and suppresses the Magic aura. These times of the year are the anniversary of the Argo's landing (27 May), the summer and winter solstices, and the dates of various ancient festivals to the pagan gods. These last dates are not specified, to facilitate ease of play, and the happy coincidence that the characters arrive on the eve of a forgotten festival, which would make it easier to enter the Faerie regio rather than the Magic regio.

Regiones and Specific Magical Features

Jason's visit left indelible marks on the supernatural landscape, and almost every magical physical feature is connected to the Argonaut's adventure on Bear Island.

THE JASONIAN WAY

The Jasonian Way is a faerie regio that runs from the Altar of Apollo of Landings at City Harbor to Mount Dindymon. Formed from Jason's initial inland foray, is the easiest and fastest way to reach the summit. Other, mundane, routes take longer and are more dangerous. Most citizens know that the easi-

est path to the summit is the path Jason took, although his path is not easily found. Sometimes it is there and sometimes it isn't. The storyguide should drop hints that a regio pathway exists at City Harbor.

The regio's entrances are at its termini, either the end at the harbor or the point near the summit. Both lie in a Faerie aura, which offers travelers the chance to find the regio. The majority of the path exists solely in the regio, with no related path in the mundane realm. Because the Jasonian Way is so strongly attached to Faerie, without a mundane counterpart, the regio has a Faerie aura of 7. Entering the Jasonian Way is more difficult at City Harbor (Faerie aura 1) than the summit's Faerie regio (Faerie aura 6), because

Entering the Temenos of Dindyméné's Regiones

Both the Faerie and Magic regiones can be entered from the temenos, which has a predominant Magic aura of 3. A permanent path leads from the temenos to the Faerie regio, regardless of the temenos' current aura. One of the chestnuts surrounding the temenos is rotten, with a hole in its trunk that passes through the tree. The hole is at the base of the tree and about 3 feet in diameter. A character who circles the grove ten times, walking counterclockwise outside the ring of trees, and then crawls on his hands and knees through the hole in the chestnut enters the Faerie regio. Some of Artakia's citizens know this secret, notably the more rambunctious youths, who learned it from their grandparents. There is no similar procedure to enter the Magic regio, as far as any of the locals know.

Explores can also find the regio entrances with Hermetic spells, Second Sight, and Magic Sensitivity. The spell Pierce the Faerie Veil detects the Faerie regio, and its variant, Pierce the Magic Veil, highlights the Magic regio. To see either boundary, have the player make a Regio Sight Roll (ArM5, page 189). Under the Temenos of Dindyméné's Magic aura, the Ease Factor to see the Magic regio is 11 and to see the Faerie regio is 23. When the temenos has a Faerie aura of 4, the Ease Factor to see the Magic regio is 25 and to see the Faerie regio is 9.

the harbor has a weaker Faerie aura than the temenos. Exiting the trail is easy and a traveler can always see the shimmering boundary that separates the regio from the Faerie aura.

The regio trail looks similar to other hunting paths on the island. When travelers set out, the trail's lighting and temperature resemble dawn. It takes four hours to travel the trail, no matter what the characters do to expedite this process. Midway through the journey the air grows hot and the sun stands overhead in the noon position. As the journey ends, the lighting fades like the setting sun and the air cools. Mundane means up the mountain take three or four times longer and are fraught with chance encounters with bears, lions, and Gegenees.

The only danger on the Jasonian Way is leaving the path and entering a vast faerie forest. Off the path the woods are dark and mysterious. Little light penetrates the dense foliage, and thick creepers and tangled undergrowth hinders movement. Hundreds of Gegenees live in the faerie forest, offering a never-ending supply of antagonists. The Gegenees cannot enter the Jasonian Way and must travel between the faerie forest and the island's mundane forest using their own faerie powers.

THE FAERIE REGIO OF DINDYMÉNÉ

The temenos atop Mount Dindymon leads to two regiones, one Faerie and one Magic. The Faerie regio, home to the Idaian Daktyls, resembles the temenos, although the area penned in by the trees is much greater. More than a hundred trees circle an area containing ten huts, each built from large boulders or logs, cleverly constructed from the unrefined building material. The stone huts house the five male Daktyls and the log huts are the females' homes. Sounds and odors emanate from within, hissing and clanging and acidic coal smoke from the stone huts, and gurgling, pungent, potion-brewing byproducts from the log huts.

The Faerie regio has a Faerie aura of 6. It sits in a unique position, stacked with a Magic aura and Magic regio, reflecting how the Idaian Daktyls have positioned themselves as intercessors between the magical goddess and her human worshipers. The Daktyls are hos-

tile toward intruders, although invited visitors receive a cautious welcome.

THE MAGIC REGIO OF DINDYMÉNÉ

With a Magic aura of 6, the Magic regio is an enlarged copy of the Temenos of Dindyméné. Visitors initially suspect that they have shrunk; everything around them is huge. Fifteen immense oak and chestnut trees surround an area large enough for a village. The corresponding altar of stacked stones is as large as a tower. The bucolic sense of peace and serenity found in the mundane realm is also intensified. Entering characters gain a new Personality Trait, Calm +2, unless they have supernatural abilities derived from the Magic realm, which includes the Gift.

The Magic regio is uninhabited. Seven pawns of *Herbam vis* grow annually in the trees surrounding the grove, manifesting in the seven largest acorns produced in the year. The stacked stone alter produces five pawns of *Terram vis* each year, vis collecting in five of the hundreds of crushed stones that rest against the alter.

THE XOANON OF DINDYMÉNÉ

A xoanon is a wooden or marble effigy carved to resemble a particular god or goddess. Argos, the legendary craftsman who built Jason's ship, carved the Xoanon of Dindyméné from a stump of ivy and enchanted it with special powers. Standing 3 feet high and weighing approximately 40 pounds, the xoanon looks like a plump woman with an emphasis on her maternal breasts and hips, sitting on a throne, hands resting on the heads of a pair of crouching lions.

Anyone holding the xoanon can trigger its powers — which are aligned to the Magic realm — as long as the holder knows the proper command phrase. The first power creates a bear or lion, the type of beast chosen by the summoner. The second power forces a beast to follow the summoner's commands for a day. The final power causes a powerful thunder and lightning storm to manifest overhead. Each of the xoanon's powers can be activated

once per day. The xoanon can be studied in a Hermetic laboratory as per the rules found in *ArM5*, page 100. The equivalent Hermetic Lab Total for the first power is 35 (Creo Animal base 15, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 size adjustment), for the second power is 40 (Rego Animal base 15, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +1 size adjustment), and for the final power 25 (as the Hermetic spell *Clouds of Rain and Thunder*, *ArM5* page 126).

The Xoanon of Dindyméné is an essential part of the ceremonies that wake the titaness and put her back to sleep. Because of its importance the Daktyls keep it hidden in one of their huts.

Inhabitants

Bear Island has a range of supernatural inhabitants.

Introducing Bear Island into the Saga

There are several ways to bring characters to the island. Small and fairly accessible, the island holds treasure, ancient lore, unclaimed vis sites, faeries, and a sleeping titaness. Characters hearing of the island's legends might want to investigate for themselves. Other magi, especially storyguide characters, might ask the player characters to investigate for them.

It is relatively easy to learn about Bear Island, especially if a magus lives in or has friends in the Thebes Tribunal. While not as popular as the Trojan War or Aeneas' travels, the legend of the Golden Fleece is available in certain circles. Copies of Apollonios Rhodios' poem *Argonautika* exist in some of the libraries of the Thebes and Levant Tribunals. Both Apollodoros' *Library* and Hyginus' *Fabulae* contain a summary of the legend, and while the slaying of Kyzikos is mentioned, the sacrifice to Dindyméné is not. Western magi, particularly those in the Iberian and Roman Tribunals, can

more easily find the plagiarist Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautika*, a dull but accurate rendition of Apollonios' work. Both texts are tractati of Faerie Lore, Quality 6.

The Theban Redcaps are the most likely source of information on Bear Island. Among their recorded journals and tallies of deeds kept at their covenant, Alexandria, are directions to and descriptions of the island. Specifics are limited. The Temenos of Dindyméné is mentioned, and the suspicion that magi might be able to interact with her. A few hasty entries say that past magi searched unsuccessfully for the xoanon.

Shipwrecked!

The Sea of Marmara is busy. Her waves carry merchants, warriors, pilgrims, and pirates. Just north of the Holy Land and near the western end of the Silk Road, all sorts of vessels could accidentally end up beached on Bear Island's shores. As in the original myth, characters are blown to the island and trapped, as high winds continue to keep their ship bound to the coast. Other vessels are also trapped, and if the shipowners know that the player characters are magi they might ask them for help. To escape with their ship, the characters need to propitiate Dindyméné, just as Jason did. They do not necessarily have to build a xoanon, but must somehow convince the Daktyls to quell Dindyméné's imprisoning winds.

Looking for Treasure

Few magi are interested in monetary loot, but companions and grogs can be. Sailors say that chests full of lost Kyzikos staters are buried on the island. Depending on the proximity to the covenant, the group's companion or grog characters might mount a quick expedition to Bear Island, and quickly find that they need the help of the magi.

Dindyméné's xoanon is a powerful, pre-Hermetic artifact. Magi interested in ancient magical treasures might search for the xoanon, as might original researchers, collectors, and those in need of its reputed powers. Such a search leads to Bear Island and the summit of



Mt. Dindymon. The Daktyls need the xoanon in case they want to wake Dindyméné, and do not allow it to be taken. If their Faerie regio is threatened, they carry the xoanon down the Jasonian Way, and at some point along its length veer off the path into the vast faerie forest, hiding it somewhere in the woods.

Looking for a Familiar

The halcyon is a legendary bird, especially among the sailors of the Thebes Tribunal. Legendary creatures make good familiars, and a magus hearing of the bird might want it. A magus searching for the halcyon is certain to run into the island's supernatural inhabitants, especially since the bird eats the Magic regio's vis. On nights of the full moon she visits the Magic regio to eat Herbam or Terram vis, depending on her gastronomic mood. When not in the Magic regio or making her nest at sea, the bird lives in the branches of the faerie forest, and the only way to find her is to wander off the Jasonian Way.

Looking for Arcane Lore

The Idaian Daktyls are well versed in ancient Mystery Cults, especially those once used by supplicants to commission faerie aid. Their insight into arcane mysteries can transfer to other cults. Inquisitive cult members may use this knowledge to invent new Initiation Scripts for their Mystery Cult. Their secrets could create Mystery Initiation scripts or improve Hermetic magic. Houses Verditius (crafting) and Tylalus (leper healers) might be most interested, but Hermetic researchers (Bonisagus) would also enjoy meeting the Daktyls.

Inventing a new mystery cult script takes at least a season (see Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults and The Mysteries Revised Edition). Gruff and belligerent, the Daktyls must be convinced to participate. They can be bribed with magic items, trade instruction for services, or form other types of faerie bargains. They might hold a contest to see who is the better crafter or physician, they or the inquisitive magus.

Monster Hunting

Many of the islands of the Thebes Tribunal contain monsters. The horrendous Scylla lives in a large rock off the coast of Italy, cyclopes inhabit the island of Hypereia, and sea nymphs slip from the sea's silvery depths to sun themselves on island beaches. The six-armed Gegenees are part of the tribunal's collection of bloodcurdling fiends. Flambeau trophy-hunters would be happy to hang a few Gegenees heads from their doorway.

In the Jason myth, the heroes killed hundreds of Gegenees. In accordance with that role, a faerie Gegenees leaves his former body behind once slain, and his essence returns to the underwater rock that hold his external vis. The faerie then crafts a new body out of faerie glamor, a process that takes an indeterminate amount of time. Although this is still the same faerie, it is possible for the new body to view the old, if it so desires. The corpse left behind does not contain any vis, and is solid for several years before dispersing into faerie nothingness. In the short-term, a trophy hunter can find an unlimited supply of Gegenees to hunt.

Waking the Titaness

The unique feature of Bear Island, beyond her treasures, lore and interesting faeries, is Dindyméné, the sleeping titaness. Hearing that a titaness is bound beneath Mount Dindymon, either through interactions with the island's population or from Hermetic information networks, a magus might want to purposefully wake Dindyméné. Several motivations exist. A magus might want to control the titaness as a soldier in his personal retinue, another might want to learn from the titaness, while perhaps a third simply wants to set her free and see what happens. Imprisoned by Zeus and his siblings long ago, Dindyméné can only be awoken or bound by a specific faerie ritual.

The Daktyls can wake Dindyméné by using an ancient ceremony, which all ten must perform in the Magic regio atop Mt. Dindymon. A similar ritual puts the titaness to sleep. Circling around the xoanon of Dindyméné, the ten dance and chant. This is part of the Daktyls' role, and they can do it automati-

cally. Other characters may try, if they have the xoanon. The player whose character is leading the dance must make a Faerie Lore + Communication + stress die against an Ease Factor of 18. Watching the Daktyls perform the ceremony prior to an attempt grants a +3

bonus to the roll. Including a Daktyl in the ceremony grants a +1 per included Daktyl to the roll.

WAKE DINDYMÉNÉ:

Faerie Lore + Communication
+ stress die vs. 18

Gegenees

A Gegenees (pl: Gegenees) is a six-armed aboriginal living on the forested slopes of the mountains of Bear Island. The Gegenees roam the woods in packs, ever eager to find and destroy intruders. While not purposefully protecting the Temenos of Dindyméné, their savage nature keeps visitors away. There are no females or children, only fierce male Gegenees warriors.

Faerie Might: 20 (Terram)

Characteristics: Int -3, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -3, Str +9, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik -1

Size: +3

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Monstrous Appearance, External Vis, Huge, Improved Damage (stones), Improved Soak, Personal Power, Narrowly Cognizant, Traditional Ward (holy symbols of Poseidon: trident, horses, and sea shells)

Personality Traits: Violent +3, Persistent +2

Combat:

Club (individual): Init 0, Attack +13, Defense +8, Damage +12

Club (group): Init 0, Attack +19, Defense +8, Damage +12

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Thrown Stone (individual): Init -1, Attack +11, Defense +6, Damage +16

Thrown Stone (group): Init -1, Attack +17, Defense +6, Damage +16

Soak: +5

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)

Pretenses: Area Lore: Bear Island 1 (Chytus Harbor), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 2 (intruders), Brawl 4 (dodging), Hunt 1 (tracking), Greek 1 (cursing), Leadership 1 (combining personal attacks), Single Weapon 7 (club), Thrown Weapon 6 (stone)

Powers:

Enter the Faerie Forest, 3 points, Init -4, Terram: This power allows the Gegenees to enter and leave the faerie forest regio on Bear Island at will. After invoking this power

the Gegenees sinks into the ground in one realm, either faerie forest or mundane forest, and rises in the other. This power only works on Bear Island, and does not allow traveling Gegenees to enter other faerie forest regiones.

(Level 25, no Hermetic equivalent)

Equipment: Large club and possibly a boulder.

Vis: Four pawns of Terram vis in one of the boulders that lie scattered around Chytus Harbor.

Appearance: Dull-witted and monstrous, a Gegenees stands 12 feet tall and weighs almost a ton. Two arms come from either shoulder, with two more sets of arms attached beneath the first at the ribcage. His only equipment are his weapons: a large branch rent from a tree and a large boulder suitable for launching.

A Gegenees has three attacks, which he can deliver against separate targets within reach or a single target. If he decides to attack a single target, the three attacks count as one group attack, and in this situation the storyguide makes a single attack and defense roll using the stats listed under the "weapon (group)." This attack is treated as a trained group, since a single mind coordinates all three attacks, and receives a bonus. This attack also delivers group damage, inflicting 3 wounds if the attack is successful. A Gegenees's attacks are natural and do not need to Penetrate Magic Resistance.

Gegenees can also form groups in combat. Up to six Gegenees can combine in an untrained group; Gegenees are too wild to practice together and form trained groups. When joined in a melee group, use the "weapon (group)" stats and make a single attack and defense roll. If any wounds result from an attack, multiply the number of wounds delivered by three (for each faerie's combined personal attacks) and the number of Gegenees in the group.

The Gegenees live in the forested hills of Bear Mountain, and constantly watch Chytus Harbor, which both serves the legendary role they play and safeguards their external vis. Savage to the core, they attack any who land.

Dindyméné, the Mother Goddess

The titaness Dindyméné is called many names throughout the Thebes Tribunal: Kybélé in Phrygia, Kubaba in Anatolia, and Rhea on mainland Greece. Daughter of Uranus and Gaia, the primordial sky and earth gods, Dindyméné is the mother of Zeus and his siblings. Besides being the gods' mother, she embodies fertility, mountains, nature, and wild beasts.

Dindyméné is a kosmokrator, one of the primal spirits of the Magic Realm. Like all kosmokrators, she is a Daimon. As a permanent resident of the Magic Realm, Dindyméné can only appear in the material world as an Aspect of herself, a physical representation of the titaness. Once created, the Aspect is separate from the Daimon, and whatever happens to it does not affect the actual titaness. The Aspect cannot refresh its Magic Might pool, but if Dindyméné is awake — which she has to be for the Aspect to appear — she can cancel the old Aspect and create a new Aspect at will. The new Aspect has a refreshed Magic Might pool and does not have any wounds or injuries that the old Aspect might have. Due to the conditions of her imprisonment, Dindyméné's Aspect can only appear on the summit of Mt. Dindymon.

Magic Might: 75 (Vim)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per -3, Pre +1, Com +1, Str +12, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik -6

Size: +5

Confidence Score: 6 (13)

Season: Winter

Virtues and Flaws: Daimon; Magical Master: Summon Animals*, Animal Ken, Inoffensive to Animals, Voice of Bear Island**, Wrathful; Anchored to Bear Island**, Hatred (to those who imprisoned her), 4 x Slow Power***, Houses of Hermes: Societates, page 105.

** *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 47

*** All of Dindyméné's Terram powers are Slow Powers (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 50), and take an additional round to invoke.

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: 8 x Greater Power, No Fatigue, 3 x Ritual Power, Improved Abilities, 10 x Improved Attack (cudgel), 5 x Improved Confidence, 5 x Improved Damage (cudgel), Improved Recovery, 7 x Improved Soak, 10 x Improved Defense (cudgel)

Personality Traits: Wrathful +3, Fertile +2, Hates Jailors +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -6, Attack n/a, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Bludgeon: Init -6, Attack +10, Defense +2, Damage +13

Cudgel: Init -5, Attack +31, Defense +22, Damage +27

Soak: +17

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (50+)

Abilities: Animal Ken 5 (lions), Area Lore: Anatolia 5 (animals), Area Lore: Bear Island 5 (animals), Area Lore: Greece 5 (worship sites), Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 6 (lions), Brawl 7 (bludgeon), Concentration 4 (Terram powers), Faerie Lore 3 (Daktyls), Folk Ken 4 (pregnant women), Great Weapon 6 (cudgel), Greek 5 (homemaker terms), Magic Lore 6 (history of the titans), Penetration 5 (Auram), Summon Animals 9 (lions)

Powers:

Breath of the Angry Goddess, 5 points, Init -11, Auram: Strong winds circle the island, preventing anyone from sailing away. Even rowing is difficult, and ships' crews must make a Strength + Athletics stress roll against an Ease Factor of 15 to succeed. Failure costs a long-term Fatigue level and botching capsizes the vessel. (Base 5, +3 Sight, +2 Sun, +3 Size, +1 unnatural)

Crest of the Earth Wave, 1 point, Init -4, Terram: Similar to the Hermetic spell, Dindyméné's version is at Range: Sight, (ArM5 page 156). Rather than beginning at the goddess' feet, the effect begins at the Sacred Grove.

Foul Weather made Fair, 5 points, Init -11, Auram: This power cancels Dindyméné's *Breath of the Angry Goddess* power. It can also be used to stop a natural storm. (Base 5, +3 Sight, +2 Sun, +3 Size, +1 unnatural)

Heed the Mistress' Command, 1 point, Init -8, Animal: This power forces an animal to follow Dindyméné's commands for a day. (Base 15, +2 Voice, +2 Sun)

Teeth of the Earth Mother, 2 points, Init -10, Terram: This signature power is similar to the Hermetic version of the same name, but at Range: Sight, (ArM5 page 154).

The Animal's Tongue, 5 points, Init -16, Vim: Dindyméné can grant the Minor Supernatural Virtue: Animal Ken to a deserving recipient. The effect can be

temporary or permanent, as described in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 39.

(No Hermetic equivalent: Ritual Power)

The Earth Split Asunder, 1 point, Init -7, Terram: Like the Hermetic spell but at Range: Sight, (ArM5 page 156).

The Goddess's Companion, 5 points, Init -16, Animal: This ritual power creates a mundane bear, which is not automatically friendly to Dindyméné.

(Base 15, +1 Touch, +1 Size, Ritual)

The Goddess's Protector, 5 points, Init -16, Animal: This ritual power creates a mundane lion, which is not automatically friendly to Dindyméné.

(Base 15, +1 Touch, +1 Size, Ritual)

The Incantation of Lightning, 2 points, Init -10, Auram: Similar to the Hermetic spell but at Range: Sight (ArM5 page 126).

The Wrath of the Earth Mother, 3 points, Init -10, Terram: This effect causes a severe earthquake to shake the island. The shaking begins slowly and increases in successive rounds. The earthquake reaches its full potential in five rounds, toppling buildings and causing +15 Damage to the inhabitants. Those who succeed at a Dexterity stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9 avoid the worst of the earthquake and take only +5 Damage. (Base 3, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +4 Boundary, +3 Size)

Vis: 15 pawns of Vim vis coalesce in 15 beads woven into Dindyméné's corporeal form's hair.

Appearance: Dindyméné's Aspect looks like a plump woman, with round thighs, heavy breasts, and brown skin. Her long, curly hair is bound atop her head in a stylistic pyramid of cords and hung beads. She wears a linen peplos (inner tunic).

Imprisoned by Zeus and his siblings, the titaness has not woken in thousands of years. She has limited, dreamlike consciousness of her island and occasionally invokes her weather powers to harass its inhabitants. However, the islanders' actions are unconnected to the foul weather. Dreaming Dindyméné lashes out against her memories, the torturous nightmares of Zeus's rebellion and her imprisonment in the earth, rather than anything the villages do.

If successful, Dindyméné either wakes or falls asleep, depending on the character's intent. On a failure, nothing happens, but a botch could have varied results. A sleeping Dindyméné might not wake for 100 years, remaining unaffected by future ritual attempts during that time. An awake and calm Dindyméné might attack the dancers. The xoanon might crack and need to be repaired by a magical craftsman before it can be used again.

Use the same formula if characters try to put Dindyméné to sleep, but increase the Ease Factor to 21. As before, the Daktyls can automatically succeed at the ceremony that returns the titaness to slumber.

If roused from her slumber, the Daimon titaness sends an Aspect of herself to Bear Island. She is initially hostile, recalling her defeat and long imprisonment. She becomes congenial after slaking her initial wrath, although that could take some time and Bear Island is bound to suf-

fer under her rage. Forcing Dindyméné to sleep instantly cancels the Daimon's Aspect on Bear Island. The Daimon cannot send another Aspect until woken again.

Magi have various ways of binding and controlling magic spirits, and any of these could work. Dindyméné is powerful and any such attempts will need to penetrate her 75 Magic Resistance. Rules for interacting with Daimons are found in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 102.

Hooks For Using Bear Island Again

Bear Island is more than a simple setting for a single adventure. Magi might return of their own volition, or consequences of their first visit might draw them back to the island. Having successfully survived the island and learned its secrets, magi might want to make it their home.

Covenant Boons and Hooks

If the Magic temenos is used as a covenant site, the location has preexisting Boons and Hooks. Adjust these Boons and Hooks in accordance with developments in your saga. If the players have killed Dindyméné, for example, the Hook: Monster no longer applies.

Boons: Major Site: Regio (Magic regio), Minor Site: Seclusion, Minor External Relations: Ungoverned, Free Fortification: Island

Hooks: Major Site: Monster (sleeping Dindyméné), Minor Site: Regio (Faerie regio), Minor Surroundings: Legendary Site.

Story Seed: A Conflict in the Choir

The Daktyls do not always get along. Several Daktyls decide to parade the xoanon through the streets of Artakia to remind the people of Dindyméné. Thinking that this is a bad idea, two other Daktyls take the xoanon and hide it. The remaining eight use Dindyméné's powers to shake the island, hoping the two recalcitrant Daktyls will return the xoanon. They don't. The magi are asked to help.

Halcyon, Magic Bird

The mythical halcyon is a small sea bird, about the size of a cuckoo or dove. Building a floating nest, the bird lays eggs during the winter solstice. It magically calms the winds a week before the solstice and a week after, guaranteeing two weeks of smooth sailing for those in the area. It is also known to circle around anchored ships before suddenly disappearing. Both Pliny and Aristotle comment on the bird's benevolent behavior. Seeing a halcyon is considered an auspicious event.

Magic Might: 15 (Auram)

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com 0, Str -12, Sta -2, Dex +3, Qik +8

Size: -5

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Magical Champion; Homing Instinct, Inspirational, Personal Vis Source, Second Sight, Unaffected by the Gift; Servant of the Island, Hunger for Herbam Magic.

Mundane Qualities: Accomplished Flyer, Imposing Appearance, Mimicry

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power (x2); Improved Might (x5)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +8 Attack n/a, Defense +13, Damage n/a

Soak: -2

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Bear Island 3 (Mount Dindymon), Area Lore: Sea of Marmara 4 (hidden coves), Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 4 (food), Brawl 4 (dodging), Greek 3 (nautical terminology), Second Sight 3 (regio boundaries), Survival 3 (home terrain)

Powers:

Halcyon's Idyllic Day, 5 points, Init +3, Auram: This power diffuses active storms and prevents new storms from forming. While in effect the targeted body of water remains calm and peaceful.

(Base 5, +2 Day, +3 Sight, +2 Group, +2 Size)

The Impossible Retreat, 1 point, Init +4, Animal: Similar to *The Leap of Homecoming* (ArM5, page 135), this power instantly transports the halcyon any place to which it has an Arcane Connection. Because the halcyon does not have hands, the Arcane Connection is typically soil or twigs from a nest or hiding spot.

(Base 35, copying the Rego Corpus effect)

Vis: Three pawns of Rego vis in three of its primary flight feathers.

Appearance: Often identified as a kingfisher, the halcyon is a compact bird with a short tail, large head, and long pointed beak. Primarily blue and white, its head is gray and its beak bright orange.

(The Halcyon was first designed as a mundane animal, using the rules in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 38-43, and then as a companion-level magic animal using the rules in *Realms of Power: Magic*, Chapter Four.)

Centuries ago, Dindyméné saved the halcyon's life, and since then the bird has served the titaness. When not building, and laying eggs in, her floating nest, the halcyon lives in Dindyméné's Magic regio. During its long stay it has become dependent upon eating the regio's Herbam vis. Were it to relocate, it would need a regular diet of Herbam vis, at least one pawn per season.

The Personal Vis Source mentioned in the halcyon's Virtues and Flaws is not located on Bear Island, but in one of the many hidden coves along the Sea of Marmara's southern shore.

Roaming Daktyls

Although they have lived on Bear Island for centuries, the Daktyls are not bound to the island. Several of the faeries head for the mainland, their curiosity piqued by the player character magi's recent visit. Two remain, a male named Titias and a female named Kyllénos, who are unable to control sleeping Dindyméné's moods. After several windstorms and an earthquake, the villagers decide to destroy the sacred glen, thinking that burning

the scar of paganism from the land will bring God's favor and end the inclement weather. Titias and Kyllénos seek out the magi and ask for assistance. Can the magi stop the villagers and find the eight wandering Daktyls?

Reestablishing the Balance

Bear Island's inhabitants exist in a network of stable relationships. The Greek citi-

zens grow their crops, fish the ocean, and stay out of the forest. The Gegenees enforce the border between coastal civilization and the wild interior. The Daktyls play false intercessors for the few inquisitive village youths brave enough to ignore their elders' warnings and venture up Mt. Dindymon. The halcyon builds its nest, infrequently inspects moored ships, and feasts on the island's *Herbam vis*. Dindyméné shifts in uneasy slumber.

The members of the relationship network react to the player characters' intrusions. If

Idaian Daktyl

Assistants to the titaness, the Idaian Daktyls were intermediaries between Dindyméné and her human worshipers. This once important role has faded to almost nothing. Visitors are few. None come to worship, and only the younger men and women come to investigate, curious about their grandparents' tales of the "forest people." Some understand that Dindyméné is an ancient goddess, but the majority think it just another word for the island. The Daktyls don't care if the mortals understand the exact arrangement, as long as they are sought out as intermediaries between the villagers and something. Five of the Daktyls are male, and five female. The males are renowned metal-workers and aligned with *Terram*, while the females are famous healers and aligned with *Corpus*.

Faerie Might: 30 (40 in their Faerie regio) (*Terram* or *Corpus*)

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

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Positive Folktales, 2 x Focus Power (males) or 2 x Ritual Power (females), Spiritual Pact, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Personal Power, Place of Power (Bear Island Faerie Regio); Sovereign Ward (Christian religious symbols); Small Frame

Personality Traits: Haughty +3, Protective +2, Elusive +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense +3, Damage n/a

Mace (males): Init +0, Attack +6, Defense +3, Damage +10

Short Sword (females): Init +0, Attack +6, Defense +3, Damage +7

Soak: +2

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Area Lore: Bear Island 3 (faerie elements), Awareness 2 (storms), Bargain 4 (trading favors), Brawl 3 (dodge), Carouse 3 (sacrifices), Etiquette 1 (faeries), Faerie Lore 5 (Theban faeries), Folk Ken 2 (old women), Guile 2 (false information), Leadership 3 (intimidation), Magic Lore 4 (titans), Single Weapon 3 (mace or short sword)

Male Daktyl's Powers:

Enter the Sylvan Glen, 1 point, Init -3, Vim: This power allows the target to enter any Faerie regio, instantly sensing the boundary and an existing entrance.

(Base 3, Conc +1, Vision +4)

Smithying, 1 point per magnitude, Init -11, *Terram*: Duplicates any *Creo*, *Muto*, or *Rego Terram* spell, at the cost of 1 Might point per magnitude of spell. Effects must be non-Ritual effects, but can incorporate the *Duration: Until*, providing long-lasting effects as long as the condition they were constructed under isn't broken. The maximum effect level is 50.

Female Daktyl's Powers:

Enter the Sylvan Glen, 1 point, Init -3, Vim.

Physicianing, 1 point per magnitude, Init -1 - (magnitude x 2), *Corpus*: Duplicates any *Creo*, *Muto*, or *Rego Corpus* spell, at the cost of 1 Might point per magnitude of spell. Ritual effects are possible and require the Daktyl to permanently reduce its Magic Might by the cost of the effect. Effects can also be temporary, which does not permanently reduce the Daktyl's Magic Might. The maximum effect level is 50.

Equipment: Leather apron and tools necessary for the trade, either metal-crafting tools (hammer and anvil) or surgical

tools and medicine (scalpel and powdered herbs). The male Daktyls carry a mace among their gear and the female Daktyls a short sword.

Vis: Six pawns of *Terram* or *Corpus vis* located in the various tools and equipment each carries.

Appearance: The Daktyls are weird little humans, with wiry hair, exaggerated facial features, and misshapen limbs. Each wears a white linen tunic and a heavier wool cloak.

The Daktyls are more powerful in the Faerie regio, where their Faerie Might increases from 30 to 40. They are also more belligerent in their home, and are quick to foment disagreements among themselves.

The Daktyls can channel Dindyméné's powers through the Supernatural Virtue: *Spiritual Pact*, (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 88, and Chapter 11, *The Wolf's Court*). Normally this Virtue is bestowed by a Magic spirit upon a human votary or worshiper. In this rare instance, Dindyméné has bequeathed this power to the Daktyls, her faerie votaries, giving the faeries access to powers associated with the Magic realm. This alone might be enough to fascinate Hermetic researchers.

To access Dindyméné's powers, a Daktyl spends an hour dancing, meditating, and winding himself up into a state of ritual ecstasy. He then receives a Magic Might pool equal to his *Presence* + *Magic Lore* + a stress die (3 + stress die). He can spend these points to invoke Dindyméné's magic powers. The Magic Might pool does not provide additional Magic Resistance, nor can the Daktyl spend Magic Might points to invoke his own faerie powers. Penetration for the Magic powers is calculated using the Daktyl's Faerie Might score, not Dindyméné's Magic Might score.

any component is threatened, the other elements move to correct the imbalance. Slaughtering Gegenees, for example, threatens the Daktyls, who respond to protect their guards. Hunting and collecting the boulders that contain the Gegenees' external vis also counts as a dire threat to the island's inhabitants. Dindyméné sleeps more soundly to the gentle flap of the halcyon's wings, and the Daktyls prevent bird hunters.

If the characters make massive changes to the island's inhabitants on their first visit, the islanders over-react as a result. For example, a massive assault against the Gegenees makes the survivors invade Artakia. The attack sends ripples through the mundane component of the Theban Tribunal, which eventually impacts the Tribunal's magi. A Greek magus accuses the player character magi of molesting the island's faeries, and demands that they be punished. A Hermetic lawyer suggests that the magi act proactively and assuage the raiding Gegenees, before the case comes to trial.

Home Sweet Home

Bear Island is a good location for a covenant, being isolated, with a healthy crop of annual vis, and several supernatural auras and regiones. Mundane society is accessible but removed, an ideal situation for most magi. The supernatural inhabitants will prove challenging, but determined magi should be able to placate the neighboring Daktyls and Gegenees.

Magi have a choice of three Magic auras for a covenant: the spring of Artakia with a Magic aura of 2, the Temenos of Dindyméné and its Magic aura of 3, and the Magic regio with a Magic aura of 6. The Magic regio of-

fers seclusion and enhanced protection. Of the three, the spring is the easiest site at which to found a covenant. The Daktyls and Gegenees don't pester squatters at the spring, although it might be too close to Artakia and curious mundanes for the magi. The Temenos of Dindyméné is a better location, but placing a covenant there rouses the Daktyls into action. If the magi can convince them that supplicants can still enter the Faerie regio to ask Dindyméné's favor, they may allow the magi to build. The Daktyls will certainly not want the magi to deface the Temenos of Dindyméné.

With its Magic aura of 6, the Magic regio is a much more powerful location. Fearful that Hermetic activities will rouse the mother-goddess, the Daktyls protest and do their utmost to prevent the magi from building a covenant. If the magi succeed the Daktyls continue to harry the property. Using their Spiritual Pact Virtue they use the mother-goddess's powers against the covenant. If all else fails they will raise Dindyméné and aim her at the waiting magi.

In the Theban Tribunal, each covenant needs to bind a patron spirit. Any single Daktyl could serve as a patron spirit, although this will rouse jealousy and envy in the other faeries. Impetuous magi might try to bind Dindyméné as a patron spirit. They must first wake her and survive her wrath before negotiating the binding pact.

Variations

If you have renamed Bear Island as the Island of the Sleeping Fomóir, and moved it from the Theban Tribunal to the Hibernia Tribunal,

you will need to adjust the island's inhabitants. Most of these changes are merely a matter of replacing a name with a more appropriate one.

Dindyméné becomes Conaing (pronounced KU-nung), a Fomóir leader thought to be slain but rather magically put to sleep by Lugh, a famous Irish hero.

The Idaian Daktyls become Tuatha Dé Danann, powerful faeries enslaved by Conaing and still forced to do service, despite the Fomóir's slumber.

The halcyon should be a talking dove, a famous symbol of Divine help in Irish myth, and become a Divine instead of a Magic creature. Its powers remain the same.

Replace Argos's xoanon with the baptismal font of St. Brendan, which has the same powers.

Artakia becomes a monastic community, much smaller in size and containing only monks. Several of the Infernal auras should be removed, although the tumulus remains, holding the remains of the slain abbot instead of a dead king.

The Jasonian Way becomes Brendan's Way, and a Gegenees become a Fathach (pronounced FAH-hach), an ugly, saw-toothed giant. Reduce its six arms to two, remove its multiple attacks, and increase its Soak +10.

Hibernian covenants do not need a patron spirit, but do need a cathach to serve as the covenant's trophy, (see *The Contested Isle*). The baptismal font of St. Brendan makes an ideal cathach, as do the heads of any of the Tuatha Dé. The head of a Fathach might serve as a cathach, but it depends on the Praeco's decision.

Chapter Four

The Cursed Woods

In a desolate and barren valley in Pomerania, a dark and forbidding forest rises from the wilted grass. Under perpetually dark clouds, the old, looming trees whisper words of warning in the wind. For generations this place has been known as truly cursed. No sane traveler passes within sight of this place, and not even the most desperate outlaw dares seek refuge here. This information was sufficient to pique the curiosity of Regulus ex Tytalus. Being ambitious as well as promising, he set off to meet the challenge and test himself, and that is the last record of him that exists.

History and Rumors

The valley of the Cursewood has never been settled, has never been an important route, nor has it ever been explored fully. It is ignored by people in authority since it has no strategic value or resources. The region even has much better wild areas for expansion. The common people believe the place is cursed, and a multitude of stories can be heard told in whispered voices, behind barred doors, around the safety of the hearth. While it is nominally placed in the Rhine Tribunal it could be moved almost anywhere else with little change (see later).

The real and full story of the place is something very few know and even fewer share, but it is included here for reference. Almost a century ago, Regulus discovered the cursed forest and went to investigate, and after several trips to the dark place with almost disastrous consequences he began to

understand: The Cursewood was home to a powerful daimon called Wyzwanie (Polish for “challenge”) residing there as a genius loci and fiercely protecting the place. The daimon is not simply trying to kill or drive off intruders, only those of weak will and without sufficient determination. Such a test, a challenge, spoke very much to Regulus’ Tytalan nature. The daimon was something to fight and to deal with, to reach an accord with and gain access to what it was protecting. Regulus also realized that conquering the Cursewood would gain him not only power and glory, but also valuable resources and a place in which to reside and from which to further his own ambitions. He built his sanctum here and intended to found a covenant and build a Mystery Cult based on Wyzwanie.

Unfortunately he did not enjoy his victory for long, and only touched the tip of the potential there. Back in his first years post-Gauntlet he had fought the demon Terentia and her diabolist followers, and his achievements caused a great setback for their evil plot. Terentia’s followers subsequently found an infernal artifact that they had been seeking for centuries. They saw the opportunity for revenge, and mustered an army to take the artifact to attack Regulus in the Cursewood. Many of the infernalists fell to Wyzwanie’s attacks, but the remaining diabolists got close enough to slay Regulus. His mortally wounded body was strung up by the feet from a tree where he was left to die. The grisly murder caused the creation of an Infernal aura which encroached on the Magic aura, fed by the evil of the artifact. The daimon decided the device needed to be hidden and took it upon himself to protect it, by enveloping it with an aspect of itself. Regulus’ encampment and the

infernal artifact were immediately withdrawn into a newly formed magic regio. The artifact pained Wyzwanie, even encased in stone, and so he decided that he would reward with his friendship the worthy challenger who could destroy the device. It would now take even more effort to impress him.

For a time the infernalists tried to gain access to the regio, and their diabolical acts caused the infernal influence to rise steadily, but in the end Wyzwanie’s harassment forced their retreat. Wyzwanie still resides in the woods but is tormented by the demonic taint, his original curse now seasoned with spite and malice.

Variant: Shades of Grey

As an alternative, Regulus’ early dealings with the diabolists might have been more amiable. Being ambitious, callous, and overconfident, he was certain he could withstand the temptations of the demons and merely reap the rewards they offered him. He believed he needed the infernal gifts and powers to win Wyzwanie over, and once he had succeeded the demon Terentia came to collect her prize. But Regulus retained a single shred of reason and dignity — perhaps his time spent with the woodland spirit brought him to his senses — and he refused to cross the last threshold to outright diabolism. Terentia exploded in anger, and in the ensuing fight Regulus was killed. The fact that Regulus dealt with demons is considered Uncommon Knowledge (see sidebar, earlier). It should keep the player magi on their toes, making them wary of any treasure found. The basic challenge and story of the Cursewood remains unchanged, unless

What is Known of Regulus

At the first mention of Regulus or the Cursewood, players roll Intelligence + Organization Lore: Order of Hermes (or alternatively [Regulus' home covenant] instead). Apply a +3 modifier for magi trained at Regulus' covenant, or whose parens are descendants of Regulus' covenant mates. Magi trained outside the Rhine Tribunal suffer a -3 modifier to the roll.

KNOWN BY ALL

- Regulus was a member of House Tytalus who he lived about a century ago.

WIDELY KNOWN

- He was building a Mystery Cult to

do with using the powers of spirits to work the elements, or knowledge of Hermetic elemental Forms to command spirits.

- Which covenant he was a member of (this varies depending on the saga).

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- About a century ago, the magus Regulus ex Tytalus set off to investigate the Cursewood, and was never heard from again. This may sound like the final demise of Tytalus the Founder, and the storyguide may use this as a deliberate red herring if desired.
- He fought diabolists just after his Gauntlet.
- He registered the Cursewood as a vis source.

- He never engaged in any known criminal acts.
- He was on the verge of a big discovery. Sources indicate that he would gain a high aura, vis sources, seclusion and protection, as well as inexhaustible sources for the study of magic, at the price of accepting a challenge from the Cursewood.

LOST SECRETS

- The exact details outlined at the beginning of this section about the daimon, what Regulus found in the Cursewood, what he did with it, and what caused his demise are not known by any living person. However, elements of the account can be used to provide further evidence and clues if necessary.

the storyguide wishes all the treasures and artifacts to be tainted and potentially dangerous.

Introducing the Cursewood into the Saga

The Cursewood is introduced as a focus for an investigation, and the preparation for and execution of one or more expeditions. Many Tytali are immediately drawn to the story, but the infernal connection as well as the wild and untamed lands serve as hooks to interest a great many more magi if the mere promise of vis isn't sufficient. It is vital that magi venturing here have an idea about what to look for and where.

Proxy Votes

This hook works for magi with close connections to the Quaesitores. A magus may allow another to vote for him at Tribunal by proxy and by lending his voting sigil. It seems Regulus ex Tytalus proxied his vote

to a Mara ex Miscellana over a century ago, who after her retirement passed Regulus' vote on to her filia Stanica. Quaesitors regularly need to check up on these matters and would very much like to know whether Regulus is still alive. In the Rhine Tribunal, his sigil will be granted to a Master or Archmagus if he is shown to be dead, as is the custom. Such characters start from the section Investigating the Cursewood, later.

The Infernal Connection

Things can also start from the infernal aspect of Cursewood. The demon Terentia and her followers are still active, and news of this could reach the player magi, or they could be targeted directly. Investigating the demon soon leads to mention of Regulus; see the section Investigating the Cursewood found later. Regulus, and the parentes of the player magi, may be implicated in diabolism, or it may be apparent that the characters are in a race against time and the diabolists to prevent some great evil.

Definitions of Spirits

AIRY SPIRITS ARE DEFINED IN *Realms of Power: Magic* as magical spirits of flora, fauna, natural elements, and even abstract phenomena such as emotions or sounds. Their powers and personalities are appropriate to the Hermetic Form they associate with, and they are basically a weak type of spirit. More powerful are the genii loci or spirits of place, which are a more powerful subset of the Airy Spirits who embody and represent a specific place. In the Rhine Tribunal the forest spirits are an example of these, but a genius loci may also reside in a hill, a lake, or the western wind. Even more powerful are the daimons, which are spirits living entirely in the Magic Realm that interact with the mundane world through aspects. The daimon can retract this aspect and send a new one at will, so that killing one has little meaning. Except, perhaps, for angering the daimon.

The Tytalean Red Herring

If one or more of the player magi are from House Tytalus, or if they are well-versed in the history of this controversial Founder, the story of a magus Tytalus going to a supernaturally affiliated forest and never heard from again easily

The Nature of the Curse

Contrary to rumors, the hostile nature of the Cursewood is not caused by a curse at all, but by Wyzwanie. He is the spiritual embodiment of primal, hostile woodlands, which, in turn, he exists to protect. Anyone daring to enter is thoroughly tested to see whether he meets the high standards set. Wyzwanie repeatedly tests intruders by causing the terrain and environment to lash out, and tries to sabotage any attempts to ease the passage. The point is to drive away or kill those too weak to be worthy of his respect. A favored method is to strike first at the pack animals and supplies, then the servants, and guards of the leader. Anyone succeeding in his challenges is welcomed

into his inner domain to meet him.

About a century ago an artifact of the powerful demon of rage and war, Terentia, was lost in Wyzwanie's domain, and he decided to prevent it from being abused. Wyzwanie increased the demands on challengers. The tests serve to gauge whether the intruder is there to take the dark artifact or, alternatively, has sufficient strength and the correct mindset to destroy it. Since the rise of the infernal influence Wyzwanie has suffered torment and is extremely hard to appease, making the demands harder to meet. Until this problem is resolved Wyzwanie will not strike a deal.

The Affiliation of Regulus

The affiliation of Regulus is important to characters aiming to research him and the Cursewood. If the player magi live in an old covenant, Regulus was once a member here. It doesn't matter whether they are young or experienced. If they live in a covenant formed within the last century, Regulus was once a member of the covenant where either an older member or one of the player magi's parentes originate. Information has been passed down from master to apprentice through the years, but not widely circulated. As an alternative, old covenant records or correspondence about the situation can be found in the library. See the section on Research later.

The exact location is deliberately not fixed, but it is distant from the major settlements along the rivers and the Baltic Coast. In the neighboring valleys can be found tiny hamlets, farmsteads, hunting- or logging camps, and all the inhabitants are terrified of the Cursewood.

The main challenge in the location is surviving the hostile terrain and environment, which is unnatural and evil due to the Infernal taint of the place. The effect of the spirit's intervention is to have nature itself resist any trespassers and any change, and after any clearance the elements of the place soon revert to their original and wild form, making the woods almost impenetrable. An expedition not guided by tough and skilled specialists and commanded by a strong-willed and resourceful leader is likely to not only fail in penetrating the woods but risks a horrible death.

sparks ideas. Why does this sound so much like the Founder's end? Is it merely a story fed by this myth? Did Regulus know something important and stage the situation? Was he really Tytalus returned in disguise? A player magus with a Tytalus rival could find himself lured into doing the hard work of penetrating the Cursewood, with the rival waiting to reap the benefits.

In Pomerania, in the eastern marches of the Rhine Tribunal, bordering on Novgorod, the lands are covered in mighty forests and the population is very sparse. Among the hills in a remote area the Cursewood rises abruptly from the wilted and flat grassland of a barren valley.

Variant: Theban Tribunal

The Cursewood can easily be placed in the south-eastern part of the Order's domain. For use in the Tribunal of Thebes it can be placed almost anywhere in Anatolia a fair distance inland and from major settlements. This can conceivably be in the Empire of Nicea. The genius loci is called Diekdikitís. For more local flavor switch the willow trees to hazel and the pines to cypress with no changes in stats.

Variant: Hibernian Tribunal

The Cursewood could also be set in the Hibernian Tribunal with only superficial changes. A suitably remote place would be in the Ulster region halfway between Lough Neagh and the northern coastline. Dúshlán will be the name of the genius loci; the rest of the Cursewood can be used with no other changes.

Variant: Normandy Tribunal

Finally, the Cursewood could be placed in the Normandy Tribunal with little change. An example of a remote place is midway between Vannes and St. Brieve. The genius loci should instead be called Aergad. No further changes are necessary.

THE CURSEWOOD

The Cursewood covers a roughly circular area about 30 miles across, with Regulus' sanctum in the regio at the center. Set at intervals at the forest edge are stones bearing the mark of Regulus and his home covenant, signifying that this was a registered vis source. The forest and terrain are unnaturally mixed, and often foreign to the local region. It consists of menacing and wilting pines, oaks, and willows, all hung with moss, lichen, and cobwebs. Most of the area is relatively flat ground. The occasional steep, rocky hill rises from the ground, the largest almost a mile across. Several small springs feed the lake at the center with streams running off, crisscrossing the forest. In many of the lower-lying areas these streams have created swamps. Low-hanging, dark clouds hang over the woods causing thunder and periodic ice-cold showers. Using a spell like Intuition of the Forest does not work because communication with the forest is really with Wyzwanie, and he is too tormented to be coherent or helpful, nor will he speak with intruders before they have proved themselves worthy. The failure of this spell does hint at the presence of a forest spirit.

What is Known about Pomerania

At the first mention of the Cursewood, players may make a roll of Intelligence + Area Lore: Pomerania.

KNOWN BY ALL

Pomerania is sparsely settled with many wild areas ruled by supernatural entities.

WIDELY KNOWN

Nobody ever goes there, and no routes take anybody even close. The woods are cursed, haunted, hostile, and not worth the effort.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

The woods are believed to infested with airy spirits of natural elements.

LOST SECRETS

The effects sound like ones caused by a single powerful spirit.

Forest Lore

An individual with Forest Lore (see *Guardians of the Forest*, page 37) can try to commune with the forest spirit, but as this is a foreign place the character must have an Ability level of at least 3 to have any effect.

SCORE	EFFECT
(foreign forest)	

- 3 Character learns Wyzwanie's name immediately, and after a few hours also learns of Regulus' sanctum in the center as well as the Significatos (see later).
- 4 Character may commune with Wyzwanie, but only at the center of the woods, and learns of the infernal artifact. Wyzwanie will not offer deals until the artifact is destroyed.
- 5 Character knows after a little observation which effects are natural and which are caused by Wyzwanie.
- 6 Character may find vis, although it is vis sordida.
- 7 Character may travel the Cursewood unhindered by Wyzwanie if alone, but still needs to prove himself worthy if he wants to deal with the spirit.
- 8 Character is automatically judged as worthy.
- 9 Character may negotiate with Wyzwanie for Walking the Path (see later) without the need to solve the infernal problem first, although the Quests all concern this.

for the subsequent stages. Even though there are only three main types (forest, hills, and swamp), there are also short sections of paths or navigable stretches of swampy river, and each new choice should sound different. For example, after a stage in the forest, the characters reach swampy ground with pools of stinky, bubbling black mud. They can choose to wade straight on through this (swamp) or follow the edge of the wetlands through an area where the pines are white and without bark or branches, all covered by spiderwebs (forest again). Each stage takes a number of hours to complete equal to the number of hazards suffered, although always at least one.

TERRAIN	ROLL
Forest Trail	Stamina + Survival
Forest Floor	Perception + Survival
Swamp Wading	Stamina + Athletics
Swamp/River Boat	Dexterity + Profession: Boating
Swamp Swimming	Strength + Swimming
Hill Path	Dexterity + Athletics
Hill Climb	Strength + Athletics

The following modifiers to the roll apply:

- 1 per group member beyond the leader and guide
- +1 per group member who knows the Ability used apart from the guide
- Encumbrance of the heaviest laden character
- Wound and Fatigue penalties for the guide

TREKKING IN THE CURSEWOOD

Penetrating the Cursewood is difficult and dangerous, and the main theme of the location is this challenge. It tests the leadership, cooperation, determination, and strength of will of those involved. Wyzwanie's challenges are henceforth referred to as hazards. Each of the five stages represents a leg of the journey and causes the loss of one Long Term Fatigue Level. The storyguide describes the terrain and situation — along with any choices — and lets the players plan and choose to take countermeasures, using the mechanics described later. The troupe needs to choose a leader and a guide, although these roles can be changed in each stage. The leader is the person in charge of making final decisions, most likely a magus, but it could be a grog captain if the magi defer to him when in danger. Ideally it would be the character with the best Leadership Ability. The guide is the point man who uses his skills to make good progress and avoid dangers. This might be

the character with the best Ability score for the relevant terrain, but his Leadership Ability is also important. The leader and guide can manage a group of people no larger than their combined Leadership scores; exceeding this causes additional hazards as shown later.

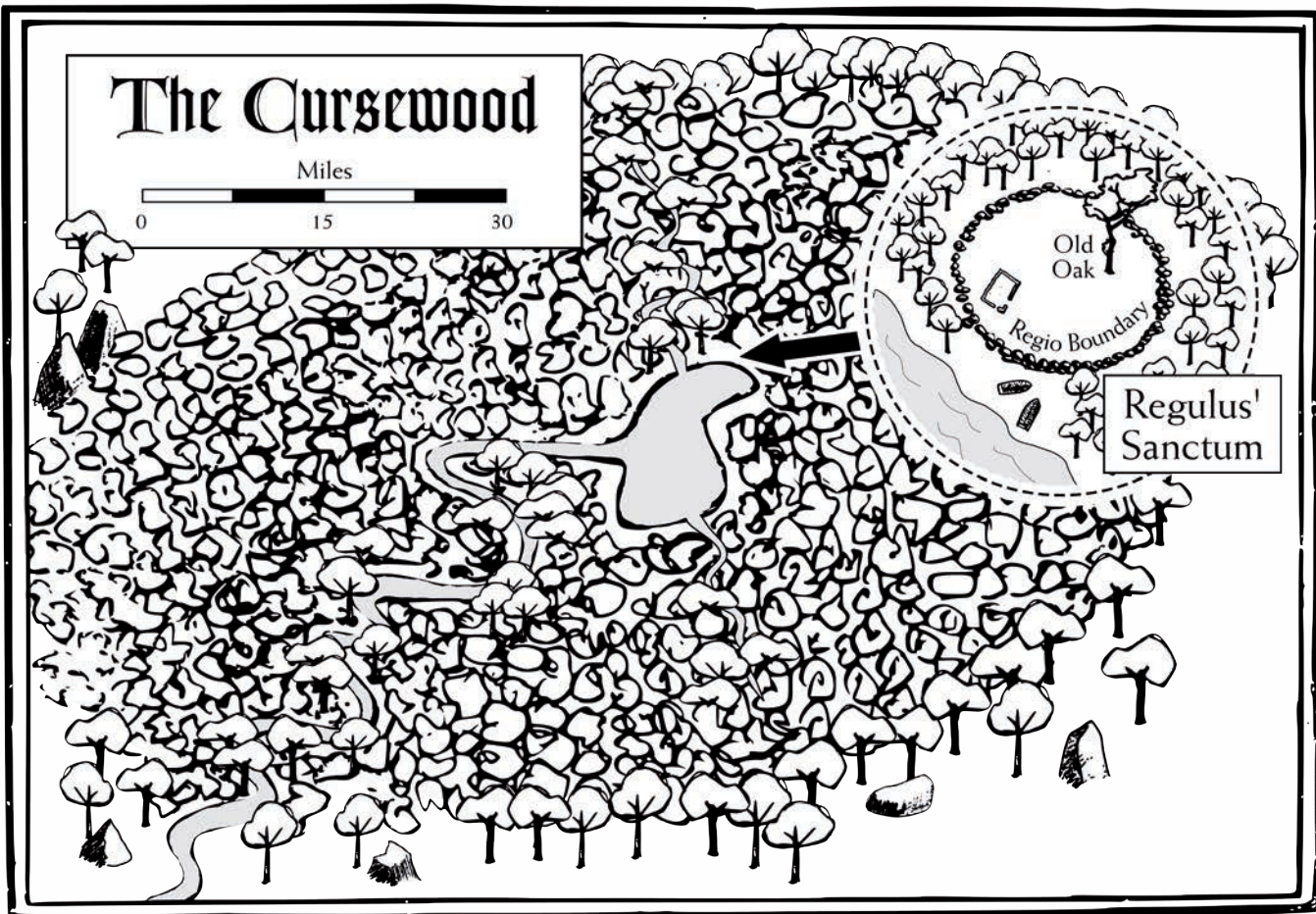
The main focus is on creating the feeling of doom and gloom of the threatening place, and so detailed rules can be foregone by a storyguide wishing to run the challenge in a looser way.

Each stage of trekking requires a roll to check for progress and to avoid dangers, using the stats of the guide. The specific Characteristics and Abilities to be used depend on the terrain chosen, as does the nature of any hazards. The first stage is forest floor, and the characters are offered two or more choices

TREK PROGRESS

Add one extra hazard for each person exceeding the maximum group size, defined as the combined Leadership scores of the leader and guide.

ROLL	RESULT
0 or Botch	Lost in the woods, no progress. Suffer four hazards
3	Suffer four hazards
6	Suffer three hazards
9	Suffer two hazards



12
18 or higher

Suffer one hazard
The first time this is rolled, suffer only one hazard, and for the next stage the rolls are at +3. If rolled subsequently, no Hazards are suffered during that stage, but there is no bonus for the following stage.

RETREAT AND DEFEAT

If the group decides to retreat, they suffer minimal harassment on the way out, which takes only an hour per stage. Wyzwanie might even be obliging and alter the terrain to be less difficult, for example, by turning a swamp into a small river flowing out. Eerie and unpleasant things still happen, but they are not dangerous and require no rolls. The terrain alters again behind the characters, so

the next visit, or even turning around again, is no easier. It is as if the forest expels the group in disgust; the characters hear a quiet, scornful laughter coming from nowhere in particular when they aren't actively listening for it.

REST, SLEEP, AND SUPPLIES

The characters lose Fatigue, especially with magusing spontaneous magic, and need to rest. Remember to keep track of Long Term Fatigue Levels, each of which takes a full night's rest to recover, and remember that Short Term Fatigue Levels are treated as the more serious levels, thus taking longer to recover from. For example, a magus with two Long Term and one Short Term Fatigue Levels recovers his Short Term as if it was his third level lost. Due to the evil nature of the woods and the hostile environment, recovery times are doubled for Short Term Fatigue. While the characters rest,

Wyzwanie sends some of the few animals still left in the wood to pester and disrupt the intruders. Examples are noisy ravens, swarms of mosquitoes, or squirrels pelting the sleeping characters with rotten acorns. If Wyzwanie decides to cause a hazard during the night, no Fatigue is recovered. Either way this also serves as a distraction during which Wyzwanie ruins the supplies or camping gear of an unlucky victim: blankets are torn by thorns, waterskins fill with mud, food is infested with maggots or flies. Due to the heavy corruption, ingesting any plants or water from the Cursewood immediately causes a Light Wound.

HAZARDS

A hazard means that one or more individuals in the group have had a mishap, with details dependent on the terrain, as described later. Only one or two individuals are in immediate danger at first, but the

danger soon spreads to the other player characters. By fast and clever use of magic or abilities they can try to avert the hazard or limit the damage. When choosing the initial victim, Wyzwanie likes to spread the suffering around to cause overall weakening. However, the current guide is an obvious choice. The spirit's initial goal isn't to kill or maim anyone, but to wear everyone down and make it clear that the place is dangerous. Weak or unskilled groups are driven off, or risk death or permanent injury if they insist on going on. A hazard caused indirectly by Wyzwanie's powers, like moving or reshaping terrain features, does not need to penetrate. More direct attacks, as well as unnatural changes in elements, do need to Penetrate. Use Wyzwanie's Penetration, remembering that he resides in a level 7 Magic regio, and so gets a +7 bonus to Penetration, while the characters are in a level 5 Infernal aura, and so face a -5 penalty to their Magic Resistance.

FOREST

The forest is old with a mix of pines, willows, and oaks. Use the following examples to help you describe it.

Visual examples

Sickly and twisted trees, covered in hanging moss and cobwebs, pale and unhealthy or bright and venomously-looking in color. The terrain is flat and covered in thick moss or rotting plants which hide jagged rocks or hidden crevices below, hostile growths like thorn scrub and stinging nettles, pools of stinking slime, or broken ground and loose rubble.

Auditory examples

Eerie and distant sounds like creaking branches in the undergrowth, groaning trees, howls, cries, or hisses from unseen creatures, sounds of running feet starting and stopping suddenly, and rumbling in the very earth.

Olfactory examples

Heavy smell of decomposing plants, sweet stink of rotting flesh, hot and dry smell of volcanic rock, or a delicate perfumed scent completely out of place.

Events for inspiration:

- **Attack from a Corrupted Tree.** In the forest, this is an oak.
- **Surrounded by thorns.** The group is encircled by a thick patch of naturally occurring thorn bushes. This effect is the same as *Wall of Thorns* (ArM5, page 135). Requires Penetration.
- **Pitfall.** A character falls into either a new fissure which opens up or an existing one hidden by branches and dead leaves. A fall of 10 feet results in a +2 damage for mud, +5 for dirt, or +10 for rocks.

HILLS

Hills of varying sizes dot the forest with jagged rocks penetrating the topsoil, sparsely covered in pine trees. Dark and fetid springs well up through cracks, forming small streams running down toward the lake in the center of the woods.

Visual examples

Earth mound with thick undergrowth of thorn scrub, steep rocky slope with slimy moss, jagged rocks and loose debris, or treacherous clefts hidden by plants.

Auditory examples

Winds above the treetops resemble a scream, springs bubble noisily or explode in geysers, unseen rocks tumbling loose, or the scrape of metal or claws on bare rock.

Olfactory examples

Sharp metallic scent of rocks, sulfurous springs, or smell of sap from the pines.

Events for inspiration:

- **Slope becomes steeper and surface transforms into loose, jagged rocks.** Dexterity rolls are needed to avoid falling. The Ease Factor is 6 to stay in place or 15 to move up the slope. A fall means +5 damage from sliding in sharp rocks. Once a character is sliding, he takes +3 damage and roll Dexterity-3 each round until he stops. The storyguide may require between three and five successful rolls to get safely off the loose rocks. Requires Penetration for sharp rocks, but not for becoming steep.
- **Attack from a Corrupted Tree.** In the hills, this is a pine.
- **Hostile weather.** This may be anything from effects like *Talons of the Wind* (ArM5, page 127) or *Charge of the Angry Winds* (ArM5, page 125), to simply rain or snow that hampers the group's actions further. Requires Penetration for damage, but not for causing uncomfortable weather.
- **Exploding ground.** An effect like *The Earth's Caruncle* (ArM5, page 156). Requires Penetration.

SWAMPLANDS

The run-off from the once crystal clear lake at the center crisscross the forest floor with small streams that occasionally flood flat ground.

Visual examples

Bubbling black mud, trickling water covering sickly yellow quicksand, banks of foul mist drifting lazily around and closing in on intruders when they are not looking, treacherously idyllic pools with lily pads, or fallen slippery logs almost forming a path of bridges, but some of them won't support a person.

Auditory examples

Complete silence occasionally interrupted by a single splash, squelching of mud,

buzzing of mosquitoes, or the croak of what sounds like enormous frogs.

Events for inspiration:

- **Sucking quicksand.** Earthen hands grab the victim in an effect similar to *Hands of the Grasping Earth* (*ArM5*, page 156). The hands drag victims below the water and mud over three rounds. Anyone not freed by then suffers Deprivation of air (*ArM5*, page 180). There may be more hands ready to attack anyone trying to help the initial victim. Requires Penetration.
- **Attack from a Corrupted Tree.** In the swamp, this is a willow.
- **Churning waters.** A sudden current whirls victims around and carries them toward the edge of the woods in a suddenly formed river. Victims roll Strength + Swimming (or Profession: Boating) against an Ease Factor of 12 to reach the safety of the river banks. Failure means that the victim is pulled along adding another hazard during this stage to account for the increased time spent. A single botch carries the victim far, losing all progress during this stage, while a triple botch sends them out of the Cursewood to start all over again.

The Center of the Woods

The center of the woods holds the key to solving the mystery and getting the rewards.

REGULUS' ENCAMPMENT

Regulus' encampment and his sanctum are located in the middle of the woods. In a clearing surrounded by a low wall of stacked stone there remain only the ruined foundations of a cottage close to the lake shore, where rotting boats are tied to the bank. These are the echoes of what remains of his sanctum and the immediate area, which was pulled into a Magic regio (see later) formed

as the Infernal aura impinged. At the storyguide's discretion a moldy, tattered copy of Regulus' journals can be found here, if the characters deserve or need clues for further investigation. The daimon gives intruders no rest and keeps on challenging them, so even magi who have found shortcuts suffer the torments of this place. At some point they either retreat, perish, or are found worthy. This area used to have a Magic aura of 4, but this is currently suppressed by the Infernal aura of the Cursewood.

Entry to the regio is gained by crossing the low wall, where Wyzwanie discreetly manifests himself through some natural medium and leads worthy visitors inside. Unworthy intruders cannot gain entry without his help, not even forcibly through the use of magic. Second Sight reveals the existence of a regio, but not any way to enter. A significant criteria for being deemed worthy is having braved and survived the trek through the cursed forest while fighting off the challenges.

THE OLD OAK

Just inside the wall stands a menacing old tree. It is an ancient, twisted oak with ash gray bark and leaves the color of blood. Lines and contours in the bark make the trunk look like a face in pain. From one of the branches hangs a length of rotting rope. This is where Regulus was hanged, and his bones can be found scattered below the tree inside the regio.

The Infernal Aura of the Cursewood

Emanating from the old oak near the encampment where Regulus was hanged, an Infernal aura with a rating of 5 covers the area to the edge of the Cursewood. The aura is a Malevolent aura, a specific kind of corrupted aura brought about by cruelty, the heinous sins of the diabolists, and the murder of Regulus and their foul rituals following this event. This phenomenon is explained in detail in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 12–14, but, the most important effects are listed here:

Using Shortcuts and Magic

Bear in mind that magi may very well succeed in using shortcuts to the center of the woods. Flying over the treetops, tunneling below the forest floor, or getting an Arcane Connection to the center to teleport to are among the obvious ideas. However the regio can only be entered by those led by Wyzwanie, and he only allows this once he is satisfied. Persistent magi who find clever shortcuts may very well earn his respect that way, in the end.

On the other hand the use of magic to deal with the hazards is by no means discouraged, and clever use of low magnitude magic or shows of force impress Wyzwanie. A magus showing strength this way is tested again with a completely different hazard before earning full respect. Obviously magi specializing in elemental and natural magic fare better than Mentem or Vim specialists here. A Herbam magus with a Magical Focus in wood can defuse or bypass most obstacles with ease, but still risks fatigue loss and multiple botches due to the hostile aura.

- Wounds suffer a penalty to Recovery rolls equal to the aura rating of 5 while inside. This is a basic effect of any Infernal aura and is not specific to Malevolent auras.
- The aura strength of 5 is added to any Damage total.
- All physical activities suffer 5 additional botch dice from the aura; this includes all rolls for trek progress. Botches are more likely to result in injury, with Wound level equal to number of botches.
- Any old wounds caused specifically by demons reopen, no matter how long ago they occurred. An Incapacitating or Heavy wound reopens as a Wound two steps lower than the original.

The Regio

Regulus' encampment is now hidden in a Magic regio of level 7. If Wyzwanie allows it, the regio may be entered by simply crossing the wall. Any not deemed worthy remain at

the mundane level. The encampment appears as it was before it retreated into the regio. At the side of the central lake is an area cleared of trees, where a stream from the hills feeds the lake. At the bank, a rowboat is tied to a stake. A moderately sized cottage has been built from stacked boulders, and is marked with Regulus' sanctum marker. Inside there is space for a lab, but one has not yet been set up; the cottage only holds his books on magical subjects, and his journals. The oak clearly has unnatural features resembling a face in agony. Below the oak are the bones of Regulus, partly covered by dirt and growing weeds. His spirit has long since ventured into the Magic Realm through his continued challenge of the powers surrounding him. Here also lie scattered his enchanted devices; see the section on magical treasures later. Wyzwanie shows himself in the form of a huge boulder covered in vines, and starts to tell his story. For details about Wyzwanie, see Inhabitants later.

Vis Sites

Below are given a number of vis sources from which the storyguide can choose; not all of them need be present or accessible at once. Only use the ones which best fit your saga and its vis balance. Some could also be held back for introduction later on.

THE POISONED SAP

The old oak oozes thick, green, and poisonous sap from cracks in the bark, forming around the facial features depicted on the trunk. Once per year, a magus may spend an entire season in a process similar to vis extraction to collect pawns of Perdo vis sordida equal to $(\text{Aura} + \text{Intelligence} + \text{Infernal Lore} + \text{stress die})/5$ rounding up. A double botch or higher requires a check for Twilight.

APPLES OF INDIGO HUE

A small part of the forest close to the clearing looks as if it were once cultivated

as an orchard. A single apple tree bears blue apples; up to 4 pawns of Herbam vis sordida can be harvested each year.

CRYSTAL GEODES

Inside a cave below the highest hill, translucent crystals grow out of fissures in the bedrock. Once a crystal is fully grown, it turns opaque and falls off the wall. Up to 4 pawns of Terram vis sordida can be harvested each year.

THE SILVER FISH

At the edge of the lake, the largest stream from the hills ends in a small pool with fish. Up to 4 pawns of Aquam vis sordida can be harvested each year.

THE LIGHTNING TREE

On top of a hill where lightning strikes often stands a clump of trees, all with significant lightning damage. Charred branches glowing with a white light contain vis; up to 4 pawns of Auram vis sordida can be harvested each year.

DE-CORRUPTING THE VIS

Tainted vis stays corrupted, but once the Magic aura is dominant any future vis is clean, normal, magical vis. After a full year with no Infernal influence, all vis sources are free from corruption.

Story Seed: Hell in the Backward

Does a diminishing Infernal aura simply fade out? Perhaps a tricky demon draws the remaining Infernal aura into a regio where he hides and grows in power. For example, Kraxios Lord of Wrath sees an opportunity here to ply his wicked trade. He has the power to cause people to dream witnessing their friends and neighbors perform acts of bestial atrocity, and to possess these false witnesses in order to egg them on to urge others to punish the imagined culprits. Kraxios affects several grogs who all become paranoid, spy on each other, spread rumors and in time perform sinful acts — or so he hopes. Eventually one or more grogs affected by this start causing trouble at the covenant. While the magi can contain this, it takes hard work to unravel the plot, which in the end leads to the unknown regio in the Cursewood.

Changing the Aura

To remove the Infernal aura, the characters must first remove the source of the infernal taint so it no longer feeds the aura, and then develop another, stronger aura. If the oak is destroyed, and the remains of Regulus are properly buried, the Infernal aura sits dormant and neglected, making it possible to diminish it.

If the Magic aura equals the Infernal, it takes precedence because it was the original one. Only if the Infernal aura drops below the Magic will it start to deteriorate, so further work must be done to remove it completely. More detail can be found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 10–11, but in essence, once the Infernal focus is removed and the Infernal aura is lower than the other aura, the Infernal aura drops by 1 after a number of years equal to its strength.

Thus, three years after the Infernal aura is reduced to 3, it falls to 2, and will disappear completely in a further three years if not maintained.

The magic aura could also theoretically be increased; the rules can be found in *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 10–11. However, this is quite difficult. A stress roll made once per year against an Ease Factor of 15 is needed for a permanent increase of 1. Magical activities like lab work, spellcasting, vis study, or Twilight episodes with beneficial outcomes may yield a bonus of usually between +1 to +3. The storyguide may also reward creative magi for actions such as appropriately burying Regulus in a place where his journals indicate he achieved great things, or dominating magical spirits to bind them near the sanctum.

Vis Sordida

In the Infernal aura vis sordida ("filthy vis," see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 18–19) forms spontaneously in various places. For anyone not using powers derived from the Infernal, using this vis carries with it some risks and complications, as well as a few beneficial effects:

- Each season spent in close proximity to the vis (for example, using it in the lab) incurs a temporary Personality Trait of Wrathful +1. If the magus already has this trait (or one closely resembling it) increase this by 1 instead. If the magus indulges in a sinful act of Wrath the trait becomes permanent, but he gains a Confidence Point.
- Modify casting total by +5 per pawn.
- Add three extra botch dice per pawn used; if the magus has ways of reducing the number of botch dice, he still rolls a minimum of one per pawn used.
- Botches are more severe and often cause damage or put the caster in direct peril.
- +1 bonus to Source Quality per pawn for studying Hermetic Arts.
- If used to prepare an item for enchantment, ten levels of effects per pawn used are corrupted. Effects invested into the item must use the Experimentation rules until the corrupted levels are used up.

Inhabitants

Apart from the genius loci itself, inhabitants of the Cursewood are limited to corrupted trees. Living for a time in the Infernal aura have caused these to become disfigured and truly evil. The effects of the curse have awakened some of the trees to a certain degree, and the Infernal taint has corrupted them.

Magical Treasures

Inside the cottage housing his sanctum, hidden inside the magical regio, are found the magical resources of Regulus. His artifacts lie among his scattered bones at the Old Oak, and all his vis stores were expended during his last stand. However, a stout cabinet with carved doors holds his books safely.

SUMMAE:

- Besting the Challenge*, by Regulus of Tytalus. Summa on Area Lore: Cursewood, Level 3 Quality 9
- On Airy Spirits of Significant Places*, by Alexander of Bonisagus. Summa on Magic Lore, Quality 12 Level 3
- A Material Inspired by the Divine*, by Constantine Alexander of Jerbiton, Summa on Terram, Quality 13 Level 7

The Arcane Tool, by Vries van Breinermoor of Tremere, Summa on Vim, Quality 9 Level 6

TRACTATUS:

Journal of Regulus, by Regulus of Tytalus. Tractatus on Area Lore: Cursewood, Quality 9. This book contains some information about Regulus and his plans as well. It confirms the story of Wyzwanie's challenges and mentions the diabolists. It mentions the existence of vis sources and Significatos, which can be used for clues to these by the storyguide. There is also mention of his amica Mara, see *Researching the Cursewood* later.

Commanding Spirits, by Pholus of Tytalus. Tractatus on Magic Lore, Quality 9

Unravel That Which is Cast, by Dairmuid of Ex Miscellanea, Tractatus on Vim, Quality 10

ARTIFACTS

Scattered carelessly among the debris and shrubs covering the remains of Regulus lie his enchanted devices. As the area of his demise retreated into a Magic regio the artifacts never fell into the hands of the infernalists and were preserved from natural decay.

Regulus' Tablet of Power

A tablet of sandwiched cypress and cedar wood, inscribed with ink of Hermes, and set with a star ruby. The item was Regulus' talisman and is invested with 32 pawns of vis. 11 pawns of space are used.

Master of the Magic Spirit

ReVi 41

Pen 42, 24 uses/day

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

Activated by running the finger along the word "dominate" on the tablet.

The effect forces an Airy Spirit to do the caster's bidding.

(Effect: Base 5, +2 Voice; +5 for 24 uses/day, +21 for Penetration)

Binding the Magic Spirit

ReVi 51

Pen 32, 24 uses/day

R: Touch, D: Ring, T: Circle

Activated by running the finger along the word "imprison" on the tablet.

The effect binds a being affiliated with the Magic realm within a circle touched at activation, provided it has Might no higher than 30.

(Effect: Base Effect; +5 for 24 uses/day, +16 for Penetration)

Regulus' Staff of Unraveling

Staff of elm wood, inset with a piece of basalt and a magnet, inscribed with ink of Hermes. The item was opened as a compound device with 16 pawns of vis, and all space is used.

Unravelling the Fabric of Aquam

PeVi 40

Pen 0, 24 uses/day

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

Activated by pointing at target, and moving the tip in an up-and-down motion while saying "aquam."

The effect cancels an Aquam effect with a level no higher than 45 + stress die.

(Effect: Base Effect, +2 Voice; +5 for 24 uses/day)

The staff holds three similar effects for

Wyzwanie, The Spirit of the Cursed Wood

Magic Might: 40 (Herbam), Might Pool 85 (due to Hibernation power)

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

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Size: n/a

Season: Autumn

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit, Daimon; Ways of the Forest; Improved Characteristics x4; Driven, Proud

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Focus Power (x8), Greater Power, Ritual Power (x6); Reduced Abilities (x4)

Personality Traits: Driven +3, Pained +3, Proud +2

Reputation: None

Abilities: Area Lore: Cursewood 6 (geography), Awareness 6 (intruders), Infernal Lore 4 (demons), Latin 5 (Hermetic), Local Language 5 (oratory), Magic Lore 6 (spirits), Magic Theory 1 (Vim), Teaching 5 (Magic Lore)

Powers:

Hibernation, 15 points, Init -20, Vim: The spirit remains completely inactive for a year, and the 15 points spent on this power are added to its Might Pool for the first year out of hibernation. Its Might Pool may exceed its permanent Might score and may be saved up from year to year, but is limited to a maximum of 3 times Might. Thanks to the dark legends about the wood, Wyzwanie has lain dormant for many years before the events of this chapter occur. (Ritual Power x3).

Grant Deficiency, 5 points, Init -10, Mentem: Until the next sunrise or sunset, the target of this power forgets some skill he possesses, effectively halving it. This can be an Ability or a Hermetic Form. The spirit typically targets an important ability like Survival or Leadership to make the trek harder or hamper warriors in combat (No Hermetic equivalent: Ritual Power).

Presence, 0 points, constant, Imaginem: The spirit can sense all places of its domain at the same time. (Greater Power).

Ruler of Nature, variable cost, Init 0-Might cost. Aquam, Auram, Herbam, or

Terram: Duplicates any non-ritual spell pertaining to weather, natural waterways (no unnatural liquids), trees and plants (not processed plant products), or earth and stone (not metals or worked stone) of no more than 9th magnitude. Cost is equal to magnitude. (4 Focus Powers x2).

Vis: If killed, 8 pawns of Herbam vis in the form of moss; this is vis sordida if the Infernal aura is still present.

Appearance: Wyzwanie is the consciousness of the entire Cursewood, but the daimon has created an aspect of itself taking the shape of a huge, overgrown boulder of about 30 cubic paces. Inside this is where the Infernal artifact is kept. Killing the aspect or forcing Wyzwanie to retreat to the Magic Realm effectively releases the demonic artifact from his protection. This is likely to be bad.

DEALING WITH WYZWANIE

If the challenges are met, and the player magi gain entrance to the central regio of the Cursewood, Wyzwanie tells his story. He is the spiritual embodiment of a dark and hostile forest and hence does not have any other motivations. The strong demonic influence torments him, and he periodically succumbs to his pain and anguish by creating powerful effects, but for now he will not hurt the characters as long as they are inside the regio. All those getting this far is respected for their determination and strength, and he dares to ask them to remove and dispose of the Infernal artifact. He does not know how to destroy the artifact, only that it needs to be cleansed of its evil. Player magi who research the demon Terentia and demonic artifacts in general may roll Intelligence + Infernal or Dominion Lore versus an Ease Factor of 12 for a season of study with an appropriate selection of books. Success leads to a solution, described later.

Wyzwanie negotiates no further as long as the artifact remains, and until an

agreement is reached even those who have spoken with him suffer the challenges again if they return to the Cursewood. Should the Infernal taint and artifact be removed, Wyzwanie is finally at peace. He still follows his nature as a hostile forest and as such the "curse" remains. However, clever player magi can negotiate for free passage for themselves, thus opening up a secluded and protected location with many valuable resources. As the friendship with Wyzwanie evolves, provided the magi visiting him or even residing in his woods are respectful of the dangerous forest, the daimon can be the source of many boons to the magi. Depending on which resources are available and desirable to the troupe, he may tell them how to learn Nature Lore (see *Guardians of the Forests*).

CULT OF WYZWANIE

Player magi who manage to free Wyzwanie from the torment of the infernal device can communicate with him. While he has no interest in any worshipers or reverence he wishes his forest to be kept safe and rewards both loyalty and those he finds worthy. Regulus was working on a sort of Mystery Cult using the mechanics for Walking the Path from *Guardians of the Forests* (pages 35-40), by communing with Wyzwanie. The character makes a Sacrifice (by accepting a Flaw), finishes a Quest (by serving the spirit in some way), in order to gain the Fruit (a Virtue). The strong presence of natural elements suggests Affinities or Puissance with Auram, Aquam, Herbam or Terram as being appropriate, as well as Major or Minor Foci with these elements or with spirits. Also appropriate are Ways of the Forest or a variant of Elemental Magic (*ArM5*, page 41) affecting Herbam rather than Ignem, called Nature Wizard. Quests all pertain to cleansing the forest of Infernal corruption, keeping it safe, or seeking out and destroying Terentia's followers.

the Forms of Auram, Herbam, and Terram respectively, with the same levels and parameters. These are activated with different movements of the tip, while saying the name of the relevant Form.

SIGNIFICATOS

A *Significato* is a magically occurring phenomenon which magi may utilize in their study of magic. They are described in detail in *Covenants*, page 101. Magical creatures or events in nature can grant insight from

study alone. Resolve this as vis study with the event substituting for a number of pawns of vis equal to the magnitude of Might of creatures involved. In the Cursewood, events and places in nature — like a tree hit by lightning or a rock splitting from frost — have an effective Might in the range of 10-20 due to the



magic spirits inhabiting the object, equivalent to 2–4 pawns of vis for study. At least one Significato can be found for each of Auram, Aquam, Herbam and Terram; clues to these are found in the journal of Regulus. Any individual Significato may only be studied once per year, and Wyzwanie allows the use of only one each season. As long as the Infernal aura is dominant, the Significatos count as vis sordida, as explained earlier. Unless an agreement is reached with Wyzwanie, the Significatos can't be used, since the curse actively repels intruders and makes study impossible.

Variant: Dark Faerie Aura

The one change here is that the heinous acts performed by Terentia's diabolical minions merely resulted in a modest Infernal aura. This quickly disappeared again after the diabolists left and no longer indulged in sinful rituals. At this point, a dark faerie prince called Schwarzholtz saw his opportunity. He was originally a powerful force in the neighboring valley who tormented the locals and gained vitality from the countermeasures they took against him. As Wyzwanie grew in strength and increased the effects of his curse to protect the Infernal device, the few locals who had ventured here simply stopped coming. As the diabolists left, Schwarzholtz moved in

and played the part of demonic taint. He can send out ravens to confuse travelers and the closest residents and lead them astray to terrorize once they set foot in his domain. The Cursewood is, in fact, under the control of a moderately powerful Faerie aura, but faerie powers and illusions result in the same effects as the Malevolent Infernal aura in the form of added botch dice, added damage, and penalties to Abilities and magic. These effects need to penetrate and use the Might of Schwarzholtz. A storyguide using this option may need *Realms of Power: Faerie* in order to better manage the mechanics of faeries and in order to design Schwarzholtz's powers. Schwarzholtz is equal in power to Wyzwanie. He manages to fool the genius loci into thinking there is still an Infernal taint, to maintain his continued torment.

Variant: Wyzwanie as a Faerie

Wyzwanie could instead be a powerful faerie. The rest of the story, including the Infernal taint, is kept unchanged. This would result in his domain in the woods being a powerful Faerie regio rather than a Magic one, and cleansing the area of the infernal corruption results in a dark faerie forest. The vis sources found here are faerie-pected as well; however, the Significatos are universal and usable

by magi with no changes. Wyzwanie as a faerie is not evil but certainly malicious, and his challenges make sense, since the precautions and suffering of intruders are what feed him vitality. The very nature of faeries means that Wyzwanie cannot be dealt with in the same way as if he were a daimon, since faeries want and need interaction with humans. Wyzwanie has faerie powers close to what the daimon-version has, but the storyguide may find *Realms of Power: Faeries* very useful with regard to the concept of vitality, among other things. The prospect of owning a faerie forest with faerie resources is likely less appealing to most Houses, but would be a great boon to Merinita magi. Regulus was interested in winning challenges and gaining power, so any powerful creature would do.

Researching the Cursewood

Although no living person has been to the place, it is not beyond dedicated researchers to find some information. Once Regulus' name is known, what little is recorded about him can be found. His home covenant — be it the player magi's or one of their parentes' — holds records and information. Covenant rolls can be studied, correspondence can be read, and magi descended from his contemporaries can be interviewed.

REGULUS' HOME COVENANT

Regulus' sodales in his home covenant know that he found something very challenging and potentially valuable. Returning gravely wounded after a scouting mission he started dedicated preparations. There is mention of him saying that he had placed stones with his mark in several places to signify areas of his interest, in order to discourage others from interfering. He spent years studying Arts and arcane lore, researching spells, and building devices before setting off again. The story gets somewhat thin here, as official records reveal no more. But the occasional mention in a magus' personal

journal or a note sent to a trusted amica reveals that he apparently succeeded, at least in the first stage, and spent some years in this new place. He officially moved his sanctum from the covenant to parts unknown. Rumor had it that he was looking for followers to form a new covenant. And after this, he was never again heard from.

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Official House Mercere records list him as giving his home covenant as the place to leave messages for him, under the condition that he was personally responsible for col-

lecting them. House Guernicus notes him officially entering the Order upon completing his Gauntlet and swearing the Code. Considering the fact that he was Tylalus, there are few remarks about him in legal documents. Apparently, he reported having fought some diabolists and something about the demon Terentia, but there was no suspicion of him handling the situation in any improper way. Casual remarks label him as having Vim as a special interest. Records among his fellow Tylali wisely enough contained no information about his activities or whereabouts, but they confirm his identity, history, and interest in Vim and spirits.

Corrupted Trees

A corrupted tree does not fight using the usual rules. The tree waits for an opportune moment when a lone individual is distracted, just below its branches, or even resting up against the trunk. It then makes a surprise attack to grapple or immobilize the victim and proceed to digest his body. Content with one victim, most trees try to fend off other people by striking them with its branches. The multiple branches do not attack as a group, and only one branch attacks each victim at a time. Due to the sheer size and toughness of the tree, only heavy, sharp-edged weapons stand a chance of hurting it. Living wood counts as "barely flammable," requiring Ignem spells of base 10, or fire damage of +15. The storyguide needs to use common sense regarding other spell attacks. *Crystal Dart* works, but *Piercing Shaft of Wood* can't hurt it. Most of its attacks cause Deprivation from lack of air, for which rules can be found in *ArM5*, page 180.

Corrupted Oak, Willow, or Pine

Infernal Might: 10 (Herbam)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -6, Com -3, Str +5, Stm +5, Dex -2, Qik -3
Size: +5
Ferocity Score: 1 (3)
Virtues and Flaws: Ferocity, Corrupted Tree
Personality Traits: Bloodthirsty +6, Patient +3 (+6 for Pine)
Combat, Oak:
Grapple with branch: Init n/a*, Attack +16*, Defense +7, Damage +10
Strike with branch (4 in total): Init +5, Attack +10, Defense +7, Damage +10
 * As an ambush the oak always

strikes first and has a large bonus to the attack roll due to surprise. If a grappled victim is not freed within three rounds, the victim ends up in a cavity in the tree which closes and slowly suffocates him. Causing a Heavy Wound or higher hacks the trunk open and frees the victim.

Combat, Willow:

Grapple with branch: Init n/a*, Attack +19*, Defense +7, Damage n/a (only strangling)

Strike with branch (12 in total): Init +9, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +7

* As an ambush the willow always strikes first and has a large bonus to the attack roll due to surprise. The grapple is with one or more thin, whip-like branches in a stranglehold across the throat. The tree lifts the victim off the ground, choking him. Barbs sprout from the branches dealing +5 damage per round Soaked only by Stamina and modified by Wound Penalties. The rest of the branches are used to keep other potential victims at bay while it drinks the blood.

Combat, Pine:

Spray of Sap: Init n/a*, Attack +19*, Defense +5, Damage n/a (only choking and immobilization)

Strike with branch (6 in total): Init +9, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +7

* As an ambush the pine hits automatically. When a potential victim moves below its branches the tree sprays him from behind with sap to pin him to the ground and choke him and drops a thick layer of pine needles to hide the victim. The victim can't breathe and is immobilized when the sap hardens. To move in any way during a

round, the victim needs to make a Strength - Encumbrance roll. The Ease Factor is 6 in the first round, and 9 in the second, but increases to 12 on the third and later rounds. Following the initial attack the Corrupted Pine stands motionless and relies on not being identified as the source of the attack. As it looks like all the other pines growing around it a stress roll of Perception + Awareness against an Ease Factor of 15 is required to identify it. If attacked it defends itself with its branches. The Corrupted Pine feeds on the decomposing body with its large network of roots.

Powers:

Animated Branches, 0 points, Herbam. The tree can move its branches around, using them as weapons.

Soak: +12 Oak and Pine, +8 for Willow. The only useful mundane weapons are heavy, sharp weapons such as axes.

Fatigue: Tireless

Wound Penalties: 0 (1-10), -1 (11-20), -3 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+). Dealing a Heavy Wound renders one branch non-functional (a Medium Wound is sufficient to destroy a branch on a Willow). Once all branches are destroyed, or the tree is Incapacitated, it is unable to attack or defend itself. It recovers fully over the course of a few weeks unless completely killed.

Vis: Each tree destroyed leaves behind 2 pawns of Herbam vis sordida.

Appearance: The corrupted tree is a twisted, wilted and eerie version of its type, but most other trees in the Cursewood also look like this.



REGULUS' AMICA

As an extra clue, a descendant of a trusted amica of Regulus sends material to the player magi. Regulus had corresponded with Mara, a young ex Miscellanea maga whom he sought to recruit for his project of a new covenant and Mystery Cult. Regulus sent her a book written by him, as mentioned earlier. Intended to help her find her way, it also offered cryptic clues hinting of the existence of a powerful spirit residing in the Cursewood, that getting to the goal is a challenge of one's will and determination, and that something of great importance is hidden and protected in the woods. She ventured there once, but her approach was thwarted by the curse. Mara herself produced a book, *Curses and Corruption*, a Tractatus on Area Lore: Cursewood, Quality 8, which was passed down through her lineage but neglected as uninteresting. Once Regulus stopped writing, she gave up on the idea and died a few years later. When Regulus entered the woods he gave Mara his sigil as his proxy, with permission to pass it down to her Hermetic descendants.

THE PRYING MONK

Among the correspondence left behind by Mara is a letter from Regulus mentioning that he scared off a curious monk from a nearby monastery. Anyone with even superficial knowledge of the area or the structure of the local diocese can narrow down this reference to a specific place. It takes some diplomacy and effort from suitably skilled and inoffensive researchers in order to gain access to records. A monk called Franz was traveling the countryside and deviated from his route to investigate rumors of a cursed place. Records say he was assaulted by the very trees and scared off by a ghost. He returned some years later (the dates show this to be shortly after the demise of Regulus) and reports the place being even more cursed than before. His observations are recognized by anyone possessing Infernal Lore to suggest the place is tainted by a Malevolent aura. They refer to the book *De Operationes Daemonum Dialogos* by

Michael Psellos (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 41), originally in Greek, which he hid behind the bookcases. This particular copy is a translation into Latin and is a Summa in Infernal Lore Level 5 Quality 10. Reading this book gives clues as to how the Infernal aura originated and spread and how it may be removed again.

Hooks for Using the Cursewood Again

The severity of the curse makes it likely that the first attempt by the magi will fail, and they return home to prepare better for the second attempt. Disposing of the infernal artifact is most likely not attempted the first time around, also requiring a subsequent return. Of course, the player magi might already have decided to form a new covenant, move an existing one, or establish a chapter house there.

Researchers Have Hit Paydirt

Survivors of the first expedition have returned home to recuperate and are curious about the Cursewood and Regulus. If any information about this is shared in Hermetic circles, new avenues of information may open up, fellow magi or academics coming forth with help. Researching the history or geography of the place leads to knowledge that makes a second expedition more likely to succeed. Books on Area Lore: Cursewood (see *Researching the Cursewood*, earlier) are highly useful. Reading these tells the magi to prepared for withstanding supernatural effects pertaining to weather, earth, water, and trees. Theories about the Infernal aura and how to suppress the effects are also valuable knowledge. After reviewing the new information, and armed with experience from the last foray, intrepid magi can prepare in a more dedicated manner. They have a better idea of what

arcane secrets and resources can be found and can even work on restoring the woods to a place of magic.

Chasing Rivals

Even though the magi were careful to not share any important facts with anyone else about the first expedition, known rivals or other opportunistic and supernaturally skilled individuals (Hermetic or exotic as best fits the saga) have found out something. The rivals are looking for the infernal artifact, ignorant of its exact nature. Not only are they mounting a sizable expedition to the Cursewood is, but one of the grogs from the previous expedition is missing. This should get the minds of the magi stirring. What do the rivals know? What do they want? Are they sufficiently skilled and well-prepared to conquer the Cursewood? Are they going to discover great magical secrets and in a sense steal these, leaving the player magi with nothing more than the scars from the first expedition? The player magi need to hurry if they want to beat their rivals to the goal. Alternatively, the storyguide can arrange for rumors of the rivals' preparations to reach the player magi in advance in order to give them a season or two to prepare.

Bringing Criminals to Justice

Magnus the Quaesitor approaches the magi who are veterans of the trip to the Cursewood. Even if little information has been shared with the Order, he knows at least the location and the cursed nature of the place. He was recently working on a case of suspected diabolism practiced by a Hermetic magi and her infernalist cohorts. A Hoplite on their tracks last reported them as taking refuge in the Cursewood, from where they have failed to return. Magnus asks the magi to do their duty and help bring the criminals to justice. Since one can only guess what vile deeds they are up to in the infernal place, time is of the essence. If the player magi succeed in convincing Magnus that they need time to prepare, he insists they send scouts to keep an eye on things and make sure the criminals don't get away. Even if the diabolists have all perished in the woods, he feels obliged to find their earthly remains, summon the ghosts and interrogate them to make sure the diabolical plot does not reach further. Some characters may be suspicious of a Quaesitor so bent on entering a cursed forest to summon Infernal ghosts, of course.

Destroying the Infernal Artifact

One of the Infernal artifact's powers is the ability to reform if destroyed or to move to another physical form, although this takes time. It can be hidden under the deepest seas, entombed below ground, or tossed into a volcano, but Terentia is forever drawn to it. These are only temporary solutions which open up further stories. For true and permanent disposal the artifact must be taken to a truly holy place, and only a completely pious person can destroy it. In game mechanical terms it needs to be taken to a cathedral or other place with a Dominion aura of at least 5. Here, an ordained clergyman possessing True Faith can, after hours of prayer and ceremony, destroy the artifact by expenditure of a Faith Point. The artifact need have no powers that can affect the characters; maybe only a demon can use it. It can, of course, be given powers if that suits the story the troupe wants to tell.

The Farne Islands

The Farne Islands are a group of islands lying a few miles off the coast of Northeast England. The number visible and their size varies greatly according to the state of the tide, but it is commonly reckoned that there are 28 islands in all.

The name of the islands derives from Old English *farena ealande*, the "island of the travelers." This echoes its role as a destination for pilgrims; *farend* means "traveler" or "pilgrim," and a *far* is a journey; constructions that are still present in Modern English in terms such as "wayfarer" and "fare forth." Religious travelers aren't the only ones attracted to the islands; the Farnes are a haven for all sorts of beings who use these islands as a temporary or permanent home.

During the spring and summer, the islands are home to a large number of seabirds. As the birds leave in the fall, seals haul themselves out of the sea to occupy the low lying beaches; the cows give birth and suckle their young while the bulls compete for their affections and build their harems. The pups mature at the end of winter, and all the seals return to the water.

All four Supernatural realms have touched these islands. Closest to humanity is the Divine realm, represented by a hermitage that has been the site of miracles. Further out, the faeries dwell on the legends told in the nearby villages. Further still is the haven of the travelers from the Magic realm who migrate with the mundane seabirds. Last to arrive and last to depart are the bird-shaped spirits of the storms, who persist until mid fall and wrack the coast with foul weather. Finally, deep in the North Sea is a prison for the demons that used to haunt these shores.

While the islands described here use the names and legends of islands in the Stonehenge Tribunal, they can still be used if your saga is set in a different locale. Small clusters of coastal islands can be found all around Mythic Europe, and advice has been provided for changing the location of these islands.

Myths, Legends, History, and Rumors

The islands have never had permanent inhabitants; at least, not human ones. Since as long as can be remembered the islands have been avoided by locals who ply their trade on the sea. None are of sufficient size to support even a family, and the tides around the islands are too treacherous for regular visits to the mainland. The islands could be harvested for birds' eggs and meat, not just of the birds but also of the seals who frequent these waters, but superstitious dread of the islands keeps people away.

The islands are purported to be inhabited by demons. When the wind blows in from the sea, it brings with it hellish screams. Just before storms, the screams are louder, and the locals believe that the demons summon the wind and rain. They pray to Saint Cuthbert, famous inhabitant of these islands, for protection against the demons' wrath.

The islands have occasionally been the temporary home to people. Shipwrecks are not uncommon on these demon-haunted seas, and survivors sometimes have to spend days

or weeks stranded on the islands before they are rescued. If they are lucky, they find themselves on one of the inner islands. Exiles have occasionally used the islands — mostly Inner Farne — as a temporary home, but, like the occasional religious ascetic seeking to emulate Saint Cuthbert, rarely last long in such an unforgiving landscape.

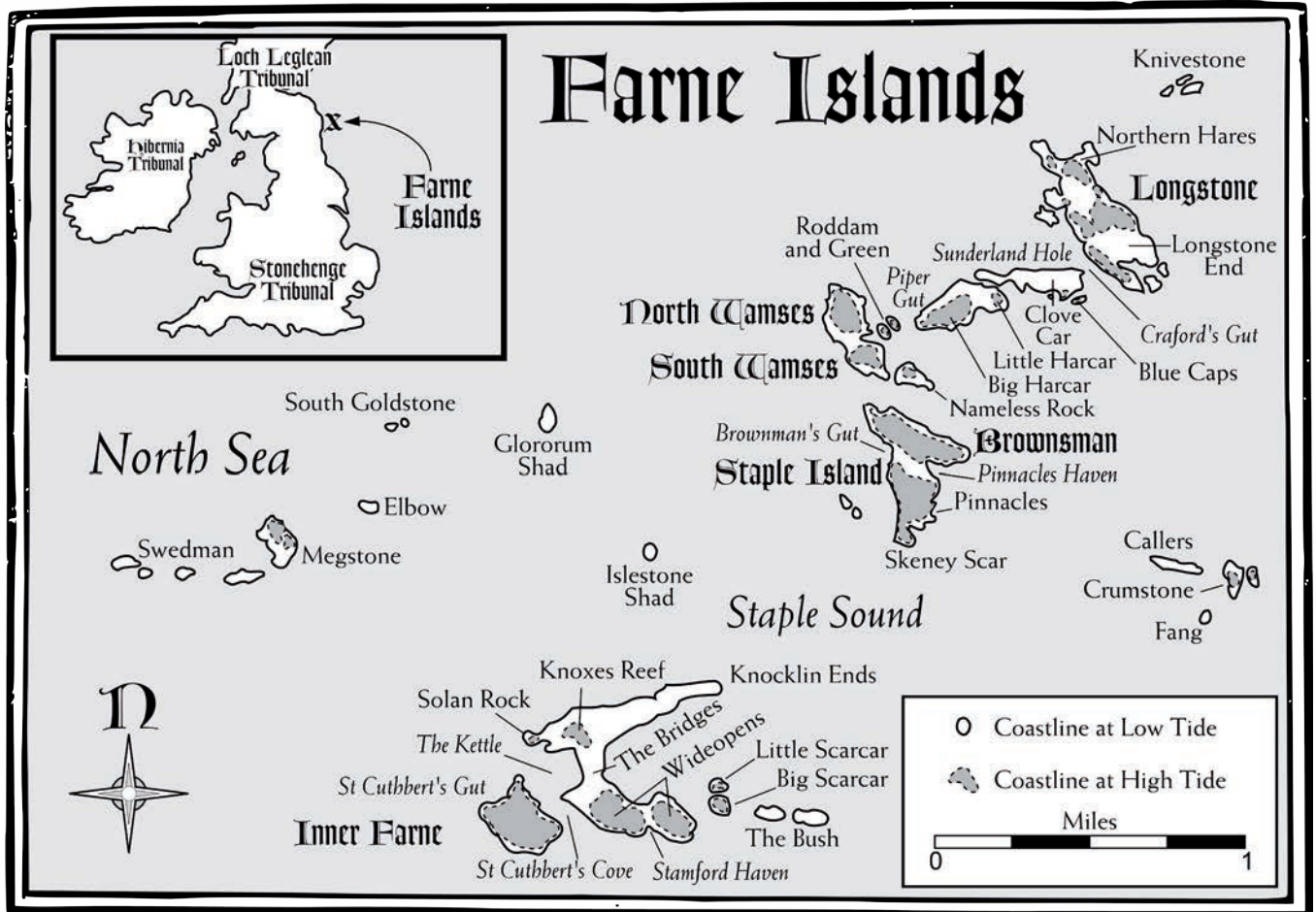
A Mystical Archipelago

The 28 Farne Islands are part of the county of Northumberland in northern England. Seven miles up the coast is Holy Island, home to Lindisfarne Priory, famed throughout Mythic Europe for the quality of its illuminated scriptures.

The islands are divided into two main groups: the inner islands that lie just 1½ miles offshore, and the outer islands separated from the inner group by Staple Sound, which is about a mile wide. There are a few isolated rocks that fall into neither of these groups.

Northumberland

The northernmost county of the kingdom of England, Northumberland has an unsavory reputation in England. Its people are seen as rough and quarrelsome, speak an unintelligible dialect of English, and are in perpetual conflict with the clans of the Scottish borders. This reputation is not wholly unfounded, but Northumbrians are also brave, loyal, and generous. Northum-



berland is a troubled land; if it is not being invaded by the armies of the Scottish kings, then it is being invaded by the king of England seeking to quash the rebellious noble class. Some of its many castles have been destroyed and rebuilt four or five times. The county has lacked an earl for the past sixty years since they have proved too troublesome to the English Crown. Instead, the county is administered by the king's sheriff at Newcastle.

The Farne Islands are in the very north of the county, close to the Scottish border. The islands are of little interest to the king; they have no strategic importance, and do not generate any income. However, they are part of the wardship of an important English fortress, Bamburgh Castle.

BAMBURGH CASTLE

This castle was an ancient stronghold of the Britons prior to the Romans, and the capitol of both the Saxon kingdom of Bernicia, and its successor Northumbria. Saint Cuthbert's choice of a hermitage on Inner Farne was quite deliberate; the king in Bamburgh would see the island every morning from his castle, and be reminded of the potent symbol of God that held the hearts and minds of the Northumbrian people.

The current constable of the castle is John Wascelin, who has nominal suzerainty over the Farne Islands. Bamburgh Castle is particularly well-garrisoned; the Scottish border is only 15 miles away, and assaults against English strongholds have been common in the last few decades, as the Scottish king tries to assert his claim over Northumberland. Bam-

burgh possesses several siege ballistas and employs its own master balister to operate them.

Getting to the Islands

The communities of the coastal region rely on fishing to make a living, and a fisherman will be reluctant to give up a day's work to ferry a group of strangers around. Offering coins in recompense is not much of an incentive; his family can't eat silver, and most rural economies only use hard cash to pay manorial fines and feudal dues, relying on barter to obtain daily necessities. That said, a sailor might be persuaded if the incentive is high enough. The sailors of the Northumberland coast are very superstitious, a character trait that is only enhanced by the presence of The Gift. They

What You've Heard

Locals get a +3 bonus to their Area Lore: Northumberland rolls for what they know about the Farne Islands.

WHAT IS KNOWN BY ALL

The Farne Islands lie a few miles off the Northumberland coast.

Saint Cuthbert used to live on the largest of the Farne Islands in the seventh century.

WIDELY KNOWN

Saint Cuthbert drove out the demons who had been living on Inner Farne; some say they took up residence on the outer islands, but have moved back since the saint left.

Local fishermen ply the waters between the coast and the inner islands; they rarely enter Staple Sound, and never approach the Outer Farnes, which are believed to be haunted by demons.

A boat can be hired from the fishing village of Seahouses and the nearby Bamburgh castle has a small ship, but the constable of the castle will want to know why people are visiting the islands.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

Two farmers claim to have found a tunnel that connects the Wideopens to the mainland; they stumbled upon it by accident one night. Few believe them, since they have been unable to find it again.

Fishing boats can find safe harbor in The Kettle (between Inner Farne and Knoxes Reef), regardless of the fierceness of the storm.

The waters around the Farne Islands are the haunt of selkies: faeries who take the shape of seals. Selkie men are skilled lovers, and can cure a woman of barrenness. Selkie women are incomparable in their beauty; a man must hide her seal-skin so that she cannot return to the water or he will never see her again.

LOST SECRETS

There is an ancient magical power connected to some of the islands that seeks to sink ships

Island Terminology

The names of the islands contain several elements derived from Old English words now obsolete. A *car* is simply a rock, particularly one isolated from others and rising out of the sea. A *shad* is a bank, usually one posing a risk to ships. A *gut* is a channel or strait too narrow to admit a fishing boat.

watch the sky and local birds for omens, and can be spooked by the slightest irregularity. They avoid unlucky topics by using word substitutions; in particular the number four, the color green, women, and priests are all taboo. Pigs are particularly unlucky; if a sailor sees a pig, he refuses to go to sea for a whole day. If someone utters the word aboard a ship, he will be tipped over the side without a second thought; if such a creature has to be mentioned at all it is called something else, such as "the thing."

The constable at Bamburgh has boats permanently harbored for the purpose of travel, but he won't lend them to a group of characters unless they possess some sort of authority, and an explanation as to their business on the islands that form part of his wardship. Of course, such obstacles to obtaining a boat can be overcome with magic, theft, or by owning one's own boat.

The Inner Islands

The group of islands closest to land are less obviously supernatural than those that are further out.

INNER FARNE

Divine aura 2, rising to 4 in the chapel.

The largest of the Farne Islands at 16 acres, Inner Farne (also called "House Island") has straight cliffs rising twenty feet (or more) out of the sea, and with no low-lying land its size is barely affected by the tide. The island offers no harbor except on the north side of the island, in a deep pool called the Kettle. An ancient wooden cross on the cliff top gives sailors a mark to draw them to this harbor. The Kettle is always a haven of calm regardless of the weather, a feature attributable to the colony of Eider Ducks of Virtue (see Inhabitants, later) who swim in the Kettle. Inner Farne has just under five acres of thin but arable land, enough to grow enough food to support one or two people. However, any crops grown here are susceptible to the hordes of birds that flock here from the Outer Farnes.

Inner Farne was occupied for a decade by the hermit Saint Cuthbert before he became a bishop. The island, as well as the neighboring

Wideopens, were occupied by demons prior to his arrival. Cuthbert erected the cross in the Kettle, the only harbor on this rocky island, and the demons were driven out of the Inner Farnes to Megstone (see later).

The saint performed three miracles on the island which made it habitable to him. He made a spring flow, providing fresh water where there was none. He sprinkled the water onto the bare rock, and it became covered in fertile soil. He then sowed this soil with barley out of season and, watered by the spring water, it grew and ripened within a month. He was therefore able to utilize the scant acres of arable land he had been given to provide food for himself all year round. With the assistance of an angel, Saint Cuthbert built a stone hermitage for himself, and later a small chapel, on the west side of the island. In 686, Cuthbert received a vision that his death was near, so he left the island and died three months later. A succession of hermits followed him, most recently Bartholomew, who dwelt at the hermitage from 1150 to 1193 and wrote a book called *Farne Meditations*. There is no hermit currently living on Inner Farne. On Saint Cuthbert's feast day each year a delegation of monks from a nearby monastery brave the North Sea to say mass in the chapel and share in the Eucharist.

Anyone raising a crop of barley on Inner Farne within the span of one month can

Boats and Boating

Exploring the Farne Islands probably requires the use of a boat. This insert is intended to give the basics of obtaining and piloting a small vessel. Rules for larger sea-going vessels can be found in *City & Guild*, page 86.

A small fishing boat of Standard Quality (see *City & Guild*, page 69 for the quality of manufactured goods) costs about five Mythic Pennies per point of Size, and must usually be commissioned from a shipwright. Size is typically +4 to +5, and it has 4 Damage levels (*City & Guild*, page 77). Boats of higher quality have more Damage Levels and are easier to pilot, but are more expensive. A ship of Size +4 needs a crew of two; double this per additional point of Size. There can be twice as many passengers as crew. Each crew member must have the Profession: Sailor Ability; this Ability is used both to pilot (combined with Dexterity) and navigate (using Intelligence). Planning a voyage that avoids hazards requires an appropriate Area Lore Ability.

A rowing boat of Standard Quality costs about two Mythic Pennies per person it can accommodate, and needs at least one rower per three passengers (or fraction thereof) overall. A boat that can ferry six persons (with two of them rowing) is Size +3 and has 4 Damage levels. Rowing uses the Athletics Ability, which can be used with no score, subject to the usual penalty (*ArM5*, page 62). Piloting rolls are made with Strength + Athletics; if there is more than one rower, use their average Strength

coupled with the designated pilot's Athletics. Profession: Sailor is still needed to navigate, and Area Lore for charting a route. Fatigue checks must be made after every hour of rowing in calm seas, every half hour in choppy waters, and every quarter of an hour in stormy weather.

To operate any sort of boat requires piloting rolls, using either Profession: Sailor or Athletics, depending on the type of boat. Normally, just one individual makes the roll regardless of the size of the vessel; this is usually the person in charge. Simply having the appropriate Ability permits the basic operation of moving the boat around, piloting rolls are only needed for unusual conditions such as deviating from the chosen course or attaining a given speed (such as in a pursuit). The Ease Factor for any rolls depends on the weather: mild wind or rain requires an Ease Factor of 3, a squall requires an Ease Factor of 9, an average storm an Ease Factor of 12, and a tempest an Ease Factor of 15 or more. Modifiers to this roll include:

SITUATION	MODIFIER
Shoddy Quality* vessel	-3
Superior Quality* vessel	+1
Excellent Quality* vessel	+Craft Ability/3, rounded up
Crew reduced by fewer than a quarter	-1
Crew reduced by more than a quarter but fewer than half	-3

Crew reduced by more than a half but fewer than three quarters -6

Crew reduced by more than three quarters can't succeed

* *City & Guild*, page 69

A failed boat handling roll means that the vessel fails to respond to the desired command, and continues in the direction and speed it was traveling before. A botched boat handling roll imposes undue strain on the vessel's structure, forcing an immediate Stress check (*City & Guild*, page 77) to avoid damage. A Stress check is normally a stress die + modifiers against an Ease Factor of 15; a typical modifier is the Ability score (such as Profession: Sailor) of someone trained in the use of the object.

Failure to control a boat might result in a collision with an island, sandbar, or other vessel. The pilot must make a Stress check to avoid inflicting damage on the vessel. If another boat was hit, the pilot of that vessel also needs to make a Stress check. Failure results in the boat losing a Damage level. Damage levels remain lost until repaired, and impose no penalties on the operation of the vessel. However, boats with no Damage levels remaining are breached; at this point the vessel begins to sink. Boats with no hold (like rowing boats) tend to break apart immediately; those with a hold might take a few rounds or even minutes to entirely founder.

harvest Creo vis from the grain (the amount must be chosen to suit the saga). However, neither the soil nor the spring retain the saint's miracle, so the characters must find another way to ripen the grain supernaturally fast. They also need to protect the crop from the rapacious attention of magical birds from the outer island.

THE WIDEOPENS

No aura.

These twinned islands have the deepest soil on the islands, although there is insuf-

ficient area to make agricultural use of this bounty. Instead, the soil of the Wideopens is used to inter the bodies of shipwrecked sailors. Burial in the graveyard of the local church is reserved for members of the parish, and when bodies are washed up after a wreck, it is unlikely that the home parish of the deceased is known. They are therefore taken by boat with the parish priest to the Wideopens, and buried. Such a burial satisfies the church's requirements but does not constitute a Church burial, and bodies interred on the Wideopens are vulnerable to necromancy and spirit magic.

A channel called Saint Cuthbert's Gut lies

between West Wideopen and Inner Farne. Compared to some of the other channels between the islands, this is a wide one, and navigable except in bad weather. It is over 300 paces between the open sea and The Kettle (see Inner Farne, earlier), and those caught within it in stormy weather risk being crushed against the cliffs on either side of the gut; a ship handling roll must be made every 100 paces in all but the calmest of weathers, and a failed roll incurs a stress roll to avoid damaging the vessel against the cliffs.

There is a local rumor of a tunnel leading between the Wideopens and the mainland. This tunnel does in fact exist: it opens onto

Story Seed: The Drowned Dead

One night on All Hallow's Eve, the walking dead start to emerge from the tunnel. They walk with a lumbering, lurching gait, stink of rot and fish, and sea water constantly spills from their gaping maws. These revenants are the corpses of sailors buried on the Wideopens, reanimated through some dread magic. The characters need to discover what agency has disturbed the rest of the dead — and guided them through the regio — before they overwhelm the villages of the Northumbrian coast.

East Wideopen, but the entrance is choked with soil. The other end appears to be a sinkhole on the headland directly opposite the island. The interior of the tunnel lies wholly within a regio with a Magic aura of 2, with either entrance leading characters into the regio. On rare occasions (as determined by the storyguide) the regio stands wide open allowing anyone to enter the tunnel, this has led to the stories about it.

THE BRIDGES, SOLAN ROCK, KNOXES REEF, KNOCKLIN ENDS

No aura

At low tide, these features join with the Wideopens into a single crescent-shaped island facing east; at high tide only Solan Rock and Knoxes Reef remain above water. On the morning of Saint Cuthbert's feast day (20th March), one can find collections of foam and spume that constitute two pawns of Aquam vis washed up in this bay.

BIG AND LITTLE SCARCAR

No aura

These two pillars of rock stand proud from the water. There is no easy way up the cliffs of the Scarcars, although some foolhardy souls make the climb in search of seabird eggs or to catch puffins for roasting. A small boat (no bigger than Size +4) can be moored



in the narrow gut between Big and Little Scarcar, and be kept safe from all but the most violent of storms.

THE BUSH

Divine aura 1

Saint Cuthbert's legend has it that he sat on the easternmost of these paired islands and meditated for a whole year, oblivious to the tide that completely submersed the islands and himself. The eider ducks brought him food, and he drunk only rainwater.

A character finding himself stranded on the island can be sustained by limpets and mussels, and can drink rainwater, and suffer no ill effects for the ordeal. Even in the worst of weathers he need not fear exposure if his faith is strong enough, nor need he fear the twice daily inundation of the island. If he prays during the hour that the island is totally immersed (requiring a Stamina + Concentration roll of Ease Factor 6) then he can survive

without air to breathe. Spending a whole year here can form part of a Test of Faith that can lead to an increase in a character's Faith Score (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 59).

The Outer Islands

The outer islands are home to several supernatural creatures. Those closer to shore — Staple and Brownsman Islands, and the Wamses — are faerie in nature, whereas those farther out are the domain of magical creatures.

STAPLE ISLAND

Faerie aura 2, rising to 5 in the undersea grottoes

Staple Island is home to a selkie king (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 91) who holds court in undersea caves close to the island. The waters around Staple and Brownsman Island are frequented by grey seals; they can be seen hauled out onto the rocks during

the birthing season, and the mating season that follows immediately after. The constable at Bamburgh has imposed strict laws forbidding hunting the seals, and poachers who disobey those laws might get a nasty surprise, since some of them are actually selkies in their seal form.

Many years ago the selkie king became infatuated with a mortal woman from Seahouses. He courted her for months. He was honest about his nature right from the beginning, such was his desire for her, and this was the cause of her great reluctance. She eventually relented, and was taken off to Staple Island with her royal husband. She lived on the island for many years, spending high tide on the island with her husband, but joining him beneath the waves at low tide. She gave him many children: some selkies, some seals, and some humans with selkie blood. She was eventually killed in a tragic accident; during a storm she was trying to rescue a seal pup from drowning and was swept off the beach by a wave and dashed against the rocks. Her body washed up on her village's beach. In honor of his wife's memory, any mortal who jumps into the sea at Skeney Car at the southernmost tip of Staple Island is immediately brought safely to the selkie king's court. This guarantees no special favor with the king, but at the least he grants an audience. The selkies and Osgood (see Crumstone, later) know of this tradition, as do a few locals who possess the Faerie Lore Ability.

The selkie king hid his name from others to grant himself more power. If he is ever killed, his hidden name allows him to reform. Unfortunately for him, Brown Wullie (see Brownsman Island) has stolen the name, and is holding it to ransom.

A character with Selkie Blood (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 109) could be descended from the king or one of his subjects. The villagers of the coastal villages know that selkies frequent the waters, and that a man can obtain a faerie wife by stealing her seal-skin when she comes ashore and takes human form. Women can gain selkie husbands by casting their blood into the ocean. Humans should be warned that while beautiful, selkies make

poor spouses. Male selkies are inconstant and faithless; females desire nothing more than to regain their seal skins and return to the water.

BROWNSMAN ISLAND

Faerie aura 2

This island is united with Staple Island at low water, but separated at high tide by Brownsman's Gut. Brownsman Island is occupied by a small group of six selkies who have been exiled from the king's court on Staple Island. They are in open rebellion against the king; they steal from his fishing grounds, mate with his females, and generally cause a lot of nuisance. The selkie king is unable to defeat his rivals once and for all because Brown Wullie, the leader of the band, has stolen the king's name and keeps it hidden somewhere on Brownsman Island. The name is concealed in a clever manner; the secret of getting it must be tricked from one of his cohorts or Brown Wullie himself.

NORTH AND SOUTH WAMSES AND THE NAMELESS ROCK

Magic aura 3

North and South Wamses are two magical beings fighting for dominance, which they do by changing size. At low tide they are joined at their bases, and dormant. As the tide comes in the Wamses Gut forms between them, and the islands start to swell. North Wamses is large in area but squat; South Wamses is smaller in cross-section but taller than its sister. The two islands expand by tiny amounts; North Wamses trying to get taller, and South Wamses wider. As they stretch and strain, the islands might shake loose boulders or earth, which could be a danger to mariners sailing too close. These discarded pieces of the islands might be of interest to magi, since collectively they generate a pawn of Muto and a pawn of Terram vis each year.

Story Seed: Seal Warfare

The characters might get involved with the conflict between the selkie king and Brown Wullie. Selkie-blooded characters are the easiest to get involved — their faerie parent is a member of one of the camps. However, any characters exploring the islands could come into contact with either selkie leader and be dragged into providing assistance. The selkie king needs to regain control of his name; once he has done this he can go to war against Brown Wullie and reintegrate the rebels into his court. Brown Wullie hasn't yet decided what to do with the king's name, but he is enjoying his freedom from his control. He may even have ambitions to become selkie king.

For an interesting twist, one of the players could take Brown Wullie as his character. This character would have the Faerie Heritage Story Flaw (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 114); and the story of stealing the king's name, hiding it, and eventually being forced to relinquish or assume it becomes part of a plot engi-

neered by the selkie king to support his own story.

THE KING'S NAME

The name of the Selkie King is an insubstantial but audible form of vis currently trapped inside a seashell. Anyone holding the shell to his ear hears the name, and becomes its new receptacle. The name can be spoken just once each time a person becomes the receptacle of the name. If it is spoken out loud, any single person who heard it said becomes the name's new receptacle (chosen at random); no-one else — including the former receptacle — can remember what the name was. Alternatively, a receptacle can whisper the name into another person's ear or into a seashell. The vis can be used by a receptacle or anyone holding the seashell, but doing so destroys the name and the king; anyone with Faerie Lore knows this. There are five pawns of Animal vis residing in the king's name.

Story Seed: Island Tectonics

South Wamses is plotting with the Nameless Rock to its east; if the two were able to join together, then the combined island would be both wider and taller than North Wamses. With each tide, the Nameless Rock is squeezing tiny amounts closer to its conspirator. The characters might be witness to the narrowing of the gut between the islands — indeed, they might get caught in between! If the contest between the sisters is ever settled, the magi may lose their supply of vis, so it is within their interests to keep them competing.

THE WAMSES

Most game statistics are meaningless for describing islands; just the relevant characteristics are given here.

Magic Might: 25 (Terram)

Size: +22

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 10, Greater Power, Ritual Power; Reduced Might x 10

Powers

Orogenesis, 3 points, Init -30, Terram. At the cost of 3 permanent points of Might,

the island gains another hundred cubic paces of rock, a miniscule amount considering its vast size. This Might only regenerates if the island is judged the bigger by an outside agency. CrTe 20 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Size; minimum level 20) Ritual Power (20 levels, -1 Might cost)

The Longest Race, 2 points, Init -28, Terram. With this power the island can heave itself a few paces in any direction. ReTe 30 (Base 2, +1 affect stone, +7 Size) Greater Power (30 levels, -4 Might cost)

The Wamses were designed as Magic Things with a Might of 35, giving them a base Size of +12. Each has 9 points of unspent Magic Qualities. The Nameless Rock is a Magic Thing with Might 30, taking Reduced Might 10 times for a final Might of 20. It has a base Size of +9, but has the Gigantic Magic Quality 11 times for a final Size of +20. It has 3 points of Magic Qualities unspent.

At the storyguide's option they may have some power to communicate with characters; otherwise, characters wishing to talk to them need to invent their own magics.

other islands here, but if examined closely a pattern emerges: the rocks and spires are an elaborate life-sized sculpture of an island rather than a natural feature. Some of the rocks look like fins, or the suckers of an octopus's tentacle, or the swirl of a snake's body, the rocky beaches look like fish scales, and so on. To see these features requires a Perception + Awareness simple roll of against an Ease Factor of 12; the character gets a +3 bonus if someone who has seen the oddities is pointing them out to him. Characters with the Second Sight Ability see the sculptural illusion immediately. Once the effect has been seen, it can't be un-seen, and it appears sinister and threatening.

Big Harcar is a vestige of level 4, and for creatures with a Magic Might aligned to Aquam it acts as a gateway into the Magic Realm. Magi who have studied the Magic Realm may also be able to use the vestige; see *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 22–28 for more details of vestiges, magical travel, and Magic Realm magic. Anyone managing to use the vestige is brought into the presence of the being in the Twilight Void. The entity appears vast, too big for the human mind to fully comprehend. One can only take in a small portion of the being at any time. Its shape cannot be understood any more than one can see the shape of a whole sea from one shore: it has scales, fins, flukes, tentacles, shells, crab-like claws which fit together in defiance of nature. The only sounds it makes is a mournful wordless song, but it can still somehow communicate with lesser beings, alien thoughts crashing into the mind like breakers on a beach.

Osgood (see Crumstone, later) calls the entity Leviathan, and believes it to be the creature mentioned in the first and last books of the Bible. It existed before God parted the waters, and will outlive mankind after Judgment Day. As best as he can make out, it desires the destruction of certain ships — or certain lives — according to some pattern he is incapable of understanding. The motivation behind Leviathan's orders has been left inscrutable; storyguides should decide for themselves what the entity is and what it wants, or else leave it a mystery.

RODDAM AND GREEN

No aura (but see below)

These two rocky pillars rise out of Piper Gut between Big Harcar and the Wamses. They are home to fulmars and gulls and are of little interest. Once per year, Roddam — the islet closest to the Wamses — gains a Magic aura of 1 for three days; during this time the relative size of the two islands is judged (see earlier). This is normally a draw, but if a person is present on Roddam, then he can judge the contest between the islands, and the judge's decision is final, regardless of the truth of the matter. The winning island gifts the judge with a pawn of Intellego vis. This means of gaining vis is known to some of the magical birds, and to the selkies who find the competition between the Wamses amusing.

BIG AND LITTLE HARCAR

Magic aura 2

These two islands join into a single rock at low tide, separated from Clove Car by a channel just twenty paces across. The wide Piper Gut separates Big Harcar from North Wamses.

Big Harcar has been the end of many ships; more vessels have been wrecked on its rocky coast than on any of the other islands. It has a malevolent reputation locally, above and beyond the superstition generated by the islands as a whole. This reputation is wholly deserved, as Big Harcar is a tether to an ancient and powerful being who dwells in the Magic Realm, or more specifically, the Aquam province of the Twilight Void (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 24). The whole island of Big Harcar is the focus of this tether; to the casual observer it looks much like the

CLOVE CAR AND BLUE CAPS

No aura

To those who are unfamiliar with the waters around the islands, it might seem like there is a half mile of clear water between Longstone and the Harcars, especially at high tide. However, Clove Car lurks just below the surface, and by the time a sailor realizes the danger, it is too late. The low lying island with its broken rocky surface can shred the hulls of even the biggest ships, causing them to run aground on Big Harcar.

Craford's Gut is the only safe water between Longstone End and Little Harcar, and it requires a master sailor to navigate the narrow strait.

LONGSTONE AND NORTHERN HARES

Magic aura 3

Named after the long (c. 450 paces) narrow ridge of Longstone End, at low tide this ridge is joined to the rest of Longstone and the Northern Hares to make an island over twenty acres in area. At high tide, the islands form a Z shape, with two bays of shallow water over the submerged rocks. Longstone is a particular favorite of the magical seabirds that nest on these islands due to the Magic aura, and is usually home to a substantial colony of the comical puffins and the eider ducks.

An occasional light is seen from the head of the Northern Hares at night. Often mistaken for a harbor light, the light has been the cause of several wrecks. It may be a natural phenomenon, an *ignis fatuus* (or Fool's Light), or the deliberate action of wreckers. There has been talk of putting a warning light on the island, but the constable of Bamburgh has not found anyone willing to live there and maintain the light.

Longstone Island has a fish-shaped rock near the cliff's edge on its northeast coast. Anyone jumping over this rock is transformed into a fish. This enchantment has a Penetration of 0, and lasts until the character no longer has any part of his body in water. Clothes, armor, and possessions are transformed with the character, and the type of fish whose

shape he assumes is dependent on his personality — an aggressive warrior might become a dogfish, a timid individual a sole, and so on. See the Fish Insert later for other ideas. The origin of this enchantment is a mystery; there is a very faint carving on the rock that resembles the tattoos used by *gruagachan* (see *Hedge Magic*, Chapter 4), but they are not known for their ability to make enchantments. For the purposes of investigation and dispelling, this is a Muto Corpus effect of Level 35.

KNIVESTONE

No aura

The three rocks that make up Knivestone are well-named; they rise out of the water like three knife blades lying on their back and pointing north east.

Isolates

There are a number of islands separated from the two main gatherings of Farne Islands.

MEGSTONE, SWEDMAN, ELBOW, GOLDSTONE

Infernal aura 1 (Megstone only)

The demons that used to haunt Inner Farne were driven out to Megstone and imprisoned here by Saint Cuthbert. They are here still, trapped in their material forms and unable to leave without mortal intervention.

The demons are truly a pathetic sight. They are members of the lowest demonic order, the evil spirits, and were never endowed with much power — just enough to cause havoc to anyone sailing near the Farne Islands. However, they have been trapped on the island for five and a half centuries. All the time demons remain in corporeal form they are subject to aging, hunger, thirst and deprivation, but they are immortal spirits incapable of true death. As a consequence, their bodies are riddled with Decrepitude. Every one of the 144 demons crowded on Megstone's meager surface (about 120 paces diameter) has at least one Characteristic at

-10, and many have several. The demons are short, hideous creatures with long heads and coal-black skin, appearing from a distance as mangy-looking seabirds. Their rough cowls are little more than scraps of threadbare cloth, and the infernal goats that once served as their mounts were eaten long ago; even their bodies have been ground down and ingested by the starving demons. They are little more than skeletons, barely having the strength to lift their heads. Those still capable of movement do so with great care to avoid shattering their delicate bones. Many are completely devoid of senses.

The appearance of these pitiful creatures has been enough to deter the few sailors who venture to this part of the sea. This is just as well, anyone landing here breaks the continuing miracle that traps them here at zero Infernal Might points, as does throwing rocks, firing arrows, or casting spells at them. From the moment that the ward is broken the demons start to recover their Might points. Those still capable of movement slip into the water in case invaders mean harm, while those capable of speech distract visitors with pleas for mercy and stories of buried treasure. It takes about four and a half hours for them to recover each Might point (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 36); with luck the demons can keep characters futilely searching the island for this long. Once they have a single Might point, they dissolve their material form (this costs no Might) and spend the point they have to reform it free from Decrepitude. They then stream forth from the island shrieking with unholy joy at being released from their prison. The demons immediately spread out amongst the Farne Islands, avoiding only Inner Farne.

The safest way to rid Megstone of the demons is to invoke Saint Cuthbert. The gentle saint never intended for the demons to suffer this long, and he can banish them back to Hell with a miracle if successfully invoked.

ISLESTONE SHAD AND GLORORUM SHAD

Magic aura 1

These two islands are both entrances to the same regio with a Magic aura of 3,

although the regio can only be accessed from either at low tide when the islands are uncovered. A character can enter the regio from Glororum Shad and exit onto Islestone Shad, or *vice versa*. The regio appears to be only a hundred paces in diameter, and is an island surrounded by a boiling sea. One tree grows on the island; one half of it is living and covered with both blossom and fruit, the other half is burnt and blasted.

This is actually the same regio that connects East Wideopen to the mainland. The odd magical topology means that there is no access from level 2 of the regio to level 3, although one can go from level 3 to level 2 and arrive in the tunnel to the mainland.

This is little more than a magical curiosity, but a character Initiated into Hermetic Architecture (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 97) might be able to extend the regiones or gain insight into breakthroughs relating to new uses of his Art.

CRUMSTONE, CALLERS, FANG

Magic aura 2

Of this small collection of islands, only Crumstone has a presence at high tide. Little more than a hundred paces across, Crumstone has a small hut above the spring tide mark. The foolhardy soul who lives here occasionally rows in a tiny skiff to the mainland to get supplies which he orders from the quayside without setting foot on land. Everything else he needs he gets from the sea: oil to light his hut from fish; meat from seals, birds, and the numerous nets he has around the rocks near his home; and a seal-skin great coat and hat to keep off the worst of the weather.

Nothing is known of him, not even his name. It is popularly believed that he is an abjurer — a man who has committed a heinous crime, but is of sufficient status to avoid capital punishment, so that instead he was forced to abjure the kingdom of England and never set foot on its soil again. This is an astute guess; Osgood is indeed an abjurer, but he is more than that, he is also a Drowned Man (*Realms of Power: Magic*,

page 96). He perished at sea while carrying out his exile, but was returned to the world of living by a mysterious power dwelling in the sea (see Big Harcar, earlier). In return for his new life he serves the whims of his unseen master, which includes occasionally luring ships onto Big Harcar. When not acting under these murderous orders, he makes amends by saving other mariners, rowing out to save them one at a time in his skiff, managing even in the worst of weathers thanks to the powers he has been granted. Osgood is a loner with a compassionate side; he is ashamed of his secret career as a wrecker, and keeps it hidden from anyone who befriends him.

Variant: Alternative Locations

The Farne Islands can be moved to any sparsely occupied coastal region. They are small enough that the storyguide need not find actual islands to substitute. Without the capacity to sustain even a single person for any great period of time, the impact of these islands on a region is minimal. That said, the following examples are all based on real island groups.

THE BRÉHAT ARCHIPELAGO

Just over a mile north of the Point d'Arcouest on Brittany's north coast are the Bréhat islands. The island of Bréhat is the largest at 760 acres and is really two islands that become joined only at low tide by the narrowest of natural bridges. The remaining islands are much smaller, mostly comparable with the Farne Islands. There is a host of eighty or so islets. The sixth century Saint Maudez (called Saint Mawes in Cornwall) gave his name to Maudez Island, which he cleared of vermin and dwelt on for most of his life; his myth can substitute for Saint Cuthbert's. Osgood is a Breton noble by the name of Orthon hiding from his Norman persecutors.

THE BRIJUNI ISLANDS

Found off the coast of Croatia in the northern Adriatic sea, the Brijuni (or Brioni, in Italian) islands are separated from the Istrian Peninsula by the Fažana Strait, about a mile and a quarter wide. There are two larger islands, Veliki Brijun and Mali Brijun (Big and Little Brijun, respectively), and twelve smaller islets. Bonosus, a repudiated fifth century bishop of Sardica (now Sredets in Bulgaria) exiled himself to Veliki Brijun, and named one of the other islands after his friend Saint Jerome (Sveti Jerolim in Slavonic). Bonosus was condemned for teaching (amongst other things) that after Jesus, Mary had several other children, thus initiating the Bonosian heresy that persisted into the eighth century. Bonosus takes the place of Saint Cuthbert; Osgood is instead called Obrad and is an exiled Serbian *župan*.

The Istrian Peninsula and the nearby island of Cres are home to the oppida of Histria and Shrouded Bay (an oppidum is what magi of the Transylvanian Tribunal have instead of covenants). Magi assigned to Histria or visiting there may have reason to visit the Brijuni islands.

LOCH CUAN

Loch Cuan, or Strangford Loch as it is known to the English, is a huge sea loch on the east coast of Ulster in the Hibernian Tribunal. The loch is 15 miles north to south and 5 miles east-west, and according to legend has 365 islands, although only twenty of them are of any size. The Ards Peninsula shields the loch from the Irish sea, leaving only a narrow channel to the south for the sea to enter. Loch Cuan is famous for its calm waters. If this Mythic Location is sited here, then Machaoi (pronounced MAH-hee) Island takes the role of Inner Farne. Machaoi Island was home to a saint of the same name in the sixth century. A monastery was built here, but it was destroyed in a magical battle between Pralix and Diedne in 806 (see *The Contested Isle* for more details on the Hibernian Tribunal). The spirits of the storms would

be much less common on these famously placid waters, but seals are a common sight.

THE PONTINE ISLANDS

This group of islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea in the Roman Tribunal consists of six sizable islands in two groups that roughly correspond to the Inner and Outer Farnes. Closest to land are Ventotene and Santo Stefano; further out is the group containing the largest island Ponza, along with Palmarola, Zannone, and Gavi. There are innumerable small rocks and islets within the archipelago. Ventotene was extensively used as a prison island by the emperors of Rome, and those exiled here include Saints Flavia Domitilla and Silverius. These islands are bigger than the Farnes; Santo Stefano is twice the area of its Northumbrian counterpart of Inner Farne, and the largest island Ponza is over 1800 acres. Ponza ("land of bridges," named after its many natural stone arches) was once occupied, but under constant attack from Saracens and pirates, it has been vacant for over two centuries, and would be a perfect location for a covenant. In legend, the sirens occupied the Pontine Islands, as well as nearby Ischia, Capri, and sunken Anthemoessa; these faeries replace the selkies in this version of the Mythic Location.

Treat the sirens as tritons (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 90).

natural aura, might incur warping and develop a supernatural Flaw. Many of these creatures would make good familiars for appropriately-minded magi.

Inhabitants

There are a number of creatures that can be found on the Farne Islands, both mundane and supernatural. Even the mundane animals, if they spend too much time within a super-

A Selection of Fish

The waters around the Farne Islands are teeming with fish. A character template for a generic fish is provided, with a number of variations for different species.

The Puffin Joker (*Fratercula Hilaris*)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per +2, Pre +1, Com -2, Sta 0, Str -8, Dex +2, Qik +6
Size: -5
Warping Score: 1 (0)
Virtues and Flaws: Inspirational; Noncombatant, Mentem Monstrosity*
 * from Warping
Qualities: Amphibious, Imposing (Comical) Appearance x2
Personality Traits: Comical +2
Combat:
Dodge: Init +6, Attack n/a, Defense +14, Damage n/a
Soak: +1
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)
Abilities: Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 4 (sand eels), Brawl 2 (dodging), Survival

3 (home terrain), Swim 4 (diving)
Vis: none
Appearance: A small comic-looking black and white bird, with a broad bill striped in red, yellow, and blue.
 This puffin has been warped by the magic of the Outer Farnes. Once per day it can perform a silly dance, bobbing its head and flicking its wings, accompanied by bowing and stamping its feet. Anyone seeing the dance bursts out laughing unless she makes an appropriate Personality roll (such as Stoic or Humorless) of Ease Factor 9. Those who fail can do nothing but laugh until the puffin stops. This effect has no Penetration, but sometimes warped puffins perform this dance as a group, which gives the effect a cumulative +1 Penetration for every five puffins beyond the first.

Correspondences of the Farne Islands

The following table gives one-to-one correspondences for the variant locations described in the main text.

Farne Islands	Bréhat Archipelago	Brijuni Islands	Loch Cuan	Pontine Islands
Inner Farne	Maudez	Veliki Brijun	Machaoi	Santo Stefano
The Wideopens	Raguenèz	Kozada	Reagh	Ventotene
The Bridges etc.	-	Madona	-	-
Big and Little Scarcar	-	-	Boretree	Le Sconcioglie
The Bush Île Verte	Sveti Jerolim*	Cross	Nave	-
Staple Island	Bréhat-Sud	Vanga	Islandmore	Palmarola
Brownsman	Bréhat-Nord	Vrsar	Pawle	Gavi
North & South Wamses	Raguénès Meur & Lavrec	Šupin & Šupinic	Sketrick & Rainey	Aniello Anionio
Roddam & Green	Bec Ru	-	Trasnagh	-
Big & Little Harcar	Béniguet	Galija	Dunynneill	Zannone
Clove Car	Grouezen*	Grunj	Beacon	Scoglio della botte
Longstone	Ar-Morbic	Mali Brijun	Taggart	Ponza
Megstone La Chèvre	Sveti Marko	Sheelah	Piana di Mezzo	-
Islestone & Glorum Shad	Seheres & Grouezen*	Okrugljak & Sveti Jerolim*	Hare & Green	Capello & Scoglietelli
Crumstone	Logodoc Gaz	Long	Le Formiche	-

*these locations double up with others in the table

THE REMORA

The remora is a small fish that is a bane to all sea travelers. It can suck so powerfully that it can bind a ship in place, holding it completely motionless. A storm could be raging with crashing waves, but the ship remains rooted to the spot, unable to move. Its name comes from Latin *mora* meaning "a delay." The Greeks similarly call it *echeneis*, "ship-delaying."

Magical Seabirds

Amongst the many thousand birds that arrive from March onward are a fair number of Magic Animals.

No-one knows for sure where these birds go when they are not at the Farne Islands. When they leave, they head south, but colonies of these birds are not known anywhere else in Mythic Europe. Some claim that they overwinter on the moon, others believe that they bury themselves in the mud at the bottom of lakes and hibernate.

EIDER DUCKS

Eider ducks are a species of large, sea-going ducks with a distinctive wedge-shaped head. The drake is striking in his black and white plumage. The female is a drab speckled brown which grants her perfect camouflage when on a nest; she gains +3 to all rolls to hide when not moving. According to legend, Saint Cuthbert loved the eider above all other birds, and locally they are known as Saint Cuthbert's Ducks, or Cuddy Ducks. Some of the eider ducks around the Farnes — particularly those on Inner Farne — are Beasts of Virtue, creatures touched by the Magic Realm that epitomize the species.

Eider ducks live on the islands all year around; they do not undergo the mass migrations of most of the other birds.

Template: A Fish

Characteristics: Cun -3, Per -2, Pre -5, Com -6, Str -8, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik +4
Size: -4
Qualities: Aquatic, Slippery, Defensive Fighter, Pack Animal
Combat:
Dodge: Init +2, Atk n/a, Dfn +5, Dam n/a
Soak: +1
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)
Abilities: Awareness 2 (food), Brawl 2 (dodging), Survival 3 (sea), Swim 5 (sea)
Appearance: These statistics are for a fish that is about a foot long

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FISH

Below are some modifications to the basic template to get different types of fish. The Fast Swimmer and Accomplished Swimmer Qualities have the same effect on fish as Fast Flyer and Accomplished Flyer have on birds.

Crab (Cancer): Size -5 (-2 Str, +1 Qik). *Virtues:* Improved Characteristics x2 (raise Str by +3); *Qualities:* Aggressive, Large Horns (Claws), Shell. *Pincers:* Init

+5, Atk +9, Dfn +11, Dam -4. *Personality Traits:* Grumpy +3

Dogfish (Squala): Size -3 (+2 Str, -1 Qik). *Qualities:* Aggressive. *Teeth:* Init +1, Atk +9, Dfn +6, Dam -5. *Personality Traits:* Loyal +3

Dolphin (Delphinus): Size 0 (+8 Str, -4 Qik). *Qualities:* Accomplished Swimmer, Crafty, Good Jumper, Pursuit Predator. *Bludgeon:* Init +0, Atk +5, Dfn +3, Dam +2. *Personality Traits:* Cheerful +3

Eel (Anguilla): Size -5 (-2 Str, +1 Qik). *Qualities:* Fast Swimmer, Grapple, Slippery (again). *Personality Traits:* Sly +3

Grey Mullet (Mugil): *Virtues:* Improved Characteristics x2 (raise Qik by +2). *Qualities:* Accomplished Swimmer. *Personality Traits:* Depressed +3

Mackerel (Scomber): *Qualities:* Fast Swimmer. *Personality Traits:* Jumpy +3

Octopus (Poillippus): *Virtues:* Puissant Brawl; *Qualities:* Grapple, Slippery (again). *Personality Traits:* Tenacious +3

Salmon (Salmo): Size -2 (+4 Str, -2 Qik). *Qualities:* Good Jumper, Tireless. *Personality Traits:* Wise +3

Sole (Solea): *Qualities:* Camouflage. *Personality Traits:* Timid +3

PUFFINS

Puffins are called *fratercula* in Latin ("little brother") because they look like miniature Benedictine monks in their white robes and black cowls and capes. Locals call them "Tommy Noddys" because of the way they bob their heads when they walk. Many thousands of puffins breed on the Farne Islands each year; they can be found on any island with soil, since they dig burrows in which to build their nests.

STORM BIRDS

Some birds are particularly associated with stormy weather at sea. Cormorants are bronze-black, raven-sized birds with a long neck and slender rapacious beak. On days when they are seen on the rocks with their wings half-spread it is believed that they are

praying for a storm.

Petrels and fulmars look a little like gulls; the fulmar that nests in abundance on the Farnes has a white head and gray plumage on its body, while petrels are mostly black or dark gray. Petrels are the heralds of bad weather and the subject of great superstition; they can sometimes be seen stirring up a storm by flying over the waves and paddling the surface with their feet. Local sailors will never kill one lest the storms take revenge.

The Selkies

Statistics for a selkie king are given on page 91 of *Realms of Power: Faerie*. Brown Wullie should also have the statistics of a selkie king. The king has the External Vis Virtue (page 50), which is his name, currently in the possession of his Brown Wullie (see Brownsman Island).

Echeneis, the Remora

Magic Might: 20 (Aquam)

Season: Spring

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -5, Com -6, Str -5, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +5

Size: -5

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal, Magical Monster; Great Strength x2, Reserves of Strength

Mundane Qualities: Slippery, Tireless

Magical Qualities & Inferiorities: Focus Powerx2; Improved Might x5, ; Restricted Power (must continually touch target to use *Holdfast* power)

Personality Traits: Won't Let Go* +3, Inquisitive +2, Playful +2

* Essential Trait

Combat:

Dodge: Init +5, Attack n/a, Defense +11, Damage n/a

Soak: +1

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Area Lore 1 (shipping lanes),

Athletics 3 (holding on), Awareness 1 (food), Brawl 2 (dodge), Stealth 1 (avoiding being seen), Survival 3 (coastal water), Swim 3 (shallow water)

Powers:

Holdfast, 1-7 points, Init -3, variable Form: The remora can duplicate any spell up to 35th level that prevents or inhibits movement. These effects are Range Touch, and the Duration is constant (designed as Sun Duration with an extra magnitude). To hold a ship in place is level 25 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 constant effect, +2 Size). To freeze in place a person or animal of Size +1 of less is level 25 (Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 constant effect). The Might cost is 1 per magnitude. Focus Powerx2 (15 levels spent as Mastery Points to raise maximum level to 35)

Vis: 5 pawns of Aquam

Appearance: A fish about a foot long, it has golden skin with black and white stripes down the length of its body, and a huge mouth.

water using their Reserves of Strength, whilst applying their Obsession power to discourage their victims from fighting back.

Introducing the Farnes into the Saga

Characters making a trip to Northumberland are bound to hear stories of the Farne Islands. Saint Cuthbert is the most popular saint in Northern England, and his legend has been spread throughout England and Scotland. There are 135 churches dedicated to him in England and another seventeen in Scotland. The saint's hermitage and miracles on Inner Farne are well known, and this might be enough to bring the characters here.

A more direct way to bring the characters to the islands is have them shipwreck there, probably on Big Harcar. The Farnes are a navigation hazard to ships traveling between the ports of Perth, Edinburgh, Dunbar, and Berwick to the north, and Newcastle, Stockton, and other English ports to the south. Coast-hugging vessels that use these waters must make a detour around the islands, or else risk Staple Sound in better weather. If the characters are wrecked on the islands they might be rescued by Osgood (see Crumstone earlier), and may decide to investigate the region.

Story Hook: Flotsam

Characters planning a sea-voyage might desire help from an eider duck, who can guarantee safety from all but magical storms. They must go to the Farne Islands to either catch one or persuade one to come with them. An eider does not need to be willing for its power to calm waves to take effect, but Saint Cuthbert might be offended at any mistreatment of his favored animals.

Selkie women are classic Faerie Spouses Trapped by a Trinket (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 75); without their seal skin they cannot regain their seal form. Selkie men are Masters of Skills (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 78) who seek to challenge mortal men in contests, particularly drinking contests, to win mortal women as lovers.

Mundane seals are contested over by selkies as much as humans are. Selkie men take the form of bull seals, and test mundane seals for the right to mate with cow seals. If a mundane bull seal takes control over a selkie female, he hides her comb to keep her in seal form for the breeding season.

GREY SEALS

Although called grey seals, they are variegated in color. The pups are born creamy yellow, but soon turn grey. Once mature, a cow seal has cream underparts and a grey coat covered with darker spots. They occasionally have other patches of cream. The bull seals are usually a dark brown in color, making their

spots hard to see. Cow seals are under six feet long and weigh over 300 pounds in weight; males can get to over seven feet and usually over 700 pounds.

The Demons of Megstone

As described earlier, these demons are currently riddled with Decrepitude, at the Dazed Fatigue level, and at zero Might pool. The statistics provided nearby are for the demons at full strength with new bodies; something they can only achieve if freed from their bondage on Megstone.

The demons are from the order of the Evil Spirits, and their role is to make life on the sea more perilous. They are responsible for the physical evils of the sea, encouraging their victims to succumb to drowning, to not struggle for life but to give into death. In this they ensure that bodies of the dying and dead are never recovered, preventing deathbed confessions or extreme unction. Their usual tactic is to grapple swimmers and hold them under

Eider Duck of Virtue

Season: Spring

Magic Might: 8 (Animal)

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

Size: -3

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Homing Instinct*, Lesser Benediction (see below); Clumsy, Pious

* see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 44

Qualities: Amphibious, Camouflage (females only), Hardy, Timid

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power; Improved Abilities x3; Susceptible to Deprivation

Personality Traits: Calm +3, Duck* +3, Brave -3

* Essential Trait

Combat:

Dodge: Init +3, Attack n/a, Defense +9, Damage n/a

Soak: +3

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-2), -3 (3-4), -5 (5-6), Incapacitated (7-8), Dead (9+)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 4 (food), Brawl 2 (dodging), Stealth 4 (hiding), Survival 5 (coastal waters), Swim 4 (coastal waters)

Powers:

Quell the Savage Waves, 1 point, constant effect, Aquam: Any waves within ten paces of an eider duck are dampened to be a gentle ripple. This can affect all

but the very fiercest of storms. This is a constant effect that is active whenever the duck touches the sea; it cannot control it or turn it off. ReAq 35 (Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 Part, +1 Size, +1 constant) Greater Power (35 levels, -3 Might cost)

Vis: 1 pawn of Aquam, in feathers

Due to a miracle enacted by Saint Cuthbert, an Eider Duck of Virtue is aligned to both the Magic and Divine Realms (represented by the Lesser Benediction Virtue); they benefit from the most beneficial or least detrimental result from the Magic or Divine column in the Realm Interaction Table (ArM5, page 183)

Grey Seal

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

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics, Long-Winded, Puissant Swim, Carefree

Qualities: Amphibious, Pursuit Predator, Tireless, Tough Hide

Personality Traits: Seal +3, Playful +3, Brave 0

Combat:

Teeth: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +6, Damage +3

Soak: +5

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Brawl 3 (bite), Athletics 3 (acrobatic turns), Awareness 3 (fish), Hunt 4 (fish), Swim 4+2 (pursuit), Survival 3 (at sea)

These statistics are for a cow seal, for bulls add the Large Virtue to increase Size to +2; this adds two to Strength (and Damage) but subtracts one from Quickness (and Initiative and Defense). Seals can hold their breath for twice as long as normal, and the bonus from its Long-Winded Virtue adds to rolls to withstand deprivation of air.

Books Containing Farnes Lore

Vita Sancti Cuthberti, Tractatus on Organization Lore: The Church, Quality 7. The two versions composed by the Venerable Bede (one poetic, one prose) each have a Quality of 9.

The Ecclesiastical History of the English People by the Venerable Bede is an encyclopedia (*Art & Academe*, page 26) of four tractatus of Quality 9 (17 books): Area Lore: British Isles (history); Area Lore: Northumberland (history); Organization Lore: The Church (history); Theology (saints)

Farne Meditations by Bartholomew, Summa on Divine Lore, Level 3, Quality 6

Story Hook: Jetsam

Magi who live in a coastal covenant, or who are visiting a coastal area, find vis washed up on the beach. This takes the form of foamy spume, and the characters may wish to track it back to its point of origin to examine the possibility of a renewable vis source. The vis is an Arcane Connection to its source, and it leads the characters directly to the islands, where Osgood waits for them. He deliberately set the vis adrift, trusting in the power he serves that it would bring him help. The help that Osgood requests can vary, but probably involves some business ashore which Osgood cannot fulfill as

an abjurer. He might want them to check up on his family, deliver an heirloom to his newborn son, or make reparations to the victim of the crime that caused his exile in the first place.

Story Hook: Lagan

A man known to the characters comes to them for aid. He could be a fisherman, a minor noble, even another magus. He knows of a fabulous treasure in Staple Sound, but is unable to get to it since it is on the bottom of the sea. The description of the treasure should be chosen to pique the interest of the

characters. In actual fact, he is after the seal-skin of the daughter of the selkie-king, who has taken to hiding it under a rock at the bottom of the sea to prevent her from being trapped into marriage by mortals — as the most beautiful of all the selkie maidens she has been captured dozens of times over the last century. If the characters help the lust-driven man get the seal-skin (there may be other treasure there as well), then they incur the wrath of the selkie king.

(Flotsam, jetsam, and lagan are three types of marine salvage. Flotsam describes goods found floating on the sea. Jetsam consists of those goods washed up on the shore.

Genius Procellosus

Season: Spring
Magic Might: 10 (Auram)
Characteristics: Int -3, Per +1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +3, Sta 0, Dex +3, Qik 0
Size: -5 (apparent)
Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit
Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Focus Powerx2, Greater Power; Improved Powers
Personality Traits: Capricious +3, Territorial +2
Soak: +0
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Area Lore: Farne Islands 5 (Outer Farnes), Awareness 2 (visitors to the islands), Penetration 3 (Storm-Calling)
Powers:

Presence, 0 points, constant effect, Imaginem: Grants awareness of everything that happens within the bounds of the spirit's chosen domain, which is about the same size as Target Room. In essence, the spirit is coterminous with its associated landscape feature, so it is present simultaneously everywhere within its boundaries. The area controlled by the spirit can produce a yearly harvest of 2 pawns of Auram vis, which manifests as salt encrustations. Harvesting this vis does not erode the spirit's Might. Greater Power (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 103)
Storm-Calling, 1-7 points, Init -4, Auram: The storm spirit can duplicate any Creo Auram or Rego Auram effect of 35th level or lower. They concentrate mostly on wind and rain, and often work together to create one immense storm that ravages the coastline for miles. Focus Pow-

erx2 (15 levels spent as Mastery Points to increase maximum level, 2 Mastery Points to increase maximum level to 35, 3 Mastery points to increase Initiative.)
Vis: 3 pawns of insubstantial Auram vis, in body.
Appearance: Invisible to those without Second Sight, this spirit appears as a sea-bird, typically a cormorant or a petrel. When using their powers, their apparent size swells vastly, but the Size characteristic is meaningless since they have no ability to craft a physical form.
 A genius procellosus — storm spirit — is a spirit of the elements (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 104). Each storm spirit claims a rock around one of the Farne Islands; anyone landing on its rock is liable to be attacked by the spirit's powers.

Demons of Futility

Infernal Might: 5 (Aquam)
Order: Evil Spirits
Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +2, Sta 0, Dex +1 Qik +1
Size: -2
Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Swim, Reserves of Strength, Weak Willed
Personality Traits: Selfish +5, Brave -5
Combat:
Grapple: Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage n/a
Soak: +2
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)
Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (goats),

Athletics 3 (blocking escape), Brawl 5 (grapple), Ride 2 (goat), Swim 5+2 (coastal waters)
Powers:
Coagulation, 1 point, Init -1, Corpus: Permits the demon to form a physical body. It takes 5 rounds to form this body, but can dismiss it in a single round.
Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim: Imposes the trait of Helpless on a victim; see *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, pages 31-32 for more details
Crushing Doubt, 1 point, Init 0, Mentem: The demon touches a person, who is then overcome with the futility of struggling against their fate. While the demon remains in physical contact, its victim cannot spend Confidence points. The

victim must make a Personality Trait roll to take any action; this can be any positive, active Trait that could overcome the character's doubt. The Ease Factor is 6 + the character's Helpless (or similar) Personality Trait.
Vis: 1 pawn of Aquam, in head
Weakness: Protected Group — survivors. Anyone who has taken an Incapacitating Wound in a natural disaster but survived cannot be harmed by these demons or affected by their powers
Appearance: Short, twisted, and hideous, these demons have elongated heads and coal-black skin. They wear hooded cowls, and often ride goats.

Lagan applies to goods on the sea floor, usually marked with a float for later recovery).

Researching the Farne Islands

For characters researching the islands there is no real substitute for local knowledge.

Inner Farne and its saint are famous throughout the region, but locals know the names and some of the legends surrounding the other islands. The supernatural nature of the islands is a matter of fact to the sailors who ply these waters for fish; they avoid actually visiting the islands as if they were cursed, but are avid collectors of rumors, travelers' tales, and complete fabrications.

The hagiographies of Saint Cuthbert contain good factual information about the inner islands. There is one anonymous *Vita*, and two more written by the Venerable Bede, another local saint. The originals of these works can be found in the priory library on Holy Island, along with a copy of Bede's *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* which also has some information about Saint Cuth-

bert and the later hermits who stayed on Inner Farne. *The Farne Meditations* by Bartholomew (see Inner Farne, earlier) also contains some lore, but is mostly a record of the hermit's spiritual insights.

Hooks for Using the Farne Islands Again

The Farne Islands are presented as a series of wondrous places that can be explored over a series of stories, either run in series or interspersed with others. Since there are no local maps of the islands, characters may not be aware of the extent of the archipelago immediately, and so might first visit Inner Farne (for example), and then realize later that there is a second group of islands.

There are a number of unconnected stories

associated with various islands. The three key stories are the selkies of Staple and Brownstone, Osgood and the Leviathan, and Cuthbert and the demons of Megstone. The storyguide might choose to concentrate on just one, or, if the characters seem interested in the location, employ more than one at a time.

Story Hook: An Island Retreat

The Farne Islands would make a good site for a covenant, either for the player covenants or for their allies. The best-suited island is Longstone Island, which is the most remote from the mainland. *Conjuring the Mystic Tower* is not a practical solution since it would be too obvious, rising from the flat island, and be exposed to the elements. However, the tower could be placed on the flatter, low-lying rocks that are inundated at high tide, with much of the height of the tower supported by the steep cliffs. The lower portions of the tower

would be below the waterline for much of the day, but if the entrance to the tower is placed on the upper storeys this need not be a major impediment since the magically-created tower can be made entirely waterproof. There are several vis sources nearby that can support the covenant; and they could gain income from fishing. A less law-abiding group of magi might turn to wrecking or piracy instead.

The biggest problem is Bamburgh Castle and its constable. The wardship of the islands is in the hands of Wascelyn, and it is unlikely that magi could take up residence on the islands without him noticing. However, these islands currently net zero income for the crown, and if the characters could come up with some way to turn a profit, then they might have a bargaining chip to secure residence. One service they could offer to sweeten the deal is to maintain a warning light on the island at night, but this could bring them into conflict with Osgood, who is occasionally called upon to cause a ship's destruction.

Chapter Six

The Poisoned Earth

The Romans mined the Mendip Hills, removing lead, but left poisoned ground where nothing could live. Since that time a necromancer and her Diedne foes have dueled here, leaving undead guardians. The site has been visited by infernalists and colonized by faeries. All of these things, however, just obscure the secret hidden deep in the poisoned earth.

Myths, Legends, History, and Rumors

This site is famous in the Order of Hermes as the site of a magical duel during the Schism War. The battle is famous not so much for its historical significance as for the techniques used by its combatants. Averno of Tytalus, the necromancer, used spells so unconscionable that in peace the Order would likely have had her Marched. Her spells, mixed with accounts of the Diedne magic, which some historians claim are so horrible that they must be propaganda, have made this site the focus of the sorts of stories Tytalus magi tell their apprentices to keep them awake for a week.

Averno chose this site because it had been a lead mine during the Roman domination of Britain. Lead is useful in defixione cursing, a form of necromancy practiced by some descendants of Guorna the Fetid (as described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 143). Lead also causes madness, and its extraction was so dangerous that it was performed by replaceable slaves. These factors combined to saturate the area with the graves of the insane dead. Averno's greatest joy,

Roman Mining of Arsenic, Silver, and Lead

Romans often mined lead ore to extract silver from it. The method is superficially simple. The miners extract the ore from shallow trenches, using iron wedges to break it up. This ore is piled either side of the trench while the miner digs. The ore is then collected and washed. Care must be taken that livestock does not drink from the vats, and that the washing water is discarded away from the drinking supply. Animals, or people, who drink ore washing water develop a particular sickness, which some say is lead poisoning, but others say is caused by faeries.

The washed ore is then heated, which liberates the lead from the dross. This waste often contains arsenic. The lead is

then heated further, to a high temperature only achievable through the use of bellows or magic. This causes the silver to separate from the lead and float to the surface of the crucible. It is then poured off.

Lead is poured out of crucibles onto sand, into which the shape of ingots has been dug. The cooling ingots are connected by a channel of lead, which allows many ingots to be created with a single pour. This shape looks, to some, like a sow with many piglets attached, so the lead produced this way is often called "pig lead." The ingots were then often inscribed with an owner's name. Some of the local faeries take the porcine symbolism literally.

excepting the malicious assassination of her enemies, was to call up the distorted ghosts of the area, and set them to pathetic tasks.

Lead mining also fills the ground with arsenic salts. Arsenic is particularly useful for necromancers, because it is used in embalming, and it discourages insects, which keeps laboratories tidy. In 1220, this layer of toxic soil begins about a foot underground, so grasses grow in the area and it appears superficially pleasant. Any activity that pierces the soil, however, brings forth the poisonous dust beneath.

Miners in Mythic Europe still use the same methods the Romans did, although they mine more slowly and safely. Miners whom the player characters consult could explain the hazards of lead contamination and arsenical soil. Characters who are forewarned can use Terram spells to protect themselves from the poisoned earth. Alternatively, they can use cloths to prevent breathing the dust, or wait until there is heavy rain before visiting the site.

The Mendip Hills

The Mendip Hills are low limestone hills in Somerset, England. They are a wild area, filled with deciduous forest, bogland, and all manner of supernatural creatures. The Hills are traversed by peasant foragers from surrounding communities. Desperate people with woodland survival skills sometimes find refuge here.

The Mendip Hills were the richest source of lead in the Roman province of Britain. Britain in turn was the richest lead-producing province in the Empire. So much lead was exported by Britannia that miners in Iberia eventually petitioned the Emperor to intervene and reduce the amount sent from the Mendips to Rome. The lead used to waterproof the baths of Somerset, described elsewhere in this book, was mined in the Mendip Hills.

Rumors

This site is widely known to exist, but virtually no-one visits it, so detail is scarce in local folklore or Hermetic records. Organization Lore: Order of Hermes and Area Lore: Somerset are both appropriate Abilities.

WHAT IS KNOWN BY ALL

- The site is haunted by ghosts, the home of faeries, and a cavorting spot for demons. The stories about the area are rarely historically accurate. In the case of the faeries, the stories rapidly become correct.
- The soil here makes people sick, if they dig down into it.
- It's a huge graveyard: if you dig you find bones or even ancient corpses which have refused to rot.

WIDELY KNOWN

- This site is widely known to exist in

the Order, and the story of the battle between Averna and the Diedne is a sort of guilty pleasure among some magi. No-one particularly wants to travel here, however, as Seekers have assessed it and removed anything not looted by the Diedne magi.

- Averna was a corporeal necromancer.
- Some locals say the faeries of the area can be more safely confronted by a person wearing a handkerchief dipped in something strongly scented over the face. The scent really doesn't matter: the handkerchief acts as a filter for the arsenic dust in the incidental matter of the bodies the faeries use.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- The rising of the Blue Apples and their use as a Warping agent.
- Some of the women of a nearby village think a stern but friendly spirit resides here, who aids women who have bad husbands, or too many children. Some

of the men think there's a female spirit in that place which lures men into fatal intercourse.

- If you dig at a certain point, skeletal warriors emerge from the ground.
- Some locals claim the lead mine started as a silver mine, but was noncommercial. Magi, who can heat ore without fuel or labor, might be able to make a mine here profitable, if this rumor is true.
- There are no winter faeries in Somerset.

LOST SECRETS

- The method of processing the Blue Apples to create vis is lost, but remembered by some of the spirits of the area.
- There is a non-Hermetic spell that will trap the Summer Fae of Somerset, hidden in the Cave of the Inscription.

The Site of the Battle

The site described in this chapter lacks any superficially unusual features. It is a flat hill, mostly limestone, overlooking the surrounding forest. Its top is covered by grasses, and magi who examine it closely can find the stones that acted as the foundations for Averna's tower. Depressions trace their way about the hill and surrounding forest: these are the remnants of the ditches used by Roman miners to extract ore. Low mounds mark the graves from which arsenical skeletons emerge.

There are no trees on this hill. If a tree's roots go down more than a foot, they pierce into the poisoned earth and that tree dies. On the nights when the Apples of Twilight can be harvested, this makes the trees on which they grow, which rise to mature height and crumble away in the course of a single night, particularly noticeable.

Alternative Locations

The Romans used lead for so many things that they mined it wherever they could find it,

provided they had sufficient slaves. The Romans knew that being raised in a town where lead was mined caused retardation in children, and that many lead miners were driven insane by their tasks. Free men refused to mine it, so the limiting factor in lead mining was a lack of miners, rather than a shortage of sites.

Several other sites are suitable for the stories presented here. Rio Tinto, in the Iberian Tribunal, was the most productive source of lead in the Empire, outside of Britain. Later in the Empire's history, its manufactures depended on lead from Argentiera in Sardinia, part of the Roman Tribunal. In 1220, the largest lead mines in Europe are in the Harz mountains, and the great lead market is in Cologne, both in the Rhine Tribunal.

Rio Tinto, like the Mendip Hills, ceased to be mined for lead after the Romans withdrew, for no clear historical reason. If using this location, the Silver Lady might similarly have slaughtered the miners. Her motivation may differ. Some portions of the area are named for King Solomon's mines, and were colonized by the Phoenicians. Either empire may have buried a magician king here, and had his grave disturbed by miners.

Aura

The battlefield has a Magic aura of 5. Although it lacks a Faerie aura, local stories call the place haunted, and many of the darker faeries of the region claim to dwell in a court here. Similarly, although there is not yet an Infernal aura on this site, many local demons are aware of the value of its soil in the commission of sin. It can be used for murder, but it's also an abortifacient. It's not safe, but that hardly matters to the forces of darkness.

THE CAVE OF THE INSCRIPTION

This site is in Somerset, which, in at least three languages, means "Land of Summer." For as long as people remember or writings record, there have never been any faeries with strong thematic ties to winter in Somerset. This, according to the faeries, occurs because a very early wizard banished the creatures of cold and darkness from the land, or imprisoned them in a cave. Summer faeries are only slightly less fearsome, but the spirits who understand their natures chafe under this restric-

tion, unable to take the roles of the storm riders of the winter sea, or snow maidens.

The faeries say that deep beneath the hills there is a cave they cannot enter. On the wall of the cave, in blood and orpiment, is written a story; it is that story which binds the Winter. If the writing were erased, Winter would return. Some faeries offer various gifts for this service, but the words are guarded by other faeries. Player characters might also prefer to examine, rather than destroy, this unique magical working. Some faeries claim, and in this case they are telling the truth, that the mines here fell into disuse when the miners penetrated the cavern, and were executed by a guardian called the Silver Lady.

What the faeries do not say is that there is a second great working. It was written in the dark by a blind man, and so has never been read by anyone. If it were copied onto the wall beside the Inscription, using the right ink, it would trap the Summer Fae (or at least force them to avoid forms strongly tied to Summer). A copy of the second working, and a sample of the ink, is in the cave. Avera's laboratory, and thus tower, were placed here because of the high aura in the cave, but it predated her arrival in Stonehenge by centuries. The cave has a Magic aura of 6, which rises to 8 if the second working is written on the wall.

Avera placed a sadistic ward about the inscription and ink. Avera's *Watching Ward* contains a spell (PeCo 40) that causes a human body to explode into a pile of maggots over the course of a minute. A second spell, in a linked Ward on the roof, speeds up the thoughts of the victim, so that time seems to stop around them. They are unable to move while, over a period of several subjective days, they are consumed by larvae. Each spell has a Penetration of +20. These *Watching Wards* only work once, so unscrupulous player characters can disarm them by just throwing a victim into the cave.

Vis

There are several odd sources of vis on, or near, the battlefield. Further sites in Somerset are listed in the chapter on Bath.



THE BLUE APPLES OF TWILIGHT

At the dark of the moon, 13 times a year, from a mass grave of Roman mining slaves, a pale tree rises. In a single night it grows to maturity, and bears small, blue apples. These are fatal to the touch. If the apples are gathered together, mashed, and left to ferment in an oak barrel in the dark for a season, they provide Perdo vis. The apples are prized as a delicacy by some of the local faeries, and there are rumors that the apples are so delicious as to force magi who eat them into Temporary Twilight.

The apples are poisonous, and the slightest exposure can be absorbed through the skin. See the poison rules in *ArM5*, page 180. The apples have an Ease Factor of 12 and inflict heavy wounds.

THE WITCH OF WOKEY HOLE

Elsewhere in the Mendip Hills is a complicated series of caverns called Wookey Hole.

Within the hole is a trapped faerie. Centuries ago, the "blear eyed hag" would use the evil eye to destroy crops, lame livestock and destroy the relationships of young lovers. The abbot of Glastonbury sent a monk, who had taken his vows after the witch destroyed his chance at love, to destroy her. The monk used the power granted by his faith to force her to retreat to her lair, and then entered the cave and splashed the shadowy areas with holy water. This turned the witch into a stalagmite.

A complicated ritual can be used to harvest vis at this site. If a goat is tied in the cave on the anniversary of the witch's transformation, then has its throat cut in the morning, and is left to rot until only bones remain, then the bones become 5 pawns of Perdo vis. Vis can be more simply gained by chipping out a ball of stalagmite which is in the witch's left hand. It contains 7 pawns of Perdo vis, but is the spirit anchor for the faerie. Unless the vis is used quickly, it evaporates from the ball as the witch is freed from imprisonment.

Other weaker faeries who do not want the witch to damage their games try to bar-

The Nature and Effects of The Second Working

The Inscription is so ancient that its source is lost to history, but there is an account of its origin which Averna believed. Averna's beliefs can be recovered by closely interrogating her spirits and Somerset faeries, then incorporating the slivers of information she let fall over the course of her life. The Inscription, according to the necromancer, was one of the weapons of the Titans, left over from the ancient war between the Faerie and Magic realms. She believed it had been rediscovered by King Bladud, who was a cthonic wizard. He is described in more detail in the Bath chapter. The wizard-king used it to cage the gods of his rivals, perhaps as part of his attempt to woo the god Apollo to his cause.

If the second working is inscribed, the nature of Somerset is changed so that faeries cannot take Summer- or Winter-themed

forms within the boundaries of the ancient county. Many faeries remain, or change roles, but others, playing at refugees and nobility in exile, flood into surrounding lands. Most Faerie auras in Somerset, if lower than 10, fall by 4 points. If (aura strength - 4) is negative, then a Magic aura equal to the absolute value appears. For example, a level 3 Faerie aura is replaced by a level 1 Magic aura.

Faeries, in some sense, provide a cushion between humans and the Magical spirits of nature. Many faeries are amenable to human survival, particularly if the humans know the complex rules and codes which form that fae's role. After the Second Inscription, much of this folklore is wrong. The buffer between humans and the uncaring, chaotic spirits of nature is thinner.

vis. Some women claim the teasel has another use: that if held by a liar it will prick her finger and then turn to dust. The teasels are, however, so valuable that few wish to use them to detect deception. This is an InMe effect, Level 25, with a Penetration of 1.

Introducing the Battlefield into the Saga

Several stories may lead the player characters to the battlefield. The following story seeds are not meant to be used simultaneously.

Arsenic

The Roman method of mining leaves the land poisoned with arsenic salts, which are purified from lead in smelting. As centuries have passed, this layer of toxic soil is now covered in a layer of sterilized dust, and a higher layer of topsoil. That being noted, the protective layer is only a foot deep; a character with a shovel, a facemask, and a poor sense of self-preservation can dig up as much arsenic salt as they feel is wise.

Arsenic makes an excellent poison because in food, it is colorless, has no odor, and its salts have a flavor similar to table salt. Large doses are immediately fatal. Their symptoms are similar to that of food poisoning. Smaller doses accumulate in the body, can cause cancers and wasting diseases.

Arsenic is also valuable for necromancers. It is used to prevent the decay of cadavers, and acts as a powerful pesticide.

ASSASSIN

The player characters are seeking a poisoner. They are unable to find Arcane Connections to her, but have recovered a sample of her poison from the stomach of one of her victims. It retains a connection to this site. The player characters come

Pixies: The Minor Faeries of Somerset

Pixies are the little faeries of this region. They are physically similar to pixies found in the rest of the world, but are less cunning and are rarely malicious to good people. They spend most of their time — according to humans — in sport; they prefer to be near flowers so they may sleep during the colder parts of the year or perhaps hide in the healing wells. People from Cornwall and Devon say the pixies (whom they call *pisgies*) have their markets in Somerset, and travel there to trade strange things for stranger things. Pixies are said to be intensely jovial, so much so that "to laugh like a pixie" is idiomatic for happiness in this region.

Some people carry a tiny statuette of Joan the Wad (*Joan the Torch*) to avoid trouble with the pixies. She's a will-o-the-wisp who is Queen of the *Pisgies* in the neighboring areas of Devon and Cornwall. In those areas, *pisgies* are more vicious, so simple precautions like carrying this trinket makes sense to travelers. Somerset's pixies aren't bound by this ward at all, and seem drawn to people carrying it. Some play tricks on people who don't know which kingdom they are in, but these are rarely the sort of fatal spite shown by some of their Cornish cousins.

gain with or trick the magi, to gain the ball for themselves. They might, for example, teach the goat sacrifice method of vis harvesting in exchange for the ball.

THE TEASELS OF SOMERSET LEVELS

In the Somerset Levels, the marshy ground toward the coast, magical teasel flowers grow. These are prized by local women. Teasels, when dried, have a spiky structure that can be used as a comb to raise the nap of fabric, and has various other uses in fabric craft. A person using one of these teasels while creating something with or from thread has a +2 on all totals concerning the quality of their handiwork.

A local pixie claims to be the grower of these flowers. She will sell one for a good story, and often gives them to needy women who seek her in the swamps. She will not give them to children, or to pregnant women, and many locals believe that while a magical teasel is in the house no children can be born. The faerie is happy to give her flowers to men, but in the last two decades none have asked, as the existence of the faerie has become a feminine secret.

Each teasel contains a point of Herbam

Inhabitants

Many strange creatures may be found at this site, depending on the stories that the troupe desires to tell. The following beings are not intended for simultaneous use, although some combinations may work for some stories. The magical creatures, for example, may work as a set, and might be useful in stories with either demonic or faerie principals.

ARSENICAL PSEUDOELEMENTAL

A pseudoelemental is a creature superficially similar to an elemental, as described in *Realms of Power: Magic* (pages 133–129), but not created from pure elemental matter. As with an elemental, it loses Might points equal to the penalty it suffers from Wounds, and blasting away large parts of the elemental may reduce the amount of vis it contains (1 pawn per 5 might lost) unless this matter can be recovered. Spells that reduce its Might destroy this vis.

Magic Might: 20 (Terram)

Characteristics: Cun -6, Per -5, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +11, Sta +6, Dex +2, Qik -1
Size: +3

Season: Summer

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing; Way of the Poisoned Land; Poor Memory, Short Attention Span, Simple Minded

Personality Traits: Arsenical pseudoelemental +4, Thirsty +2.

Magical Qualities: 2 Greater Powers (Crush, Slake Thirst); 4 x Improved Attack, 4 x Improved Damage, 4 x Improved Defense, 4 x Improved Initiative, 6 x Improved Soak, No Fatigue

Magical Inferiorities: Temporary Might
Combat:

Pseudopod: Init +11, Attack +13*, Defense +10*, Damage +23**

* Includes +3 bonus for Ways of the Poisoned Land Virtue

** A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the crushing nature of this attack, requires a Medium Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, p.180)

Soak: +18

Wound Penalties: -1* (1–8), -3* (9–16), -5* (17–24), Incapacitated* (25–32), Dead (33+)

* Pseudoelementals lose temporary Might equal to wound penalties suffered. Incapacitating wounds reduce the pool by 5 points.

Abilities*: Area Lore: Poisoned Land 4 (poisoned places), Athletics 4 (run), Aware-

ness 4 (humans), Brawl 6 (pseudopod), Penetration 4 (Terram).

* Many Ability rolls gain +3 due to the Ways of the Poisoned Earth Virtue.

Powers:

Crush, 0 points, Init -3, Terram: The pseudo-elemental clubs its victim with a pseudopod, requiring a normal melee attack. If the victim is Size +3 or less, the attack pins it to the ground and the elemental adds (Might/5) to its Grapple Strength (*ArM*, p. 174) to prevent escape. If the pseudoelemental grapples successfully, then all of the victim's equipment less durable than metal is destroyed or broken, and metal objects are damaged such that a second use of this power breaks them.

Re(Pe)Te 30 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 affect stone, +1 requisite, +1 constant effect) Greater power (30 levels, -3 Might cost, +1 Init).

Slake Elemental Thirst, 1 point, Init +3, Aquam: Direct contact with the pseudoelemental drains fluid from the target, inflicting a Fatigue level of damage. After all Fatigue levels are taken, wounds may be dealt in the following sequence: a Light Wound, then a Medium Wound, then a Heavy Wound, then an Incapacitating Wound, then a fatal wound. Fatigue levels can be restored by drinking two pints of fluid, but wounds must be healed as normal.

PeAq 15 (base 5, +1 Touch, +1 Part) Greater Power (15 levels, +1 Might cost, +6 Init)

Vis: 4 pawns Terram, bodily matter.

Appearance: A large blob of earth, perhaps 3 paces across if made into a sphere. It is filled with veins of whitish-grey powder, and tiny, fragile, metallic crystals. On close examination, the earth is made up of soft, fragile cubes.

This is a spirit similar to an Earth Elemental, but made more dangerous and more cruel by the arsenic salts which it has incorporated into its body. It may once have been a spirit of place, driven mad as mining tore out its minerals.

ARSENICAL SKELETONS

These animated skeletons are not truly magical creatures; they are a Ritual spell effect. They lack Might and, beyond their movement and senses, magical powers. They contain no vis.

Characteristics: Int -2, Per -2, Pre 0, Com

-2, Str 0, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Skeletal Warrior +3

Combat:

*Shortsword**: Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +6, Damage +5**

* Change to other weapons for cosmetic effect

** A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the slashing nature of this attack, requires a Light Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, p.180)

Soak: +8, leather armor which crumbles off after absorbing the first crushing or slashing strike; thereafter +3. Add a +10 Soak bonus if struck with piercing weapons.

Wound Penalties: -1 (1–3), -3 (4–6), -5 (7–9), Incapacitated (10–12), Dead (13+)

Abilities: Single weapon 4 (shortsword)

Equipment: Desiccated leather armor, old, but surprisingly unrusty, weapon.

Vis: None, animated corpses do not contain vis.

Appearance: Soldier skeletons, clad in leather armor so aged that it crumbles under blows. The skeletons have glowing eyes, if their skulls are intact, but this is a purely cosmetic effect caused by Avera's sigil.

These are reanimated corpses, created by the necromancer as a guards and soldiers. They have been buried for centuries in soil filled with arsenic salt, which makes them far more dangerous than they initially appear. Skeletons have a low Size score compared to living humans because they lack the mass provided by organs and fluids.

DISTORTED GHOSTS

These creatures are the ghosts of miners whom the necromancer bound to the area, and abused with Muto Rituals.

Magic Might: 6 (Mentem)

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

* Tireless

Size: 0, but immaterial

Season: Summer

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit, Berserk, Cautious with Profession: Miner, Magical Monster

Qualities and Inferiorities: Lesser Power (Donning the Corporeal Veil), Tough, up to 4 other Qualities due to Avera's distortions. Choose from: ambidextrous

Inhabitants, cont'd.

(allows a second one-handed attack per round), clawed (adds +2 Brawl attack, poison on Light Wound), bite attack (use Brawl statistics, poison on Light Wound), animal scales (+3 Soak), buckler heads for fists (counts as 3 choices, 2 brawl attacks, damage is +7), two extra arms (allows flinging of two added hammers in a round, or the use of a second buckler), hands distorted into great pincers (+3 Init, poison on Light wound), made of lead (counts as 3 choices, +9 soak), winged (counts as three choices, allows flight, particularly useful for ghosts who fling meer hammers.)

Personality Traits: Vary, but include Ghost +3 and Angry of at least +2

Combat:

One of:

Brawl: Init 0, Attack +6*, Defense +7*, Damage +4** or

Bucker: Init +1, Attack +9*, Defense +7*, Damage +7** or

Meer hammer (melee): Init +1, Attack +7*, Defense +6*, Damage +5**

*Meer hammer (thrown)**:* Init 0, Attack +5*, Defense +3*, Damage +8**

* When berserk, the ghosts have a +2 Attack bonus and a -2 Defense penalty.

** The matter out of which the ghosts form their bodies is contaminated with arsenical salts. A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the crushing nature of these attacks, requires a Medium Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, p.180.

*** The ghost's hammer reappears in its hand whenever needed.

Soak: +4, when material, +2 bonus if Berserk.

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

Abilities: Brawl 6 (miner's gloves) or Great Weapon 6 (bucker) or Single Weapon 5 (hammer) and Thrown weapon 3 (hammer), Area Lore: Poisoned Land 4 (mines), Athletics 4 (carrying), Awareness 4 (threats in the mine), Profession: miner 6 (silver/lead),

Powers:

Domning the Corporeal Veil, 5 points, Init -3, Mentem: Allows the ghost to take material form.

Base 5, +1 touch, +2 Sun, +1 requisite, Lesser Power: As per *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 102.

Equipment: Clothes, mining tools

Bucker: a heavy, two handed tool, used to

crush and grind stones. The buckler has a curved head on a long wooden pole. A rocking motion is used to mash ore-bearing stones against a single, larger, firmer stone, called a knocker, which lies along the floor.

Meer hammer: a miner in this area could claim land equal to how far he could toss his mining hammer. Mining hammers are heavier than carpentry hammers, but some miners have lighter ones, used particularly for laying claims.

Vis: 2 pawns Mentem, mining tools

Appearance: Ghosts who have been driven mad, and whose physical forms are distorted by their sickness.

The ghosts of this site look unusual for three reasons. Like many ghosts from Roman times, they are black, rather than white. House Criamon claims that their Founder was responsible for this change. Ghosts are minds made apparent, and many of the miners here had been driven mad by lead poisoning, so their physical forms are distorted. The necromancer had powerful Muto Mentem spells she used to change the shapes of ghosts, giving them features she considered aesthetically interesting. This has made the affected ghosts even less sane than they previously were.

THE SILVER LADY: THE QUEEN OF THE LIFELESS HILLS.

The poisoned land around the battlefield was, for a long time, unlivable: people who went there died by ingesting arsenic dust, absorbing fatal amounts of lead, or being ripped to shreds by the undead warriors. Folktales formed around this site, and they have been incorporated into the role of the Silver Lady. The Silver Lady stands on the border between the contaminated and fertile land, and terrifies humans who seek to cross. Many of the faeries in the area claim to be her vassals, and she pretends she controls the undead, although she merely triggers their attacks as convenient.

The Silver Lady appears to want to be left alone, but persistent rumors say that a few girls in each village are hers. A child lost for a few days in the woods may come back to her village deranged from her sojourn. After she recovers, such a girl may experience Visions, and gain a reputation as a wise one if she does not hide her gifts. The Silver Lady seems particularly likely to take female swine-

herds as her servants. On rare occasions, one of these girls is whisked away into Faerie, and returned as a trained warrior or diplomat, seeking obscure advantages and treaties for the Silver Lady.

The Silver Lady's name comes from her appearance. Many of her accoutrements seem to be made from metallic lead.

This has a dull silver color. Many of her other accessories, and her skin, are the brilliant white of lead paint.

The Silver Lady is not designed as a player character.

Faerie Might: 35 (Corpus)

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

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, 2 x Focus Powers, 4 x Greater Power, Immune to Weapons Made of Base Metals; Improved Characteristics, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Traditional Ward (gold)

Personality Traits: Cruel +3, Patriotic (Somerset) +2

Combat:

Boar spear (as great weapon): Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +9*

Boar spear + shield (mounted, as lance): Init +2, Attack +14, Defense +10, Damage +7*

Longbow: Init -2, Attack +11**, Defense +7, Damage +8*

* Does not include +5 due to Damaging Effect power. A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the piercing nature of these attacks, requires a Light Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, page 180.

** Does not suffer penalty for shooting while mounted.

Soak: +1 if surprised, +9 in combat (thick flakes of lead as mail, topped with a crowned, leaded skull helm.)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Penalties for wounds suffered by the Lady are also suffered by her mount.

Pretenses:

Area Lore: Somerset 6 (lead mining), Awareness 6 (things in the poisoned land), Bargain 5 (nobles), Bow 6 (longbow), Brawl 6 (hog mount)**, Carouse 5* (nobles), Charm 5* (men), Dominion Lore 3 (Somerset), Etiquette 3* (ancient Roman), Faerie Lore 6 (Somerset), Folk Ken 6 (Somerset), Great Weapon 6

Inhabitants, cont'd.

(boar spear), Guile 6* (greedy people), Hunt 6 (fleeing humans), Infernal Lore 3 (Somerset), Intrigue 6* (land), Leadership 6* (hogs), Magic Lore 3 (Somerset), Penetration 5 (poisons from the land), Ride 5 (hog)**.

* Remember to add +3 for Allure power, if applicable.

** The hog the Lady usually rides is actually part of her material body, like her other pieces of equipment, and so she does not need to make Ride rolls unless doing particularly athletic things.

Powers:

Alchemical Sublimation, 0 points, Init -1, Terram: One of lead's main properties in alchemy is that it dissolves other base metals. Any item made of a base metal that touches the Queen, or her equipment, melts, without heating, into a misshapen lump, should she will it.

(Base 2, +1 touch, +2 base metals. 2 intricacy points spent on cost, 1 spent on Init.)

Allure, 0 points, Init -1, Mentem: Grants a +3 bonus on all rolls to impress or convince others.

(Base 3, +1 Touch +2 Sun, 1 Intricacy point spent on cost)

Breath of The Poisoned Land: 0 points, Init -3, Auram: A breeze rises up from the poisoned land, carrying the fatal scent. All characters who do not take precautions within five hundred paces of the target, suffer arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, page 180.

Base 5 (new, create a very debilitating air), +2 Voice, +1 Diam, +1 increased Target. Designed as a variant of *Stench of Twenty Corpses* *ArM5*, page 125. 3 intricacy points spent to reduce cost)

Cause Poisoning: 0 points, Init -3, Corpus: Anything the faerie touches can, at her whim, become coated in either lead or arsenic. Unless precautions have been taken in advance, poisoning quickly follows.

(Base 20, +1 Touch, 3 intricacy points spent on cost)

Damaging Effect: 2 points, Init -2, Terram: Adds +5 damage to the faerie's weapons.

Base 5, +1 Part +1 Diameter. This is non-Hermetic, as noted in *Realms of Power: Faerie* page 58.

Focus Power (The poisoned earth), (1 point per magnitude) -1, Init -5, Terram: allows the Silver Lady to create non-Ritual Hermetic effects involving Terram of level 35 or less.

Grant Puissance in Poisoning: 2 points, Init -2,

Corpus: The Lady can either grant a +1 bonus on Ability checks to a group of people, or +3 to one person, who attempts poisoning. The Lady can only regain the Might spent on this power when she withdraws the bonus.

(As *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 58. Base 2: +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +2 Group)

Lead Mania: 1 point, Init -3, Mentem: An effect similar to *Blessing of Childlike Bliss*. (*ArM5*, p.151) Suddenly becoming unable to reason, in a place this dangerous, is generally fatal, but sometimes the Lady's whim is such that intruders survive.

Base 10, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, 2 intricacy points spent on cost.

Spirit Away: Variable points, n/a, Vim: A complicated power, described in full in *Realms of Power: Faerie*, Chapter 2. It allows the Silver Lady to whisk humans away into the Faerie lands.

Equipment: Royal robe of a dull, metallic gray. Jewelry that contains arsenic crystals. Crown of lead and arsenic. Boar spear, bow, silver scale armor. Her clothing and most of her equipment is an extension of her physical form, and switches as required by the story's progress, without concentration or actions on her part.

Vis: 7 pawns Perdo, the skull of the dead necromancer.

Appearance: A study in metallic lead and unnatural white, the Queen of the Hills looks a little like a goddess, or a mad sorceress, or like a succubus. Opinions differ, possibly because her form is mutable.

THE SILVER LADY'S MOUNT

The Silver Lady's Mount is not an independent faerie: it is an extension of her body, like her weapons and clothes. As such it lacks Might, and uses her Characteristics, Pretenses, and Virtues.

Size: +3

Combat:

Tusks: Init 0, Attack +11, Defense +9, Damage +8*

* Does not include +5 due to Damaging Effect power. A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the piercing nature of these attacks, requires a Light Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, p.180.

Soak: +2 if surprised, +10 in combat (thick flakes of lead as mail)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)

Penalties for wounds suffered by the pig are also suffered by its mistress.

Equipment: Saddle, bridle, panniers, tusk sheathes of lead.

Appearance: The mount of the Silver Lady appears to be a massive hog, dull gray in color.

Averna's Hogs

The hogs of Averna are small, savage fighters. They prefer to charge their foes and gore, even when other tactics would be more sensible. Their flesh is filled with lead, and carrion animals that eat of it often go mad and attack their surroundings.

Averna's hogs could be adapted as player characters. The current Pretense list is too specialized outside a strictly combat role. The Monstrous Appearance or Negative Reaction Flaws, or the Positive Folktales Virtue, may suit the character.

Faerie Might: 10 (Animal or Corpus depending on effect)

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

Size: -2

Virtues and Flaws: Hybrid Form, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Increased Faerie Might, Improved Characteristics, Personal Power (supernatural agility); Little; Incognizant, Traditional Ward (gold), Vulnerable to Gold (Minor - Soak against gold is 0).

Personality Traits: Fierce +3, Happy +3, Interested in self-preservation -2

Combat:

Tusks: Init +5, Attack +10*, Defense +12, Damage +6

2 *wicked little knives*: Init +11, Attack +9*, Defense +5, Damage +1**

* Does not include bonus for charging (+5 tusks, +6 knives) if using the optional rules presented in *Lords of Men* page 125.)

** A character who suffers a wound that draws blood (which, given the piercing nature of these attacks, requires a Light Wound) suffers arsenic poisoning, as detailed in *ArM5*, page 180.

Soak: If surprised +2 (Hide), if prepared for combat +7 (lead scales)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Pretenses: Athletics 5 (dangerous stunts), Area Lore: Mendip Hills 3 (hiding

Inhabitants, cont'd.

places), Awareness 5 (mortals), Brawl 5 (knives), Hunt 3 (humans), Stealth 3 (the poisoned lands).

Powers:

Supernatural Agility, 3 points, constant, Corpus: Allows the creature, when performing activities that require the Agility Pretense, to perform minor tricks like scaling sheer walls, dropping safely from great heights, and leaping onto galloping horses as they pass.

Equipment: Knives, armor.

Vis: 2 pawns Animal in gnawed pig bones.

Appearance: The hogs are small, muscled humanoids. They have a pigs' snouts and tusks in low-set heads that look slightly too large for their bodies.

PANDIUS

Pandius is a demon who teaches methods of secretly poisoning rivals. He does this to corrupt fractious groups in society, by making people fearful enough that they, too, resort to homicide by poison, in what they consider self defense. Pandius lacks a beautiful form, in which to entice humans, so it selects acolytes, helps them to kill rivals, and then uses them to draw in further followers.

This demon is served by swarms of maggots, a type of tiny, flying demon that causes madness. Maggots are described in detail in *Realms of Power: The Infernal* on page 72.

Order: Pandius is a Vessel of Iniquity

Infernal Might: 20 (Animal)

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

Size: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Hateful +6, Dislikes direct sunlight +1.

Reputations: Poisoner 1 (Infernal).

Hierarchy 1

Combat:

Great claws: Init +3, Attack +13, Defense +13, Damage +6*

Stinger: Init +6, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +9**

* The claws are used to either strike or grapple. Pinned enemies are automatically hit by the stinger in the following round.

** Any successful attack is poisonous, as per arsenic, detailed in *ArM5*, page 180.

Soak: +8 scorpion form

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

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

Abilities: Awareness 4 (the Divine), Brawl 6 (claws), Guile 6 (provoke fear), Intrigue 6 (provoke fear), Legerdemain 6 (adulterating food and drink), Stealth 6 (assassinating), Teaching 6 (how to kill people secretly)

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem:

For 1 point, allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. For 5 points, allows the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure. Pandius is unusual in that he uses dreams to help his acolytes plan. Most victims are just shown a single plan, and practice killing an enemy repeatedly in dreams. This doesn't affect the Abilities of the victim, but provides a bonus for the scene in which they attempt the practised plan, of up to +6, depending on the thoroughness of the preparations.

Form of Wickedness, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem:

Allows the demon to manufacture a solid form of pure sin. It forces those around the demon to begin suspecting their neighbors of poisoning them if they lack sufficient Magic Resistance. A Stamina stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is needed every hour, failure costing a Fatigue level, and a success breaking this Power's hold. The Power also ends when the victim falls unconscious. A botch causes temporary insanity and imposes a Minor Personality Flaw appropriate to the sin. This form may only be maintained for one round, after which the demon must take spiritual or material form.

Form of The Venomous Evil, 0 points, Init 0, Animal:

After assuming corporeal form, see Form of Wickedness, earlier, the demon can take solid form. See Appearance for details.

Possession, variable points, Init +2, Mentem:

The demon stores some of its Might in a temporary pool in a victim, after over-

coming Magic Resistance. When this pool is spent, the possession ends. The two pieces of the demon can only communicate if in sight of each other. The demon controls the actions of the host, but must spend Might to have the victim perform tasks they consider abhorrent. This requires the demon to make a roll of stress die + spent Might points against the victim's Personality Trait roll. It also costs 1 Might to use a Supernatural ability, or the same number of Might points a possessed supernatural creature spends to use one of its powers. Pandius may possess multiple people simultaneously, and sometimes rides along in the bodies of acolytes, using his Abilities to aid in assassinations.

Contagious Obsession, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem:

When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power Penetrates Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality Trait of Fears (rival) and at the next opportunity he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality Trait, to avoid attempting to harm the object of his fear. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently. Any human who becomes a victim of this demon's Obsession power becomes a carrier of that Power and can pass it on to anyone he harms, using the same series of rolls. Every added victim costs the demon 1 Might point, and the Power ceases to be contagious if either he runs out of Might or a day passes without someone being infected. Even after the power ceases being contagious, it continues to harm the afflicted as described earlier.

Weakness: Will not cross fresh running water.

Vis: 4 pawns of Perdo, stinger

Appearance: The natural appearance of this demon is sin made manifest as a formless dark shape. He can, however, take a solid form, appearing as a huge, beastly man, with the armor, pincers, and tail of a scorpion.

DEMONS

to the site to seek Arcane Connections to the poisoner, or to lay in wait for her, when they suspect she needs to resupply.

An area so filled with poison and death is an obvious haven for the Infernal. The

characters have stumbled upon a demonic scheme, and their investigations indicate that the diabolists will meet here on an ill-



omed night. The player characters can either ambush the diabolists as they arrive or, if they are feeling confident, let them summon the demon to whom they answer. The player characters can then attack the source of the problem. A suggested demon, Pandius, is described earlier.

METALLIC ARSENIC

A Verditius magus has a (correct) theory that arsenic salts could be smelted into a metal. He needs to set up a laboratory in a place rich in arsenic to perfect the process. Once the Verditius has this metal, he can

determine its magical properties (its Material Bonuses), and create alloys with it, so that arsenic-laced magical items become practical. Some of the faeries already have crystalline arsenic, which aids his research greatly if acquired.

Metallic arsenic is the most fragile, brittle metal known to magicians. If used in items, it requires encasement in other, more durable, materials for its protection. Arsenic has the following material bonuses:

- +8 magic that kills directly, without intermediate media.
- +4 preservation of dead things from decay
- +2 stimulating the ill

RAMPAGING MONSTER

The site has been disturbed, by characters following one of the other hooks, suggested earlier. The churned earth liberates a poisonous elemental. Elementals, being magical, prefer to live in Magic auras, so the

Digging For Arsenic Is Dangerous

Player characters digging for arsenic must be careful not to breathe in the dust that their digging liberates. Characters may improve their chances of survival by taking only small amounts, wearing clothes that fully enclose the body, wearing a facemask of finely woven cloth, watering the soil so that it is less dusty, taking soil using a coring tool rather than a shovel, and washing thoroughly afterward.

Characters taking no particular precautions are poisoned. Characters taking some precautions must make a roll, using Dexterity and a suitable Ability, against an Ease Factor of 5, +1 per dose. Characters taking comprehensive precautions may remove industrial quantities of arsenic in safety.

Buckland Saint Mary: Where The Faeries Fear to Go

One town in Somerset, Buckland Saint Mary, is never visited by "faeries" because the faeries and the pixies had a war, and the pixies so utterly annihilated the faeries that they can never return. Aside from making this a place which Faerie Blooded characters, of many types, should avoid, in fear for their lives, it makes the town valuable to magi researching the battlefield. The War of the Faeries and the Pixies was a faerie representation of the Schism War, and pixies of the town know how to find the site. The pixies in this area are allied to, or even

become, will-o-the-wisps, and can lead a character through the forest in that role.

The pixies in this little town know the traditional wards for many local faeries, and are happy to give them to humans. The faeries, in turn, have told everyone who will listen that pixies cannot harm a person wearing a coat inside out. Wiser people have pointed out that this is true, but pixies when riled are relentless little things and there are many, many more of them than you might imagine.

creature raids into the mundane world, and returns to the battlefield.

Researching the Battlefield

The superficial secrets of this site are easy to discover. Many of the histories of the Schism War mention this battlefield. Locals can be convinced to tell tales of the Silver Lady, her powers and her servants. The deeper secrets of this site can only be discovered during stories.

Hooks for Using the Battlefield Again

Many of the original hooks offered for the site can be used to suggest a return. Two other hooks make for stronger stories

if the players know the site from earlier game sessions.

Return from Faerie

This site oozes magic, and is inhabited by Faeries with the power to spirit humans away for centuries on end. It is possible that magi who have fallen out of the world will return on this site. The player characters may become aware of the magus's imminent return, as a reward in some other story. A character away so long may need help to return: either magical assistance to open a way, or shelter and support while he learns the ways of the current century.

The Second Inscription

Player characters may become aware of the Second Inscription. They may rescue it from another person aware of its existence, particularly if they are allied to local faeries. Having seized the record of the inscrip-

tion, the player characters may cast it, or, alternatively, they can research the strange language in which it is written, and the odd ingredients in the mystical ink. The First Inscription, the scroll of the Second Inscription, and the mystical ink, each provide guaranteed Insight for Original Research.

Chapter Seven

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Ireland. Beneath an island on a lake in a remote part of the country is a gate to Purgatory itself, put there by Saint Patrick to teach his congregation of the horror that awaits the sinful in the afterlife. The canons who tend the site can cause petitioners to cross over and witness the punishment of sinners on the eight fields of torment, a spectacle that can bring its own spiritual rewards as the culmination of a pilgrimage. The pure might even get a glimpse of the Earthly Paradise, where shriven souls wait in bliss for Judgment Day.

For those less interested in spiritual improvement, the Purgatory of Saint Patrick still holds interest. For those who dare its fiery depths there are opportunities to fight with demons, to speak with souls who are beyond the reach of Hermetic magic, or, for the truly daring, a chance to ransom a soul from punishment and restore her to life!

Myths, Legends, History, and Rumors

An immense serpent-like monster called a *peist* used to live in the waters of Lough Dearg. When Saint Patrick came to the region he took up residence on an island on the lough, but when bothered by the *peist* he banished it, along with all other serpents in Ireland. He proceeded to preach his ministry to the people of Donegal. After laying out the basics of Christianity, he told them of Hell, then of

Purgatory. They did not believe a word of it. Vexed at the obstinacy of his hearers, Patrick prayed to God that he might be able to show them a convincing token. Accordingly, one day when he was in the wilderness, Christ appeared to Patrick and gave him a book of gospels and a staff. He was then shown the secret entrance to a cave on the island. Patrick was told that anyone who made a pilgrimage here, and spent a day and a night in the cave, would receive a wondrous vision. Patrick arranged for an abbey to be built on this spot, with a door bound in iron to guard the entrance to the cave; the key to this door was placed in the possession of the abbot.

Reflections of Heaven & Hell

This Mythic Location is divided into two sections: the temporal and the spiritual. These correspond respectively to the structures in the physical world, and the contents of the regio that those structures guard.

The Islands

Lough Dearg (pronounced "lokh jarg" and meaning *red lake*) is situated in the northwest of Ireland in the Kingdom of Tír Chonaill, surrounded completely by mountains. As the name suggests, the water has a reddish tinge, a remnant of the *peist's* blood. There are forty-six islands on the lough, and all but two are barren. Inisphadraig (pronounced "IN-ish FOD-rug") is the largest of

the islands and is named after Saint Patrick; nearby is Inisnaoimh ("IN-ish NEEV," or Saint's Island). Both islands formerly composed a single Celtic monastic community, but this has been replaced by an Augustinian house on Inisphadraig alone; Inisnaoimh has no permanent residents, although it has a church guarding the cave containing the entrance to Purgatory.

The Canons of Patrick's Island

In 1130 Saint Malachy established a chapter house of Augustinian Canons Regular on Inisphadraig, whose mother house was the Abbey of Saints Peter and Paul in Armagh. The Augustinians assumed authority over both islands, and it is from this time that the tradition of pilgrimage to the Purgatory really began.

There is a Dominion aura of 3 on Inisphadraig, which rises to 4 within the bounds of the Augustinian chapter house. The house holds eight canons, although has sufficient room for twelve. They also maintain a substantial alms house for the comfort of the penitents. Known as Black Canons for the color of their habits, the regular clergy of Patrick's Island take their role very seriously, and brook no lapses in discipline amongst their petitioners. Troublesome pilgrims are expelled immediately by Brother Bressal (see later), whose Divine Form makes his commands particularly compelling.

Every night for the 76 days of the pilgrimage season (see A Destination for Pilgrimage, later), the canons draw lots to determine which pilgrim is rowed over to

What You've Heard

If the character has Organization Lore: Church and is familiar with the Irish Church (through a specialty, or from being raised in Ireland for example), he can substitute this Ability for Area Lore. Characters with Area Lore: Purgatory receive a +3 bonus to this roll.

WHAT IS KNOWN BY ALL

- Purgatory is the destination of many souls after death; it is like Hell, but has the promise of Heaven after spending some ill-defined amount of time suffering for one's unrepented sins.

WIDELY KNOWN

- As well as souls, Purgatory is filled with the demons who supply the punishment.
- A roll made with Theology against this Ease Factor reminds the character of Saint Augustine's four-fold division of the afterlife into the *boni* (the saved), the *mali* (the damned), the *mali non valde* (the not completely evil), and the *boni*

non valde (the not completely good).

The destination of each is Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and the Earthly Paradise, respectively.

- Saint Augustine described Purgatory as a state rather than a place, but commentators since him have tended towards Purgatory being in a physical location. There has been no definitive word from the Church on this, but the Purgatory of Saint Patrick is the name of a pilgrimage site in Ireland.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- An entrance to Purgatory can be found on an island in Lough Dearg; people who enter are shown what punishments await them when they die.
- Purgatory is just one stop on the road to Heaven; after purgation a soul is supposed to move on to the Earthly Paradise, and receive a vision of the glories awaiting him in Heaven on Judgment Day.
- The fires of Purgatory are capable of changing someone's Essential Nature;

things that are burned within its furnaces are forever altered.

- There is a mirror or window in Purgatory in which one can see any soul, living or dead, no matter where she is, just by saying her name. Demons use this mirror to watch chosen souls and target them for corruption.
- A soul was once said to have escaped from Purgatory, and come back to life.

LOST SECRETS

- Sometimes, those locked into the cave on Lough Dearg do not return; it is understood that a penitent can perish in Purgatory and become a permanent resident.
- Purgatory has an entrance to Hell, and the Earthly Paradise has an entrance to Heaven. A living soul might possibly be able to enter either the Infernal Realm or the Divine Realm after his trip to Purgatory.
- The Fountain of Youth is said to lie within Purgatory.

Inisnaoimh for the ritual. Blank lots are inserted into a bag along with those bearing the names of the hopeful. The drawing of the lots is blessed by Brother Bressal (see Insert), which causes the most worthy or the most needy to be chosen; if none fill that criterion, or if patience would prove to be instructive, then the canon draws one of the blank lots and no-one is chosen that night. Pilgrims who have undertaken the journey together can choose to enter a single lot for the entire group, in which case they all undergo the ritual together if they are chosen. Non-Christians are not prevented from entering Purgatory, but many would consider it irreligious and disrespectful to do so.

The Cave on Saint's Island

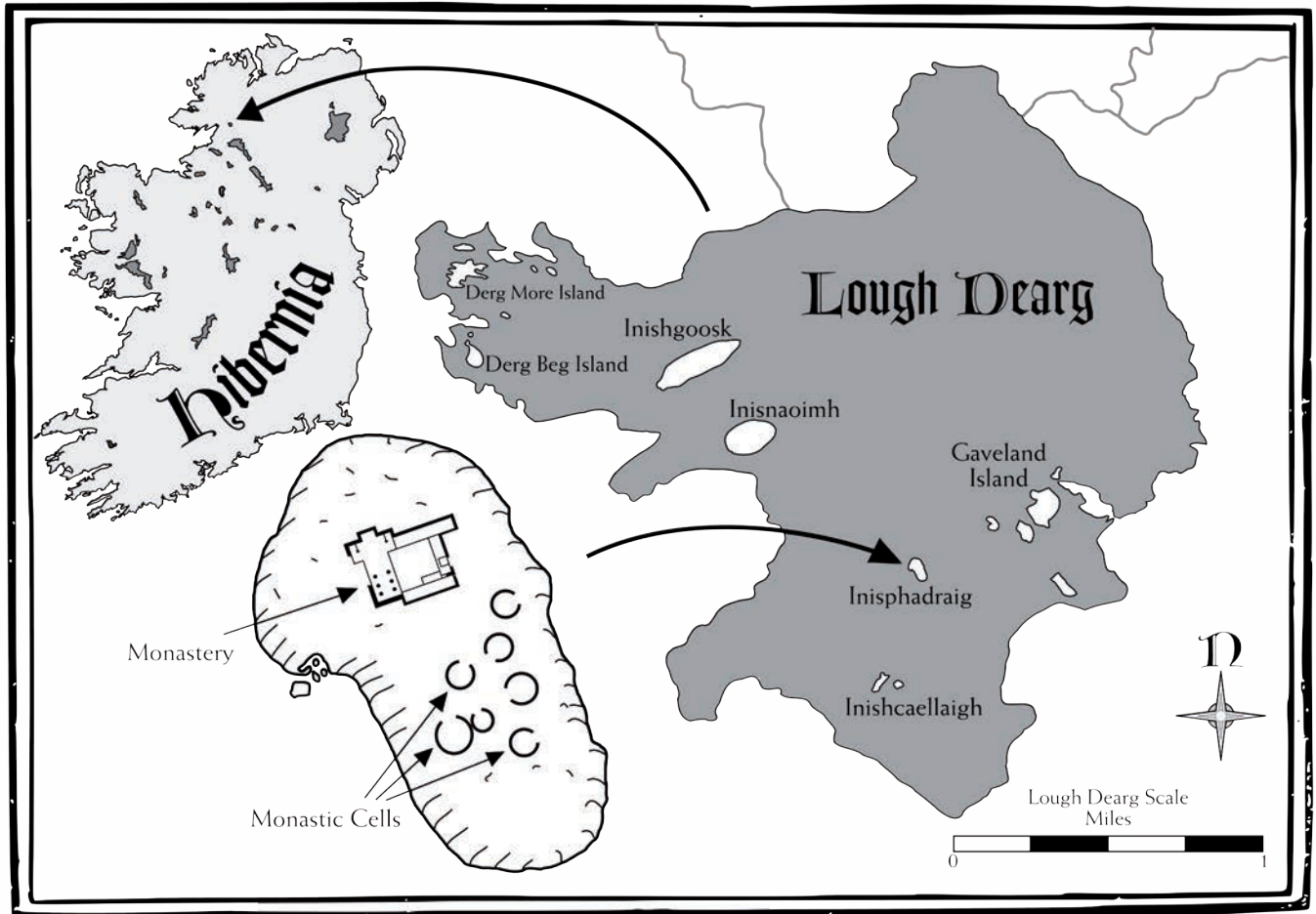
The aura on Inisnaoimh is an Empyrean aura of level 4. Empyrean auras (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 7) are Divine auras that do not derive from worship.

The only structure on the island is a small church, and built into the crypt of the church is a cave-like cell. When people are brought over for the ritual, they spend fifteen days in prayer and fasting in this church. There may be five or six people at any one time at different stages of their vigils; more if a group is preparing together. When the vigil is complete, a Mass is held, and the officiating priest asks the penitents for the third and final time if they are prepared to go through with the trip. The penitent is installed in the cell at dusk, and the door is left locked until just before dusk on the following day, when a new penitent is installed.

The entrance to the cave is kept locked by the canons. It has a narrow entrance, just two feet wide and three feet high followed by a short flight of steps. The chamber beyond is only five feet high and nine feet long. There is a second chamber of similar dimensions. Here, the canons conduct a rite amounting to an imitation of death. Those undergoing this rite are laid upon a slab and the canons perform the Office for the Dead.

As part of this Mass, Brother Bressal leads the other canons in ceremonially casting two Divine effects. The first causes all spirits and souls to become visible (including those of the penitents); the second opens a gate to Purgatory, allowing the penitent to pass through if he wishes. Characters can follow their comrade into Purgatory if they wish since they can now see his soul. The canon has True Faith and has been trained in Divine magic, and he is assisted by four other canons who have had training in the Purity Method. He can rely on a Ceremony bonus to his casting total of at least +16 (equal to the sum of his assistants' Stamina + Purity, see *Realms of Power: the Divine Revised Edition*, page 36 for more details on the Ceremony Ability). He also spends a Faith Point when opening the passage to Purgatory.

Although referred to as a vision, this is not a hallucinatory experience. Anyone passing through the gate to Purgatory is bodily transported into the regio, and experience for real the torments and wonders beyond. Very occasionally, a person does not return



from Purgatory. Brother Bressal has his name inscribed on a plaque which is installed in a secret crypt. The Guardians of Purgatory say daily Masses for such lost souls.

Virtually everyone entering Purgatory from Inisnaoimh receives the Vision of Hell described below. The lucky few who defeat the perils they encounter also receive the Vision of Heaven. Characters who possess True Faith are spared the horrors of Purgatory if they wish, and may choose to experience just the Vision of Heaven.

THE PILGRIMS' PROGRESS

Most pilgrims who enter the Purgatory of Saint Patrick do so to fulfill the requirements of their penance and expurgate their sins. They witness the horrors of Purgatory, in particular the tortures that are applied to those guilty of their particular moral faults.

Through the strange rules of the place, they tend to see souls that they knew in life suffering for their sins. Pilgrims pass through all eight fields of pain until they reach the Bridge to Paradise, and if they are lucky, receive more than a mere glimpse of the Earthly Paradise before being brought back to earth.

Much as the Vision of Hell is intended to be a warning to the sinful, the Vision of Heaven is a promise of the bliss that will follow Purgatory once sins have been punished. The Vision of Heaven shows characters that God is merciful, and that the horrors of Purgatory will one day cease. This Vision encourages characters to live exemplary lives, so as to shorten or even eliminate their time in Purgatory.

While the Visions of Hell and Heaven are deeply meaningful experiences to those who undergo the trial, they are not ideal material for a roleplaying game. Characters are

expected to witness but not interfere or suffer the punishments themselves; the Vision of Hell is intended to be a warning, a particularly grisly sightseeing tour. As a result, there is little for the players of pilgrims to do in Purgatory other than to listen to the storyguide's description. It is recommended that a character's vision is not described in detail, but instead that the storyguide concentrates on a handful of the character's biggest sins. If multiple characters enter the Purgatory — either separately or together — then gloss over much of the journey and concentrate on describing the punishments due a specific moral fault born by each character.

However, not all trips to Purgatory are made for the purpose of spiritual improvement, and these journeys are more interactive for the characters involved. This involves a simple choice to abandon the guides and to strike out independently into the regio. A danger with this approach is that mortals

stand out in Purgatory, and attract the attention of both demons and souls. Furthermore, it is easy to get lost in the apparently endless fields of punishment, and the characters will need to find their own way to the Bridge to Paradise (see later).

If not accompanied by one of the monkish guides, a character who approaches a field of punishment where the sin punished matches his own vices risks getting dragged into the field by demons and subjected to the same punishments as the tortured souls. Characters are attacked by a group of iurgatores (see Inhabitants, later) who attempt to overpower the character. If this happens they join the sinners on the field of punishment. The torments suffered can be simulated using Deprivation rolls (ArM5, page 180) made every hour, but the victim never suffers Unconsciousness; instead skipping straight from Dazed to a Light Wound. The demons cease their torture to avoid an Incapacitating Wound, allowing the victim to recover so that the torments can start again. Wounds inflicted by demonic torture are excruciating but temporary. Once torture ends they recover as if they were Fatigue levels with the same penalty; thus a Light Wound recovers in 10 minutes, a Medium Wound becomes a Light Wound in 30 minutes, and a Heavy Wound becomes a Medium Wound after 60 minutes. Being tormented seems to last for months or years to the victim. A character who dies in Purgatory is treated no differently from a character dying elsewhere; his soul is sent to the place that it has earned (probably somewhere here in Purgatory). A church burial is not possible in the unhal- lowed soil of Purgatory, so the character's spirit remains with its body.

As well as attracting attention from demons, unaccompanied characters are mobbed by the souls of sinners. Most cry out pitifully from their places of punishment, but some temporarily escape their tormentors to plead for surcease, mistaking the mortals for angels or saints. Amongst these souls is occasionally someone that the characters knew before their death, as these souls seem to be uncannily drawn towards familiar faces. These souls can usually do little to help or

Time in Purgatory

Time is an odd thing in Purgatory. The ruler of Purgatory (see Pasiel, later) is capable of manipulating the individual experience of every soul to maximize its suffering. One soul might experience a single, endless moment of torment, whereas another experiences the relentless march of decrepitude and senility several times a day. For living characters, time appears to pass at the rate experienced by nearby sinners; or, if they are unlucky or foolish enough to draw Pasiel's attention, at a rate determined by its whim.

In the Earthly Paradise, however, there is no sensation of time at all. There are no heavenly bodies or changing seasons, and nothing therein ages, spoils, or expires. External frames of reference such as the duration of a spell or enchantment are meaningless, since a minute, a day, and a year all seem to take the same amount

of time.

Regardless of the apparent passage of time, living characters returning to the mundane realm arrive at a point determined by the inscrutable powers of the Divine. For most short trips into Purgatory, this is the same night in which they left. Characters who get lost in Purgatory, or who achieve the Earthly Paradise, may return much later, if at all. Either way, characters make aging rolls for the time passed in the mundane realm, not the apparent time spent in Purgatory or the Earthly Paradise. Characters cannot use the differential passage of time to gain experience points; the distraction of Purgatory or the Earthly Paradise is too great to allow study, practice, or receiving instruction. Story experience applies as normal once the characters return from their ordeals.

hinder the characters (see Inhabitants, later), but some still retain a measure of their former life.

The Vision of Hell

*Then said the knight, "I fear you not,
I give me to Him that had me wrought."*

*Then the fiends made a fire anon
of black pitch and brimstone,
they cast the knight therein to burn,
and all began on him to gurn [=grin].*

Owayne Miles

The Vision of Hell is not the true Hell, but rather a trip through Purgatory. In the division described by Saint Augustine, Purgatory is the domain of the *mali non valde* (the not completely evil). The rite performed in the cell by Brother Bressal opens a gate to Purgatory, and the character is guided through. To the character it seems like the canon has brought him to a door in the cave and guided him through. If the holy magician has employed his miraculous power that enables characters to see souls, then the other characters in the room can follow the affected character across the regio boundary

and into Purgatory.

Upon going through the door, characters enter a long hall without walls. This is a Divine regio of level 6, but the character is guided through by the canon, and need not make a Regio Sight roll (ArM5, page 189). Should he wish to return to the cave under his own power, the Ease Factor is 9 for moving from a Divine aura of 6 (the hall) to a Divine aura of 4 (the cave).

In the hall, characters are greeted by a man dressed in a black robe like the Augustinian Canons Regular, but not someone whom they met in the chapter house. The man tells the characters that they are in grave danger, and that their lives and souls are at stake. They are exhorted to resist the temptations of the fiends that wait ahead for them, but equally they are warned not to ever turn back; should they attempt to return without completing the journey, their souls may be eternally consigned to Hell. If the characters pledge to continue, the guiding monk leads them through an immense fire which springs up in the hall. The flames do not burn, but when they emerge from the fire they in the first part of Purgatory, the Field of Chains. Purgatory lies within a Tartaran Infernal regio of 8 (see Insert), but again, the charac-

Brother Bressal

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

Size: 0

Age: 57 (54)

Decrepitude: 0 (4)

Warping Score: 3 (10)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Faith Score: 2 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Religious*; Ceremony, True Faith, Affinity with Intervention, Educated, Improved Characteristics, Pious, Monastic Vows; Ability Block (martial Abilities), Fragile Constitution, Soft-Hearted, Visions

* Minor Social Status Virtue for canons, see *The Church*, page 26

Personality Traits: Pious +5, Stern +2, Willing to Bend Rules +1

Reputations: Sainly 2 (Local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense 0, Damage n/a

Soak: +8 (includes +5 from Divine Form)

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 3 (writing about God), Ceremony 4 (Intervention), Charm 2 (penitents), Civil & Canon Law 4 (penance), Concentration 3 (prayer), Dominion Lore 4 (regiones), Folk Ken 3 (penitents), Latin 5 (Church), Leadership 3 (regular clergy), Living Language: Gaelic 5 (Ullaid), Organization Lore: Church 6 (Augustinians), Profession: Gardener 2 (vegetables), Survival 2 (islands), Theology 4 (Purgatory)

Methods and Powers: Meditation 5 (Divine guidance), Purity 6 (regiones), Intervention 9 (healing), Understanding 5 (fairness)

Effects of Divine Ascent: Divine Form — Commanding Aura (add Warping Score to Magic Resistance, *Aura of Rightful Authority* with Penetration 13, +5 bonus

to Soak; impious actions have 9 extra botch dice, takes a wound every time he sins)

Equipment: Black robes, wooden cross

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A man past his prime, and yet still maintaining much of the vigor of his earlier years. He wears the robes of his order and a tonsure; his wispy hair is pure white and forms a veritable halo around his head. His eyes are pale gray. Brother Bressal has begun to embody God's Light through Warping, and radiates a majesty that he cannot hide. To the impious his visage is terrifying, but to the virtuous the sight of him is a balm against the ills of the world.

Brother Bressal is the guardian of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick. He was instructed in Divine magic by the previous guardian, who himself was taught by the Patrician monks who dwelt on Inisphadraig before the current chapter was established. The Guardians of Purgatory are a small Holy Tradition with Meditation, Purity, Understanding, and Intervention as their favored Methods and Powers. Through Intervention, Brother Bressal is capable of sensing manifestations of the supernatural world and causing these portentous apparitions to become visible to others. He can also draw the essence of God into his body or another's, transforming the body and perfecting it according to God's will. Through Understanding he can learn hidden information about the future or the Divine will. See *Realms of Power: the Divine Revised Edition* Chapter 3, for more details on Divine magic.

Brother Bressal typically has 3 Faith points, two for his Faith score and an additional one for participating in the sacrament of the Eucharist each morning.

NEW MIRACULOUS EFFECTS

These three Miraculous Effects are employed as part of the duties of Brother Bressal.

They use Ranges and Durations listed on page 68 of *Realms of Power: the Divine Revised Edition*. Range: Presence affects anyone within the caster's personal aura, which is 15 paces for Brother Bressal; Duration: Office lasts until the next hour of formal prayer, usually about three hours.

And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate

Meditation, Understanding Level 15

R: Per, D: Office, T: Ind

As he handles a lot representing someone who wishes to enter the Purgatory of Saint Patrick, the recipient receives a vision telling him whether or not to choose it. The recipient can examine more lots for the duration of the power. This power might defeat any attempt to magically tamper with the lots, depending on how the tampering is done.

(Base 10, +1 Office)

Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up

Meditation, Intervention Level 25

R: Presence, D: Office, T: Room

Causes all spirits and souls within the target area to become visible. This includes the spirits of living people, which appear as the person usually does. If the person is invisible or otherwise changed from his usual shape, his normal appearance is superimposed on his current appearance.

(Base 4, +2 Presence, +1 Office, +2 Room)

For thou hast power of life and death: thou leadest to the gates of hell, and bringest up again

Purity, Intervention Level 40

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

This miraculous power can only be used at a worldly entrance to Purgatory. A doorway into Purgatory is opened, and those who pass through must find their own way back.

(Base 35, +1 Touch)

ters need not make a Regio Sight roll to cross over since the guide has led them through. Should they wish to return on their own to the hall, the Ease Factor for the Regio Sight roll is 33 (moving from an Infernal aura of 8 to a Divine aura of 6).

The monkish guides are as much a feature of Purgatory as they are physical be-

ings. They do little other than to show the characters the way; their presence also prevents demons from attacking the characters as they witness Purgatory's sights. If they are attacked for some reason, they are simple to kill; they do not fight back, and should be treated as mortal noncombatants.

Purgatory appears as a cavern, so vast

that the roof is lost in darkness and smoke. The floor of the cavern is filled with the human souls and their hideous demonic torturers. The regio is dimly lit by ubiquitous fires that emit malodorous smoke reeking of brimstone and burnt flesh. There is constant noise caused by the screams, wails, and cries of countless souls in suffering.



The characters can meet any Christian soul in Purgatory. Those of non-Christian beliefs go elsewhere upon death. They can seek out specific souls by seeking an appropriate Field of Torment — an Intelligence + Theology against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals which fields punish which sins. Alternatively, the souls (or even the demons, if their word can be trusted) might be able to indicate the location of particular individuals. However, visitors have an uncanny propensity for stumbling across a soul that they recognize, and may well meet a close friend or hated enemy by chance.

THE FIELD OF CHAINS

In the Field of Chains, wounded naked figures of both sexes lay face down, held in place by thick iron bands. Lurgatores walk all on top of the supine bodies, cracking spines and crunching rib cages as they do so. These unfortunate are being punished for the sin of sloth, not simply laziness but a lack of commitment

to God's laws. Failing to act is as much a sin as acting contrary to one's morals, and warrants punishment on the Field of Chains.

THE FIELD OF NAILS

In the Field of Nails, tormented figures lie face up, pinned down by red hot nails through their hands and feet. Black toads sit on their chests and fiery adders bite at their backs, inflicting a gnawing hunger with their venom. They are being punished for sins of self-indulgence, such as gluttony, lechery, and hate.

THE FIELD OF HOOKS

Here, men and woman are hanging by various body parts from hooks, some of which descend from the sky, others are attached to stakes rising from the blood-soaked soil. Some hooks are attached to vertical iron frames, and lurgatores stoke the flames beneath them, making the iron glow

Tartaran Regiones

(Summarized from *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, pages 16–17)

Tartaran regiones are places of hell-fire. This fire requires no source of fuel, and in fact burns rocks, water, and other substances which are not normally combustible. This hell-fire forms into lakes of fire, and may coat any surface no matter what its orientation.

- No Fatigue levels can be recovered within the regio, and all Fatigue levels lost are Long-Term Fatigue.
- Characters carrying substantial amounts of metal are affected by continual *Heat of the Searing Forge*.
- Flames inflict +5 to +35 fire damage if touched, depending upon how much of the body is immersed.
- Add sum of the sinful Personality Traits to all fire or heat Damage Totals, counting negative virtuous traits as sinful.

hot. These are the perpetrators of fraud: thieves, hypocrites, false witnesses, oath breakers, forgers, and the like.

THE WHEEL OF FIRE

Sinners in this field are affixed to an immense wheel that burns with a ferocious heat. With much groaning and screaming, the wheel turns, and those bound to it start to burn, slowly at first, but are soon blazing away. When the fire reaches their bones it consumes them utterly, leaving nothing but fine white ash — and yet somehow they are still affixed to the wheel, whole and anew, ready for another round of burning. Those suffering this punishment are guilty of the sin of covetousness: more than a simple lust for material wealth, this is the sin of wanting — and taking — what other people have.

THE MOUNTAIN OF BLOOD

The slopes of a blood-red mountain are the scene of the next punishment: a frigid blast of wind carries victims aloft into the

air, covering them with ice and snow. The wind then reverses and hurls its passengers into a stinking river of filth. Iurgatores use their hooks to retrieve the sinners from the river, whereupon the blast of wind captures them again.

This punishment is reserved for the violent; those who abuse their neighbors or their selves. Confined to this field are murderers and batterers, also the profligates who wantonly destroy purely for the love of destruction, anarchists, malicious gossips, and suicides. Often, punishment here follows punishment on the Field of Nails for the self-indulgence of the sin that then led to violent behavior.

THE HOUSE OF FLAMES AND SMOKE

A sturdy hall built of stones stands here; those entering are confronted by the immense heat and acrid smoke emanating from it. Inside are circular pits, each one filled with molten brass, lead, copper, and caustic brimstone. The men and women being punished here are immersed in the pits, some to their navel, some to the chest, and others to the chin.

Those who are punished in the House of Flames and Smoke are sinners who have indulged in perverse appetites that have corrupted the body or soul. This includes alcoholics, gluttony to the point of ill-health, gambling to the point of poverty, and the like. Those who have committed violence against God are also here — blasphemers, perpetrators of bestiality, usurers, and the like. Like the Mountain of Blood, sinners punished here have usually also been punished on one (or more) of the previous fields; this field is about the consequences that come from self-indulgence or sloth.

THE ABYSSAL PIT

As characters approach this field, they are confronted with a gout of flame arising from the earth burning in seven colors. The flames seem to grasp and grab at characters, and those succumbing are dragged into a

mighty pit. There is the sensation of falling, but the bottom is never reached. There is no sign of other sinners here. The pit is a complete deprivation of all sensation, a mind-numbing absence of God's gifts to humanity — the breath of life, the spark of inspiration, the gifts of reason. Each sinner is utterly alone in an apparently infinite space.

The Abyssal Pit is the punishment for pride, often considered the most fundamental of all sins. It is a sin to which magi are particularly prone, for they have the capacity to contravene nature with their magic. Pride makes them do so not out of need, but because they can. Freedom from the Pit can only be achieved once the character is properly humbled.

THE BOILING RIVER

The horrors of Purgatory culminate with terrible and immense beasts bearing sixty eyes and sixty hands, who grab the sinners crowded before them and hurl them into a stinking boiling river of sulfur and blood. This is the most terrifying of the sights in Purgatory so far, and characters should be shaken by the sight of it. Those consigned to the Boiling River have betrayed those who had special reason to trust them. These are the sins of Judas Iscariot, committing traitorous acts against their spouses, family, guests,

or lords. An adulterer, after being punished for his act of lust, ends up here for the betrayal inherent in his adultery. The man who murders his liege is similarly punished first for the murder, then for the treachery.

THE MOUTH OF HELL

The Boiling River flows through a deep gorge and into the mouth of a monstrous and hideous beast the size of a mountain. This is the entrance to Hell. It is guarded either side by two seraphim (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 21), placed there by God to prevent the egress of damned souls and demons alike. The fact that there are demons on earth suggests that this security is insufficient; nevertheless these mighty angels discourage with extreme prejudice anyone trying to enter or leave Hell.

The Bridge to Paradise

There is a single bridge that crosses the Boiling River. The characters are told by his monk-like guides that this is the bridge to Paradise. They step back, because they cannot follow him, or force him to cross. The bridge is carved out of the naked rock, and is knife-thin. It appears to be hundreds of yards across, and the river descends into a

The Furnace

The Furnace underneath the House of Flame and Smoke is the source of all of Purgatory's flames. Its slag heats the Boiling River (see later) and flows into Hell. The Furnace is constantly stoked by the Iurgatores, and Xaphan, the Forge-Man of Hell (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 76) is occasionally found here. Anything can be used as fuel, although souls are the most common commodity. The Furnace has a curious transmogrifying effect; certain things burnt within it are changed rather than consumed. If vis of any Art is thrown into the Furnace it can be retrieved as Ignem vis. Enchanted devices emerge untouched, but with their powers changed into Ignem effects of the same level. Mortals find that

one of their Virtues or Flaws is exchanged for a different Virtue or Flaw, with a fiery theme — a character might find that Inventive Genius becomes Puissant Ignem, or that Lame becomes Ignem Monstrosity (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 46). These changes seem to violate the Limit of Essential Nature and the Limit of Vis, and magi might be interested in using the Furnace as a source of Insight into original research on such subjects. It takes at least a season to obtain an insight, during which time the characters need to keep hidden from the demons who stoke the flames, whilst using the Furnace to transform all manner of objects. The Furnace provides an insight towards the creation of a 50th level effect.



The Mirror of Souls

Somewhere in the Abyssal Pit is a mirror that reveals the true face of anyone whose name is spoken. Having revealed the face, the viewer can then broaden the view to scry upon the person and his immediate environs. The Mirror actually works on any Sympathetic Connection, not just a name, and can even be used to find earth-bound demons. It can also find people in Purgatory, but not if they are in Heaven or Hell. Pasiel (see later) occasionally uses the Mirror to locate missing souls.

Merely displaying a face does not appear to need to Penetrate Magic Resistance, but subsequent scrying does, using the Mirror's Penetration of 50. The Mirror of Souls cannot be removed from the Abyssal Pit, but anyone studying it *in situ* for a season can use it as a source of insight for Original Research into subjects such as bypassing the Limit of Arcane Connections or the Limit of the Infernal. The Mirror provides an insight towards the creation of a 50th level effect.

deep ravine, making the journey even more precarious. Although this can only be barely seen from the foot of the bridge, the Boiling River descends into the true Hell, and characters on the bridge can get a glimpse of the Infernal Realm, although it seems a mile below them.

Those refusing to cross the bridge must find their own way out of Purgatory. This involves walking back to the Field of Chains, and attempting to cross the regio boundary into the hall, and from there, the cave.

Those setting forth on the bridge might not fancy their chances; it is narrower than the width of a foot. Those who have learned from the Vision of Hell, and resolved to change their behavior, find that each step becomes easier than the previous, and the Bridge to Paradise becomes wider and wider as they progresses along it. Characters who are here for selfish reasons must struggle with the bridge remaining knife-thin; those who persist must make three successive Dexterity + Athletics stress rolls

of Ease Factors 6, 9, and 12 to make it to the other side. Magic avails little, because the bridge is actually a regio boundary into the Earthly Paradise. Crossing the bridge on foot allows the character to enter the Divine regio automatically, but crossing in any other manner requires a Regio Sight roll of 37 (passing from an Infernal regio of level 8 to a Divine regio of level 8). Attempts to instantly transport oneself fail since they cannot cross the boundary, and those able to fly find themselves hopelessly mobbed by winged demons. Spells are not entirely useless; a magus could improve his balance, for example, or cast a Divine version of Piercing the Faerie Veil (ArM5, page 158).

Anyone falling from the Bridge to Paradise appears to plunge into the Boiling River, but is actually transported through the regio boundary out of Purgatory and back into the cave on Inisnaoimh.

The Vision of Heaven

*It was green, and full of flowers,
of many diverse colors;
it was green on every side
as meadows are on summer's tide.
[...] There they have the tree of life,
Therein the mirth, and never strife,
[...] There was no wrong, but ever right.
Ever day and never night.
There shone as bright and more clear,
Than any sun in the day does here.*

Owayne Miles

For those characters who have attained the Earthly Paradise, the bridge becomes wide enough to allow two carts to pass. Stepping off the end of the bridge takes the character from Purgatory's Infernal aura into the Earthly Paradise's Divine aura, specifically a Celestial regio of level 8. The Earthly Paradise is the domain of the Archangel Shamshiel, who has a Divine Might of 75. Although this angelic being watches over every aspect of the Earthly Paradise, characters visiting here will not meet him unless they do something foolish, such as try to eat from the Tree of Life.

Much like Purgatory, for most characters there is little to actually do in the Earthly Paradise other than witness its glory, but the storyguide should not be tempted to gloss over this part of the story. The Vision of Heaven is the character's reward for struggling through Purgatory and abjuring their sinful behavior. It is also a promise of what they can look forward to should they remain on the path of righteousness. This should make a lasting impression.

THE GATE OF PARADISE

At the end of the bridge is a gate of pure gold in a high wall of stone and steel. The gate is studded with topaz, pearls, sapphires, rubies, and diamonds. The gate opens in welcome as the characters approach, and from within spill dazzling light and the sweet smell of incense. An angel dresses the characters in cloaks made from cloth-of-gold, as they settle on their shoulders, any wounds or Fatigue that were incurred in Purgatory are healed instantly. Furthermore, each character receives one Faith point, which they may keep, or else spend at any time to negate the intense disorientation caused by the celestial regio (see Insert).

THE PROCESSION OF THE SAVED

The characters are next aware of an unearthly harmony of voices raised in praise of God, as a procession approaches. The men and women are clothed as kings, queens, cardinals, and regular clergy of all orders, and carry crosses, banners, candles, and golden palm branches. These are the saved who are awaiting entrance into Heaven after undergoing the torments of Purgatory.

A character might meet someone he knows amongst the throng: this must be someone who has died, but could be either a virtuous person from his recent past or a close acquaintance from further back. Colleagues, family members, or even rivals are suitable, particularly if their death took place during game play. However, all the saved met in the

Earthly Paradise are Christian; devotees of other Divine faiths are presumed to undergo a different experience after death. If there is a suitable person for the character, she steps forth from the joyous throng and greets the character warmly, regardless of their previous relationship. This person can act as a guide in the Earthly Paradise.

THE TOUR OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE

The characters are free to wander through the delightful meadows of the Earthly Paradise, adorned with flowers, fruit, grass, and trees. There are animals aplenty; all are handsome, noble looking beasts and are entirely devoid of aggression. The wonder of the place exceeds superlative adjectives, and is described in the source material as the absence of negatives instead: there is no night, no darkness, no cold, no heat, no pain, no disease, no hatred.

Any soul, such as a character's friend, can remind the characters that this is not Heaven. Everyone must suffer the purgatorial fires upon death, but the time spent there can be remitted with the masses, prayers, good deeds, and alms of the living. If the characters live a good life, their time in Purgatory can be negligible if they die wholly shriven of sin. Only those who refuse to repent are consigned to the Boiling River and taken to Hell. Here, in the Earthly Paradise, the blessed dwell until original sin is remitted at the end of days.

THE HEAVENLY PARADISE

The guide suggests that the characters go to the top of a mountain and look up into the sky, which is the color of gold burning in a furnace. Here, at the entrance to Heaven, the character receives a taste of heavenly food. A flame descends from the sky and encloses every person and enters them, suffusing body and heart with a sweet sense of delight. It seems like this moment lasts forever. At this point, the character should be rewarded with the desired outcome of his

The Fountain of Youth

Near the shores of the Boiling River is a grove of black poplars. In the grove is a white marble fountain, a place of calm within the tumult of Purgatory. Dead souls occasionally find this place by accident and enjoy its balm before they are summoned back to their place of punishment. Demons do not enter here voluntarily, although they are not prevented from doing so. Mortal souls who drink of the water can restore their youth and rid themselves of warping. A single mouthful can remove up to 3 points of Decrepitude (and associated aging points) or 3 points of Warping Score, or some combination of the two. The character also subtracts 30 years from her Apparent Age, or is reduced to an Apparent Age of 15, whichever is older. Finally, all drinkers acquire the Unaging Virtue. It is only possible to benefit from the Fountain's power once in a lifetime.

A magus can use the Fountain of Youth as a source of insight into the Limit of Aging or the Limit of Warping if he is able to remain here for at least a season. The Fountain provides an insight towards the creation of a 50th level effect.

It is rumored that an angel guards the Fountain of Youth. Anyone coming here to abuse its power may have to contend with its celestial guardian.

pilgrimage to the Purgatory of Saint Patrick. This outcome was decided when the character embarked on his journey, and he has suffered many trials, but his diligence is now rewarded.

It is a true wrench when the guide tells the character it is time to go back. She promises that if he lives well, he will return to this place when he dies. She then leads him back to the gate, and shuts it behind him; the character finds himself once more in the cave on Inisnaoimh.

Variants: Alternative Locations

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick is a unique phenomenon in Mythic Europe. Al-

Celestial Regiones

(Summarized from *Realms of Power: the Divine*, pages 14 – 15)

Celestial regiones are the homes of angels. Only the strong willed or spiritually pure can retain their senses or comprehend such a place. The environment can be overwhelmingly symbolic, filled with fire, ethereal song, and wondrous visions. All pain, wounds, and negative emotions are quelled.

- To act normally, a visitor must make a Stamina + Dominion Lore stress roll against an Ease Factor equal to (3 x aura). Magi can use Parma Magica instead of Dominion Lore. Failure results in penalty to all actions equal to (3 x aura). Characters can spend 1 Faith Point to automatically succeed on the roll.
- After a number of hours equal to their Stamina + Parma Magica + 3, visitors lose 1 Fatigue level per hour. The interval between rolls is days rather than hours for characters with True Faith. If they fall Unconscious, gain

1 Warping Point per level of the aura every hour; if this is more than 2, then this triggers a roll for Ascension (see *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 63).

- From the Earthly Paradise, all characters experience the Ascent as if they were holy characters, but any consequences are specific to the character's usual response to Warping. Thus holy characters experience Ascent as normal: Magi gain Warping Points and the good effects of a comprehended Twilight; hedge magicians undergo their own variant of Warping. Other characters may receive new Flaws or Virtues for the increase in their Warping Score. Overall effects of Warping for all characters (e.g. new Flaws) should reflect the Divine somehow. No more Warping is gained during the Ascension, and when it ends, characters no longer find themselves in the Earthly Paradise, but rather back in the mundane realm on Inishnaoimh.

Which Earthly Paradise is This?

Medieval lore recounts that there are two paradises: the Heavenly Paradise, which is the Divine Realm, and the Earthly Paradise, home of the *boni non valde*. The Earthly Paradise is often equated with the Garden of Eden. In the legend of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick, the Earthly Paradise attained by Sir Owain was not the Garden of Eden, and so it has not been considered to be so here. The Garden of Eden has already received a thorough description for *ArM5* (*Ancient Magic*, pages 18–23); if you want to integrate the two into one, then the Garden of Eden lies within the Earthly Paradise, in a Celestial regio of level 10. Other entrances to Eden also exist, but from any direction are guarded by two cherubim with flaming swords.

though there are other supposed gateways to Purgatory or Hell, none are historically sites of pilgrimage. There is no reason that a storyguide cannot transplant the myth to

a different part of Mythic Europe, and keep the basic structure of the location as described here intact. The only detail requiring a change is to take a local saint instead of Saint Patrick, but this is simply a matter of changing names. All of the action takes place inside a regio, and the entrance to that regio can be anywhere.

CENNET AND CEHENNEM

A pair of sinkholes on the coast of Asia Minor in the Tribunal of the Levant, directly north of Cyprus. The names translate to "heaven" and "hell" respectively. Cennet descends nearly a hundred and fifty paces into the earth, at the bottom of which is a monastery founded by Saint Paulus and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. A flight of 450 steps cut into the wall of Cennet lead down to the monastery. A tunnel beneath the monastery leads to Cehennem, opening up in the wall of the other sinkhole.

According to myth, Cehennem was used as a temporary prison for Typhon before

Zeus had him imprisoned under Mount Etna. Cehennem is clearly deeper than Cennet, but since the hole to the sky is narrower than the diameter of the shaft, there is no mundane way to descend to the bottom. Local legend says that it is bottomless, and leads into Purgatory. Anyone using magic (or other means) to reach to the bottom encounters the regio boundary to Purgatory, and unless they make their Regio Sight roll they never find the bottom.

TAENERUS

Cape Tainaron (called Taenerus in Latin) is the southernmost point on mainland Greece, in the Principality of Achaea. The church built on the very end of the cape was originally a *nekromanteion*, or shrine to the dead, dedicated to Hades, but was converted to a Christian place of worship under the Byzantine Empire. Beneath the church is a cave believed to be an entrance to either Purgatory or to the realm of the pagan dead.

LAKE AVERNUS

This is a curiously circular lake on the Bay of Naples in the Roman Tribunal. The lake is avoided by locals; it emits sulfurous fumes which can be very hazardous, and birds cannot fly across the lake without being poisoned and then drowned. The lake shore is connected to the abandoned Greek colony of Cumae by an underground tunnel more than half a mile long; this tunnel is wide enough to admit a chariot. At Cumae dwells the Cumaeen sibyl, a Magic Human called Carmentis who is blessed with a vast knowledge and, some say, the ability to see the future. She is also a Christian, and the guardian of a gate into Purgatory. See *The Sundered Eagle*, pages 120–121 for more details on Sibyls.

MOUNT ETNA AND OTHER VOLCANOES

For obvious reasons, volcanoes commonly attract legends about entrances to

Hell, and some of these legends are true — although those wishing to visit Hell must pass through Purgatory first. Mount Etna may be the home of magic spirits, but it is a vast fire mountain, and can easily have a gateway into Purgatory underneath one of the many shrines on its flanks. Volcanoes are discussed in more detail in *Hermetic Projects* (Chapter 2).

Inhabitants

The principle inhabitants of Purgatory are the demons who inflict the punishments upon sinners. However, characters may also catch a glimpse of the ruler of Purgatory, an Angel of Punishment called Pasiel. Remember that in Purgatory all demons get a +8 bonus to their Magic Resistance and Penetration Totals from the aura (*ArM5*, page 183).

THE BRAWLING FIENDS

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick is teeming with demons; in effect there is an unlimited number of them. Most have little interest in the characters, spending their attentions on the sinners they have been assigned to torment. The tormenting demons are quarrelsome creatures, and fights are constantly breaking out between them; sinners get a brief respite from their pain while their tormenter brawls with its neighbor, or tries to rip its wings off. For this reason, they are called *iurgatores* (singular *iurgator*); meaning “bullies.” These are by no means the only demons in Purgatory, but they are the most common by a significant margin.

On occasion, the *iurgatores* band together to subdue one of their “guests.” They may act as a Trained Group of five, gaining a Group bonus of +12 that is usually applied to attack. When they gang up like this they pounce in huge numbers on their target, although only the closest five actually attack each victim. If a demon is killed or seriously wounded it is immediately replaced by another from the scrum.

PASIEL

The *iurgatores* have a supervisor — apparently just the one — who can occasionally be seen flying high above the fields of pain, climbing out of the fiery river, or sitting on a high rocky spire overlooking the entirety of its hellish domain. This is Pasiel, who has been set over the punishments of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick. Like all demons of its order, Pasiel believes itself to be an angel who has been set over the sinners to cleanse them of their sins. This may actually be true, but as far as game statistics are concerned, Pasiel is treated as a demon (see *Realms of Power: the Infernal* page 40 for a longer discussion on the nature of this order of demons).

Pasiel is always aware of the number of inhabitants in its domain. A few extra mortal souls rarely stir it into action, although if they remain for any substantial amount of time its interest may be drawn to the matter. Only rarely does Pasiel intervene in a punishment or break up a fight. Its attention is usually drawn by unusual business on the

fields of torment, such as a group of player characters interfering with its staff. Pasiel is a very powerful creature, with a peculiar ability to affect time. It is capable of reverting itself to a past or future state, and can do the same to creatures and objects. Note that this is not time travel: in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, time is a state or a quality of a thing just like its size or color, and changing something’s time does not allow it to move faster — only the object’s time is altered, not that of the world around it. However, Pasiel can restore lost Might and heal wounds by giving itself more time to do so; age objects rapidly; or make sinners believe they have spent years in agony while only a miniscule amount of time actually passes.

SOULS IN PURGATORY AND PARADISE

The victims suffering in Purgatory and dwelling in the Earthly Paradise are, for all intents and purposes, human souls. Whether or not they are the actual souls of those char-



Options for Characters Retrieved From Purgatory

Ars Magica Fifth Edition has a number of options for characters rescued from Purgatory.

- Raised From The Dead (Major Story/Supernatural Flaw, *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 36): This Flaw is suitable for characters where the difficulty of being known to have been dead is a desirable story hook.
- Viaticarus (Minor Supernatural Flaw, *Grogs*, Chapter 6): Designed for characters who received the Last Rites and then inexplicably survived, this Flaw is also applicable to characters who have

somehow been brought back from the dead.

- Drowned Men and variants (character template, *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 96 – 97): These characters owe their resurrection to a magical patron, who might supply the body once the soul has been rescued. There is no reason that this concept cannot be adapted for a divine or infernal agency.
- Ghosts (character template, *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 115 – 118): An option for characters who are not resurrected into a physical body

acters, or merely shadows residing in a regio is deliberately left as a mystery, and player characters should be incapable of determining the truth of this mystery. Only baptized Christians can be found within the regiones, even if they subsequently became apostates, and only those who are *mali non valde* or *boni non valde*. The truly wicked end up in Hell, whereas the truly blessed are admitted directly to the Heavenly Paradise. Christian burial makes no difference to the disposition of a soul, but it does permit the deceased's spirit to travel with the soul to its destination. Ghosts are spirits that have remained on or been returned to earth, but the soul remains in Purgatory, Paradise, Hell, or Heaven, as applicable. Creatures who possessed a Might score in life were not human, and do not end up either in Purgatory or the Earthly Paradise.

The speed at which a given individual purges his or her sin and moves on to the Earthly Paradise varies according to unknown rules. It is generally believed that masses said for the dead speed the time spent here, but again, the truth should be left a mystery. Player characters should be able to meet anyone whom the storyguide wishes them to meet.

Souls in Purgatory or the Earthly Paradise have all the characteristics they did in life, but with the following changes:

- All souls have a Might Score, and most have a Divine Might. Exceptions in-

clude characters who were aligned to another Realm through the possession of a special Virtue, in which case their Might matches that Realm. Thus the souls of magi have a Magic Might thanks to The Gift, whereas repenting infernalists may still bear the taint of an Infernal Might.

- Most souls have a Might of 5. However, the strongest souls are those that have spiritual armor. Add five Might for every point of the character's Confidence Score. Further, add the sum of all virtuous Personality Traits to Might Score, and subtract the sum of all sinful Personality Traits. If the character has a virtuous or sinful Personality Flaw treat this as a Personality Trait of +3 (if Minor) or +6 (if Major). Treat negative sinful Personality Traits as a positive virtuous Personality Traits, and negative virtuous Personality Traits as a positive sinful Personality Traits. Might can be no lower than 0. Remember to include the Aura modifier (*ArM5*, page 183) to Might Scores to determine Magic Resistance.
- Souls do not have Decrepitude or Warping. Remove all effects of Aging. The character appears at the age with which it most identifies: a knight might appear at the prime of his life, whereas a maga famed for her wisdom could appear as an elderly woman.

- When used, the Abilities of Souls are limited to half of their Might score, rounded up. So the soul of a knight with a Divine Might 10 and Great Weapon Ability of 7, treats the Ability as only 5 while in Purgatory. Characters who were capable of using magic in life are still capable of doing so as a soul, Arts are capped at the soul's Might Score.
- No force other than the Divine can kill or destroy a soul; at worst they can be temporarily reduced to zero Might or an Incapacitating Wound. Further, the souls in Purgatory cannot be denied their punishment for long; mortal intervention can only cause a temporary cessation of their agonies.

If it is possible to retrieve a soul from Purgatory or Paradise, then as she leaves the regio she loses her Divine Might (if any), exchanging it for that of a different Realm (usually Magic Might) or losing it entirely. She also loses all the above features, and should be treated as an entity belonging to the Realm matching her Might. The soul must have a physical tether for her to exist beyond the bounds of the regio, else she simply returns to the regio immediately, much like the soul of any deceased mortal. This tether is usually a physical body, but it might be possible for the soul to remain a disembodied spirit by binding it to an object or place. The details of this process are best left to the individual saga, but some options can be found in a nearby Insert.

Introducing the Purgatory of Saint Patrick into the Saga

The Purgatory of Saint Patrick is perhaps best introduced to a saga in its basic form, a place of pilgrimage and moral correction through example. If the location is intended for a future role in a story, then the player

Iurgatores

Order: Accusers

Infernal Might: 15 (Corpus)

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

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Immunity to Fire, Puissant Brawl, Reserves of Strength, Tough

Personality Traits: Cruel +6, Bravado (in numbers) +3, Cowardly (when alone) +3

Reputations: Purgatorial Bullies 2 (Infernal)
Hierarchy: 2

Combat:

Grapple: Init +1, Attack +12, Defense +11
Damage n/a

Mace: Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +7,
Damage +12

Hook: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +6,
Damage +10*

* Anyone taking a wound from a hook is impaled, and cannot disengage from melee combat without first making a Strength roll against an Ease Factor of 9. The demon must free his captive before he can strike with the weapon again.

Soak: +10

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Purgatory 4 (any one field), Athletics 3 (when chasing),

Awareness 2 (sinners), Brawl 7+2 (grappling), Leadership 4 (grappling), Profession: Torturer 5 (one particular punishment), Single Weapon 5 (mace)

Powers:

Coagulation, 2 points, Init -1, Corpus: This power permits the demon to form the physical body described here. It takes 2 rounds to form the body, but it can be dismissed instantly, returning the demon to immaterial form.

Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim: The demon can inflict the Personality Trait of Cowardly on a character at a score of +1 per point of Might spent. If the character acts upon this trait, the character risks gaining the trait permanently. See *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, pages 31-32 for more details.

Betrayal of the Heart, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: The accusing angels can see into the hearts of mankind and draw forth the most secret thoughts — people's fears and sins. Each use of this power reveals to the demon one fact about the target to which the target would never admit. Truly holy people may be immune to this power, if they have no secret sins or fears.

Whispers Behind the Back, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: Exactly as the spell *Pains of the Perpetual Worry*, this power gives the victim

a nagging, taunting, painful emotion linked to their secret sins. It is a recurrent sense of anxiety that their secret will be uncovered, and a suspicion that everyone already knows it and is taking about the target behind his back. This power lasts for a month.

Weakness: Protected Group — Anyone who is free from sin and calls upon the name of God cannot be harmed by an iurgator or affected by its powers. Free from sin' may be difficult to determine; any character who is recently shriven and has no sinful Major Personality Flaws probably counts, as do those with a Faith Score. None of the souls in Purgatory qualify, by definition. Other causes must be adjudicated individually.

Vis: 3 pawns of vis sordida (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 19) in hook

Appearance: Stocky bipedal bodies with features that combine bulky animals like bears, bulls, or pigs with those of humans. They sport bat-like wings which barely seem big enough to carry them, yet somehow manage. Their skin is naked and wrinkly, and a poisonous shade of green. Each carries a verdigrised copper club in one hand and a massive curved hook in the other.

characters can be appraised of the function of the canons on Inishphadraig, the process of drawing lots, and the ritual burial ceremony on Inishnaoimh, even if they don't undergo the ritual themselves.

A Destination for Pilgrimage

Most visitors to the Purgatory of Saint Patrick do so as the culmination of a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is more than a simple journey; it is a journey undertaken specifically to petition God, usually for the remission of sins. Pilgrimages are times of physical and spiritual testing, which takes the form of Oppositional Elements that try the character of the traveler. The last of these Oppositional Elements is provided by the Purgatory itself. A pilgrimage can be undertaken for more

than just penance. It can be akin to a Divine form of Initiation; a quest to acquire a supernatural Virtue aligned to the Divine Realm, or removal of a curse from any realm. See *The Church* pages 16-19 for more details of Pilgrimages and Oppositional Elements.

The Circuit of Saint Patrick is a pilgrimage itinerary that takes in sites of the saint's miracles and *vita*, including Armagh, Downpatrick, the Vale of Angels, Saulpatrick, and Maghera before ending at Lough Dearg (see *The Contested Isle*, Chapter 9: Ullaid for more details). This itinerary permits a group of characters to explore several legendary sites and experience hardship and wonders in equal measure. While the Circuit ends at the Purgatory of Saint Patrick, the characters are not required to actually enter the regio to complete their penance and receive absolution, but those who submit themselves to the lots have the possibility of doing so.

A number of ceremonies instituted by Saint Patrick are still in force today. Those wishing to visit the Purgatory must plan to arrive at the island between June 1 and August 15; they will not be admitted outside these dates. Before commencing a pilgrimage to the Purgatory, the penitent must first visit his bishop and declare that he wishes to undergo the journey of his own free will. The bishop ritually tries to dissuade the sinner, but if he persists, provides a letter of recommendation to the prior of the island. The petitioner then commences his pilgrimage, visiting a number of holy sites in Ireland as he does so, one of which must be Armagh which is the home to the motherhouse of the canons that guard the island. The prior of the motherhouse warns the petitioner again, and inform him of the perils he faces, but if the pilgrim is steadfast he receives a lead badge indicating the prior's favor, and may continue on his pil-

grimage. Eventually he ends up in the northwest corner of Ireland at Lough Dearg. Upon presentation of the bishop's letter and the prior's badge he is rowed to the island priory to await being called to Purgatory.

Other Stories

Not all introductions to Saint Patrick's Purgatory need to involve a pilgrimage. Here are some other ideas.

AN UNSAFE REFUGE

A magus is condemned to a Wizard's March due to Infernalism discovered by the player characters. He flees to Lough Dearg, feigning contrition, and is admitted to Purgatory by Brother Bressal, who senses his sin. Characters who chase the felon into Purgatory must find and fight the sorcerer in a place where the strong Infernal aura give his powers a distinct advantage over Hermetic magic.

A HIDING PLACE

The characters learn that an evil cult has contrived to conceal an object deep in Purgatory through the help of demons. The stories around this object are apocalyptic in scope: a weapon that can kill from afar, a chalice that can sink continents, or a child who is the son of Beelzebub. While the cult develops its plans, the characters may be able to slip into Purgatory and snatch the prize from beneath their very noses.

Alternatively, the characters might decide that Purgatory is a secure place to hide something too dangerous to keep at their covenant. An unholy relic that spreads corruption can do no harm in Purgatory. In the Hibernian Tribunal, there is a tradition that a covenant that loses its chosen trophy for more than a year and a day is no longer considered a covenant (see *The Contested Isle*, Chapter 4). An enemy might hide the trophy in Purgatory to keep it from its owners.

A KEY TO THE DOOR

Souls are escaping from Purgatory. The player characters receive a visit from an individual they know to be dead: either a close friend or a fearful enemy. They may discover that the escape was engineered by a recently-arrived soul who has the power to cross regio boundaries, and also the means to arrange for the souls to be held in the mundane world (see earlier). All he asked for this was an oath to perform a favor for him in the future.

Who is this necromancer-in-reverse, and what is his plan with all the favors he is gathering? Furthermore, where are Brother Bressal and the Guardians of Purgatory? Their job is to prevent escapes like this, but they have vanished from Inishnaoimh.

HELL ON EARTH

Iurgatores have started to emerge from under the Saint's Isle. It started with just one or two, but soon they emerged in their hundreds. They have occupied the region of Lough Dearg, digging tunnels beneath the earth and building torment pits. Initially they found that mortal humans were too fragile for their usual punishments, but they have found ways to adapt their techniques, and are now besieging towns in search of victims.

The characters get involved when a friend or companion fails to return from pilgrimage. Alternatively, if they live in the area they may be the intended victims of the bloodthirsty demons. The demons must have had mortal help breaching the Gate to Purgatory, so there is at least one human enemy involved. As per the story seed above, the Guardians of Purgatory must have been somehow eliminated or corrupted to allow the demons to escape, and their help may be needed to close up the gate once more.

Things to Do in Purgatory When You're Not Dead

The principle purpose of the Purgatory may be the atonement for sins, but this is by no means the only reason why characters might seek out the cave on Inishnaoimh. Brother Bressal and the Guardians of Purgatory control who enters Purgatory through the lots, but characters with a legitimate need that opposes evil or promotes good are admitted without comment. More dubious or selfish uses for the regio are also sensed by the canon who draws the lots, and the characters might need to persuade Brother Bressal of how the greater good is served by their actions. A charitable penance might be requested to counteract the non-pious use of the gateway, but Brother Bressal believes that even the most selfish man might be guided back to a righteous path upon witnessing the horrors awaiting him following his death, and rarely refuses anyone.

For characters adventuring in Purgatory, treat the location like any other regio. Characters can still warp, age, die, or go into Twilight. Time passes at the same rate, except for those individuals undergoing torment (see *Pilgrim's Progress*, earlier)

INSIGHT INTO ORIGINAL RESEARCH

There are places in Purgatory that can offer insights into original research. The Mirror of Souls, the Fountain of Youth, and the Furnace are phenomena that could help magi unravel knotty problems in Hermetic Theory.

In addition to the problems of getting to Purgatory in the first place, a character desiring insight needs to spend at least one season (and possibly more) there to obtain the desired insight. Pasiel is likely to investigate extra souls who remain too long within his duchy, and the character needs to be adept at hiding from bands of Iurgatores sent looking for him.

Pasiel, the Duke of Purgatory

Order: Duke of the Avengers of Evil
Infernal Might: 40 (Corpus)
Characteristics: Int +2, Per +3, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +4, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +5
Size: +3
Confidence Score: 3 (7)
Virtues and Flaws: Greater Immunity to Fire; Piercing Gaze, Puissant Profession: Torturer; Difficult Underlings
Personality Traits: Relentless +5, Passionless +4, Merciful -3
Reputations: Purgatory's Chief Torturer 7 (Infernal)
Hierarchy: 7
Combat:
Scourge: Init +7, Attack +14 Defense +16, Damage +12
Grapple: Init +5, Attack +13, Defense +16, Damage n/a
Soak: +15
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)
Abilities: Area Lore: Purgatory 7 (placement of sinners), Athletics 5 (flight), Awareness 5 (disturbances), Brawl 10 (grapple), Infernal Lore 12 (Purgatory), Leadership 7 (intimidation), Penetration 5 (*Punish the Sinner* power), Profession: Torturer 12+2 (ironic punishment), Single Weapon 7 (scourge), Stealth 10 (surprise), Theology 10 (sin)
Powers:
Coagulation, 4 points, Init -1, Corpus: This power permits the demon to form the physical body described here. It takes 4 rounds to form the body, but it can be dismissed instantly, returning the demon to immaterial form.
Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim: The demon can inflict the Personality Trait of Guilt-Ridden on a character at a score of +1 per point of Might spent. This is a paralyzing feeling of remorse causing lassitude and self-indulgent bemoaning. If the character acts upon this trait, the character risks gaining the trait permanently. See *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, pages 31-32 for more details.
Punish the Sinner, 5 points, Init +3, Corpus: An angel of punishment can inflict wounds upon a victim, which are commensurate to their level of sin. If the target has committed a mortal sin for which he has not atoned, then he suffers a Heavy wound if this power penetrates his Magic Resistance. If he has an unrepented venial sin on his conscience, then he suffers a Medium wound. A

victim with no outstanding sin on his conscience suffers a number of points of damage equal to a simple die plus the sum total of all sinful personality traits, ignoring negative signs as necessary. For example, a character with Lewd +2, Greedy -1 and Peaceful -3 suffers +5 damage, +2 for the Lewd trait and +3 for the negative Peaceful trait. Greedy is a sinful behavior, but this character is not greedy. The Soak total for this damage is a stress die plus Stamina. Pasiel's use of this power manifests as the opening up of old wounds suffered by the character; if he has none, then new ones are caused by Pasiel's scourge.

Duke of Purgatory, 0 points, constant effect, Vim: While within Purgatory's bounds, Pasiel is empowered by his role as its lord and master. His Might score and his Magic Resistance deriving from his Might should be treated as half as much again (that is 60 + aura modifier 8) against any effect designed to control him, ward against him or his powers, or destroy his Might. Attacks against his corporeal form or mind are not protected, and he gets no extra Might pool from this power.

Break Time's Arrow, variable points, Init -5, appropriate Form: Pasiel can move an object within Voice Range to a past state. Moving a creature one year into the past costs 1 Might, two years costs 3 Might, three years costs 6 Might, and so on, increasing as an Art. The creature experiences the amount of time it is moved all over again, but only a single round of time passes for everyone else. This erases the effects of any aging suffered in that time, but since the character will be reliving that time all over again, no changes need to be made to the character sheet. Everyone around the character does not appear to move, for only the recipient's time has been affected, and the recipient cannot do more with anything whose time has not been altered than he could normally achieve in a single combat round. He can interact normally with others affected by the same power for the same amount of time. To outsiders he flickers and twitches, as years' worth of movement and actions take place in an instant. Pasiel uses this on characters suffering in Purgatory, and on the demons torturing them, in order to extend the misery they suffer.

Time's Former Glory, 1 point, Init -5, Vim: Pasiel can revert itself to a former state. Each use of this power allows the demon to either instantly restore up to five points of Might score, restore all of its Might pool, or cure itself of one wound. If it restores Might or Might pool, the cost of this power is subtracted *after* the power has taken effect. To observers, Pasiel shudders and flickers with movement. Like the previous power, it moves itself to a time when it was not wounded or drained of Might, and then, with the patience that only truly immortal beings have, waits for the appropriate amount of time elapses.

Decay of Eleven Score Years, 1 or more points, Init -5, appropriate Form: Pasiel can change a non-living object within Voice Range to a future state, aging it hundreds or thousands of years instantly. This causes it to crumble to dust, affecting one cubic pace of material per point of Might pool spent.

Time Waits for No Man, 1 or more points, Init -5, appropriate Form: Pasiel can inflict a future state on a living thing. This causes immediate degradation through aging; plant matter rots away, animals visibly age and die. For humans, this power causes immediate aging: Pasiel can choose any effect on the Aging Table (*ArM5*, page 170) up to and including a crisis. A result that inflicts one Aging point costs 1 Might, inflicting two Aging points costs 3 Might, and causing a crisis costs 6 Might. Inflicting a crisis also causes a Hermetic longevity ritual to expire. Advance the apparent age of the character by five years per point of Might spent.

Weakness: Protected Group — the Virtuous. Anyone truly free from sin cannot be harmed by Pasiel or affected by its powers.

Vis: 8 pawns of vis prava (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 19), in scourge

Appearance: A mighty angel 12 feet tall, painfully thin with pale skin stretched tight over protruding bones. Its eyes are like the deep pits of the abyss. It has immense gray wings covered with dust-laden and moth-eaten feathers, and carries a scourge whose thongs are tipped with rusted iron. Its movements are precise yet stuttered, bursts of motion too swift for the eye to see interspersed with utter stillness. It moves with absolute silence. Pasiel does not talk — at least, not to mortals.

To obtain insight for original research, the character must study the source for a season, and then make an Intelligence + Magic Theory stress roll against an Ease Factor of 18. The Inventive Genius Virtue adds 3 to this roll. If the roll is successful the character gains an insight, allowing him to create a specific effect that grants breakthrough points equal to its magnitude once completed. If the character fails he may try again after a season; if he botches he thinks he has made an insight but has not. For more details on using insight in original research see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition* page 14 or *Ancient Magic* page 8.

INTERROGATING THE DAMNED OR THE BLESSED

Someone who has died and has received a Church burial is beyond the questioning of Hermetic necromancy. However, if they are baptized Christians, they are not totally beyond the reach of the characters. Only saints — and possibly those who possess indulgences, like crusaders — go straight to Heaven upon death, and only the worst of unrepentant sinners go straight to Hell; everyone else tarries in Purgatory, then passes to the Earthly Paradise. Characters would have to be desperate indeed to enter Purgatory to get information from a departed soul, but sometimes it is the only way to get what one needs.

Once in Purgatory, the characters must locate the soul they want from the thousands present. Finding the Mirror of Souls would be a boon; otherwise the characters may have to turn to the doubtful help of demons or tortured souls. The characters then need to halt the punishment sufficiently to ask their questions, which is sure to draw the attention of Pasiel. Getting out again would almost certainly require spells which see through a regio boundary, since the roll otherwise would be exceptionally difficult.

THE END OF THE QUEST

Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise are ideal destinations for epic quests. Perhaps a ritual to undo an ancient spell can only be performed on the slopes of the Mountain of Blood. The characters' chief antagonist could be a demon that guards the Mouth to Hell, and they must journey there to bring him defeat. Maybe the only way to destroy an evil artifact is to bathe it in the Light of Heaven in the Earthly Paradise. These or similar reasons could cause a group of characters to brave Purgatory's torments

A FALSE RETURN

After a pilgrimage to Purgatory, a person has begun to act in an uncharacteristic manner. Friends of the person — who may be the player characters, or else ask them for help — suspect that perhaps it was not her soul that returned from Purgatory, but maybe that of another, or even a demon. Whoever (or whatever) has returned has an agenda, and begins to enact sweeping changes to her life which affect any organization to which she belongs (which might include the Order of Hermes). She soon gathers about her a cult of personality, making it difficult for former friends to get close and verify her identity. There is always the possibility that no substitution was made at all: Purgatory is a place where people's lives are changed, and the focus of this story may have had a meaningful experience there which made her alter the course of her life forever. However, there is also the very real possibility that another soul or a demon has returned in the body of the pilgrim.

If a different soul returned, it may be that of any individual that could conceivably be in Purgatory — a vanquished enemy, a historical tyrant, or a Marched magus; someone not evil enough for Hell, but maybe only through the lack of opportunity. Now she has a second chance to complete what was left unfinished.

Sources

The Vision of Hell and Heaven described in this chapter is based mostly on a Middle English poem called *Sir Owain*, written at the end of the thirteenth century by an anonymous author. It was based on the *Tractatus* of H., but changed the central character from an Irish monk into the eponymous Northumbrian knight. Details from the *Tractatus* were also used, along with other examples from the otherworld journey literature of the medieval period, such as the *Visions of Tundal*, *Thurkell*, and *Gunthelm*. The quotes come from *Owayne Miles* ("Knight Owain"), a later poem of the same story.

If a demon is involved instead, Hermetic magic can have difficulty telling the difference, particularly if the demon is able to take steps to fix the results of any tests (swapping a relic with a fake, using a possessed stooge, spending Confidence to show forbearance in the face of apotropaic magic, and so forth).

Either way, if she is not who she says she is, then the real soul is still trapped in Purgatory, and her story can be verified by entering Purgatory and finding her. The demons there are covering up the escape of one of their captives (demon or not) through a shapechanged soul, hoping their master won't find out (they are not very bright), and the characters might be taken in by their deception.

JAILBREAK

Perhaps the most tempting reason to visit the regio on Inishnaoimh is to attempt to bring a soul out of Purgatory or the Earthly Paradise and restore her to life. Whether or not this is actually possible is ultimately the decision of the storyguide, and it should certainly be a singular event of mythic significance. Players should not think that they can just send their characters in to Purgatory to retrieve dead characters whenever they

want. However, they should not be discouraged from trying even if it is impossible; if nothing else it will prove to be a valuable lesson in hubris.

Characters condemned to Hell or who have gone straight to Heaven cannot be saved in this manner; only the not completely good or not completely evil are eligible, assuming it is even possible in the first place. The subject should also in some way be considered to have died before his time; perhaps he was accidentally slain by the characters, or died through some other misadventure with a destiny unfulfilled. The characters need a body for the soul they are rescuing, and for most only the original corpse will do.

Upon entering Purgatory, the characters must be able to find the desired soul amongst the countless damned, and then free her from her torments. This attracts

the attention of Pasiel, who opposes any group abducting one of its subjects. Securing a soul from the Earthly Paradise could be even harder, since the soul is probably unwilling to leave: who would exchange endless bliss for the mundane world? Shamshiel opposes any egress of souls through Paradise's gates, and Pasiel cannot tolerate a blessed soul in its realm. This would be a once-in-a-lifetime story, given the rewards if it is successful.

Researching the Purgatory of Saint Patrick

The eleventh to thirteen centuries is a time of flowering of literature recounting otherworldly journeys to Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise. Many of these stories are told in a vernacular language rather than Lat-

in. The principle, and most widely available sources are:

Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii by H. of Sawtrey, written in about 1160 by an anonymous monk (who may have been Henricus of Basingwerk Abbey). This is a third hand Latin account of the Vision of Hell and Heaven, experienced by a monk called Owain and told to Gilbert, Abbot of Basingwerk and later recorded by H. This is a tractatus on Area Lore: Purgatory of Quality 7, and can also be studied as a summa on Theology at Level 3, Quality 8.

Lespurgatoire Seint Patriz by Marie of France, written in Norman French in the late 12th century. This is a tractatus on Area Lore: Purgatory of Quality 9.

Chapter Eight

The Fallen Temple of Mercury

This Mythic Location is a ruined Cult of Mercury temple, hidden within a Magic regio. The temple complex is large — the size of a town — and it has lain ruined for centuries. The temple complex is haunted by memories of the long dead priests of Mercury and a number of laboratory texts for Mercurian rituals can be recovered from the ruins. Studying the texts, and repairing crucial parts of the temple complex, leads the player characters to forgotten powers...

The Cult of Mercury

The Roman Cult of Mercury, which tore itself apart in internal feuding as the Western Roman Empire collapsed, is well-known within the Order of Hermes. Many magi consider the cult a prototype for the Order of Hermes, and it is commonly thought that Bonisagus' discovery in the eighth century of a secret cache of Cult of Mercury rituals, near the Aventine Hill in Rome, was a crucial step in his development of the theory of Hermetic magic.

In 1220, many Houses in the Order of Hermes claim to know secrets that originate with the Cult of Mercury. For example, many of the few Gifted magi in House Mercere claim to actually be priests of Mercury, and the second Primus of House Guernicus (Fenicil) is said to have gathered a vast collection of Mercurian rituals, which are reputedly now kept in a secret trove at Magvillus.

History of the Temple

There were many, many temples of the Cult of Mercury spread throughout the Roman Empire. This particular ruined temple was an unusually large complex because it was a training site and at times a headquarters for the Cult. However, note that this is not *the* Temple of Mercury (if such a thing could be even said to exist). It is just *a* temple of Mercury, which was sometimes an important cult center, and sometimes not. In terms of its relationship to the rest of the Cult of Mercury, it was equivalent to a single covenant within the Order of Hermes.

The history that follows is recorded on documents at the temple site itself.

A temple to Mercury was first constructed in this regio during the dying years of the Roman republic by Julius Caesar. Julius' temple was founded in 46 BC (a couple of years before his assassination) and he also stationed a small detachment of legionaries at the site. It is unclear whether Julius actually traveled to the site or merely ordered that the temple be constructed.

The extent of Julius' temple is unknown because in 32 BC, at the height of the civil war between Octavian and Anthony, Julius' temple was destroyed and the regio was abandoned. Later, in 11 BC, Augustus (Octavian's new name), who had recently taken the title *Pontifex Maximus* (high priest of the Cult of Jupiter), entered the abandoned temple regio through a newly constructed triumphal arch. In the regio, Mercurian priests invested Augustus with the title *Antistes Mercuria* (high priest of Mercury), and he immediately ordered the construction of a new, massive temple complex.

Augustus' reconstruction of the temple was completed in 3 AD. The title *Antistes Mercuria* was inherited by Tiberius in 14 AD, but it did not then pass to his heir, Caligula, and thus ceased to be an office of the Roman emperors in 37 AD. However, the temple continued to be one of the most important centers for the Cult of Mercury up until the civil war following the murder of the Emperor Commodus in 192 AD.

From 192 AD records are sparse as the temple appears to have declined in importance. Although the records do not mention the reason, it is likely that the priests at the temple supported one of the factions defeated during the civil war by the eventually triumphant Septimius Severus. When, in 313 AD, the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official state Roman religion the records cease; the temple seems to have been finally abandoned.

Introducing the Fallen Temple

Characters could learn about the fallen temple of Mercury in the following ways:

Story Seed: Curious Books

The characters discover one (or more) of the following books which contain information about the temple of Mercury that was commissioned by Augustus. The characters inherit these books from a dead master, or discover them in an abandoned laboratory, or otherwise stumble upon them. The books could even be found in the hands of mundanes.

Fenicil, *The Cult of Mercury* (Tractatus, Organization Lore: Cult of Mercury, Quality 8). Contains a brief mention of the fact that Augustus commissioned a temple that became the cult center for a short time. This book was written in the ninth century AD. It's not very widely circulated in the Order and is unknown outside. Fenicil's source seems to be Athenaeus' *Edicts of Augustus*. Fenicil does not list the temple as one that he has recovered artifacts from. Of course, this doesn't mean that Fenicil didn't find the temple; maybe he wrote his book before finding the temple, or maybe he wanted to keep the temple's location secret.

Athenaeus, *Edicts of Augustus* (Tractatus, Civil and Canon Law (emperors), Quality 8). Notes the commissioning of the temple, the date of Augustus' investiture, and locates the Roman province Augustus traveled to for the investiture. This book was written in the second century AD. The book is not widely circulated in the Order, and is known of, but neither considered very important, nor widely circulated in

scholarly legal communities. Athenaeus seems to have had access to a now lost archive of early imperial correspondence.

Variou, *The Annals of Mercury* (Summa, Organization Lore: Cult of Mercury, Quality 10, Level 3). Contains a detailed history of the reconstructed temple from 11 BC until 192 AD, sketchy details of the original temple from 46 BC to 32 BC, and a few later entries that cease after 313 AD. This book was written by the priests of Mercury and a copy is located at the temple, but it is possible that another copy could be found elsewhere. As this book assumes that the reader is a priest at the temple, the temple location is not actually very clearly described. However, once a character has studied from the book for a season he can make an Intelligence + (appropriate) Area Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 12 to infer the likely location of the temple.

Mercere, *Roman Astrological Correspondences of Mercury* (Tractatus, Artes Liberales (astronomy), Quality 9). This book, supposedly written by the Founder Mercere, contains

a horoscope for Augustus' investiture as a priest of Mercury. A character who knows the exact date of this investiture can use this horoscope to back-calculate the location of the temple (Intelligence + Artes Liberales (astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9). The exact date is given in the *Edicts of Augustus* and in *The Annals of Mercury*. This book is rare, but it is known of outside the Order.

Story Seed: The Past Lives of Stones

While in a church the player characters notice that one of the wall carvings curiously depicts the Roman god Mercury waiting behind a kind of archway. Inspection reveals the stone carving is in a different style to others in the church, which all illustrate biblical scenes. In fact, the carving is a piece of the triumphal arch that leads to the temple of Mercury (see later), which has been recovered and reused on the church.

What is Known about the Fallen Temple of Mercury?

Characters with the Organization Lore: Order of Hermes, or Cult of Mercury or Roman Empire or similar have some knowledge of the Temple of Mercury. This includes almost all magi.

KNOWN BY ALL

The Cult of Mercury is common knowledge within the Order of Hermes. Practically every magus knows that the Cult of Mercury existed in the Roman empire and effectively disappeared when the western part of the Roman empire collapsed in the late fifth century AD. It is also common knowledge, within the Order of Hermes, that Bonisagus based some of his magic theory on Mercurian rituals for which he found texts in Rome.

WIDELY KNOWN

It is widely known, within the Order of Hermes that Augustus ordered the construction of a large temple of Mercury, and that this temple was for a number of years the headquarters of the Cult of Mercury. Characters with a special interest in the Cult of Mer-

cury (such as Seekers, the Guernicus guardians of Fenicil's rituals, and Mercere priests of Mercury) have a +1 bonus to this roll.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

Much of this information is contradictory. The contradictions should suggest to the characters that some information is wrong, but is not clear which is wrong. Characters with a special interest in the Cult of Mercury (such as Seekers, the Guernicus guardians of Fenicil's rituals, and Mercere priests of Mercury) have a +3 bonus to this roll.

- The temple was only occupied for a few decades.
- The temple housed the leaders of the Cult of Mercury up until the fall of the western empire.
- The temple is still functional and inhabited by a vestige of the original Mercurian priesthood.
- The temple was destroyed during a Roman civil war.
- The temple was in Rome and was actually the site discovered by Bonisagus,

near Aventine Hill.

- Fenicil (or his agents) discovered and looted the temple in the early years of the Order.
- Harco, the House Mercere domus magna, is constructed on top of the temple ruins.
- There are portals that link to Augustus' temple.
- There are books that contain information that may be used to locate the temple (*The Cult of Mercury*, *Edicts of Augustus*, *The Annals of Mercury*, and *Roman Astrological Correspondences of Mercury*; see Curious Books, later).

LOST SECRETS

The location of the temple is a lost secret, but it is possible that magi have already discovered its location. If the storyguide chooses, a character may already know this, and either know the location himself or know who has discovered the site.

If other magi already know the location of the temple, it is possible that other Hermetic magi may occupy (or at least claim) the site. This is beyond the scope of this material.

Do the player characters realize the significance of this find? Do the church records note where the stones for the church came from? The stone source may be close by and known of by the parishioners. Perhaps an Intellego Terram spell can reveal the history of the curious stone carving.

Story Seed: A Vision of an Empty Temple

A pagan player character receives a vision of the abandoned temple of Mercury and, standing within, a headless statue of Mercury. The vision either indicates a route to the temple, or hints about books that can reveal the location.

Does the character follow up on the vision? What do his Christian colleagues think? Do the visions increase in urgency if the character delays?

Story Seed: One Step Forward

The player characters discover an ancient, functioning Mercurian portal which leads to a quiet meadow scattered with bits of ruined stone architecture. There is a faint Magic aura (level 1) in the area.

This is the ruined triumphal arch (see later). Do the player characters recognize what the ruins are? Can one of the characters see into the temple regio? The portal only leads in one direction; can the characters find their way back to the covenant?

The Fallen Temple

The ruined temple complex is in a regio. The regio is entered by passing through the triumphal arch (see later). The arch is itself ruined and must therefore be repaired before the regio can be entered.

Where is the Temple?

When the original temple was founded by Julius Caesar, Rome either controlled or was in contact with most of Mythic Europe. The temple can be easily located within the territory of the late Roman Republic which includes most of the Greater Alps, Iberian, Levant, Normandy, Provençal, Roman, and Theban Tribunals, and (outside the normal territory of the Order), parts of North Africa. The temple might be located along an old Roman road or near a city that was originally a Roman colony. It may even be within an old Roman settlement, perhaps even Rome itself.

However, in your saga the temple does not really need to be within the normal frontiers of the late Roman Republic. In your saga, perhaps Rome expanded more quickly or in a different way. It is also entirely plausible for the temple to be a forward expeditionary camp or colony well beyond conventional Roman settlement, particularly if there are (or were) portals linking it with Rome and other locations.

Choose a place that makes sense for your saga.

The Triumphal Arch

The Romans constructed stone triumphal arches over the major entrances to towns and, in large cities, over the entrance ways to important civic spaces, such as forums, and over the intersections of important roads. Triumphal arches were dedicated to generals (or later the emperor) responsible for important military campaigns, and were usually illustrated with carvings to remind the citizens who passed through the arch how glorious Rome and her leaders were.

The triumphal arch at the temple is quite simple and is sparsely adorned with only three carvings. One carving illustrates the naked god Mercury waiting behind a triumphal arch that Augustus (dressed as a Roman general) is entering. Another carving illustrates Augustus (as general) receiving a laurel wreath from Mercury. The third carving shows Augustus

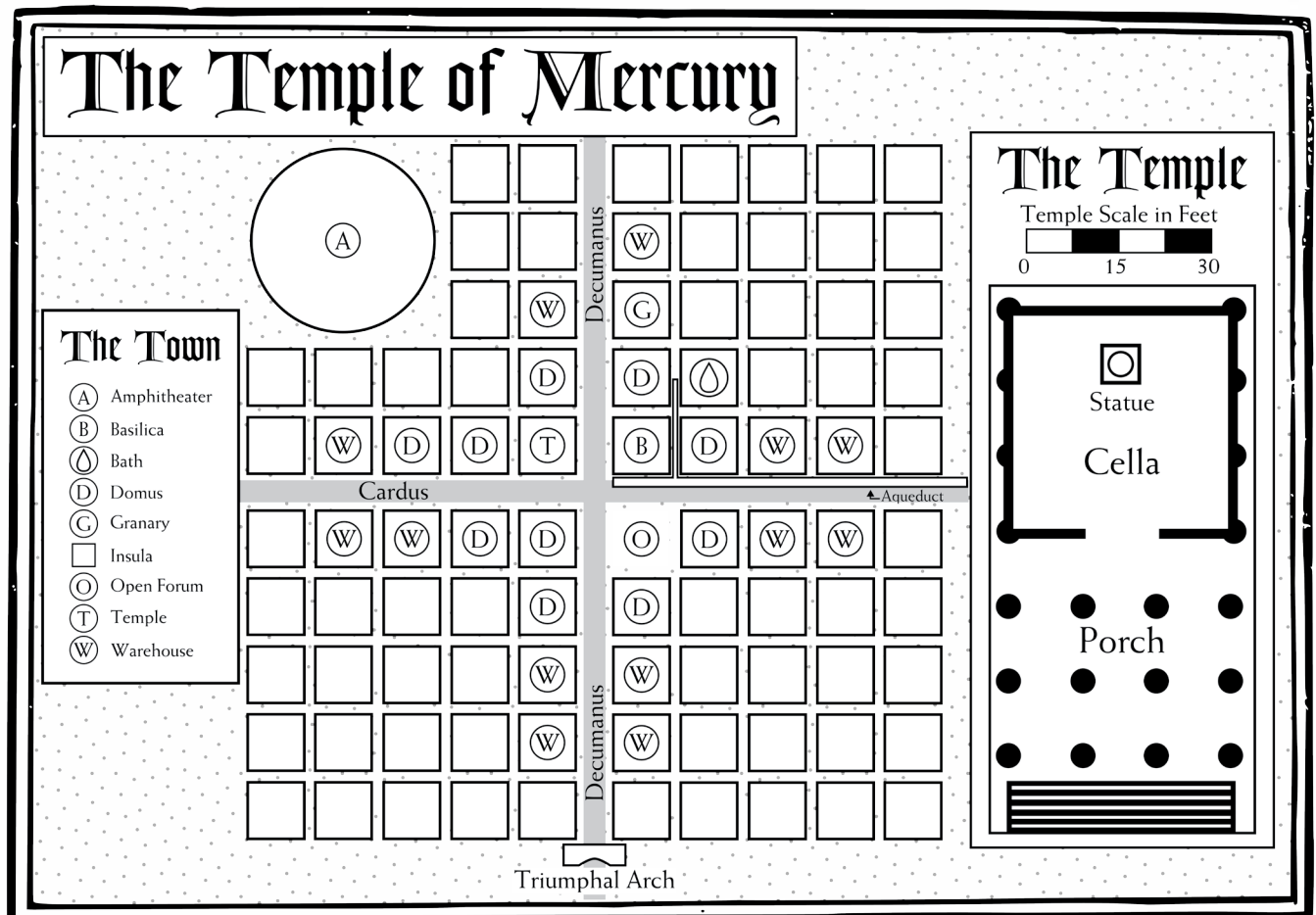
(dressed in the hooded toga of a priest) sacrificing a bull in front of a temple. Traditionally, this last image illustrates the victorious emperor making a sacrifice in front of the Capitoline temple in Rome, but the appearance of this temple is wrong, suggesting that another temple is depicted. This detail can be noticed by a Perception + Organization Lore: Roman Empire roll against an Ease Factor of 6.

The arch structure is made of stone and when complete it stands about 25 feet high, 20 feet deep and 35 feet wide. There is a single passage through the middle of the arch. The internal ceiling of the passageway is 15 feet high and 15 feet wide. Above the passageway, the arch attic is solid stone. The carvings are three large panels on the front face of the attic.

The arch is currently lying in pieces, partially obscured by undergrowth and trees.

The area around the ruined triumphal arch, extending for about 100 paces, has a Magic aura of 1. The regio behind the triumphal arch has a Magic aura of 5. To enter the regio a character must merely walk through the passageway of the arch, but for this to be effective the arch must be rebuilt. Merely being able to see into the regio is insufficient to enter this regio: the arch must be present. However, any character who can see into the regio (see *ArM5*, page 189) realizes that it is necessary to rebuild the arch and has an idea of what the arch should look like (as in the regio the complete arch can be seen).

The important criteria for the arch are the astrological position, orientation, and shape of the arch. This can be calculated by any character who can see into the regio with a successful Intelligence + Artes Liberales (astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9. The exact construction material of the arch is irrelevant, although the characters might not realize this. If a character *does* realize the irrelevancy of the arch material he has the option of rebuilding the original arch or constructing a new one. A cunning magus might consider devising a non-ritual Creo Terram effect to create a suitable arch. Such a spell means that the magus can cheaply create the regio entrance, as required, without leaving a permanent entrance for oth-



ers to use. An arch created of exotic material (such as bone, ice, smoke, flames, and so on) is also effective.

The Town Beyond the Arch

Passing through the arch, and into the temple regio (magic aura of 5), characters enter what is effectively a Roman town. The town is uninhabited and ruined although, eerily, it is not very badly damaged. A few buildings appear damaged by fire and others appear to have been torn into rubble by powerful and violent forces. Parts suffer from storm and water damage. However, in other buildings wooden floors and furniture still survive.

The town is laid out in a regular grid. The triumphal arch is at the southern end of a wide north-south street. The street is paved, about 5

paces wide, and has a slight slope up towards the center of its width (allowing rain to drain into shallow culverts along either side of the street). This street, the Decumanus, is 500 paces long and perfectly straight. At the center of the town the street is bisected by a similarly sized street, the Cardus, running east-west.

The intersection of these two main streets divides the town into four quarters. Each quarter is further divided into smaller blocks, 25 blocks (5 by 5) to a quarter (for a total of 100 blocks). Each of these small blocks is separated from its neighbors by a narrow alleyway about 1 pace wide. Most blocks have a three-story building (an insula) built on them. The insulae are each divided into a dozen or more apartments. Near the center of the town, with entrances along the main streets, ten blocks are instead each occupied by a large single storied house (a domus). The nine blocks in the northwest corner are occupied by a small amphi-

theater. In the center of town are several large buildings: the temple to Mercury, a bath complex, an open forum, several warehouses, a granary, and a domed basilica. An aqueduct enters the town at the eastern end of the Cardus and a system of fountains and channels carry water to most parts of the town. Very large channels carry water to the basilica and bath complex. The aqueduct is dry.

The town occupies the entire regio and it wraps around itself, so a character who leaves the town on the eastern side merely finds himself entering again on the western side. The exception is the triumphal arch at the south end of the Decumanus; passing through this leads back to the mundane world. The arch in the regio is currently standing, and the condition of the arch in the mundane world does not matter. If the arch in the regio is destroyed it is impossible to leave the regio



via this exit until the arch is replaced. The aqueduct contains an alternative exit (see later) and it is possible to use *Leap of Homecoming* type effects to exit (or enter) the regio regardless of the condition of the arches.

INSULA

The 66 three story apartment blocks appear sufficient to house a total of at least 4000 people. Most are relatively undamaged by the passing centuries, and many contain furniture, decaying clothing suitable for men, women, and children, and even children's toys. The ground floors of the insulae seem to have been public spaces: communal kitchen and dining areas and shops. *Each* insula could comfortably house half a dozen Hermetic laboratories with plenty of living space for servants. However, there is no evidence that the insulae were used as laboratories by priests of Mercury.

In the north-western quarter, near the amphitheater, the insulae were occupied virtually exclusively by adult males and a

number of weapons and pieces of armor are stored in some apartments. It is likely that these apartments, which are the most damaged in the town, were barracks for a garrison of legionnaires.

In the north-eastern quarter the insulae appear to have housed groups of individuals living in simply furnished communal rooms, segregated by gender. Shackle points mounted on the walls indicate that the inhabitants of these apartments were slaves.

DOMUS

These ten, single-storied houses are each based around a central courtyard with a narrow street entrance. The internal rooms each open up into the central courtyard, which contains a shallow pool fed by the aqueduct. Each pool is created in a slightly different shape, which remind characters of curiously antiquated Hermetic voting sigils. Each domus appears to have luxuriously housed a small number of people, and their servants. These were clearly the houses of the Mer-

curian priests (and perhaps also housed the ranking officials of the town). Each domus could comfortably house several magi with laboratories and space for grogs, but it seems that only a single Mercurian priest resided in each house.

Three of these houses have been burnt to the ground, all that remains are blackened stones and broken terracotta tiles. The other houses are largely undamaged, but all show signs of having being looted: forced padlocks on chests, smashed doors, and floors littered with shattered amphora.

AMPHITHEATER

The amphitheater in the northwestern corner of the town is a circular arena surrounded by tiered stone seating. The seating at the southern end of the amphitheater has been shattered and the debris have been widely splayed throughout the town; several large chunks of stone have fallen through the roofs of the nearby barracks insula. Although any spell traces have long since decayed, to Hermetic investigators this looks very much as though a gigantic version of *The Earth's Car-buncle* targeted the amphitheater structure.

The arena floor is a wooden platform which has collapsed at the ruined southern end of the amphitheater. The collapsed floor reveals a labyrinth of passageways, cages, and trapdoors beneath the arena.

FORUM

The forum is a large open-roofed rectangle, with a floor of large marble flagstones, and surrounded on all sides by a columned corridor. This was a meeting area and market place. The northern end contains a raised pulpit. The forum is not damaged.

WAREHOUSES AND GRANARY

Near the forum are several of large buildings that appear to have been warehouses, and which now contain shattered pottery amphora, crates of exotic cloth, and ingots of

iron and tin. Next to the warehouses is a granary. The granary is roughly the same height and size as the insula, but does not have fixed internal floors; instead it has a number of wooden mezzanine style platforms, some of which have collapsed. The granary's wooden floor is elevated (about a pace off the ground) with numerous vents to allow air to circulate under the floor and through the main structure of the building.

BASILICA

The basilica is a large three storied building that has a central domed hall flanked by offices. The offices housed administrators for both the Cult of Mercury and the garrison of legionaries stationed at the town. The following offices are of particular note:

Salary Office: Contains pay records (in Latin) for the legionnaires stationed in the town. The accumulated pay records can be studied as an Organization Lore: Roman Empire Ability tractatus of Quality 7. It seems that, including auxiliaries, the number of legionnaires at the town varied between 100 and 1000 soldiers. The largest numbers were stationed at the town during the early 1st century AD and the late 2nd century AD. The largest set of records are for a brief period of two years between 190 and 192 AD where the pay of around 10,000 soldiers was processed at the salary office, implying that the town was the headquarters of a much larger force, presumably billeted in the surrounding provincial towns and fortresses.

Library: It seems the library was hastily looted. What remains scattered on the floor are a number of Lab Texts for Mercurian rituals (see Mercurian Rituals) and a complete copy of the *The Annals of Mercury* (see Story Seed: Curious Books, earlier). There are also documents on Roman Law. A compilation of these documents can be read as Summa of Level 7 Quality 7. The relatively low quality represents the fact that parts of some documents are missing.

Correspondence Office: This office contains correspondence between the priests of

Story Seed: The Beast in the Maze

The labyrinth of cages and passages beneath the arena once housed lions, tigers, and other exotic beasts that were used to stage bloody arena battles. These are now all nothing but piles of bones and teeth, but one immortal arena beast remains. This magical gladiator-creature is a minotaur. The minotaur has forgotten his life before he was captured to fight in the arena, and even the functioning arena is now only a dim incoherent memory. Over the lonely centuries the minotaur has explored most the town, but he still makes his lair in the broken ruins of the labyrinth beneath the arena.

MAZE BEAST

Magic Might: 10 (Animal)

Season: Winter

Characteristics: Int -2, Per 0, Pre -1, Com -1, Str +6, Sta +2, Dex +3, Qik 0

Size: +2

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Improved Characteristics, Tough, Piusant Ability (Great Weapon), Warrior; Magic Monster; Reclusive, Visions

Qualities: Gigantic, No Fatigue, Lesser Power, Personal Power (Sense of Self)

Personality Traits: Reclusive +3, Angry +1

Reputations: None

Combat:

Pole-axe: Init +1, Attack +21, Defense +13, Damage +14

Short-sword + Buckler: Init +1, Attack +16, Defense +12, Damage +11

Gore with Horns: Init 0, Attack +16, Defense +11, Damage +7

Soak: +5

Fatigue Levels: None, tireless.

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (arena

beasts), Area Lore: Temple of Mercury 3 (arena), Athletics 4 (running), Awareness 5 (finding), Brawl 9 (gore), Dead Language: Latin 4 (archaic), Great Weapon 10 + 2 (pole axe), Hunt 5 (tracking), Living Language: Greek 4 (archaic), Magic Lore 2 (Mercury), Single Weapon 9 (short sword), Stealth 5 (maze), Survival 5 (town)

Powers:

Bellow, 5 points, Init -10, Mentem: This anguished and lonely cry chills, dims, and quiets the mind of any who hear it. Affected characters have a -6 Penalty to any Quickness based roll (including combat Defense and Initiative). (Base 4, +2 Voice, +1 Diameter, +2 Group)

Sense of Self, 0 points, Init 0, Animal: This constant effect power allows the minotaur to always find his way from his current location to any other place he can remember. (Base 3, +2 Sun; +4 constant effect)

Equipment: Pole-axe, sword and buckler.

Encumbrance: 0 (3)

Vis: Two pawns of Animal vis; one in each horn.

Appearance: The maze beast is a bull-headed man, who carries a large battle axe. He has lost the memory of his past. His name, his original home, his lover; it is all misty and obscure. His sleep is plagued by broken, incoherent visions of loud arena fights and of the town when it was filled with bustling Romans.

The minotaur is lonely but frightened when the player characters enter the regio. He has not seen a living soul for centuries. How he reacts to the player characters is uncertain. If matters do not escalate to violence he may make a good covenant servant.

Mercury and their colleagues at other sites. The accumulated correspondence can be studied as a Organization Lore: Cult of Mercury Ability Summa of Level 3, Quality 10.

In addition, a character can use the correspondence to infer the location of other temples of Mercury, by trying to calculate distance by reply-time and noting any clues to landmarks and cities in the content of the correspondence. It takes a week of study to attempt to find one other temple of Mercury in this way and requires a successful

Intelligence + Organization Lore: Cult of Mercury roll against an Ease Factor of 9. The storyguide needs to decide precisely how many different temples this temple was in correspondence with, as once all such temples have been located no new attempts can be made.

Municipal Office: The city records contain maps of the city and a map of the aqueduct system both within the city and the route taken by the aqueduct to reach the source spring (see Aqueduct). The municipal records also contain taxation

information for the merchants entering the town. Goods from all around the empire made their way to the town, including wool from Britain, olive oil and wine from Greece and Italy, and ivory from North Africa. These records indicate that the town had a fairly stable population of several thousand between 3 AD and 192 AD. The records after 192 AD are poorly documented and rather haphazardly kept. The accumulated city records can be studied as an Organization Lore: Roman Empire Ability tractatus of Quality 7.

Scrying Office: This office contains a large shallow pool connected to the aqueduct network. The pool is currently damaged, and dry. It is not immediately obvious what the pool is for, but a character who studies *The Scrying Pool* ritual (see Mercurian Rituals) recognizes the pool as a component of the ritual. The pool must be repaired and filled with aqueduct water before the ritual can be cast.

The "books" in the basilica office take the form of sequences of scrolls, and many are scattered. It takes several days to assemble all the books, and some scrolls may be missing.

The Annals of Mercury

*The final, short entry in the annals reads:
"We thought that we would go on forever."*

AQUEDUCT

The aqueduct system enters the regio through an elevated, enclosed, concrete pipe at about head-height on the eastern arm of the Cardus. The aqueduct network consists of both open culverts and closed pipes and by careful arrangement of the levels allows water to flow throughout the town. The aqueduct is dry and there is some damage to parts of the system within the town. The damage means that, even if water was to enter the head of the town aqueduct network, the two western quarters of the town would not receive any flow.

The aqueduct pipe that enters through the extreme eastern side of the town is in fact another regio entrance. The pipe is a bit under 2 feet in diameter, which is just big enough for (non-claustrophobic) characters of Size 0 to wriggle up. Smaller characters can climb the pipe more easily. In the mundane world, the aqueduct travels for about 20 miles (or further, depending on where the temple is located) partly underground, partly overland, until it reaches a mountain spring.

The reason that no water comes down the aqueduct is that it is also damaged in the mundane world. Repairing the aqueduct is simple, but labor intensive. It requires 20 man years to repair the aqueduct, that is one character working 20 years for an equivalent of two seasons a year. This could be achieved in other ways, say 20 characters all working together for two seasons. Note that this is just repairing the existing aqueduct; originally constructing the aqueduct would have required considerably more labor.

Once the aqueduct is repaired it must be maintained, by clearing it of silt and debris (and maybe ice in winter), and plugging leaks. Maintenance occupies 5 characters every season, and the work must be done every season. If maintenance is not done for a season, at the end of that season roll a simple die against an Ease Factor of 3 + 1 for each consecutive season for which maintenance has been neglected. If this roll is failed the aqueduct is clogged by silt and the flow stops. If less than 5 characters' worth of work is done in a season, then it counts as a season without maintenance. Once maintenance has been neglected, for every season of neglect it takes 1 man year (i.e. two seasons of work) to catch up on the maintenance, with a maximum requirement of 20 years work (at two seasons per year). This repair work is in addition to the normal 5 characters' worth of work per season. The flow does not resume until the extra repair work has been done.

BATHS

This bathing complex contains separate pools for different temperatures, which are heated by a furnace and an underfloor venting system. The complex is ruined and the bath-

ing waters are supplied by the aqueduct. See Chapter 2: Bath in this book for more information about Roman baths, if required.

THE TEMPLE OF MERCURY

The actual temple to Mercury is a large structure, built on top of a podium with a floor area of about 3000 square feet. The podium is about three paces high with a steep flight of stairs at the front. The temple has four pillars along the front and seven pillars down each flank. The pillars are twenty paces high and about a pace in diameter. The pillars are topped by a peaked roofed pediment and the front pillars enclose an open porch area, of about 1700 square feet. The back pillars enclose a single chamber, the cella, which has an area of about 1300 square feet. In the dark cella stands a decapitated marble statue of Mercury, that stands twice the height of a man. The god's head is nowhere to be seen.

Hermetic investigation (for example, with *Intellego Terram*) reveals that the statue was decapitated hundreds of years ago; probably at about the time that the town was abandoned. The statue can be reconstructed either through *Creo Terram* rituals or the work of mundane craftsmen.

The Mercurian Rituals

The Library in the Basilica contains a number of Mercurian Ritual Lab Texts. These are written in Latin and with difficulty (the texts must be translated into Hermetic terms) can be used to reinvent Hermetic versions of the rituals.

Reading the Mercurian Rituals

Any character who can read Latin and has a score in Magic Theory can discern from the Lab Texts roughly what each Mercurian ritual

is for. It takes a day to study each Lab Text in this way, and the character learns the Form and Technique of the ritual, the magnitude of the effect, and an idea of what the ritual actually does.

Briefly reading the Mercurian Lab Texts in this way does not allow the character to cast the ritual or even use the Lab Text to reinvent the ritual. This is because the Lab Texts are non-Hermetic and must be translated into Hermetic terms before use. This brief reading can however be used by the character to judge whether the translation effort would be worthwhile.

Learning the Mercurian Rituals

As Bonisagus based Hermetic magic partly on Mercurian magic it is relatively straightforward for magi to use these Laboratory Texts to reinvent the rituals. The procedure is:

- The magus must first translate the Mercurian Laboratory Text into a Hermetic one.
- Translation of the Mercurian rituals requires a laboratory. If the character chooses he can experiment (ArM5, page 107), which may change the ritual slightly, but not in a predictable manner.
- For each season of translating the Mercurian Laboratory Text, the character accumulates a number of points equal

to the amount by which his Lab Total in the appropriate Arts of the ritual exceeds the level of the ritual. When the character has accumulated points equal to twice the level of the ritual he has translated it. This process produces a Hermetic copy of the ritual. These rules mean that in order to translate a Mercurian ritual the magus must have a Lab Total greater than the ritual level. In order to translate the ritual in a single season, the magus requires a Lab Total equal to three times the ritual level.

- Once he has translated the ritual the character can then invent the ritual from the Hermetic version of the Laboratory Text using the normal rules for inventing spells from a Laboratory Text.
- Any Hermetic magus can use the Hermetic copy of the Laboratory Text to invent the ritual, even if he does not have access to the Mercurian original.
- The rituals are non-Hermetic and so

must be invented exactly as described in the translated text — the Range and so on cannot be varied. If the magus experiments (see ArM5, page 107) then, obviously, some parameters may potentially change (at the discretion of the storyguide).

- Each Mercurian ritual must be translated separately. However, if the character has translated some Mercurian rituals, he receives a bonus to subsequent translation Lab Totals equal to the highest magnitude of the Mercurian rituals he has already translated. This bonus does not apply to the Lab Total for invention; it only applies to the translation.

Casting the Mercurian Rituals

Once a magus has translated and invented the Mercurian rituals he can cast them as if they were Hermetic rituals of the appropriate Arts. The effects may be dispelled as if they were Hermetic. However, the rituals obviously have a non-Hermetic origin to any observer who has an Ability Score in Magic Theory.

Hermetic Versions of the Mercurian Rituals

These rituals can be recovered and reinvented as Hermetic rituals by following the process of translation and invention.

PURIFICATION

CrCo 40

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Individual, ritual

This ritual may only be cast on another character who has a Decrepitude Score of 1 or higher. The caster cannot cast it on himself. During the ritual the target must be bathed in water, in a consecrated temple of Mercury.

The target's apparent age is reduced by 5 years and his Decrepitude Score is reduced by 1. The player also removes up to 5 Aging Points currently allocated to the

Story Seed: Already Claimed

The aqueduct's water source is already claimed as a vis source by the magi of another covenant, who are unaware of the aqueduct. Can the player characters negotiate for access to the water? Perhaps the issue can be resolved via a Certamen challenge, or by a swap for another vis source.

Project: The Wizard's Aqueduct

The player characters could invent (or commission another magus to make) an item to magically transport water from the aqueduct source to the temple of mercury complex. This bypasses the troublesome need to maintain the remote aqueduct system, but the current owners of the vis source will become annoyed.

An alternative project is to invent a spell that can be cast periodically to magically clean the aqueduct system.

Vis Source: The Aqueduct Spring

The water source for the aqueduct is a distant mountain spring. This is an Aquam vis source. The first gallon of water to bubble up at the dawn of Summer Solstice contains the vis. It takes about four and half hours for this water to travel down the aqueduct to the town (if the aqueduct is functional). The vis can be collected either at the source, or at the town, or somewhere in between.

The source provides 5 pawns of Aquam source per year. Adjust this total depending on how significant the troupe wants this source to be, and the size of the vis economy in your saga.

Story Seed: The Godhead

To Second Sight, the god Mercury is not as headless as it appears to the mundane senses, the statue has an invisible head. This head is a demon who has somehow infiltrated the regio and replaced the true head of Mercury. The demon is a member of the Order of False Gods and manipulates Hermetic detection effects so that he appears to be a Magic creature.

The demon claims to be an avatar of Mercury and attempts to corrupt the souls of the player character magi. The demon's main strategy is to offer the player characters rewards in return for committing sins, although obviously he disguises this as "Mercurian Rituals." Examples of the demon's bargains are:

TASKS

- De-consecrate a Christian church and raise an image of Mercury over the altar.
- Make a human sacrifice at the foot of the decapitated statue of Mercury.
- Steal the tithe from a parish church and offer it to Mercury instead.

REWARDS

Death Prophecy: The Godhead gives the character a Death Prophecy, which acts exactly like the Virtue (ArM5, page 41). However, the Death Prophecy is a lie. Of course the character does not discover that the demon has lied until it is too late.

Puissant (Art): The Godhead grants the character this Hermetic Virtue (ArM5, page 48). This also causes any effect cast by the character, that uses this Art, to be tainted with the Infernal. However, the demon uses his *Shroud the Stench of the Pit* power to prevent this taint from being detected.

Pawns of Vim vis: The vis is tainted by the

infernal (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal* page 18-19). The demon's *Shroud the Stench of the Pit* power disguises this fact, until the vis is used.

The player characters probably eventually discover that the Godhead demon is not really Mercury. Once they do, the demon proposes a new pact: he offers to continue to use his *Shroud the Stench of the Pit* power to hide the character's infernal transgressions and in return the characters must sign their souls over to him. The demon's proposal is tempting, because it is very likely that the Order of Hermes will March the player characters if the earlier "accidental" pacts are discovered. Claiming to have only accidentally dealt with a demon is a very shaky defense, particularly if the characters have been performing the demon's tasks. The demon is, of course, sure to point out how the magi need him to hide their infernal taint.

THE GODHEAD

Order: Prince of the False Gods

Infernal Might: 40 (Terram)

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

Size: -1

Confidence Score: 3 (9)

Virtues and Flaws: Arcane Lore, Piercing Gaze

Personality Traits: Arrogant +6

Reputations: False Mercury 5 (infernal)

Hierarchy: 9

Combat:

Bite: Init +4, Attack +12, Defense +12, Damage +7

Soak: +10

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -3 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Awareness 3 (the Gift), Brawl 5 (bite), Bargain 7 (pacts), Code of

Hermes 3 (infernalism), Guile 5 (Mercurians), Intrigue 5 (infernal)

Powers:

Coagulation, 4 point, Init -1, Terram: Allows the demon to form a physical body (see *Realms of Power: Infernal* page 31). The physical body manifested by the demon is an invisible stone head. When in his spiritual form the demon is also invisible and can neither be physically damaged nor targeted or detected by Hermetic magic.

Envisioning, 1 point, Init 0, Mentem: Allows the demon to appear in the dreams of a character (see *Realms of Power: Infernal* page 32).

Grant Magical Power, 2 points, Init 0, Vim: Permanently grants a character the Puissant Art Virtue, but only if the character first performs a task for the demon. This taints the Art with the infernal.

Obsession, 1 point, Init -5, Vim: Whenever a character sins in the presence of the demon it can use this power to infect the character with the Personality Trait: Arrogant +1; see *Realms of Power: Infernal* page 31.

Shroud the Stench of the Pit, variable, Init +3, Vim: Allows the demon to disguise from Hermetic detection any of his other powers. This disguise costs the same number of Might Points as the original power and lasts indefinitely or until the demon lifts the shroud.

Vis: 10 pawns of infernally tainted Terram vis in stone brains.

Appearance: The Godhead is an invisible stone head about twice the size of a human head. The head can float around if he chooses. As he is a demon and without virtue, the Godhead is a coward. So if wounded either with magic or physically, the Godhead abandons his physical (but invisible) form and instead adopts his spiritual form.

character's characteristics.

Assuming that the vis is available, and the caster is willing, the ritual may be cast multiple times in quick succession (to reduce a high Decrepitude Score to a much lower value). The ritual has no effect if the target character has a Decrepitude Score of 0. Note that the ritual does not reduce the actual age of the character, so it has no effect on the Aging Roll.

Commentary included in the Lab Text suggests that the Mercurian priests used this ritual in a similar manner to the way Hermetic

magi use the Longevity Ritual. The ritual is compatible with the Longevity Ritual.

This ritual breaks the Hermetic Limit of Aging.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

THE SCRYING POOL

InIm 20

R: Arcane, D: Concentration/Special, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual allows the caster to see an image of the target and his immediate surroundings in the surface of the pool of water in the Scrying Office (in the Basilica). The ritual is specifically designed for this pool; another similar pool cannot be used.

If *Wizard's Communion* is used to cast this ritual, then it only expires when all of the casting magi cease to concentrate. Individual magi may cease concentrating and rejoin later. In this way, by taking shifts, the ritual may be prolonged for hours, days, potentially

Story Seed: Book Sellers or Book Keepers

Other magi learn that the characters have access to lost Mercurian rituals and ask for copies. The characters can choose to sell or give away copies, or keep access restricted to the player characters alone. If the characters restrict access (or charge too high a price), other interested magi try to steal the Mercurian lab texts.

Note, this issue may arise even if the player characters do not actually bother to translate the rituals.

even years. Only magi who participated in the *Wizard's Communion* may join or rejoin the ritual. This effect is a special feature of how this ritual was originally designed to interact with *Wizard's Communion*, these rules do not apply to other spells.

Casting this spell on a member of Order of Hermes is illegal scrying. Of course, the casters might not be bothered by this.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

RAISING THE AUXILIARIES FOR A DAY

CrMe 35

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Group, Ritual

This ritual cast from the porch of a consecrated temple of Mercury (see *Consecration of Mercury's House*), on a group of up to 100 characters, gives the characters a +1 bonus to Attack and Defense rolls and allows the characters to fight together in trained groups, assuming that there are sufficient officers available to lead the groups.

Characters who are already affected by this ritual do not gain additional benefit from subsequent castings.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

PENETRATE THE REGIO SKIN

Cr(Re)Vi 25

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual creates a new entrance through a Magic regio boundary. The entrance is up to

one pace in diameter, and a successful Dex + Finesse roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is required to precisely control where the entrance physically is. The caster must be able to sense the regio boundary in order to cast this ritual and the storyguide may rule that some regio boundaries are impervious to this ritual.

It seems that this ritual was used create the Aqueduct entrance.

Note that this ritual only penetrates Magic regiones, different versions may be discovered for other sorts of regio.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

BLESSING OF MERCURY

CrVi 30

R: Touch, D: Year, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual may only be cast in a consecrated temple dedicated to Mercury (see *Consecration of Mercury's House*).

The target gains +3 to all Casting and Laboratory totals for the duration of the spell. If a character is already affected by this ritual, successive casting have no effect except to reset the duration.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

TRANSFORMATION OF FLESH TO SPIRIT

CrVi(Co) 60

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Structure, Ritual

At the climax of this ritual, which must be cast within a consecrated temple of Mercury, the caster kills herself and if she is powerful enough the aura permanently increases by 1 (to a maximum of 10).

To determine whether the aura increases two criteria must be met: the caster must have no Art Score with a value less than twice the current aura level, and the Penetration of the ritual must exceed five times the current aura value.

If this ritual is cast using *Wizard's Communion* then only the leader of the ritual must kill herself, and only the values of her Art Scores are significant.

If a character learns of this ritual it may occur to her (Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore

roll against an Ease Factor of 3) that the reputed sacrifice of Trianoma to increase the aura of Durmar may have been a version of this ritual (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 8).

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

WIZARD'S INITIATION

CrVi(Co) 75

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual may only be cast in a consecrated temple dedicated to Mercury (see *Consecration of Mercury's House*).

The target of this ritual gains The Gift.

Unfortunately, this ritual does not work (see insert for details). If a character attempts to cast the ritual, then regardless of Casting Score the ritual does not work. In addition, roll an extra botch die in the case of a possible botch.

There is no way of discerning that the ritual does not work, other than by reading (and trusting), the Mercurian literature on the subject (see insert) or attempting to cast and failing.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

CONSECRATION OF MERCURY'S HOUSE

CrVi 55

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Structure, Ritual

This momentary ritual opens a temple shell to habitation by Mercury. This creates a level 1 Magic aura within the temple precinct (which may be then swamped by a larger aura of a different sort). As this is a momentary Creo ritual, once the ritual has been cast the aura remains and cannot be dispelled. If the temple already has a Magic aura the existing aura is not increased by the casting of this spell.

Another effect of this spell is that the temple has the magical property that it is consecrated to Mercury, which is important for some of the other recovered Mercurian rituals. The consecration can be detected by Hermetic Intellego Vim magic (as an effect of eleventh magnitude) and this effect can also be dispelled with Hermetic Perdo Vim (even



though the aura itself cannot be dispelled). If the consecration is dispelled the ritual can be cast again to restore this property.

The final effect of this spell is that any characters with Faith Points whom are within the Structure at the time of casting (including the caster) lose 1 Faith Point. This Faith Point may be regained in the usual ways.

The temple shell must be built to the same plan as the ruined temple (just the temple itself, in the center of the town). The temple can be a different size to this exemplar temple, however. The ruined temple is not currently consecrated.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

COMMUNE WITH MERCURY

InVi 20

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual, cast within a consecrated temple of Mercury, allows the character to communicate in their mind with the god Mercury; or at least someone claiming that he is.

Whether the god has anything useful to say is up to the troupe.

The god exists somewhere in the Magic realm and seemingly has no knowledge of Mythic Europe since the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine in 313 AD, and has only a hazy understanding of Mythic Europe under the pagan Roman Empire. The god is conscious and if contacted several times he remembers the earlier contacts, although he seems to experience the passage of time differently from the characters. Depending on the needs of your saga, the god could have an agenda, such as the re-establishment of a pagan empire or the recovery of artifacts. Alternatively, the god may not care much at all about the world and activities of the player characters.

Note that this ritual does not need to Penetrate to have an effect.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

WIZARD'S COMMUNION

MuVi 5, MuVi 10, and MuVi 20

R: Voice, D: Momentary, T: Group

Story Seed: Integration of the Mercurian Rituals

The magi could embark upon an integration breakthrough (see *Ancient Magic* page 7, or *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition* page 14) to fully incorporate the guidelines behind these Mercurian rituals into Hermetic magic. If this is done versions of these rituals with new Ranges, Durations, etc could be developed.

Apart from a functioning *Wizard's Initiation* (discussed elsewhere) the following breakthroughs might be achieved:

CrVi 50 ritual guideline that creates a Magic aura of 1. The base level for this ritual is Touch, Momentary, Room and the ritual may only be cast with Room, Structure, or Boundary targets. Versions of this guideline for other realms might be invented too. Breakthrough Points Required: 30. Insight Sources: *Consecration of Mercury's House* ritual, the temple structure at the heart of the regio, any other site with a Magic aura.

CrVi 55 ritual guideline that increases a Magic aura by 1 to a maximum of 2. An additional magnitude increases a Magic aura by 1 to a maximum of 3, a further

magnitude will increase Magic aura by 1 to a maximum of 4 and so forth. An aura cannot be increased to a value greater than 10. The base level for this ritual is Touch, Momentary, Room and the ritual may only be cast with Room, Structure, or Boundary targets. Versions of this guideline for other realms might be invented too. Breakthrough Points Required: 30. Insight Sources: *Transformation of Flesh to Spirit* ritual, the regio aura, the aura at the Durenmar covenant.

Cr(Re)Vi 20 guideline that creates an entrance to a Magic regio. Must be cast at the regio boundary, which must be sensed by the caster. Versions of this guideline for other realms might be invented too. Breakthrough Points Required: 30. Insight Sources: *Penetrate the Regio Skin* ritual, the aqueduct regio entrance, the main triumphal arch regio entrance.

The rituals might also be integrated to "discover" the Mercurian Magic Virtue (ArM5, page 46). This requires 45 Breakthrough points.

Saga Seed: The Failure of the Wizard's Initiation Ritual

The *Wizard's Initiation* ritual does not work. To Hermetic eyes, there does not seem to be anything wrong. It just fails when cast.

The Mercurian priests were aware of this, and their commentary on the ritual indicates that the ritual began to occasionally fail in the early first century AD and seems to have been totally unusable by the fourth century. This problem did not just affect the priests at this temple; it was a problem across the empire, and it is often mentioned in the correspondence between temples (which is stored in Correspondence Office).

The Mercurian priests identified the cause of this crisis as the passing from the astrological Age of Aries into the astrological Age of Pisces, which was occurring at this time. Something about the ritual is incompatible with the Age of Pisces and the priests also noticed a change in the balance of power between the realms with the changing astrological age. The Mercurian priests were unable to repair their initiation ritual and the failure of the priests to solve this problem certainly contributed to the collapse of the Cult of Mercury.

The player characters may decide to attempt to repair the ritual for the Age of Pisces. The pay-off for doing so is fantastic, both in terms of power and Hermetic prestige. Developing a functioning version of this

ritual is an integration research project (see *Ancient Magic* page 7, or *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition* page 14) that requires 60 Breakthrough points and adds the following guideline:

CrVi(Co) 75 ritual guideline. Gives the target, who must be human, The Gift. The target of this ritual must be Individual.

Apart from the non-functioning version of the ritual at this temple, slightly different (but equally non-functional) versions of the ritual might be recovered from other temples and used as sources of insight. Any research notes of the Mercurian priests may also be used as sources of insight. Accessing sources of insight requires discovering the location of, and exploring, other temples to Mercury, and other sites of interest to the Cult of Mercury. It is also quite likely that some of the Mercurian priests' research notes are in the possession of other Hermetic magi. These magi may or may not be aware of the notes' significance, and may or may not be willing to share. Astrological texts and calculations that concern the astrological ages may also be used as sources of insight for this project.

If it is undertaken, repairing the *Wizard's Initiation* ritual (and dealing with the consequences if the magi succeed) may become a significant part of your saga.

ASTROLOGICAL AGES

An astrological age lasts for about 2160 years, and is named after the position of the sun on the vernal (spring) equinox. The sun's position moves slightly each year, and from the rate of movement it appears it takes about 25,900 years to travel through all the signs of the zodiac. In 1220 the sun is near the middle of Pisces on the vernal equinox, thus 1220 is near the middle of the Age of Pisces.

Despite this general definition, there are different schools of thought (both amongst mundane astrologers and Hermetic magi) on precisely when the vernal equinox can be said to have left one zodiac sign and arrived in the next. However, most agree that, rather than a sharp break, there is a period of several centuries during which one age fades as its successor grows. This slow transition between the Age of Aries and the Age of Pisces occurred sometime between the birth of Christ and the collapse of the western Roman Empire.

Some Hermetic theorists believe that magic behaves differently in the different astrological ages. However, due to the Order's lack of practical experience with ages other than Pisces this is a very theoretical, abstract concern that few magi bother themselves with.

These Mercurian "rituals" translate to *Wizard's Communion* (ArM5, page 160). There are first magnitude, second magnitude, and fourth magnitude versions. Note that these are not actually rituals.

Obviously, as *Wizard's Communion* already exists in the Hermetic repertoire there is little point translating this text. The fact that there are already existing Hermetic versions suggests that another magus has translated similar rituals gathered from another site. Perhaps this was some of the work that Bonisagus did at Aventine Hill.

(Base Effect, non-Hermetic)

Opponents

As described, the temple of Mercury is relatively empty of inhabitants and is undiscovered. The intention is that this allows the troupe the space to tell the story of how the

player characters react to and interact with the location. However, some story seeds that provide opponents who could also try to interact with the location, and thus interfere with the player character's plans, include the following.

Story Seed: A Rival Expedition

A group of young magi, and their retainers, independently discover and arrive at the temple to Mercury. These magi have either discovered a portal that leads to the heart of the temple town, or have discovered the regio entrance. The young magi are seeking Mercurian rituals, which they plan to recover, translate, and adapt to Hermetic casting methods. The expedition also considers founding a new covenant (or chapter house) at the site, especially after the importance of a consecrated temple of Mercury to many of the rituals is realized.

If this expedition arrives when the player

characters are absent, the young magi may not realize that others have discovered the temple. In any case, the player characters need to either compromise and share the discovery, or attempt to assert a prior legal claim, or merely eliminate the new arrivals.

Use a selection of the magi templates in ArM5 (page 24–28) to represent the young magi. The expedition could be acting on orders or guidance from older magi at a distant covenant. The distant covenant may even be in a different Tribunal.

Story Seed: The Dead Amongst Us

There is no graveyard within the town, and there are no bodies to be found. This is strange, but could be for a number of reasons. Perhaps the dead were removed at some point, or have decayed to dust, or maybe the graveyard is outside the regio (beneath a field near the ruined

Rules for Ghosts

See *Realms of Power: Magic* pages 115–118 for rules concerning characters who have become ghosts.

Alternatively, if the troupe does not have access to such rules, assume that a ghost in the necropolis is immaterial (that is, cannot touch living things), has a Mental Magic Might equal to his highest Ability or Art Score, and can no longer earn XP points. A necropolis ghost also has no Fatigue and although he can be wounded (with suitable magical weapons) all wounds (except fatal ones) are recovered at the beginning of the night when the moon rises, which is every 12 hours in the necropolis. The ghost can be destroyed by destroying his Might, by inflicting a "fatal" wound, or by destroying his corpse. The ghost also

has the *Leaving the Crypt* power.

A ghost of a magus may cast spells as usual, but as he has no Fatigue he may not cast Fatiguing Spontaneous magic, and he only succeeds in casting Formulaic spells if his Casting Total equals or exceeds the spell level. The magus ghost cannot directly target the living with spells, but the living can still be affected by his spells. For example, a wall created by a ghost magi's spell impedes a living character, but the ghost cannot target a *Pilum of Fire* on a living target.

Leaving the Crypt: Init +1, Vim, 1 Might Point: For a duration of 1 Diameter the ghost may physically affect the living with his body, weapons, and (if applicable) may target spells at the living.

arch). Another option is that there is another regio present, which contains a necropolis.

The necropolis regio (Magic aura 7) is identical to the temple regio (that is, it is a dark mirror of the town), but the necropolis is in quite good repair, and it is always night. However, there is still weather (storms and so on) in the necropolis. The main way to enter the necropolis is by dying within the temple regio. Upon death, the character's corpse disappears and reappears (along with his ghost) in the necropolis. Once within the necropolis, the character's ghost remains until his corpse has decayed to dust, which usually takes several centuries (in the conditions within the necropolis), at which point the ghost finally departs. The ghosts cannot normally leave the necropolis regio, but any character who can see through the regio boundary (see *ArM5*, page 189), including a ghost, can cross the regio boundary.

As it is so long since the temple was occupied that even the ghosts of the Roman priests and citizens have departed. However, the necropolis may contain the ghosts of others (including magi) who have found, and died within, the temple in the last few centuries. This could include a Founder.

Story Seed: The Cult

The temple location is already known to a Mystery Cult, and traveling to the temple to perform rites in the forum, bath, and temple is an important component of the cult's Initiation rituals.

An Initiate of the Mystery Cult arrives at the temple to perform a ritual, and is surprised to find the player characters present. The cultist is evasive about the purpose of his visit, and very suspicious that the player characters are attempting to discover the cult's secrets. He attempts to persuade or force the player characters to leave the site, either via negotiation, or Certamen, or hostile acts. If he is obviously hopelessly outnumbered or outclassed, the cultist first gathers fellow cult members as reinforcements.

The Mystery Cult need not be directly connected to Mercury, as the temple site is a place of magic power that could be important to the cult for other reasons. For example, if the temple is located in the Rhine (beyond the normal territory of the Roman republic) then the site could have previously been important to the Germanic cults that eventually became House Bjornaer. This could then mean that the

Roman construction of the temple of Mercury on this site (denying it to the Germanic priests/shape-shifters) was originally an early move in Rome's attempts to conquer Germania.

Returning to the Temple

The temple can become a recurring location for the saga in the following ways:

- The temple site is large and may take several visits to fully explore.
- The characters may decide to restore and consecrate the temple as required to cast some of the Mercurian rituals.
- The characters may mistake the Godhead demon for Mercury and make pacts to return to the temple for rewards after completing the demon's tasks.
- The characters may discover that they can commune with the real god Mercury (or a faerie, magical, or demonic imposter) using the *Commune with Mercury* ritual. Pagan characters may thus decide to return to the temple for seasonal religious festivals. This might form a part of initiation rituals.
- The characters could colonize the temple site and use it as their covenant location or as a chapter house.
- Members of the Cult of Mercury, Seekers, or Guernicus agents may learn of the temple and ask the characters for guidance to the location. If the player characters have already colonized the temple then these visitors may try to assert a superior legal claim to the site, or wage Certamen or Wizard War for exclusive access.

Chapter Nine

The Faerie Toy Market on Devil's Lane

Devil's Lane that trades in magical toys. Devil's Lane is a small faerie regio which has multiple urban entrances throughout Mythic Europe. A pair of Merinita magi have made their covenant within the market and the player characters may visit the market to buy or commission toys, or to take advantage of the regio's many entrances to travel to a distant Tribunal. The player characters might also join, or usurp, the Merinita covenant.

A Trip to the Toy Market

These story seeds introduce the toy market to the player characters.

Story Seed: A Tempting Portal

The player characters stumble upon the threshold of the narrow, refuse choked alleyway that leads to the Devil's Lane regio when visiting a city for other reasons. The regio entrance is warded (see *The Alley Wards*), so player character grogs may be able to see the regio entrance, but be unable to enter.

Story Seed: The Baron's Gift

The player characters (or their agents) are present at a birthday feast held in the baron's court. A young faerie-blooded knight, Sir Callum, presents an extravagant magical toy (*The Rain Parasol*, see *Toys*, later) as a gift. The court

gossip is that Sir Callum purchased the gift at a toy market in the nearby city. Curious player characters can investigate the source of the gift.

Story Seed: Toys that Break the Code

A Quaesitorial investigation comes to the covenant. Many magical items are apparently circulating in a city near the covenant, and the Quaesitors are concerned that magi are responsible and that the items will draw undue attention to the Order of Hermes.

The Quaesitors initially treat the player characters as suspects due to the covenant's proximity to the city, but once the Quaesitors have recovered some of the items (perhaps with the player characters' assistance), it is obvious that the items are faerie in origin. In fact, a faerie-blooded merchant is buying the toys from Devil's Lane, and then selling them on in the main street. However, the player characters may still be suspected of involvement.

The player characters could try to locate the source of the faerie items to prove their innocence, or might merely be interested, like the Quaesitors, in where the faerie items are coming from. Alternatively, the player characters could be the Quaesitors investigating another covenant.

Story Seed: Toy Courier

A Redcap stays at the covenant whilst couriering a toy between the faerie toy market and another covenant. He does not reveal the details (price or function) of the toy, but he is perfectly happy to discuss the

toy market itself. The Redcap can guide the player characters to Devil's Lane.

Story Seed: To Hell and Beyond

Player characters searching for an entrance to hell learn a story of a princess whose sorcerer-father was imprisoned in hell by the devil. The princess mingled her blood with that of a faerie queen and used a portal in Devil's Lane to travel to hell and negotiate with the devil for the return of her father. The story is light on details, but the player characters may suspect that this story refers to the location of the Devil's Lane Merinita covenant (see *What is Known* insert) and decide to investigate further.

Player characters searching for a hell entrance might include infernalists, demon-hunters, and characters seeking to recover souls (or artifacts) from hell. Magi might also seek an entrance to hell in order to close it.

Player characters seeking an entrance to the Faerie Realm might uncover similar stories about accessing the Faerie Realm from Devil's Lane.

The Streets

The faerie toy market follows a central twisting lane (Devil's Lane) from which, like spokes, lead a number of narrow alleys. Each alley is an entrance to the regio. Faerie merchants ply their wares in stalls and stores along Devil's Lane. The streets are usually bustling with hundreds of roughly humanoid faeries.

The entire market is a Faerie regio (aura level 6).

Flying Down Devil's Lane

Characters with the capability may fly within Devil's Lane. However, there is a thick dome of turbulent gray-black cloud hovering about 100 paces above Devil's Lane, which extends down to touch the buildings at the edge of the lane. The swirling dome of cloud-cover is impenetrable, thus it is impossible to fly in or out of the regio, except through the normal alleyways.

Sometimes the clouds loose a barrage of rain or hail, but usually the lane is dry illuminated by a flat diffuse light emanating from somewhere overhead. The cloud cover persists into the night, so that it is impossible to see stars above Devil's Lane.

Characters with powerful Perdo Auram effects may be able to, at least briefly, clear the sky above Devil's Lane. If so, the storyguide needs to consider whether there is an aerial regio entrance, and where it leads to.

Devil's Lane

The heart of the faerie market is Devil's Lane. This street, cobbled with oily black stones, snakes back and forth upon itself, and is lined with rickety timber and redbrick two-story buildings. Many of the buildings have balconies, brightly-dyed canvas awnings, or protruding upper floors that extend out over the street to almost touch their opposite neighbors. Thus, in places, Devil's Lane is more of a dark tunnel than an open street.

The length of Devil's Lane is about 150 paces, but due to its zigzag geometry little more than 10 paces can be seen at once, and it is about three paces wide. However, many parts are constricted due to spilling street stalls. In these occluded segments only a narrow path, less than one pace wide, is navigable.

Devil's Lane has two ends. One is called Upside and the other Downside, and, due to the zigzag geometry, the two ends meet. Devil's Lane is thus a loop and a character who walks to the furthest extent of Upside

finds himself at the beginning of Downside (and vice versa).

The Alleyways

Extending out of Devil's Lane are a dozen narrow, brick alleyways, each named after a city (apart from one nameless alley). The alleyways are one pace wide and 20 paces long. On the wall of each alleyway is a slate board that lists the guild rules in Latin (see Market Guild).

The alleyways are the regio entrances (and exits) and each leads to its eponymous city. The market faeries refer to the mundane areas linked to the regio as "city-side," or in the specific case "London-side," "Paris-side," and so forth. The terms "lane-side," "Devil's-side," "the market" and "Devil's Lane" are all used to refer to the market regio.

THE ALLEY WARDS

The city-side alleyway entrances are warded against humans who do *not* have faerie blood. These wards manifest in different ways city-side (and also change from time to time): sometimes the alleyway is impossibly narrow, or barred with gates, or invisible, or

What is Known About The Faerie Toy Market?

Characters with Area Lore: City Abilities (for the cities that contain entrances to Devil's Lane), or Faerie Lore may know of Devil's Lane and the Faerie Toy Market.

Characters with Organization Lore: Order of Hermes, or Area Lore: Tribunal Abilities may know of the Merinita covenant at the market.

KNOWN BY ALL

Nothing is universally known about the toy market.

WIDELY KNOWN

The existence of the Devil's Lane faerie toy market is obscure but mundane knowledge in the cities that contain entrances to it. Many characters with Area Lore: City Abilities know of the faerie toy market and also know that Devil's Lane is very difficult to find. Most who know this tale actually dismiss it as a mere (untrue) faerie tale.

Within the Order of Hermes it is widely known that there is a Merinita cov-

enant called Devil's Lane built within a Faerie regio that also contains a faerie toy market. Merinita and Redcap magi have a +1 bonus to this roll.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

A few with the Area Lore: City Ability have knowledge of the location of the local entrance to Devil's Lane and also the knowledge that it is only accessible to those of faerie blood.

Many within the Order of Hermes know that there are multiple urban entrances to the toyshop regio. The Redcaps have documents that describe the entrances to the toy market regio. Quaesitors have a +3 bonus to this roll and Redcaps have a +6 bonus.

LOST SECRETS

A few magi know that Devil's Lane is a bridge between hell and the faerie realm. Merinita and infernalist magi both have a +3 bonus to this roll

Story Seed: Civic Reconstruction

Cologne and Constantinople alleyways are inaccessible because reconstruction in the respective cities has destroyed the regio entrances city-side. The members of the market guild council are aware that this is the cause and might commission the player characters to solve the problem (with payment in vis). However, the guild councilors are canny and do not immediately offer a commission to curious characters. The councilors surmise that magi sufficiently curious to ask about the bricked up alleyways may well try to fix the entrances on their own initiative (at no cost to the guild).

Mundane construction (or disasters like fires and earthquakes) may render other regio entrances unusable. If this occurs to the entrance that the player characters use, the characters could be stranded either city-side or lane-side.

high above street level. Nothing prevents travel from Devil's Lane to city-side.

The alley wards have no Penetration, and thus do not keep out most magi (or others with Magic Resistance). The wards also do not keep out mundane or magical animals (including familiars). To Hermetic Intellego Vim investigation the wards are constant, faerie effects of magnitude four, analogous to Corpus, and can be dispelled. However, if dispelled the wards reappear at the next dawn or dusk (whichever is next). It is not clear whether specific faeries cast the wards or they are a "natural" feature of the regio.

The Rat Pack

The streets of Devil's Lane teem with a large tribe of vicious faerie blooded rats. There are thousands of rats in the rat pack; some originate from city-side, but many rat generations have been born within Devil's Lane too.

A Street Directory

The following alleyways lead from Devil's Lane:

- Acre Avenue
- Barcelona Street
- Bologna Way
- Bordeaux Street
- Cairo Way
- Cologne Avenue
- Constantinople Street
- Florence Avenue
- London Street
- Paris Way
- Prague Street
- No-Name Street

Cologne and Constantinople are unusual because the ends of these alleyways are bricked up (see Story Seed: Civic Reconstruction).

No-Name Street is also bricked up and seemingly inaccessible. If asked, the faeries do not know where No-Name Street used to lead (or even whether it ever led anywhere at all).

In your saga, the troupe should feel free to replace alleyways (or add new ones) to ensure that the toy market is as accessible (or inaccessible) as you want it to be.

The rat pack is led by Mengalaz, the familiar of the Merinita magus Bartholomew, who lives in Devil's Lane.

The rat pack collectively acts as a garbage and sewage system that consumes anything organic left lying in the street within a few hours. This includes corpses, and Unconscious or Incapacitated characters. The rats may also swarm to attack (and eat) any creature of Size -3 or smaller (a cat, baby, or smaller), particularly if that creature is either alone or part of a small group of like-size creatures. The rat pack may thus be a real danger to the familiars of visiting magi. Inorganic refuse (or characters) may be nibbled upon, but are not consumed.

When swarming to attack, the rats form into groups. One is a trained group of 6 rats led by Mengalaz; the group bonus is +18. The remaining rats form up into untrained groups each numbering 6 rats. There are at least 4 untrained groups, and there could be dozens, depending on the number of rats immediately available. If the target of an attack is a group too, then all the rat pack groups attack the group trying to split it into smaller groups (see Splitting Groups, ArM5 page 175). Once the opposing group has been split Mengalaz's trained rat group tries to overwhelm the most vulnerable member of the split group, leaving the large groups to hold of the other opponents.

If a rat is killed or incapacitated, the surviving members of his group attempt, in the group's next turn, to disengage (see Disengaging, ArM5 page 173). If successful, the rats

flee, scurrying into the drains and refuse of Devil's Lane. If the disengage attempt fails the group continues fighting.

If engaged in combat by foes larger than Size -3 the rat pack immediately breaks and flees down filthy drains, and scuttles into narrow nooks. Apart from spells (or other supernatural powers), there is little that can stop the rats from fleeing.

The Merchants

Dozens of faerie merchants sell toys from cramped and crowded stores at the market. Most merchants are nearly human faeries, some are mortals with faerie blood, and a few

Story Seed: At The End of Upside

Those who know the correct way of walking can enter the Faerie Realm by walking along Devil's Lane to the end of Upside. Player characters (Perception + Awareness roll against an Ease Factor of 15) may notice that some faeries appear at Upside; in addition, characters with Second Sight (or *Piercing the Faerie Veil*) can see that Upside is an entrance to the faerie realm. However, even characters who can see the regio boundary must be guided through it by a native inhabitant of the Faerie Realm.

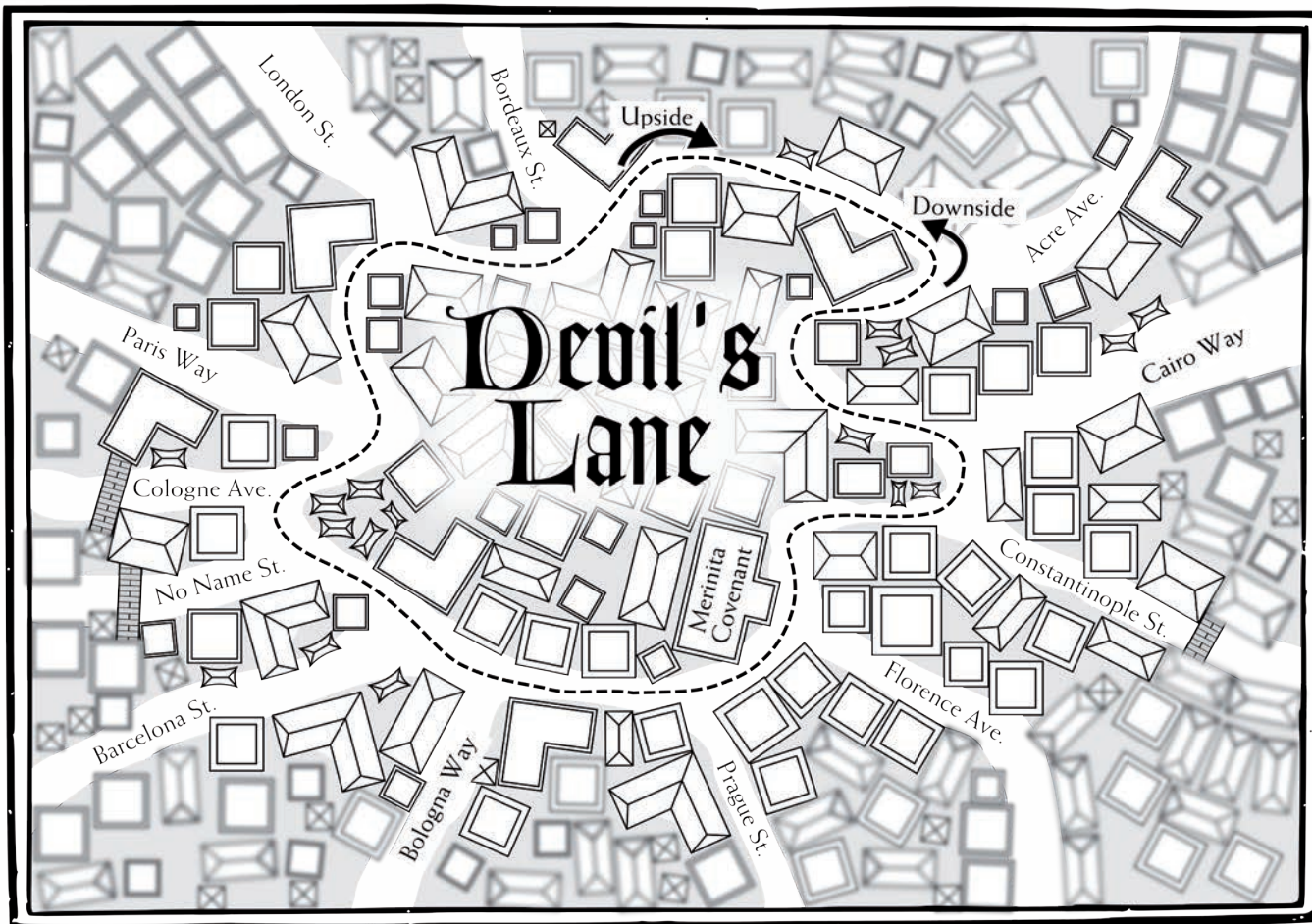
Story Seed: From Downside

Walking down Devil's Lane to the end of Downside is a method of traveling to and from Hell. This is the origin of the lane's name and a legend claims Devil's Lane is Satan's personal bridge to the Faerie Realm. Why Satan would need a bridge to the Faerie Realm is unexplained, in legend.

The truth is that, normally, there is no hell-gate at the end of Downside, but on Walpurgis Night (30 April) an entrance to Hell, the Infernal Realm, briefly appears. This entrance is only open for a single round but is accessible to anybody. Player characters who have a reason to travel to Hell may try this method. A character ob-

viously needs a different strategy to leave Hell (if he intends to), or be prepared to wait in Hell until the entrance opens again.

Although it is only open for a moment, hundreds of minor demons (usually in immaterial form) also take the opportunity to sally forth from Hell when the hell-gate opens. The Devil's Lane faeries greatly fear the screeching demons and thus spend Walpurgis night huddled behind shuttered windows and bolted doors. In fact, the demons usually ignore the faeries (who have no souls) and rapidly make their way down the alleyways out into city-side.



Market Rules

- Anyone may purchase from the market.
- All merchants must be members of the guild in good standing, as determined by the guild council.
- All merchants must be resident on Devil's Lane.
- Only guild members and worker elves may reside on Devil's Lane.
- The magus Bartholomew and the maga Julia may reside on Devil's Lane.
- Trading hours are from dawn until midnight.
- The satyrs of the Black Forest are forever denied entry to Devil's Lane.
- The rats must not be fed.
- All debts must be paid within a year and a day.
- The workshops (and the worker elves) must not be interfered with.
- Felix the wolf is the legitimate enforcer of guild rules.

are exotic creatures like centaurs. The wares are a combination of mere glamour and enchanted items like the magic toys (which are also glamour, detailed in *The Toys*); some even sell mundane wares.

The main currency of exchange is vis (discussed later).

If you have access to it, any faerie creature from *Realms of Power: Faerie* may be used as a merchant; if the character lacks it give him a Bargain Pretense of 3 to 7, depending on how competent a merchant he is (not all the merchants are competent!). Game statistics are also given for a typical merchant, Walter the Book Merchant vary his statistics as required to represent other merchants.

Market Guild

The faerie merchants belong to a guild, which sets and enforces the market rules (see insert). The market rules are written in Latin

on slate boards mounted on the (lane-side) walls of each of the alleyways that lead into Devil's lane. If the slate boards are stolen or defaced they are replaced within a day. Removal of the written rules does not have any impact on their validity.

Punishments that the council can set include: warding Devil's Lane against individual persons, seven years labor in the faerie queen's salt mine, vis fines, and the first born child of mortals.

The guild council can vote to change or add to these rules, of course.

COUNCILORS

The guild council has five members. Votes are carried by a simple majority and quorum is three councilors. Any councilor may call the council to order. The magus Bartholomew is an additional, sixth, non-voting member of the council. The current guild councilors are:

The **Three Sisters** are beautiful, deceptively young, and seemingly naive merchant sisters who hold the office of councilor between them (that is, the sisters share a single vote). The sisters, whose names are Lo'relyn, Fi'noa, and De'dee, mostly sell *Rain Parasols* (see The Toys).

Count Thorstein is a flamboyant centaur merchant whose main interests are beards and manes. He sports a variety of dashing styles himself, and is very interested in the beards (or manes) that other characters wear. The count sells hats but spends most of his day trotting up and down Devil's Lane inspecting facial grooming.

Guild-Master Wendell is the self-appointed leader of the merchant guild. He is a grey bearded man in his fifties, always dressed in official guild regalia modeled on the guilds of Cologne. Wendell is very serious and pedantic about meetings and procedures. He sells wands such as those listed in The Toys.

Guild-Mistress Greta is a pleasant and kindly middle-aged woman. She is not actually a faerie, but a faerie-blooded folk witch who lives on Devil's Lane and sells her own potions at the market (see *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition*, Folk Witch Chapter). The rest of Greta's coven lives city-side (in Bologna and Florence) and uses the Devil's Lane regio to travel to visit each other.

Felix the Wolf is not a merchant (although

he is a guild member). He is a large, sleek black wolf who silently slinks up and down Devil's Lane policing the guild rules. If you need game statistics for Felix use Tarlan the Wolf (*ArM5*, page 195).

Buying Toys

The faerie merchants sell toys for the number of pawns of vis required to create it plus one pawn. Items that are sixth magnitude or higher effects cost an addition pawn of vis again. Charged items cost a minimum of one pawn of vis per charge. Mundane items cost 1 pawn of vis.

These prices are the merchants' bottom line, but usually the faerie merchants claim that the price is twice this, and are willing to negotiate down to the bottom line. Of course, if the player characters pay without attempting to negotiate the merchants are happy.

The merchants do not flatly name a price in vis, but rather request an unusual payment such as children born under particular auspices, the longest piece of rope in the kingdom, or the first sheaf of wheat. The merchants specify these payments because they contain vis (usually faerie tainted) equal to the price of the item. However, the merchants are prepared to negotiate for other similar payments as long as the vis total is correct. The merchants notice, and do not accept a payment, if the player characters

transfer the vis from the specified payment before passing it over. See *Covenants* Chapter 6 and *Realms of Power: Faerie* pages 18–19, for more ideas of vis sources that the faeries might suggest.

The merchants do not care what Form the vis is, and accept vis tainted by any realm.

Commissioning Toys

If the player characters wish to commission a toy (rather than buy something pre-made), then the bottom-line price is twice the vis cost and this must be of an appropriate Art type to create the item. The initial price is four times the vis cost. The price for commissioned items must be paid upfront.

See *What Can Be Made?* for further information.

Limited Life-Time

The toys are faerie glamour that the faeries "pretend" operate like Hermetic effects. As the toys are glamour, eventually the faerie magic fades and the toy ceases to work. All the toys, therefore, only last for seven years after purchase. Even those toys which are presented as charged items must be used within this time-frame. If questioned about this the merchants' mutter something about a "limited warrant of effect."



Devil's Lane Goblin Rats

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -5, Str -11, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +5

Size: -7

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Blood (goblin), Lightning Reflexes, Nocturnal

Qualities: Crafty, Pack Animal, Sharp Ears.

Personality Traits: Sneaky +3, Cowardly +3

Reputations: Diabolical rats (local) +1

Combat:

Claw: Init +4, Attack +8, Defense +12, Damage -9

Teeth: Init +5, Attack +8, Defense +9, Damage -10

Soak: +1

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (running), Area Lore: Devil's Lane 5 (drains), Awareness 3 (food), Brawl 3 (claw), Stealth 4 (urban), Survival 3 (urban)

Appearance: Black matted fur, vile yellow eyes, and a thick prehensile tail.

The Toys

The following toys are indicative of the what is available from the merchants. The troupe should feel free to devise more toys. The base price is given for each toy. The default offer price is twice this.

Generally a single merchant sells only one type of toy and usually has multiple versions of his toys for sale. Most types of toys are sold by several merchants.

Angel Eyes Potion

MuAq(Im) 15

Pen 0, charged item, 10 doses

R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

The liquid in this vial is mixed into water, which becomes sparkling and glitters. Anyone who drinks the water becomes effectively incapacitated by wild hallucinations.

Each dose can affect up to a large barrel worth of water.

(Effect: Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun) (10 pawns, for 10 doses)

Bird Bane

MuAn 44

Pen 0, constant effect

R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

This item is a tiny leather harness with bird feathers glued to it. When the harness is strapped onto a cat, the cat grows large, functional, feathered wings. After a diameter or so of total confusion, most cats quickly adapt and become adept flying hunters (use Athletics Ability for flying maneuvers).

Convincing the cat to remain still while the harness is attached may be traumatic.

(Effect: Base 25, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; +1 uses, +3 sunset/sunrise trigger) (7 pawns)

The Book of Beasts

InAn 10

Pen 0, 1 use per day

R: Arcane, **D:** Concentration, **T:** Individual

This elaborate book has a picture on every page of a different beast. Each page is a fixed Arcane Connection to an example of that beast, and by holding the page and concentrating hard, the user of the item sees a mental image of the beast.

Note that each page is actually a separate InAn 10 magic item. Various editions of the book with different numbers of pages are available.

Depending on how long ago the particular edition was made, some of the beasts may be dead. Different editions usually refer to different individual beasts.

(Effect: Base 1, +4 Arcane, +1 Concentration) (2 pawns per page)

The Dove Hat

CrAn 30

Pen 0, Unlimited uses

R: Touch, **D:** Diameter, **T:** Individual

While reaching into this large hat, the user of this item says the command word "volo" and plucks out a pure white dove. At

the end of one Diameter, the dove disappears.

(Effect: Base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Diameter; +10 Unlimited Uses) (5 pawns)

The Forest Giant

CrHe 40

Pen 0, charged item

R: Personal, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

This charged item is an acorn that when thrown to the ground grows overnight into a towering oak tree. Once the magic is complete, the tree is entirely natural. The effect is Personal range, because the acorn (that grows into the oak) is the charged item.

(Effect: Base 15, +2 Sun, +3 Size) (2 pawns)

The Girdle of Change

MuCo 14

Pen 0, constant effect

R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

When worn, this girdle changes the apparent sex of the character (male to female, or vice versa). The character appears like his sister (or her brother) would.

(Effect: Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 uses, +3 sunset/sunrise trigger) (3 pawns)

Green Flame Powder

Mulg 10

Pen 0, charged item

R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

This charged item is a gritty powder that when thrown into a fire causes it burn with a bright lime green flame.

(Effect: Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun) (1 pawn)

Hat That Grants the Over-Anxious Father Peace of Mind

InCo 24

Pen 0, constant effect

R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Individual

This delicate lady's hat can only be worn by a virgin. The hat detects whether the wearer is a virgin, and if she is not, the hat falls off.

(Effect: Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 uses, +3 sunset/sunrise trigger) (4 pawns)

Walter the Book Merchant

Faerie Might: 5 (Mentem)

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

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Speech, Faerie Sight, Humanoid Faerie, Lesser Power (*Read it*); Arrogant, Incognizant, Poor Eyesight, Traditional Ward (sunlight)

Personality Traits: Arrogant +3, Unhelpful +1

Reputations: Book Merchant 1 (local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack na, Defense +1, Damage na

Soak: 0 (Sta)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Artes Liberales 5 (literature), Awareness 6 (books), Bargain 6 (scribes), Faerie Speech 5 (books), Legerdemain 3 (writing tools), Profession: Scribe 3 (copying)

Powers:

Read it, 0 points, Init 0, Mentem: Walter can talk knowledgeably about any book that his mortal audience has read. He knows who it was written by, what language it is written in, when it was written, and

the rough content (such as a character might gain from quickly flicking through the book). Like *Faerie Speech* this power affects the faerie Walter (rather than his audience) so it does not need to Penetrate to have its effect.

Faerie Sight. This power allows Walter to automatically distinguish mundane things from glamour, to automatically identify another faerie's glamour, and to automatically see an Arcane Connection (and know to whom it is an Arcane Connection, if that person is present). Walter can also use faerie sight to determine the motives and goals of other faeries (Awareness + Perception roll against an Ease Factor equal to Might of other faerie / 5). See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 50 for more details.

Faerie Speech. This power allows Walter to duplicate the language spoken by his human audience. See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 50 for more details.

Equipment: Scribe's robes, writing tools, and books.

Vis: 1 pawn of vis in brain.

Appearance: City-side, tales are told of a merchant-scribe, on Devil's Lane, who sells completed exercise tablets to

young student scribes. This merchant-scribe is Walter. He is a middle-aged, tonsured scribe, dressed in clerical robes, with small eyes and a large nose. Walter spends all of his time in his candle-lit shop, which is filled with books and stacks of parchment, and he is weary of his customers, who are mostly frightened student scribes wandering Devil's Lane.

Walter does indeed sell completed exercise slates. These are glamour that last for a year and a day (cost is 1 pawn of vis), but are otherwise completed exercise slates as advertised. Walter also sells mundane books (actually glamour facsimiles that last for seven years) (1 pawn of vis for tractatus and 1 pawn of vis per level for summae) and he sells copies of *The Book of Beasts*, see *The Toys*.

The glamour facsimiles of mundane books that Walter sells cannot really be read, but the reader thinks they can. Treat any Season spent studying a glamour book as a Season of practice (with a Source Quality of 5). Note that although the player knows this, the character believes the book is real (unless he has evidence otherwise, of course). Walter does not sell books about Arts.

Hen Dust

CrAn 40

Pen 0, Charged item, 1 use

R: Touch, D: Diameter, T: Individual

This dust, which seems to consist of ground up feathers and egg shell, is sprinkled over an egg. The chick immediately breaks out of the shell and over a period of one diameter grows into an adult.

The dust works on any egg (bird, reptile, fish) as long as the adult creature is of Animal Form and no larger than Size +1.

(Effect: Base 30, +1 Touch, +1 Diameter) (2 pawns)

Inverted Water Wheel

ReAq 29

Pen 0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Part

This item seems to be an ordinary water wheel, but when it is placed in flowing water, it forces the water back upstream against the flow.

The wheel can affect either an entire

stream or a part of a larger body of water.

(Effect: Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 Part, +1 unnatural; +1 uses, +3 sunset/sunrise trigger) (4 pawns)

Love Potion

ReMe 30

Pen 0, charged item

R: Touch, D: Moon, T: Individual

This potion, which contains one dose, causes the drinker to fall madly in love with the first person he or she sees after consuming the potion.

(Effect: Base 10, +1 Touch, +3 Moon) (2 pawns)

The Magic Money Box

MuTe 45

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Group

Into this money box (about one foot square and six inches deep) the user places a

group of stones, and then shuts the lid. When the box is opened again, the stones have turned into gold coins!

(Effect: Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 Group, +2 metal; +10 unlimited uses) (7 pawns)

Miraculous Beer Mug

CrAq 25

Pen 0, Unlimited uses

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

This mug miraculously refills with delicious, frothy beer. The effect is activated by emptying the mug.

Note that this magic beer has no real nutritional value (the drinker is thirsty the next day), and although a character can get drunk on the beer, he does not get a hang-over.

(Effect: Base 2, +2 Processed Liquid, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; +10 unlimited) (4 pawns)



Story Seed: Negotiating with the Workshop

The player characters may try to negotiate directly with the workshop foremen elves. Negotiations need to be kept secret from the merchant faeries, who consider this an infringement of the market guild rules. The foremen elves don't want vis, but instead try to negotiate some of the following conditions for themselves and the workers. Each of these demands requires a story (an advantage for both the faeries and your troupe):

a holiday of one season per year, amenities constructed within the workshop (such as baths, a theater, or catering),

freedom to regularly leave the workshop and explore city-side, pay in gold nuggets, more hats, mortal wives for the worker elves, recovery and return of items that "should not have been sold," and are now held by other magi, mortal kings, or powerful supernatural creatures, replacement of older worker elves with mortal children (who change and become worker elves), rescuing friends of the worker elves from slavery in a faerie mine.

many hundreds of individual creatures.

(Effect: Base 15, +2 Voice, +1 Concentration, +3 Structure, +10 Unlimited uses) (8 pawns)

The Siege of Constantinople

CrIm 15

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Personal, D: Sun, T: Individual

This tapestry illustrates the 1204 siege of Constantinople. When activated, the tapestry animates, and acts out the critical battles and events in the siege. Similar tapestries depict other battles and legends.

(Effect: Base 1, +2 Sun, +1 moving image, +1 intricacy; +10 unlimited uses) (3 pawns)

One Romantic Evening

CrHe 10

Pen 0, charged item

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Group

When this enchanted rose petal (a charged item) is kissed and thrown to the ground, the ground becomes carpeted in thousands of deep red rose petals.

(Effect: Base 1, +1 Touch +2 Sun, +2 Group) (1 pawn)

Rain Parasol

CrAu 40

Pen 0, 24 uses per day

R: Touch, D: Diameter, T: Group

When this parasol is opened with a particular flourish, a miniature storm (about a

pace across) forms beneath the parasol. The storm features dark clouds, rain, thunder, and lightning.

(Effect: Base 3, +1 Touch, +1 Diameter, +2 Group +4 wholly unnatural; +5 (24) uses) (6 pawns)

The Rat Pipe

ReAn 55

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Voice, D: Concentration, T: Structure

While this pipe is played all vermin (rats, mice, and so forth) in a building are attracted to the piper and follow him as he plays. Once affected, the vermin continue to follow the piper while he plays, even if he leaves the building.

As vermin are small, this effect affects

The Silvery Miraculous Daffodil Wand

CrHe 15

Pen 0, 1 use per day

R: Touch, D: Moon, T: Group

When touched to the earth, this silver wand, delicately wrought as a simulacrum of a daffodil, causes a bed of almost nearly one thousand yellow daffodils to burst from the earth. The daffodils last for a month.

(Effect: Base 1, +1 Touch +3 Moon, +2 Group) (3 pawns)

The Scrying Bowls

InAq 30

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Arcane, D: Concentration, T: Individual

This item is two bowls that are each Arcane Connections to the other. Both bowls should be filled with water and while looking into one bowl the user recites a short poem. While the user recites the poem he sees reflected in his bowl the reflection that appears in the other bowl (and his reflection appears in the other bowl).

The bowls can be used to scry or communicate (visually, only) across large distances.

(Effect: Base 3, +4 Arcane, +1 Concentration; +10 unlimited uses) (4 pawns each bowl)

Wand of Dancing Flowers

MuHe 40

Pen 0, 24 uses per day

R: Sight, D: Concentration, T: Group

This wooden wand is used like a conductor's baton to cause a bed of flowers to dance.

(Effect: Base 5, +3 Sight, +1 Concentration, +2 Group; +5 (24) uses) (6 pawns)

Wand of Horses

MuAn 26

Pen 0, 2 uses per day

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Individual

This silver wand changes vermin (mice, rats, and so forth) into horses for a day. This item can target non-mammalian vermin (for example, frogs and insects) too.

(Effect: Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Sun; +1 uses) (4 pawns)

The Wooden Knights

This pair of wooden knight puppets (each about two feet high) are invested items. The knights are each invested with two effects, one to read the thoughts of a puppeteer, and the other to move the wooden puppet about. The idea is that two characters can mentally command the knights to fight each other. (18 pawns)

Read the Master's Thoughts

InMe 50

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Sight, D: Concentration, T: Individual

This effect reads the thoughts of the puppeteer.

(Effect: Base 15, +3 Sight, +1 Concentration; +5 item maintains Concentration, +10 unlimited uses)

Move the Limbs

ReHe 23

Pen 0, unlimited uses

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Individual

This effect moves the puppet at the puppeteer's direction. If the skill of this direction needs to be determined use the puppeteer's Finesse Score in any relevant rolls.

(Effect: Base 4, +1 Concentration; +5 item maintains Concentration, +10 unlimited uses, +3 Linked trigger)

Worker Gloves

Faerie Might: 5 (Vim)

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

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Sight, Humanoid Faerie, Lesser Power (*Workshop Helper*); Incognizant, Small Frame, Traditional Ward (true name)

Personality Traits: Cheerful +2, Helpful +1
Reputations: Worker 1 (Local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack na, Defense +2, Damage na

Soak: 0 (Sta)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Awareness 5 (hats), Legerdemain 4 (tools), Magic Theory 8 (items), Music 3 (whistling), Stealth 3 (workshop)

Powers:

Workshop Helper, 0 points, Init -4, Vim: The worker elf can work in a team with other worker elves to create magic items. He can also assist in Hermetic Laboratory activities as if he was Gifted (adds Int + Magic Theory as a bonus to the Lab Total); in this case the magus must have sufficient leadership.

Faerie Sight. See description with Walter the Book Merchant.

Equipment: Elaborate hat, apron stuffed with tools.

Vis: 1 pawn of vis in heart.

Appearance: There are hundreds of worker elves, and each is a short cheerful, rosy cheeked fellow, wearing a many pocketed leather apron filled with tools (hammers, files, nails). Each worker elf is identical. To tell each other apart, the elves wear elaborate brightly colored hats as a kind of heraldry. Each hat has a unique color combination, some are also hung with bells, and others have dragons, leaves, or hammers embroidered on them.

Unfortunately, while the elaborate hats allow the elves to tell each other apart, it is very difficult for other characters to rely on the hats to distinguish the worker elves. This is because the elves swap hats with each other every hour according to an obscure timetable. The elves can keep track of these changes, because each elf knows which hat he is wearing, and thus can infer which hat every other elf is wearing.

Note that the elves cannot speak but can understand human languages.

Leaden, Iron, and Tin Cords

These special familiar cords are created between faerie familiars and their master (in addition to the normal gold, silver, and bronze cords; see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 90). Briefly, the special faerie cords are required to balance the normal familiar cords and have the following negative effects (on both the magus and the familiar):

Leaden Cord: The magus rolls this number of additional botch dice when casting within a Divine aura or when touching a holy relic. Also subtract the cord value from rolled attempts to resist Divine influence.

Iron Cord: If the magus is touching iron, subtract the cord value from all rolls made, and reduce his Soak by this value if hit by an iron weapon. Also add this number of additional botch dice when casting within an Infernal aura.

Tin Cord: If the magus is *not* within a supernatural aura (of any sort) subtract the value of the cord from all Personality Trait, healing, deprivation, and aging rolls, and from his Soak total.

Foremen Elves

Faerie Might: 10 (Vim)

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

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Improved Characteristics, Increased Faerie Might, Humanoid Faerie, Lesser Power (*Workshop Foreman*); Dependents (workers); Incognizant, Small Frame, Traditional Ward (true name)

Personality Traits: Various (see Appearance)

Reputations: Foreman 3 (Local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack na, Defense +2, Damage na

Soak: 0 (Sta)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Awareness 5 (workshop), Leadership 9 (worker elves), Legerdemain 4 (tools), Magic Theory 8 (items), Music 3 (whistling), Stealth 3 (workshop)

Powers:

Workshop Foreman, 0 points, Init -4, Vim: A foreman elf can command teams of worker elves.

Faerie Sight. See description with Walter the Book Merchant.

Faerie Speech. See description with Walter the Book Merchant.

Equipment: Elaborate hat, apron stuffed with tools.

Vis: 2 pawns of vis in heart.

Appearance: There are four foremen elves, who each wear aprons and even more elaborate hats than the worker elves. Unlike the worker elves the foremen elves can speak any human language. The four foremen elves are:

Mother: A small, busty elf who is very protective and encouraging of her workers. Personality Trait: +3 Caring.

Dragon: An elf with a red angry face (and a dragon crest on his hat). He often yells and screams at his workers and is constantly cajoling them to work faster. Personality Trait: +3 Angry.

Uncle: A portly elf always eating or cooking another meal on a small brazier. He tends to not be too bothered by what his workers are actually doing. Personality Traits: +3 Hedonist.

Maiden: A frighteningly beautiful elf with long golden hair. Her workers are all in love with her and eagerly leap to her every command. Personality Trait: +3 Flirtatious.

Story Seed: Taking On a Rat

Mengalaz suspects that Julia will be the only available Merinitia magus to bind him when Bartholomew dies. He tries to prevent her from binding another creature as familiar (because he knows that a magus can only have a single familiar at a time). If he cannot prevent Julia binding a familiar Mengalaz tries to kill this other familiar.

If a Merinitia (especially one without a familiar) visits Devil's Lane, Mengalaz encourages the Merinitia to stay (as a back-up for Julia).

mally only work within the regio, and other characters cannot assist the elves. The troupe may need to set a limit to the total number of projects if large numbers of player characters attempt to simultaneously negotiate access.

The faerie workshops can duplicate any standard Hermetic item creation project. This includes enchanted and charged items, investing effects into invested items, and preparing invested items for enchantment (see *ArM5*, page 96). The workshops can create items that produce any standard Hermetic effect and can use any standard effect modifications (see *ArM5*, page 99). In addition to the normal Hermetic Ranges, Durations and Targets, the workshop elves can also create items that use the special faerie magic parameters (see *ArM5*, page 92). The workshop elves cannot create, attune, or enchant a Talisman.

Note: The toys are not actually Hermetic items. The toys are faerie glamour (see *The Toys*, in this chapter) that imitate Hermetic magic. The Hermetic item rules are used as convenient game mechanics to gauge what can be made.

The Devil's Lane Covenant

The Devil's Lane Covenant is a Merinitia covenant occupying a two storied build-

The Workshops

Spread beneath Devil's Lane is a dark labyrinth of candle-lit basements. In the cluttered and noisy underground rooms teams of worker elves toil night and day to create the magic toys. Some of the basements are also infested with the rat pack (see earlier).

The workshops are not a secret and any merchants questioned say that this is where the toys come from. The player characters may independently notice the sound of hammers and the flicker of candles seeping through trapdoors and under sunken, secluded doorways. The entrance ways to the workshops are not guarded, but are locked. However, the locks can be picked, broken, or opened with magic. Negotiating the maze of tiny passages, stairways, and elevators that connect the workshops is highly confusing and characters who are larger than Size +1 are

too big to enter the basements at all.

The merchants deal with four foremen elves, who between them command hundreds of worker elves. Why the foremen obey the merchants, and why the workers obey the foremen is unclear. If asked, the faeries explain "it is just the way things are."

What Can Be Made?

Each faerie merchant can commission in one season work equivalent to that done with a Lab Total of 100. Player characters can also negotiate for up to this amount of workshop access. Unused magnitudes from one season cannot be "saved" and used in a subsequent season. Several characters can individually negotiate for workshop access, but characters cannot combine their negotiated access, for example, to work on a project requiring a Lab Total of 200. The worker elves can nor-

ing opposite Florence Avenue on Devil's Lane. The covenant was founded by Bartholomew immediately after his Gauntlet, and Hermetic rumor is that his mother was a faerie toy merchant. Whether true or not, his mother does not currently reside at the market. The other inhabitant of the covenant is Julia, a young maga trained by Bartholomew.

There are no coven-folk, the magi rely on the faerie market for all their needs and have come to arrangements for the provisions they require. Bartholomew has a rat familiar, Mengalaz, who leads the rat pack that swarms up and down Devil's Lane.

The Merinita do not involve themselves much in either Tribunal or House politics, and are very unclear about which Tribunal they actually belong to. Jurisdiction over the covenant is complex as the regio has entrances in several Tribunals.

Julia's Laboratory

The ground floor of the covenant is the Hermetic laboratory of the Merinita maga Julia. Julia's laboratory is clearly marked as her sanctum, and it is a dark and spooky chamber filled with the bleached bones and skulls of animals, mythic beasts, and even people.

Julia was once Bartholomew's apprentice, and after a brief sojourn city-side returned in 1215. Julia had a twin sister named Leda who was abducted by faeries when the sisters were aged five, and Julia's main goal is to recover her sister. Earlier Julia thought that her sister was killed by the faeries (hence her interest in necromantic magic), but Julia now thinks her sister is alive.

Julia (wrongly) believes that the elderly Bartholomew somehow mediates the relationship between the underground el-

vish workshops and the faerie merchants. As Bartholomew seems decrepit and near death Julia intends to inherit this control when he dies, and then hold this control to ransom, to force the faeries to return her lost sister Leda. Upon his death, capturing and studying Bartholomew's lab notes is her first priority.

Julia's magic is characterized by death and her sigil is a sound like the ominous tapping of a death-watch beetle.

Bartholomew's Laboratory

At the back of Julia's Laboratory is a stone spiral stairway that twists upwards for an unexpectedly long way. In fact, climbing the stairway leads to another tiny faerie regio (with a Faerie aura of 8). The regio contains Bartholomew's laboratory.

Julia of House Merinita

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

Size: 0

Age: 31 (31)

Decrepitude: 0 (0)

Warping Score: 1 (3)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus; Major Magical Focus (Necromancy); Faerie Magic, Mastered Spells, Personal Vis Source (see below), Puissant Art (Corpus); Deficient Technique (Creo); Ambitious (to be mistress of the covenant), Lost Love (Twin Leda), Nocturnal

Personality Traits: Obsessed (Leda) +3, Ambitious +2

Reputations: Merinita necromancer 1 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Scythe (farm implement): Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +5

Soak: +1 (+1 Sta)

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: City-side 2 (graveyards), Area Lore: Devil's Lane 3 (basements), Artes Liberales 2 (astronomy), Awareness 3 (ghosts), Civil and Canon

Law 1 (graveyards), Code of Hermes 2 (faeries), Concentration 2 (spells), Dead Language: Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Faerie Lore 3 (changelings), Finesse 2 (magic items), Great Weapon 2 (scythe), Infernal Lore 1 (ghosts), Leadership 3 (undead), Living Language: Greek 5 (speaking to dead), Magic Lore 1 (ghosts), Magic Theory 3 (corpus), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 2 (Merinita), Parma Magica 3 (corpus), Penetration 2 (Vim), Stealth 3 (Graveyards).

Arts: Cr 2, In 5, Mu 5, Pe 5, Re 8, An 3, Aq 3, Au 3, Co 8+3, He 3, Ig 3, Im 4, Me 7, Te 3, Vi 6

Twilight Scars: Julia's left index finger is naked bone. She has no sensation of pain in this finger, but otherwise she can use and manipulate it like a normal finger. Of course, other people find Julia's bone finger incredibly bizarre and upsetting — so she usually wears black leather gloves.

Equipment: Hooded black leather cloak and other clothing, gloves, sharp scythe.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Charm Against Putrefaction (CrCo 10/+8*)

Whispers Through the Black Gate (InCo(Me) 15/+18*)

Eyes of the Cat (MuCo(An) 5/+9)

Awaken the Slumbering Corpse (ReCo 25/+29*) (Mastery 1, multicast)

Wizard's Side Step (Relm 10/+15) (Mastery 2, fast casting, still casting)

Lay to Rest the Haunting Spirit (PeMe 5/+18*)

Ward Against Faerie Ghosts (ReMe 10/+24*) (Mastery 1, penetration)

Ward Against Infernal Ghosts (ReMe 10/+24*) (Mastery 1, penetration)

Ward Against Magic Ghosts (ReMe 10/+24*) (Mastery 1, penetration)

Coerce the Spirits of the Night (ReMe 20/+23*)

Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 5/+14) (Mastery 2, multicast, penetration)

* Includes Major Magical Focus: Necromancy

Vis: 5 pawns of Corpus vis in a bone bracelet.

Appearance: Julia is a black-haired, deathly pale woman dressed in a large black cloak adorned with bone toggles and clasps. Julia dearly loves her lost twin sister Leda. Of course, as Julia was only five when Leda was lost, this is more an obsession than true love based on memory.

Julia has discovered a number of secret vis sources in the graveyards that lie city-side of Devil's Lane. Together, these locations are worth a total of 12 pawns of Corpus vis per year. She has registered these sources with the Redcaps.

Mengalaz the Rat

Faerie Might: 30 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -5, Str -11, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +5

Size: -7

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Animal, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Lesser Power (*Hands of the Animal*), Lightning Reflexes, Nocturnal, Personal Power (*Devil's Mind*), Tough; Narrowly Cognizant; Disfigured, Dying Master (Bartholomew), Negative Reaction, Obese, Reckless, Tradition Ward (salt)

Qualities: Crafty, Pack Animal, Sharp Ears.

Personality Traits: Sneaky +3, Reckless +3

Reputations: Leader of rat pack (local) +3, Familiar of Bartholomew (local) +1

Combat:

Claw: Init +4, Attack +10, Defense +14, Damage -9

Teeth: Init +5, Attack +10, Defense +11, Damage -10

Soak: +4 (+1 Sta, +3 Tough)

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Pretenses: Athletics 3 (running), Area Lore: Devil's Lane 7 (visitors), Awareness 7 (food), Brawl 5 (claw), Concentration 3 (*Hands of the Animal*), Faerie Speech 4 (magi), Folk Ken 2 (magi), Leadership 5 (rats), Magic Theory 4 (Faerie Magic), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 2 (Merinita), Stealth 4 (urban), Survival 3 (urban)

Powers:

Devil's Mind, 0 points, constant, Mentem: Mengalaz is aware of everything that

happens in Devil's Lane. He is an integral part of the glamour that sustains Devil's Lane, so sensing events within the lane is like sensing the condition of his own body (See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 61; *Extended Glamour* power).

Hands of the Animal, 0 points, constant, Form depends on object: Mengalaz can carry and manipulate an object using his rat paws, as if he had human hands and a Strength of +5. Mengalaz may only manipulate or carry a single object at a time in this way, and must concentrate to do anything else. (See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 59; 2 Intricacy Points spent to lower cost to 0).

Faerie Sight. See description of Walter the Book Merchant.

Faerie Speech. See description of Walter the Book Merchant.

Familiar Power: Shared Senses. Both Mengalaz and Bartholomew can utilize the senses of the other (this is two powers, one for each direction); see *ArM5*, page 105.

Familiar Power: Shared Powers. Bartholomew can utilize the powers of Mengalaz as if he had them, using Fatigue instead of Might Points to activate them (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 89). In his senile state, Bartholomew has forgotten that he can do this, but Bartholomew often uses the Devil's Mind power without realizing what he is doing.

Familiar Power: Shared Fatigue. Mengalaz can regenerate 4 points of expended Might by resting, as if it was a short term Fatigue Level. Mengalaz can also spend

4 points of Might to save Bartholomew from expending a Fatigue Level. See *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 89.

Familiar Power: Location. Mengalaz always knows where Bartholomew is (see *ArM5*, page 105). Given Bartholomew's decrepit condition this is not particularly useful (he is almost always by the fireplace in his laboratory).

Equipment: None.

Vis: 6 pawns of Animal vis in oily black intestines.

Appearance: Mengalaz is an extremely fat rat, although still surprisingly quick and agile, and is disfigured by numerous injuries. His tail is a mess of scaly scabs, a tuft of torn-hair near his throat has failed to grow back, and long scars cross back and forth over his snout; Mengalaz is highly distinctive.

Mengalaz is the familiar of Bartholomew and although he once loved his master, Mengalaz treats the doddering old fool that Bartholomew has become with contempt. He knows that when Bartholomew dies he will also begin to fade and die. Mengalaz's plan to survive this event is to become the familiar of whomever replaces Bartholomew as the master of the Merinita covenant.

To bind Mengalaz as a familiar a magus needs to be able to bind faeries (so, normally, must be a Merinita magus) but due to Mengalaz's small size only needs to be able to generate a relevant Lab Total of 20 or more (see *ArM5*, page 104 and *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 89). Mengalaz has sufficient Magic Theory to be aware of these requirements.

Bartholomew's laboratory is cluttered with haphazardly shuffled stacks of books and laboratory texts that are scattered about the perimeter of a little cluster of comfortable chairs. The chairs themselves are huddled around a small table, piled high with stacks of old cups of herbal teas. Many, long since past, futures can be read in the desiccated leaves. One corner contains a workbench covered in a colorful coiling intestine of bubbling glassware, and another workbench overflows with carefully drawn horoscopes. A large fireplace illuminates the room with a warm orange glow.

Bartholomew is old and senile, and also very near Final Twilight. He spends most of

the day dozing by the fire, wrapped in a woolen blanket, with a half cup of a fragrant herbal infusion in one hand, and an unread tome in the other. The rat Mengalaz, Bartholomew's familiar, has a nest high up the inaccessible wooden beams above Bartholomew's dotage. The overhead rustling of rats in the nest is Bartholomew's constant companion.

Up in the darkness of the ceiling, near where the rats nest, is a small balcony that leads outside. This is another entrance to the Bartholomew's laboratory regio, but Bartholomew has forgotten about it. The balcony can be reached from the buildings that neighbor the covenant in Devil's Lane. The rats access it by climbing up a drain-pipe.

Returning to the Devil's Lane Toymarket

The Devil's Lane toymarket can be involved in an on-going saga in the following ways:

- One or more player characters can take up residence with the Merinita. Julia is reluctant to allow other magi to join the covenant (as she wants to be the undisputed heir to Bartholomew). However, Mengalaz is quite happy for new magi to move in,

- especially other Merinita magi.
- The player characters may return to the market to commission or purchase magic items.
- The player characters may utilize the Devil's Lane regio as a type of portal nexus in order to travel around Mythic Europe. The characters might even be able to discover

- a way (perhaps a Hermetic breakthrough, or a faerie power) to create new alleyways.
- The Devil's Lane covenant technically lies within several Tribunals. The player character's Tribunal rules that the magi living in the market are (by selling magic items to mundanes) dangerously "interfering in

the mundane" (or are "molesting faeries"). The player characters are commissioned to enforce this ruling, and need to deal with issues of Hermetic jurisdiction.

Bartholomew of House Merinita

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

Size: 0

Age: 193 (148; +13 Longevity Ritual, +2 Silver Cord, +1 Faerie Blood)

Decrepitude: 3 (3)

Warping Score: 13 (19)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Hermetic Magus; Ways of the Town; Faerie Magic; Faerie Blood (Sidhe), Improved Characteristics, Puissant Art (Imaginem), Quiet Magic*2, Second Sight, Subtle Magic; Enfeebled, Tormenting Familiar (Mengalaz); Busybody, Compassionate (minor), Disorientating Magic, Poor Eyesight

Personality Traits: Befuddled +6, Pleasant +3

Reputations: Ancient Merinita magus 3 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -2, Attack na, Defense +1, Damage na

Soak: +5 (+2 Sta, +3 Bronze Cord)

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Devil's Lane 7 (merchants), Artes Liberales 4 (astronomy), Awareness 5 (urban), Brawl 2 (dodge), Civil and Canon Law 2 (commerce), Code of Hermes 5 (faeries), Concentration 7 (spells), Dead Language: Latin 5 (Hermetic usage), Faerie Lore 9 (change-lings), Finesse 8 (magic items), Leadership 3 (magi), Living Language: German 5 (archaic), Living Language: Greek 4 (Hermetic), Magic Theory 9 (inventing spell), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 8 (ghosts), Parma Magica 8 (Vim), Penetration 5 (Vim), Profession: Scribe 2 (copying texts), Second Sight 9 (faeries), Stealth 4 (urban), Teaching 5 (magi)

Arts: Cr 18, In 19, Mu 18, Pe 11, Re 19; An 10, Aq 10, Au 10, Co 10, He 16, Ig 10, Im 29+3, Me 18, Te 12, Vi 24

Twilight Scars: Bartholomew's skin is icy cold to the touch, his fingernails glow

and crackle with magical sparks, and his pupils are a dark purple color. Whenever he casts a spell, any milk within Voice range curdles.

Equipment: Thick robes, warm blanket, and cup of fragrant herbal infusion.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

True Rest of the Injured Brute (CrAn 20/+29)

Opening the Tome of the Animal's Mind (InAn 25/+30)

Growth of the Creeping Things (MuAn 15/+29)

Transformation of the Ravenous Beast to the Torpid Toad (MuAn 25/+29)

Circle of Beast Warding (ReAn 5/+30)

Ward Against Beasts of Legend (ReAn 15/+30)

Creeping Oil (CrAq 15/+28)

Voice of the Lake (InAq 25/+29)

Enchantment of the Scrying Pool (InAq 30/+29)

Cloak of the Duck's Feathers (ReAq 5/+29)

Breath of Winter (ReAq 15/+29)

Parting the Waves (ReAq 30/+29)

Air's Ghostly Form (CrAu 5/+29)

Circling Winds of Protection (CrAu 20/+29)

Clouds of Summer Snow (CrAu 25/+29)

Sailor's Foretaste of the Morrow (InAu 20/+30)

Ward Against Rain (ReAu 10/+30)

The Chirurgeon's Healing Touch (CrCo 20/+31)

The Severed Limb Made Whole (CrCo 25/+31)

Revealed Flaws of Mortal Flesh (InCo 10/+32)

The Eyes of the Sage (InCo(Im) 30/+32)

Shape of the Woodland Prowler (MuCo 25/+31)

The Wound that Weeps (PeCo 15/+24)

Rise of the Feathery Body (ReCo 10/+32)

Gift of the Frog's Legs (ReCo 15/+32)

Bridge of Wood (CrHe 20/+36)

Hunt for the Wild Herb (InHe 5/+37)

Scriek of the Impending Shafts (InHe 15/+37)

Converse with Plant and Tree (InHe 25/+37)

Pass the Unyielding Portal (MuHe 5/+36)

Stir the Slumbering Tree (MuHe(Me) 25/+36)

Wizard's Autumn (PeHe 15/+29)

Freeing the Striding Tree (ReHe 30/+37)

Lamp Without Flame (CrIg 10/+30)

Tales of the Ashes (InIg 5/+31)

Hornet Fire (Mulg 10/+30)

Gloom of Evening (PeIg 10/+23)

Haunt of the Living Ghost (Cr(In)Im 35/+52)

The Shadow of Human Life (Crlm(Me) 40/+39)

Summoning the Distant Image (InIm 25/+53)

Aura of Ennobled Presence (Mulm 10/+52)

Chamber of Invisibility (PelM 25/+45)

Wizard's Sidestep (Relm 10/+53)

Illusion of the Misplaced Castle (Relm 50/+53)

Memory of the Distant Dream (CrMe 20/+39)

Posing the Silent Question (InMe 20/+40)

Thoughts Within Babble (InMe 25/+40)

Past of Another (MuMe 35/+39)

Calm the Motion of the Heart (PeMe 15/+32)

The Call to Slumber (ReMe 10/+40)

Confusion of the Numbed Will (ReMe 15/+40)

Touch of Midas (CrTe 20/+32)

Tracks of the Faerie Glow (InTe 25/+33)

End of the Mighty Castle (PeTe 25/+25)

Unseen Arm (ReTe 5/+33)

Earth Shock (ReTe 30/+33) Body Text

The Enigma's Gift (CrVi 30/+44)

Piercing the Faerie Veil (InVi 20/+45)

Sight of the Active Magics (InVi 40/+45)

Wizard's Communion (MuVi 15/+44)

Wizard's Communion (MuVi 30/+44)

Bane of the Elves (PeVi 15/+37) (Faerie Equivalent of *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*)

Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 15/+37)

Disenchant (PeVi 30/+37)

Ward Against Faeries (ReVi 20/+45)

Watching Ward (ReVi 20/+45)

Aegis of the Hearth (ReVi 25/+45)

Vis: None.

Appearance: Bartholomew is a very old man, huddled under warm blankets, drinking cups of herbal tea. He is senile and vacant, but potentially powerful. Bartholomew can cast spells silently and gesture-less without penalty, although these days he finds the actual casting disorientating. Some of his Intellego spells, such as *Summoning the Distant Image*, use patterns in the dregs of his herbal tea to convey the magically sensed images.

The bond between Bartholomew and his rat familiar Mengalaz has a +1 Gold Cord, a +2 Silver Cord, a +3 Bronze Cord, a +3 Leaden Cord, a +1 Iron Cord, and a +2 Tin Cord. The powers *Shared Senses*, *Shared Powers*, *Shared Fatigue*, and *Location* are enchanted into the bond.

The Truffle Matron

The Matron of the Truffles rules over Magic creatures that are responsible for cultivating truffles throughout Mythic Europe. At her council, the Matron hears the pleadings of her subjects and adjudicates their differences. Characters who act with the proper deference and respect for the council and its proceedings are allowed to attend as guests of the Matron. If they prove their mettle, the Matron may ask for their assistance and reward them with unusual and valuable forms of vis.

Truffles of the Realm

The truffle has a long and storied history. Ancient Sumerians, Greeks, and Romans used them in their cuisines. Some believe that the "Death in the Pot" story of Elisha the Prophet from the Old Testament, 2 Kings 4:38–41, describes the gathering of desert truffles. In the story, Elisha sends his servant out into the desert to collect food for his group; the servant collects truffles, but they are unknown to him. The group eats the soup prepared by the servant using the truffles, but they complain that the meal is poisonous. Elisha sprinkles flour into the soup to make it edible.

Obviously, truffles continue to exist in Mythic Europe. Mythic Europeans do not know why truffles grow under some trees, but not others. They only know that truffles propagate through some supernatural method and that harvesting them may result in interaction with supernatural powers. In

Mythic Europe the subjects of the Truffle Matron are responsible for the cultivation of truffles, and in some instances they may either encourage or discourage their consumption. The Truffle Matron's domain extends to wherever truffles grow. When considering the five types of truffles found in the areas covered in a typical *Ars Magica* campaign, truffles may be found in any Tribunal except Loch Leglean and Hibernia.

With the exception of Bohemian and desert truffles, dogs or sows are used to locate and extract truffles. Sows have an innate ability to detect them, but may devour the truffles before the harvester can collect them. Dogs can be trained to find truffles, but it is time consuming, and they are not as proficient as sows. The benefit is that dogs are not interested in eating the objects of their search. Other forest animals, squirrels or skunks, for instance, are also able to locate truffles, but were not historically utilized for the task.

Truffle hunters also used animals to locate truffles because they believed that supernatural forces could punish someone who improperly harvested a truffle. The truffle hunters might attempt to appease the truffle guardian, but if their efforts were unsuccessful, it was hoped the animal would bear the brunt of the punishment. The nature of the supernatural agent inflicting that retribution is discussed more fully below.

Varieties of Truffles in Your Saga

Black truffles grow on the roots of oak and hazel trees in the Normandy, Provence, and Iberian Tribunals, but can also be found

in isolated locations in Slovenia and Croatia. The best ones grow in the County of Périgord, and a description of this region can be found on page 69 of *The Lion and Lily: The Normandy Tribunal*. They are purplish-black in color and roughly spherical with dark flesh that is filled with fine white veins. The black truffles are harvested in late autumn and early winter. They are known for their earthy smell and subtle, refined flavor. The typical black truffle grows about an inch or two in diameter and weighs about an ounce. Larger ones exist, but are very rare.

Burgundy truffles grow on the roots of oak and hazel trees throughout Mythic Europe from the Iberia to Novgorod and Stonehenge to Thebes Tribunals. The exterior of the truffles is dark brown in color, resembling the bark of a tree, with lighter brown interior veined with white streaks. The flesh of the burgundy truffles gives off an intense, hazelnut-like aroma. Burgundy truffles are harvested in the autumn. They have bodies from one to four inches in diameter and can weigh up to four ounces.

White truffles grow on the roots of oak, hazel, poplar, and beech trees. The best white truffles come from the Piedmont region, especially the area around the city of Alba, but they grow throughout the Roman Tribunal. They can be found in the south west portions of the Normandy Tribunal and the western most portions of the Provencal Tribunal. They also grow in Croatia on the Istria peninsula in the Motovun forest. For a further description of this area, see the Old Histria in *Against the Dark: The Transylvania Tribunal*, page 73. Their exteriors are off-white or beige, and their flesh is cream colored with white marbling. White truffles are har-

Common Knowledge, Uncommon Knowledge, and Lost Secrets

While many people know about truffles, they still hold many secrets.

KNOWN BY ALL

- Philosophiae allows the character to know that truffles grow under certain trees. A character with an Ability in Theology (Judaism or Christianity) knows the story of the prophet Elisha and desert truffles. A character with an Ability in Theology (Islam) knows that the hadith states truffles were manna provided by God to the people of Israel. A character with Church Lore knows that some church leaders denounce the consumption of truffles and refer to them as "witch's fare" and creations of Satan. Characters with an Area Lore score know the types of truffles that are available in the area.

WIDELY KNOWN

- Characters with scores in Magic Lore may know the following: Some truffles contain vis. Some vis bearing truffles are protected by creatures. Truffles of Virtue are rare, but contain vis and may be enriched. Characters

with moderate scores in Survival or Area Lore for a location where truffles grow are aware of suitable locations to hunt for truffles, what they look like, and how to prepare them.

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- Characters with scores in Magic Lore may know the following: An enriched Truffle of Virtue protects crops for a year and ensures a bountiful harvest. The process for enriching a truffle of vis requires an animal with Magic Might to devour it, then its scat is spread under trees that will produce truffles the next year. There are multiple types of truffles that contain vis. Some truffles are awakened. Awakened truffles may be found in large isolated forests within a Magic aura. Awakened truffles have Magic Might and often guard truffles in Magic forests. Some regiones are only accessible during specific, usually astronomically significant, days.
- Characters with Area Lore scores may know specific locations where truffles can be found. A Philosophiae score grants the character knowledge about

more truffles, with black and white truffles being the most likely, followed by Burgundy and Bohemian truffles, and lastly desert truffles.

RARE KNOWLEDGE

- Characters with scores in Magic Lore may know the following: Truffles of Virtue are often found under Trees of Virtue. Extraordinary vis in the form of truffles is even more rare than Truffles of Virtue. Creatures with Magic Might often rule a particular area or particular type of creature. Awakened truffles often protect the trees and truffles in a Magic forest. Typical awakened truffles have a Magic Might of 10 or less. The rulers of Magic creatures usually reside in Magic regiones or powerful Magic auras. Hermetic magi have encountered more powerful truffle-like creatures; scholars surmise that they rule over the typical awakened truffles.

LOST SECRETS

- Any of the information in "Researching the Truffle Regio" is considered Lost Secrets.

vested in autumn. They have a very strong earthy flavor and pungent aroma. They are generally about the same size as black truffles, but occasionally grow up to five inches in diameter and can weigh over a pound.

Bohemian truffles are unlike the previous varieties in that they grow above ground, do not prefer a specific variety of tree, and may grow on rotting logs. They are widespread throughout the Rhine, Greater Alps, and Normandy Tribunals. Bohemian truffles are large spherical or oval balls with a hard brown or black exterior. The flesh of the Bohemian truffle is brown or white in young specimens, but turns dark brown to purple with age. They are collected and eaten in parts of Germany, especially near Bohemia, in the spring. If allowed to mature, they develop a black viscous gel inside, which is a natural dye for clothing.

Desert truffles also grow above ground, attached to rockrose shrubs or oak and pine trees. They grow in arid and semi-arid ar-

reas around the Mediterranean, especially in North Africa and the Middle East. Desert truffles are spherical or top-shaped, with thick solid walls. They are a translucent cream to pale brown color. They tend to be about an inch across and weigh a few ounces. They can be larger, but it is rare. Locals harvest these delicacies shortly after the spring storms, which they believe create desert truffles where lightning strikes the sand.

Location of the Truffle Realm

There are several locations that are suitable for placement of the Matron's truffle regio. Below is a list of suggested locations, but the storyguide should feel free to select another location. The only criteria are that the location should be in a truffle producing region and should be in a very isolated area

or, at least, an area that has been isolated until recently.

Burgundy in Normandy is a good location for a truffle Matron dealing with mundane intrusion. There is a small forest outside of Dijon about halfway between the covenants of Cunfin and Atramentum Renuatus. A truffle realm could also be located on the Istria Peninsula near Pazin in the Kingdom of Croatia.

The dense forests of Périgord in the Aquitaine, on the Dordogne River, in the Normandy Tribunal are also excellent locations for the truffle regio. It is within 50 miles of the towns of Bergerac and Le Cité and the covenant of Nidi. The Bohemian Forest in the Rhine Tribunal is also isolated enough to be a good location for the truffle realm. The realm could be placed in the forests of southern Bohemia, roughly equidistant from the covenant of Irencillia and the towns of Prague and Passau.



The Realm of the Truffles

Entrance to the regio requires a guide to open the way or, at least, provide the characters with the precise location in which to search for the entrance. Only awakened truffles or awakened trees that are members of the truffle regio know the location of and method for opening the entrance. It is in a pocket of trees in a dense wood within a small Magic aura, which only exists on the certain days, allowing the regio to be accessed from the outside four times a year — the summer and winter solstices and the spring and autumnal equinoxes.

Once characters have been escorted to the entrance or provided with the location of it, they may attempt to enter the regio. To do so, one of the characters needs to possess Second Sight (ArM5, page 67) or Magic Sensitivity (ArM5, page 66), or know the spell *Piercing the Magical Veil* (ArM5, page 158). The rules for entering and leaving regiones are presented in ArM5, page 189. The Magic aura outside of the regio is 1, only on the solstices and equinoxes, which means that the players must roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to see inside. If the characters are near the proper location, the Ease Factor is 9 to see the entrance from each internal level of the regio to the next. Although the characters may only enter

Wild Boar of the Woods

Magic Might: 20 (Animal)

Characteristics:

Wild Boar of the Woods: Int 0, Per +1, Pre 0,

Com -2, Str +6, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik 0

Boar of Virtue: Int 0, Per +1, Pre 0, Com -2,

Str +4, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik +2

Size: +2 (Boars of Virtue are Size 0)

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Magical Champion; Ways of the Wood; Berserk, Enduring Constitution, Improved Characteristics, Tough, Wrathful, Fury; Higher Purpose (Protect the Wood), Nocturnal

Qualities: Aggressive, Hardy, Herd Animal, Tireless, Tough Hide

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic, Greater Power (x2); Animal Resistance, Ignem Resistance, Improved Abilities (x3), Improved Attack (x2), Improved Damage (x2), Improved Fatigue (x3), Improved Soak (x2), Minor Virtue: Great Characteristic (Stamina), Terram Resistance; Monstrous Appearance; Limited Speech, Susceptible to Deprivation

Personality Traits:

Wild Boar of the Woods: Territorial* +6, Vengeful* +6, Wild Boar* +3, Brave* +4, Loyal +2

Boar of Virtue: Territorial* +3, Vengeful* +3, Wild Boar* +3, Brave* +3, Loyal +2

Reputations: Truculent 2 (local)

Combat:

Wild Boar of the Woods' Tusks: Initiative +3, Attack +17, Defense +11, Damage +11 (Ways of the Forest Bonus included)

Boar of Virtue's Tusks: Initiative +2, Attack +12, Defense +10, Damage +7

Soak:

Wild Boar of the Woods: +13 (+18 when using *Protect the Herd*)

Boar of Virtue: +9

Fatigue Levels:

Wild Boar of the Woods: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -2/-2, -4, Unconscious

Boar of Virtue: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -2/-2, -4, Unconscious

Wound Penalties:

Wild Boar of the Woods: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Boar of Virtue: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 4 (wild boars), Animal Resistance 4 (teeth), Area Lore: truffle woods 4 (trails), Athletics 4 (sprinting), Awareness 5 (foraging), Brawl 5 (tusks), Ignem Resistance (spells) 4, Living Language 4 (local), Penetration 3 (*Terror of the Charging Boar*), Survival 3 (woods), Swimming 1 (streams), Terram Resistance 4 (spears)

Powers:

Protect the Herd, 4 points, Init -4, Animal R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Group

When this power is used, the Boar and all of his animal allies receive a bonus of +5 to their Soak totals for Sun Duration.

MuAn 45 (Base 25, +2 Sun, +2 Group): Greater Power (45 levels, -1 Might cost)

Terror of the Charging Boar, 0 points, Init -2, Animal or Mentem

R: Voice, D: Diam, T: Ind

the regio on four days of the year, they and the inhabitants may leave at any time. They need only follow the path from the holt back to the heart of the wood at the entrance to the regio. In addition, the Truffle Matron has the power to banish someone from the regio with only a thought.

Regio Entrance

Magic aura 3

The first level of the regio has a Magic aura of 3. The regio may only be entered on one of the solstices or equinoxes. This level encompasses the forests surrounding the truffle fields and holt. Once inside the regio, the characters step into a large forest, much like the one they left, except the trees here are improbably tall and thick. The trees all look to be centuries old. Beneath each tree grow truffles of all varieties. If the char-

acters dig up the truffles, they can determine that some of them are Truffles of Virtue. The forest is also teeming with wildlife — wild boars, roe deer, skunks, squirrels, and other ground dwelling herbivores are present. After a while, alert characters may notice that predators are conspicuously absent. Many, if not all, of the animals in this regio are Creatures of Virtue. See the *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 55, for a description.

With a Hunt + Perception roll against an Ease Factor of 9, the character notices a path leading away from the regio entrance. It is little more than a deer trail, but it is the only obvious choice other than blundering through the forest.

If the characters begin wandering the forest, the Wild Boar of the Woods eventually intercepts them. If the characters attack any of the inhabitants of the forest or start digging for truffles, the Wild Boar intervenes, charges the characters, and may attack them if they

continue. The Wild Boar of the Woods challenges the characters and demands to know their reason for invading his forest. The Wild Boar informs the characters that they must respect his rules in his forest, and not harm the inhabitants. The Wild Boar considers truffles and the awakened trees to be under his protection, and he does not distinguish between them and the animals. If the characters ask for directions, the Wild Boar tells them that he can assist, but they must aid him first.

The Wild Boar of the Woods tells the characters that a pack of wolves has entered his forest and is attacking the inhabitants. He would normally dispatch the wolves himself, but on this day, the truffles command him to guard the entrance to the regio. The Wild Boar tells them that he is concerned that by the time he is able to hunt the wolves, they will have killed many of his charges. This is a lie. The Wild Boar of the Wood lets in predators every solstice or equinox to keep the population of herbivores in check before driving them out or killing them.

Depending on how long it takes the characters to track and kill the wolves, they may have attacked several of the forests inhabitants. The characters may attempt to locate the carcasses of the wolves' kills. This is done easily enough, but their bodies are devoid of vis because the Magic wolves have consumed it.

Truffle Fields

Magic aura 5

The second level of the regio has a Magic aura of 5. It may only be entered by taking the path from the first level. If the characters have the Wild Boar's assistance, he escorts them down a trail and through to the second level before departing. Without his assistance, the characters must utilize Second Sight or cast the spell *Piercing the Magical Veil* (ArM5, page 158) while at the proper point on this path to advance to the next level. If the characters do not have a method to see the entrance to the second level, they keep walking and return to the entrance to the first level in a continual loop.

This level encompasses the truffle fields,

Wild Boar of the Woods, cont'd.

Anyone or anything the Boar charges becomes overwhelmed with a mortal fear of the Boar for Diameter Duration. The target must flee immediately from the Boar and is reluctant to ever face him again.

ReMe(An) 25 (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Diameter, +1 special effect: lingering effect (non-Hermetic effect)): Greater Power (25 levels, -3 Might cost, +10 XP in Penetration)

The Unimpeded Traveler, 3 points, Constant, Animal

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

The Boar of Virtue is able to run without being impeded by poor terrain. The boar may move at its maximum speed in even the poorest of terrain. This power is possessed by Boars of Virtue, but not the Wild Boar of the Wood.

ReAn 25 (Base 10, Sun +2, +1 Constant): Personal Power (25 levels)

Natural Weapons: The Boar's tusks are Init +0, Atk +4, Dfn +2, Dam +5.

Vis: 2 pawns of Animal vis in each tusk or 1 pawn in each tusk for the Boar of Virtue.

Appearance: A very large, dark brown wild boar with ivory tusks and brown eyes.

The Wild Boar of the Woods guards

the entrance to the Truffle Matron's regio. The Wild Boar is a solitary creature, but quickly lends his protection to any inhabitants of the regio that come under attack. The Wild Boar of the Woods is capable of moving between all levels of the regio. He is motivated to keep intruders out of his woods and only allow proper guests of the Truffle Matron to pass to the next level of the regio.

The Wild Boar of the Woods always initiates contact with a group by charging the most combat worthy looking individual, stopping about five paces short, and using his *Terror of the Charging Boar* power on him. Remember that the Boars have Enduring Constitution, which reduces all Fatigue penalties by 1, so do not hesitate to use exertion (ArM5, page 173).

For the Boars of Virtue ridden by the Truffle Drones and those in the Truffle field, reduce their Might to 10. The Boars of Virtue do not have the *Protect the Herd* or *Terror of the Charging Boar* powers, Magical Champion, Ways of the Wood, Tough, or Higher Purpose. The Flaws of Wrathful and Fury are Minor. As a replacement power, they have *The Unimpeded Traveler* power, which the Wild Boar of the Woods does not possess. Finally, the Boars of Virtue are Size 0 and have Cunning instead of Intelligence.



the immediately surrounding areas, and the path to the Truffle Matron's holt. The area looks nothing like typical human fields. There are no obvious forms of demarcation between the living areas and the fields and no form of demarcation between any of the fields. Around a central clearing, a dozen large trees with dense root systems stand. The roots are intertwined in the center and are large and dense enough that footing for humans is treacherous. It is completely impassable for horses. The whole level has an overwhelmingly strong smell of freshly tilled earth, compost, and mushrooms. It is perpetually overcast, with the sun rarely breaking through the dense cloud cover, and rain falls frequently.

Outside this ring of trees is another concentric ring of trees. Among the roots, the characters see approximately a dozen awakened truffles going about their business. The awakened truffles are of the type most likely to be encountered in the area as described in the "Varieties of Truffles in Your Saga" insert. If the characters enter the woods beyond the truffle fields, they encounter truffle drones on

patrol, who escort the characters back to the path. Game statistics and the appearance of the awakened truffles are described in the "Inhabitants of The Truffle Regio" section, later. The fields are filled with activity, such that the inhabitants do not go out of their way to interact with the characters. The fields are surrounded by forest, filled with oak, hazel, poplar, and beech trees. Without magic or Second Sight, the characters are forced to interact with the inhabitants to proceed to the next level of the regio.

The awakened truffles are working among large mounds that appear to be their homes. The roots also serve as a fence to keep a sounder of wild boars enclosed. The awakened truffles are busy tending to smaller truffles, making repairs on their homes, grooming or feeding their wild boars, and the like. Through the gaps in the trees, the characters may see more awakened truffles working between the circles of trees. The area between the trees is where the awakened truffles cultivate their Truffles of Virtue. Perceptive characters notice that the branches and roots of the trees seem to move

at the mere touch of an awakened truffle. This is because the trees here are also awakened. See *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 128, for a description of awakened trees. The structures and their contents are composed entirely of earth or living wood.

If the characters attempt to interact with the awakened truffles or trees, they are met with silence. Only characters with the spell *Converse with Plant and Tree* (ArM5, page 136) or a similar ability are able to talk to them. If the characters can communicate, the awakened truffles answer simple questions, but excuse themselves after one or two questions and return to work. They explain that the council is about to meet and they do not have time for idle chatter with "truffle eating drones." At this point, the Boars of Virtue break out of the fence containing them. The awakened truffles stop what they are doing and begin chasing them.

Truffle Holt

Magic aura 7

The third and final level of the regio has a Magic aura of 7. If the characters assisted the truffle workers in rounding up their boars, without harming them, the truffle workers assist the characters in crossing to the next level of the regio. Otherwise, the characters must find the entrance alone, which is not difficult, assuming they can see it. The regio entrance to the third level is on a path out of the fields. If the characters are unable to see the entrance, they eventually circle back and return to the entrance of the second level of the regio.

The third level of the regio encompasses the holt and surrounding grounds. The "holt" is two concentric, seamless circles of awakened trees perched on a low hill. Surrounding the holt are other smaller oak, hazel, poplar, and beech trees. Two truffle drones mounted on large wild boars wait at the end of the path leading to the outer circle of trees. More truffle drones ride wild boars among the surrounding trees.

If the characters are with an escort, the truffle drones allow them to enter. If not, they wait for several minutes and a truffle daughter appears out of the ground to escort the

Interloping Wolves

Magic Might: 13 (Animal)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -2, Com +1, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1
Size: 0
Season: Summer
Confidence: 1 (3)
Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Magic Monster; Arcane Lore, Enduring Constitution, Improved Characteristics (x2), Second Sight, Sharp Ears, Warrior (x2), Greedy (Major); Infamous, Nocturnal
Qualities: Aggressive, Hardy, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Animal/Pack Leader, Pursuit Predator, Sharp Ears, Thick Fur, Vocal
Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power, Major Virtue: Ways of the Forest; Animal Resistance, Ignem Resistance, Improved Attack, Improved Abilities (x2), Improved Damage, Improved Soak, Minor Virtue: Large; Susceptible to Deprivation
Personality Traits: Wolf *+3, Gluttonous* +6, Brave +3, Cowardly +3, Loyal +1
Reputations: Rapacious 4 (local)
Combat:
Bite: Init +4, Attack +17, Defense +12, Damage +6
Pack Leader's Bite: Init +4, Attack +19, Defense +12, Damage +6
 (The Ways of the Woods bonus is already included in the wolves' Combat totals.)
Soak: +6
Fatigue: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -2, -4, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Animal Resistance 3 (hooves), Area Lore: Pack lands 4 (prey), Ath-

letics 5 (distance running), Awareness 4 (smells), Brawl 6 (bite), Hunt 4 (tracking by smell), Ignem Resistance 4 (cold), Leadership 2 (intimidation), Penetration 4 (*Terrifying Howl of the Wolf*), Second Sight 4 (illusions), Stealth 4 (snow), Swim (streams) 1, Survival 3 (winter)

Powers:

Terrifying Howl of the Wolf, 0 points, Init -2, Animal or Mentem

R: Voice, D: Diam, T: Sound

Anyone who hears the wolf's howl is overcome with fear for one round. The target may flee, freeze, or cower in terror. The target may make a Bravery Check against an Ease Factor of 9 on each subsequent round to act normally. If the character hears a subsequent howl, the player may attempt to resist by making the same Bravery check and is not automatically terrified for one round.

ReMe(An) 35 (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Diameter, +3 Sound): Greater Power (35 levels, -3 Might cost)

Vis: Two pawns of Animal vis in the coat.

Appearance: An oversized wolf with a pale gray coat and red eyes.

The wolves tracked a herd of roe deer from the mundane world into the Truffle Matron's regio. The roe deer are inhabitants, and the wolves followed them. The wolves intend to gorge themselves on the numerous magical creatures in the regio and then gang up on the Wild Boar of the Woods. The wolves gain a +3 bonus to all rolls involving the senses of smelling and hearing. The Pack Leader's statistics are es-

entially the same as the other wolves, except he has Com +2, a Leadership score of 6 (specializing in combat), the additional Minor Flaw of Higher Purpose (provide for the pack), and the additional Minor Virtue of Improved Attack.

A wolf is inherently cowardly and flees or surrenders if separated from the pack. The storyguide should set the number of wolves at a number to sufficiently challenge the characters. Their preferred tactic is to encircle their prey, use the *Terrifying Howls* to immobilize them, and then focus on incapacitating the strongest opponent before moving to the next one. Each wolf expends a point of Fatigue on its first attack to add his Brawl score to his Attack total. As long as the Pack Leader lives, the wolves fight as a Trained Group. This allows the Pack Leader, who also acts as vanguard, to add +7 to his Attack or Defense scores for each additional wolf in his pack, up to a maximum bonus of +21 (ArM5, page 172). For a further description of the wolves' tactics, see "Hunted by Wolves" in Chapter 11: The Wolf's Court chapter.

The wolves will likely immobilize the grogs and companions, before focusing their attacks on the magi, using their bite attacks, which are not resisted by Parma Magica. Once a wolf has drawn blood, he uses it as an Arcane Connection to aid in attacking any character who initially resisted the *Terrifying Howl of the Wolf*. Blood serves as an Arcane Connection to the target that "lasts for years" and provides a x3 bonus to multiplier to Penetration for the wolf (ArM5, page 84). With a character's blood, the attacking wolf has an effective Penetration of 33.

characters into the holt. The trees making the door at the end of the path rise up out of the ground on their roots and move aside to allow the characters entrance. Once inside the holt, the trees return to their original positions.

The holt courtyard is located between the exterior circle of trees that forms the holt's walls and an interior circle of trees that forms the inner holt. The courtyard is filled with lumpy, loose topsoil. It is a rich black color and emits a strong smell of compost. Against the exterior wall to the left of the path to the interior holt there are larger mounds where truffle drones are resting. On the opposite wall a sounder of wild boars

root about in a pen made of dense shrubs and small trees. There are several awakened truffles tending to the boars.

Truffle Council Chamber

The holt's interior looks much like the courtyard, with dark topsoil and a strong smell of compost dominating. Large roots from the surrounding awakened trees form seats, tables, and a raised dais at the center of the circle. The seats and tables nearest the walls are filled with a handful of truffle drones, the next group nearer the dais is filled with a large number of

truffle workers, and the final row before the dais is filled with a small group of daughters. The Truffle Matron and her closest advisers sit upon the dais. If the characters attempt to sit, they are directed to the tables with the drones.

The workings of the truffles are largely inscrutable to outsiders. Only the Matron and daughter truffles are able to speak to the humans, and they only do so when addressing them directly. Those able to follow the truffles hear discussions regarding territorial disputes between black, white, Burgundy, and Bohemian truffles; allocation of communal resources; destruction of Magic forests by humans; or loss of truffles to human poachers. The truffles

all stare at the characters whenever issues related to the “truffle thieves” are discussed.

Characters able to understand the proceedings notice that only daughters present proposals or issues to the Truffle Matron. The Matron then opens discussion to the citizens of the regio. Perceptive characters notice that daughters are given the most deference, followed by the worker truffles and awakened trees. The truffle drones are largely ignored and rarely contribute to the discussion beyond providing factual reports. The Truffle Matron allows all to be heard before giving her opinion and suggestion on the matter. Once she has spoken, her adviser calls for a vote. If the Matron expresses a strong preference, the vote generally supports her. Drones do not vote.

The Truffle Matron’s goal is to expand the reach of the truffles by increasing the number of forests inside Magic auras and to protect the truffles inside those Magic forests that already exist. Unfortunately for the Truffle Matron, there are not many forests left in Mythic Europe for expansion. Rather, the truffles are losing forests to human encroachment. Although truffles are hearty, they have little ability to stop truffle hunters or foresters, especially those protected by the Dominion. Creating an Earth Elemental can slow the progress of humans, but greatly weakens a daughter.

The Truffle Matron and the awakened truffles do not trust the characters for two reasons. First, they are human, and humans destroy forests and poach truffles. Second, they are magi and, in the Truffle Matron’s experience, magi have an insatiable desire for vis. This desire often means that magi collect and destroy the awakened truffles or their vis-bearing crops. The Truffle Matron hopes to use the magi’s known desire for vis to convince them to assist her. Requests the Truffle Matron may make of the characters are listed in the insert, and potential rewards are included in the following “Vis Sources” section.

Tests of the Truffle Matron

Before the Truffle Matron makes any request of the characters, she demands to test

their mettle. She addresses the most senior looking female, and if no females are present she asks the characters where their leader is. If a female is present, she directs all questions and responses to that character and refers to the males as her drones.

The first test offered by the Truffle Matron is one of combat. The Truffle Matron’s champion mounts a Boar of Virtue, and she tells the characters to select their best warrior for single combat. The Matron selects either one of the daughters or a drone as her champion, depending on the strength of the characters’ selection. Her champion is armed with a bludgeon. Use the scuffling rules detailed on *ArM5*, page 174. The fight lasts until someone surrenders or is knocked unconscious. Anyone attempting to inflict lethal damage is declared the loser.

The second test proposed by the Truffle Matron is one of strength. The Truffle Matron issues a challenge of a tug-of-war between the strongest member of the characters’ group and the strongest member of the council. When she issues the challenge, the truffles laugh a hearty, deep laugh. Given that the largest awakened truffle is barely four feet tall, the characters may laugh too. The challenge is, however, between one of the awakened trees and the character. The character and the awakened tree both roll a Simple Die and add their Strength + Athletics to the roll. For every Size point the awakened tree is larger than the character, add +2 to the tree’s die roll. The side with the lower total is dragged toward the side with the higher total. If the difference is less than 5, the two roll again and continue to roll until the accumulated difference between their rolls is 5 or more. Once the total of 5 or greater is reached, the losing side is pulled across the line. If the contest lasts more than two turns, the Truffle Matron awards the characters a victory.

The Truffle Matron asks a gardener to bring a damaged sapling into the hall. She informs the characters that if they are able to repair the damage to the sapling and ensure that it prospers in the coming year she will grant them a victory in this challenge. The easiest method for completing this challenge is for one of the characters to prune the damaged branches and use Ceremonial Casting to cast a Spontaneous Ring/Circle version of *The Bounti-*

ful Feast (*ArM5*, page 135). The characters earn additional praise from the Truffle Matron if they are able to grow the sapling to maturity or otherwise protect it against harm.

After the characters have attempted the Truffle Matron’s tests, the truffle daughters begin a procession to present tribute to the Matron. The daughters each present the Truffle Matron with an exotic plant bearing vis. The Matron praises the truffle who presents the most unusual or exotic specimen. If the characters present the Truffle Matron with appropriate tribute, she increases their potential reward.

Finally, the Truffle Matron’s adviser announces that the Matron will now hear the pleadings of the citizens. They ask the Matron to settle disputes between them, assist them in solving their problems, or request aid from the community. The citizens include truffle drones, workers, daughters, and awakened trees. Examples of potential issues are included here, but the storyguide should feel to use requests that are specifically tailored to her saga.

The Truffle Matron offers a reward of vis to anyone who can solve the problems that she or her citizens cannot easily address. The Matron does not wait for the characters to offer their assistance; if they are silent, she assigns the task to a group of truffle drones or a daughter. She is generally aware of the difficulty of each task and offers a vis reward appropriate to entice someone to accept. The more tests the characters passed, the more valuable the Truffle Matron’s offer is. Through role playing, the character may be able to extract additional vis from the Truffle Matron. She offers the greatest rewards for problems raised by the daughters and the most meager rewards for problems that affect only the drones. If the characters have previously assisted the regio’s citizens, she is more generous with her potential reward, but if they have harmed any of the inhabitants or collected any vis in the regio, the Truffle Matron reduces it accordingly. If the characters have acted in an especially egregious manner, she dismisses them and tells them to complete her task without reward or never be allowed to return.

Features of the Truffle Regio

This section describes some overarching features of the regio: the Creo aligned aura, examples of the vis sources in the regio, and the inhabitants of the regio.

Aura

The entire regio is an aura aligned with Creo. See *Realm of Power: Magic*, page 16, for a description of aligned auras. The whole area has an overwhelmingly strong smell of freshly tilled earth, compost, and mushrooms. The area is perpetually overcast with the sun rarely breaking through the dense cloud cover, and rain falls frequently.

The Magic aura bonus is doubled in the regio for all activities involving Creo. Add the aura modifier to all Recovery rolls while recuperating in the aura. Creatures with Might aligned with Creo spend 1 point less Might to activate their powers while in the aura. Plants and animals grow more healthfully, stronger, and larger than normal. In addition, minor cuts and bruises heal instantly. If a character takes scuffling damage in any of the combat encounters, these heal immediately upon entrance to the truffle holt regio. For each season the character spends in the aura, his apparent age is decreased by one, but does not decrease below 27. Anyone who spends a full year in the aura receives a bonus to his Living Conditions modifier equal to the Magic aura where the character spent the majority of his time.

Vis Sources

The truffle regio contains three categories of vis: inanimate truffles, creatures, and trees. The truffles exist as Truffles of Virtue and Extraordinary Vis. The creatures are all herbivores native to lands where truffles grow. If asked why there are no predators, knowledgeable truffles tell the characters that truffles are spread by being eaten by

herbivores and passed through their system. Carnivores do nothing to assist truffles. Finally, the forests of the truffle regio are home to many Trees of Virtue: beech, hazel, oak, and poplar. *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 129, contains guidelines for both Hazel and Oak Trees of Virtue. The trees themselves use the statistics for the awakened trees above, but also have special properties.

BEECH TREE OF VIRTUE

Beech trees have a thick canopy that provides very dense shade beneath their branches. The ground around the beech tree is covered in leaves, rotting vegetation, and beechnuts. If supple branches are collected from the tree on the summer solstice they may be Enriched. The branches must be continually soaked in a mixture of wine, special herbs, and beechnuts from the tree until the autumnal equinox. The concoction must be refreshed on a weekly basis, such that all of the beech nuts from the tree are used. At the end of the soaking period, the branches are woven into a circular amulet with a spider web pattern. While the amulet is worn, the character is treated as having the Luck Virtue (*ArM5*, page 45). If characters collect all of the beechnuts from the Beech Tree of Virtue, they contain two pawns of Vim vis.

POPLAR TREE OF VIRTUE

The white poplar tree has very distinctive leaves, with the top side a dark green and the bottom a pale white. Select leaves and branches of a Poplar Tree of Virtue may be Enriched. The character must collect the twelve darkest leaves from the tree and the twelve palest leaves. The leaves are wrapped around supple twigs from the tree in the form of a crown. The crown of leaves imparts the Long-Winded Virtue (*ArM5*, page 45) while worn. The Enriched crown only grants the Long-Winded Virtue to one person, and it only lasts until the leaves become dry and brittle, about two weeks, unless magically preserved. If the characters collect the 24 most



Awakened Trees

Magic Might: None
Characteristics: Int -2, Per -2, Pre -3, Com -3, Str +8, Sta +5, Dex -1, Qik -5
Size: +5
Season: Spring
Virtues and Flaws: Tough, Clumsy
Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: No Fatigue, Wooden
Personality Traits: Tree +3, Patient +2
Combat:
Branch: Init +5, Attack +7, Defense +1, Damage +10
Soak: +16 (Blunt and impaling weapons do no harm.)
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)
Abilities: Brawl 3 (branch)
Natural Weapons: The weapon statistics for the tree's branches are Init +10, Atk +4, Dfn +2, Dam +2, which gives the same combat statistics as those listed in the spell *Lord of the Trees* (ArM5, page 139), when combined with a Brawl skill of 3.

Vis: Each Tree of Virtue contains two pawns of vis, with the Art determined by the type of tree. Oak Trees of Virtue have Auram vis. Hazel Trees of Virtue have Intellego vis. Poplar Trees of Virtue have Creo vis. Beech Trees of Virtue have Vim vis.

The above statistics are for the awakened trees in the first level of the regio. For awakened trees in the second level of the regio, add +2 to the tree's Intelligence and Perception. Add +3 to both Characteristics for awakened trees in the third level of the regio. The storyguide should feel free to adjust damage downward for attacks that would do little harm to a tree. Characters may be tempted to use fire against an awakened tree in the hope of doing extra damage. The wood of living trees needs considerable drying before becoming firewood, so fire attacks should only do normal damage.

perfectly shaped leaves from the Poplar Tree of Virtue, they contain two pawns of Creo vis.

CREATURES OF VIRTUE

In addition to the Boars of Virtue contained in this chapter, there are many other Creatures of Virtue in the Truffle Matron's regio. *Realms of Power: Magic*, starting at page 56, includes several other Creatures of Virtue that might be present. The most likely creatures are Ravens of Virtue (page 62), Stags of Virtue (page 63), Hares of Virtue, and Mice of Virtue (both on page 67). If the characters are unable to pass to the second level of the regio, the storyguide may want to introduce them to the Wise Owl of the Forest (page 65), whom the Wild Boar of the Woods has also let in.

TRUFFLES OF VIRTUE

Truffles of Virtue can arise in any variety of truffles. They look like a normal truffle, except they are much larger, three to ten times larger than typical. Truffles of Virtue may be Enriched by being devoured by a creature

with a Magic Might of at least 5. When the truffles pass through the creature's system, the scat may be used to fertilize a tree. If done properly, truffles grow on its roots the following year. If the fertilized tree is in a Magic aura for the next year, there is a chance that one of the truffles is a Truffle of Virtue. Judicious users of the Truffles of Virtue can fertilize one tree for each ounce the digested Truffle of Virtue weighed. If the Truffle of Virtue is used for other purposes, it is treated as two pawns of Creo Herbam Dedicated Vis (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 122).

SPELL-LIKE CREO HERBAM VIS

CrHe Level 20
R: Touch, **D:** Mom, **T:** Ind, Ritual

This Creo Herbam vis takes the form of a large truffle. It can be any variety of truffle. If the Creo Herbam vis is buried in contact with the roots of a plant, it instantly heals the plant of any injury, poison, or disease. If the Creo Herbam vis is used otherwise, it is the equivalent of two pawns of Dedicated vis (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 122).

(Base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Size)

LESSER ENCHANTMENT IMAGINEM VIS

MuIm Level 40
Pen 30, 100 Charges
R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Group

This Imaginem vis takes the form of a large black or white truffle. A few shavings (one charge) of this Imaginem vis can be added to food. The Imaginem vis infuses the food with the delicious, savory flavor of truffles. A single charge is enough to flavor up to 100 meals. Anyone offering the truffle-infused meal to a guest receives a +3 bonus on rolls to influence, persuade, or convince the guest. If the vis is used in any other manner, it is treated as four pawns of Imaginem vis.

(Base 1, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 Group, +1 Size; +15 Penetration, +10 charges)

LESSER ENCHANTMENT REGO ANIMAL VIS

ReAn Level 54
Pen 40, constant
R: Per, **D:** Sun, **T:** Scent

This Rego vis takes the form of a large black, white, or Burgundy truffle. The vis affects any wild boar or pig that smells it by compelling the creature to do everything in its power to devour the vis. Porcine creatures prevented from eating the vis become Berserk as per the Virtue (ArM5, page 40) and expend Fatigue on every attempt to gain access to the vis until exhausted and unconscious. If the vis is used, it is treated as five pawns of Rego Animal Dedicated vis (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 122).

The scent extends over approximately 30 paces. Wind conditions can affect the area influenced by the Rego Animal vis, providing directionality or increasing the area of effect up to a 60-pace radius. Wild boars or pigs with a keen sense of smell can be affected from even farther away, up to 150 paces. See *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 28, for a description of the Scent Target.

(Base 5, +2 Sun, +2 Scent, +1 Size; +20 Penetration, +4 constant)

SPELL-LIKE HERBAM VIS

CrHe Level 60

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Boundary, Ritual

This Herbam vis takes the form of a large truffle. If the truffle is allowed to mature and its spores are spread over an area up to six miles in diameter, all plants that grow within the area grow healthy and fruitful. The plants are protected from disease and blight for the year. The vis does nothing to prevent drought, hail, or other inclement weather. For further guidance, treat the effect as you would the spell *The Bountiful Feast* (ArM5, page 135).

In addition, any trees in the target area grow truffles on their root systems. The truffles are exceptionally flavorful and worth a great deal on the truffle market. If any of the trees are in a Magic aura for the entire year, Truffles of Virtue may grow on their roots. If the vis is used in any other manner, it is treated as six pawns of Herbam vis.

(Base 1, +1 Touch, +4 Year, +4 Boundary, +4 Size, +2 additional effect)

Inhabitants of the Truffle Regio

The awakened truffle inhabitants of the regio come in four varieties. The truffle workers are the weakest, and most abundant, with only a Magic Might of 10. The truffle drones have Magic Might scores of 15 and are generally mounted on Boars of Virtue. The truffle daughters and the Truffle Matron's advisers have a Magic Might of 20, but are relatively few in number. Finally, the Truffle Matron has a Magic Might of 30, but is alone at that level.

TRUFFLE DRONES

Drones patrol and guard the second and third levels of the regio. They do not interact with the characters unless provoked. They cannot speak with humans, so only stare blankly at the characters or follow them from a distance. Once the characters enter the third level of the regio, they notify a daughter of their presence. Likewise, if the characters do anything to harm the inhabitants of the

regio, the drones move to defend the inhabitants and send someone to notify a daughter.

Truffle drones are warriors and guards. They are also the lowest social stratum of the truffle regio. Although they act with great deference to the other inhabitants of the regio, when talking to characters, they treat them with disdain. Awakened truffles refer to all truffles and plants in the regio using feminine pronouns, except the drones, for whom they use masculine pronouns.

TRUFFLE WORKERS

Truffle workers are not interested in fighting, or interacting, with the characters. They go about their business in preparation for the council for the most part. Only if the characters interfere with the workers' homes, crops, or wild boars do they provoke a response. The workers first notify the drones and then command their Boars of Virtue to defend the fields. Workers burrow to safety deep beneath the earth and away from the fields to avoid death.

Requests of the Truffle Matron

The following problems could be raised by the Truffle Matron.

TOO MANY COOKS...

A truffle daughter tells the Truffle Matron that the truffles in her area are being massacred by humans. The Truffle Matron requests that the magi destroy the truffle hunters and return with proof. Should the magi accept the task, they are easily able to kill the hunters and their dogs. Only later do the magi discover that the hunters were grogs and companions from another covenant. The covenant collecting the vis has not registered it with House Mercere for one of the following reasons: they do not consider it to be a significant, repeating source; it is on the border to with another Tribunal; they do not know any of the truffles contain vis; or it is claimed by a Winter covenant that rarely harvests it. How do the characters react when their fellow magi track them down or raise the issue at Tribunal?

GIVING THE DEVIL HIS DUE

A daughter announces to the community that her area has been peaceful despite being near a large urban center. The daughter surmises that the local clergy are preaching against eating truffles. The Truffle Matron asks the characters to spread the word that truffles are the "witch's fare" throughout the land. If the characters are successful in their attempts, truffle hunters and traders approach the characters. Initially, truffle hunters might tell the characters a pitiful story about not being able to feed their children and play on the characters' sympathy. If this is unsuccessful, a powerful truffle merchant hires a group of thugs to run the characters out of town.

CANNOT SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

An awakened tree announces to the Truffle Matron that a previously pristine

forest is under attack from foresters. The Truffle Matron asks the characters to stop the deforestation and replant the forest. The forest is near a recently founded monastery, which is clearing land for additional agricultural fields. The foresters are not clergy, but if the magi interfere with their efforts, the monks investigate. If the characters fail to stop the deforestation, they have to explain their reasons to the Truffle Matron. If they stop the deforestation, they may be called upon to explain their actions at the next Tribunal.

YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW

The Truffle Matron requests that the characters locate a new forest and seed the area with truffles. If the characters agree, the Matron offers them several Truffles of Virtue. If the characters properly enhance the Truffles of Virtue and spread them in a truffle-free forest with a Magic aura, the truffles prosper and other Truffles of Virtue grow in

Requests of the Truffle Matron, cont'd.

the forest. Although the characters may be tempted to harvest the cultivated Truffles of Virtue, this destroys the forest's ability to continue producing Truffles of Virtue. If the characters enhance the cultivated Truffles of Virtue and spread them in the forest for several years, the forest produces enough vis-bearing truffles to become self-sustaining and the characters are able to harvest some of the Truffles of Virtue for themselves in perpetuity.

SPLITTING THE BOAR

Two powerful truffle daughters claim that a wild boar is rightfully theirs. The Truffle Matron does not want to alienate either daughter, so she instructs the characters to investigate and settle the dispute. If the characters read the minds of the daughters, they discern that both truthfully believe that the boar is rightfully theirs. In truth, the first noble attempted to capture the boar, but failed. She tracked the boar to the territory of the second daughter, who was trying to drive the boar toward a trap. While the two argued about who had the

right to the boar, the boar charged into the Truffle Matron's regio and to the council chamber with the daughters in tow. If the boar is questioned, he does not believe that he is owned by either party because neither was capable of capturing and holding him. Use the statistics for the Wild Boar of the Woods for the boar.

LATE FOR COUNCIL

One of the daughters of the council did not appear at council on the last solstice. The Truffle Matron sent a messenger to find out the reason for her absence. The messenger never returned. The Truffle Matron then sent one of her advisers, who also did not return. She asks the characters to investigate their disappearances. The growth of a nearby town and its Divine aura has forced the truffle daughter's home into a regio and she and her guests are unable to escape it. Exiting the regio is only possible during the evening on nights of magical significance or when the Divine aura drops. The inhabitants have not discovered this yet.

TRUFFLE DAUGHTERS

The truffle daughters remain in the holt unless called upon to defend the regio. If needed, they travel to the site of a conflict by burrowing and create elementals. Truffle daughters are able to create an Earth Elemental with a Magic Might of up to 20, depending on the amount of raw material available. The daughter expends 4 points of Magic Might to create an elemental from earth, the Might of which cannot exceed the creator's Might score. *Enliven the Gross Earth* is described in detail in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 38. The elemental is under the control of the creator until dismissed. Earth Elementals are discussed in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 135–137. Because of the daughters' Temporary Might Flaw, the daughters recover their Might over the course of the season unless they consume vis to speed the process up.

THE TRUFFLE MATRON

The Truffle Matron remains in the holt unless called to defend the regio. If the characters seem to be causing trouble, she instructs the daughters to secure Arcane Connections to the magi and return them to her. Her Penetration is 38 without an Arcane Connection, but with a strand of hair, for example, it is 54. The Matron banishes any troublemakers rather than combat an entire group of magi. She may attempt to deceive the remaining characters by saying that she has captured the banished individuals and will kill them if the remaining characters do not cooperate. If the characters continue to attack, the Truffle Matron can create an Earth Elemental through the use of *Enliven the Gross Earth* (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 38). She can create an elemental of up to Magic Might 30. Her elemental is equivalent to the Might 20 elemental, except that the following bonuses are added to its statistics: + 8 to Attack, +12 to Damage, and +4 to Soak. The Truffle Matron's Temporary Might Flaw means that the Might she expends is not recovered until the end of the season or she consumes vis.

New Creo Herbam Guidelines

Like Creo Corpus healing spells, a healing spell cast other than as a Momentary Duration Ritual actually suspends the healing process so that upon the spell's expiration, wounds are as fresh as they were when the spell was cast.

BASE	EFFECT
1	Heal a Light Wound to a plant.
2	Heal a Medium Wound to a plant.
3	Heal a Heavy Wound to a plant.
4	Heal an Incapacitating Wound to a plant.
5	Heal all Wounds to a plant.
10	Heal all damage to a plant, including wounds, disease, and poison.

The Truffle Matron also possesses the power of *The Oath Swearing*, which is discussed in detail in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 39. If all parties to an agreement swear an oath of their own free will, then when a party attempts to act in contravention of the oath, the character becomes aware that he might break the oath. If the character proceeds to break the oath, he acquires a Minor Flaw to be determined by the storyguide. The Flaw remains with the character until he re-swears the oath before the original parties to the oath.

Should the characters agree to complete one of the tasks, the Truffle Matron asks the group to swear a binding oath that all will follow the terms of the agreement. The storyguide should make a written record of the agreement because its exact terms may be relevant in avoiding the effects of the Oath Swearing. The Truffle Matron requests that the promise be a binding, blood oath. If the characters refuse, she tells them that they only need worry if they intend to violate the oath. The Truffle Matron offers to return the blood to the swearing characters after the ceremony to allay their fears of allowing her to keep an Arcane Connection to them. With a drop of blood as an Arcane Connection, *The Oath Swearing* has a Penetration of 58.

Introducing the Truffle Regio into the Saga

The following are a few ideas for introducing the characters to the truffles' regio. Of course, no author can know the specifics of your saga, so the storyguide is encouraged to come up with an introduction of her own. The most difficult aspect of the introduction is to pull the characters out of the covenant and prevent the players from taking the easy path of just collecting the vis and ignoring the potential stories.

Invitation from a Daughter

The storyguide could introduce the truffle regio through one of its citizens. A truffle merchant or hunter might offer to sell the covenant some truffles. Among the truffles purchased is a Truffle of Virtue or a truffle containing Extraordinary Vis. The lesser enchantment truffles above would be particularly appropriate because of the ease with which the characters should notice that they are special. After the characters track down the truffle merchant, he refuses to tell them where he found the truffles. His truffle hunting grounds are a closely guarded secret. If the characters have any facility with Mentem, or mundane means of gathering the information, they discover that the truffle hunter found the vis in a section of forest he had never before searched.

After the characters extract the information from the truffle hunter, they can attempt to find more vis-bearing truffles. While searching the forest, the characters notice a modest Magic aura is present before a daughter encounters the characters. If they still carry the Extraordinary Vis or a Truffle of Virtue, she demands that they return her valuable property. If they do not, she demands that they leave her domain or be hauled before the Truffle Matron on charges of trespassing and larceny. It is unlikely the characters could be compelled to attend the council by the

daughter, but her description of it may give the characters reason to investigate.

The Vanishing Familiar

If one of the characters is searching for a familiar, the truffle regio could be introduced through it. The storyguide could introduce the regio when the magus and his grog track the potential familiar into the regio. The potential familiar may know of the location as a safe place to hide from predators, if it is a suitable inhabitant, or as a place to get a quick snack, if it is a predator or a threat to the Wild Boar of the Woods. It is up to the storyguide to determine how the potential familiar learned the information about the regio and whether it knows anything beyond its mere existence or beyond the first level and its inhabitants.

The Missing Hunters

The storyguide could introduce the truffle regio to the players through their ancillary characters. Assuming some of the covenfolk hunt for game, they could follow their quarry into the regio on a solstice or equinox. The Wild Boar of the Woods may allow grogs to enter, intent on using them as his predators for a time. After allowing them to kill some animals, the Wild Boar of the Woods drives them from the regio. The players might consider the introduction to be a short story for the grogs, until one of the characters notices that the furs brought back from the regio contain vis.

The Frightened Foresters

While traveling, the characters encounter some foresters fleeing for their lives. They describe a giant monster, a hill that came to life and drove them from their work site. The foresters refuse to return to the area, but are willing to give the characters the approximate location. Anyone with a Magic Lore score of 3 or higher recognizes the description as an Earth Elemental. If the characters investigate,

they find several dead foresters surrounded by crushed and rusted foresting tools. With some work, they can locate the Earth Elemental and the daughter who summoned it. The daughter explains that she was forced to drive off the foresters because they were destroying her domain of truffle-bearing trees. She knows that the foresters will eventually return and that she cannot stop them without assistance. She offers the characters a deal to convince the local lord to leave her forest alone in exchange for vis and an invitation to the Truffle Matron's council.

Researching the Truffle Regio

There are several ways the characters could discover the existence of the truffle regio without leaving the covenant. What follows are three possible methods of introduction.

CHATTY KITTY

It is often a problem that familiars, even when played by players, get little "stage time." This method of introduction helps alleviate that problem. A magus of the Order has a familiar with knowledge of the regio, as discussed before in "The Vanishing Familiar" section. Either at a Tribunal or perhaps while the magus is visiting the characters' covenant, the familiar converses with a familiar in the characters' covenant about the days before they were bound. During that conversation, the magus's familiar tells the other familiar about the truffle regio. Alternatively, the familiar could be commiserating with an apprentice about their lives before getting involved in the Order of Hermes and provide the same information.

OLD GROGS NEVER DIE...

When a covenant falls into deep winter, the covenfolk can either remain loyal, dying with the covenant, or attempt to escape. The characters might learn of the truffle regio

The Magical Truffles

Magic Might: 10/15/20/30 (Creo or Herbam)
Characteristics:

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

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

Matron and daughters: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +3

Size: -3 (Workers), -2 (Drones), -1 (Matron and daughters)

Season: Spring (Workers and Drones), Summer (daughters), Autumn (Matron)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws:

Workers: Magic Thing, Magical Monster; Animal Ken, Arcane Lore, Improved Characteristics (x2), Keen Sense of Smell, Anchored to the Earth, Environmental Sensitivity (see below), Sensitive Sight, Poor Eyesight

Drones: Magic Thing, Magical Monster; Animal Ken, Arcane Lore, Improved Characteristics (x3), Keen Sense of Smell, Anchored to the Earth, Environmental Sensitivity (see below), Higher Purpose (Protect the Kingdom), Poor Eyesight, Sensitive Sight

Matron and daughters: Magic Thing, Magical Monster; Arcane Lore, Essential Virtue, Improved Characteristics (x4), Keen Sense of Smell, Large, Anchored to the Earth, Environmental Sensitivity (see below), Higher Purpose (Expand Territory), Sensitive Sight, Poor Eyesight

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities:

All Truffles: Gigantic, No Fatigue, Ritual Power (*Truffle's Healing Touch*); Personal Power (*Traverse through Mother Earth*), Lesser Power (*Control the Hungry Beast*), Improved Powers (x2); Temporary Might

Drones: Improved Abilities, Improved Attack, Improved Damage, Improved Defense, Improved Soak

Daughters: Ritual Power (x2) (*Enliven the Gross Earth*); Gift of Speech, Improved Abilities, Improved Attack, Improved Damage (x2), Improved Soak (x2); Major Flaw (Driven)

Matron: Ritual Power (x3) (*Oath Swearing, Enliven the Gross Earth*), Greater Power (*Banish the Unwelcome Guest*); Gift of Speech, Improved Defense, Improved Powers (x2), Improved Soak (x2), Inspirational, Piusant Leadership, Piusant Penetration, Reduced Attack

Personality Traits: Truffle* +3, Workers: Loyal +2, Honest: +1, Brave -1; Drones: Loyal +3, Brave +2; Daughters: Shrewd* +3, Driven* +3, Greedy +2, Brave +1; Matron: Just* +3, Cautious +2, Brave +2 (For additional Personality Traits, see below)

Reputations: Delicious 2 (local)

Combat:

Worker's Spade: Init +2, Attack +4, Defense +3, Damage +0

Drones' Club: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +5

Daughter's Club: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +9, Damage +8

Soak: Worker: +2; Drone: +5; Matron and daughters: +6

Fatigue: N/A

Wound Penalties:

Workers: -1 (1-2), -3 (3-4), -5 (5-6), Incapacitated (7-8), Dead (9+)

Drones: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Matron and daughters: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities:

Workers: Awareness 2 (smells), Animal Handling 3 (wild boars), Animal Ken 4 (boars), Area Lore: Truffle regio 3 (own section), Brawl 2 (bludgeon); Penetration 3 (*Control the Hungry Beast*)

Drones: Awareness 2 (guarding), Animal Handling 3 (wild boars), Animal Ken 3 (boars), Athletics 2 (climbing), Area Lore: Truffle regio 3 (paths), Brawl 4 (bludgeon), Leadership 1 (guards), Penetration 3 (*Control the Hungry Beast*), Ride 2 (Wild Boars)

Daughters: Awareness 2 (smells), Animal Handling 2 (wild boars), Athletics 2 (running), Area Lore: Home regio 3 (truffles), Brawl 5 (bludgeon), Etiquette 3 (truffle council), Folk Ken 2 (truffle hunters), Intrigue 3 (at council), Leadership 3 (truffles), Living Language 3 (local), Magic Lore 4 (magic animals), Penetration 3 (*Control the Hungry Beast*), Philosophiae 2 (natural world), Ride 3 (wild boars)

Matron: Awareness 4 (smells), Animal Handling 2 (wild boars), Athletics 2 (running), Area Lore: Truffle regio 4 (holt), Brawl 1 (dodge), Charm 3 (first impressions), Code of Hermes 2 (vis), Etiquette 3 (truffle council), Folk Ken 3 (magi), Intrigue 4 (at council), Leadership 5+2 (truffles), Living Language 4 (local), Living Language 4 (nearby), Magic Lore 6 (magic animals), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 2 (personalities), Penetration 5+2 (*Banish the Unwelcome Guest*), Philosophiae 5 (natural world), Ride 2 (wild boars)

Powers:

Traverse Mother Earth, 0 points, Init +1, Terram

R: Touch, D: Conc, T: Ind

The creature is able to borrow through the earth as quickly as it can walk. The burrowing does not leave a tunnel behind the creature, but does loosen the earth such that an extensively traveled area would be treacherous footing.

ReTe 5 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +1 Conc): Personal Power (5 levels, -2 Might cost, +2 Init)

Truffle's Healing Touch, 5* points, Init -9, Herbam

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Ritual

This power instantly heals a plant of any injury, poison, or disease. It can affect even the largest trees in Mythic Europe. Use of this Power depletes the Magic Might of the user on a long-term basis, but it can be recovered over time.

CrHe Level 25 (Base 10, +1 Touch, +2 Size): Ritual Power (25 levels) (* The cost is 4 in the Creo aligned aura.)

Enliven the Gross Earth, 4 points, Init -7, Terram
Create an Earth Elemental. This power is discussed in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 38.

Control the Hungry Beast, 0 points, Init -4, Animal

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Ind

The creature is able to mollify any beast such that it no longer considers the creature interesting, a threat, or edible.

ReAn 25 (Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Sun): Lesser Power (25 levels); Improved Powers x2 (-5 Might cost, +5 Init)

Banish the Unwelcome Guest, 0 points, Init +3, Vim

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

The Truffle Matron is able to expel anyone from the regio by commanding them to leave. The power must Penetrate to be effective.

ReVi 20 (non-Hermetic): Greater Power (20 levels), -4 Might cost, +2 Init

Vis: Workers and Drones contain one pawn of Herbam vis for every 5 points of Magic Might. Daughters and the Truffle Matron contain one pawn of Creo vis for every 5 points of Magic Might. The vis is contained in their delicious flesh.

Appearance: An oversized truffle with lumpy arms and legs, which look like extended roots, beady little eyes, and a very large nose. Black truffles are dark skinned and relatively slender. Burgundy truffles are hazel in color with a rough bark-like skin. White truffles are large, lumpy, and ivory colored. Bohemian truffles are more ovoid than other truffles, looking like dark brown puff balls. Desert truffles are ovoid in shape with partially translucent, pale brown skin.

All awakened truffles have the Environmental Sensitivity Flaw, but the environmental conditions differ by type. Black, white, Burgundy, and Bohemian truffles are sensitive to arid climates and extreme heat. Desert truffles are sensitive to extremely cold or wet environments. The following are additional Personality Traits for awakened truffles: black truffles: Refined* +3; white truffles: Boisterous* +3; Burgundy truffles: Stoic* +3; Bohemian truffles: Determined* +3; and desert truffles: Sensitive* +3.



through a grog from the dying covenant. Although he is not able to provide the precise location of the regio's entrance, he can guide the characters to the general area. He can also tell them that the old masters used to bring out the most wonderful smelling truffles from the regio, but never let them eat the treasures.

A TRIP TO THE LIBRARY

While reading a summa on Magic Lore, a character notices marginalia stating only that "The Truffle Matron does not?" in a section discussing rulers among Magic creatures. The section talks about how some creatures that rule over lesser Magic creatures may take conventional titles from royalty and explain their situation to outsiders using typical terms for a medieval court, but these references are often shorthand and done for the benefit of the outsider. Magic creatures often have bizarre methods of organizing themselves. Some work as democratic institutions with the most popular member leading. Others are communal with all resources being shared according to the needs of the community. In the section describing so called "communal" organizations—organizations where decisions are based on community consensus—another marginalia discusses the Truffle Matron. The comment states, "Truffle Matron's regio is fertile, has a powerful aura, and contains many

creatures of virtue. Did controlling the regio allow her to become Matron? Or is Matron nominally in control of the community's regio? Must investigate on next visit. Also, why are warriors not allowed a voice?"

The summa was owned by a long dead magus from a fallen covenant. The characters, with a little bit of knowledge of Organization Lore: Order of Hermes or a discussion with a very knowledgeable member of House Mercere, can narrow the potential authors of the marginalia to four people. One of the magi is known among scholars of the Order for writing a tractatus on Magic Lore discussing regiones. He was also known as a master of Herbam magic. In a tractatus on Organization Lore: Order of Hermes, the magus is mentioned as healing a lightning-struck ancient oak, which gave vis-bearing acorns, by burying a small truffle beneath it. The author mentions that the magus had developed a well-deserved reputation for being able to heal any plant.

The Magic Lore tractatus is relatively obscure, but several copies of it exist, including one in the library at Durenmar. If the characters track down a copy, it discusses a regio filled with awakened truffles and trees that the author discovered. The author is careful not to disclose the exact location, but with the summa and tractatus together, the characters can piece together enough information to know where and when to begin the search.

Returning to the Truffle Regio

If the characters accept the Truffle Matron's request for assistance, they must return to the regio to present their proof of completion and collect their reward. The Wild Boar of the Woods may attempt to test the characters again, depending on how their first interaction went. Of course, properly prepared characters need less assistance in traversing from one regio level to another, allowing them to avoid some encounters.

On their return to the regio, the Truffle Matron forces the characters to prove themselves again. She may challenge them with the same or similar tests as in the first visit. With two seasons or more to prepare, however, the characters should be able to improve their odds of winning the tests. If the Matron decides the characters are overly prepared for the old tests, she may include new challenges. Some ideas for new challenges include the following: a hide-and-seek game against awakened truffles, a wild boar riding contest through an obstacle course, or a wild boar race from the council chamber to the regio entrance. If they were successful in completing her task, the Matron may reduce the number of tests. Should the characters complete several tasks, the Matron may dispense with the test altogether or offer a reward for their participation.

Earth Elemental

Magic Might: 20 (Terram)

Season: Spring

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -4, Str +4, Sta +6, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: +2

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing; Ways of the Woods; Temporary Might; Poor Memory, Short Attention Span, Simple Minded.

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power (Crush), Greater Power (Red Touch), Improved Stamina; Improved Characteristics x3, Improved Attack, Improved Damage x3, Improved Soak, Large, Minor Virtue (Great Stamina), Minor Virtue (Tough)

Personality Traits: Hill +3*

Combat:

*Bludgeon**: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +13

*Bludgeon when Berserk**: Init +3, Attack +13, Defense +5, Damage +13

*Includes Ways of the Woods

Soak: +11 (+13 when Berserk)

Wound Penalties: -1 & 1 Might point (1-7), -3 & 3 Might points (8-14), -5 & 5 Might points (15-21), Incapacitated & 5 Might points (22-28), Dead & all Might points (29+)

Abilities: Athletics 2 (pursuit), Awareness 2 (keeping watch), Brawl 3 (bludgeon), Penetration 3 (Red Touch Power), Stealth 3 (keeping still)

Powers:

Crush, 0 points, Init -2, Terram

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

The elemental clubs at an opponent with its heavy limbs, requiring a normal melee attack. If the elemental is at least equal in Size to its opponent, a successful Crush attack can pin him to the ground, and the elemental adds its +4 to its Grapple Strength to prevent its victim escaping (ArM5, page 174). If the elemental successfully grapples, then any equipment carried by its victim is damaged; fragile items are destroyed, robust items are broken (and are destroyed if affected again by this power), and metal items are damaged (and are broken if affected again by this power).

Re(Pe)Te 30 (base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 affect stone, +1 requisite, +1 constant effect): Greater Power (30 levels, -3 Might cost, +1 Init)

The Red Touch, 1 point, Init +5, Terram:

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

The touch of the elemental can rust metal; if it is struck in combat by a metal object, or successfully strikes a being with metal armor, it can convert that metal into a thoroughly rusted object that crumbles to dust.

PeTe 10 (base 3, +1 Touch, +2 affect metal): Greater Power (10 levels, -1 Might cost, +7 Init)

Vis: none

Note: This elemental was created from a small hill.

meet the Truffle Matron, she tells them that the Wild Boar of the Woods is dead. A powerful creature has killed him, and the creature is hunting the inhabitants of the first level of the regio. The truffles are guarding the entrance to the second level of the regio. The Matron requests the characters' assistance in defeating the creature. If the characters are successful, the Truffle Matron requests that they find a suitable replacement for the Wild Boar of the Woods.

Request of a Daughter

During one of their visits, the characters are approached by a daughter. The daughter barter for the characters' assistance in a territorial dispute. She may ask the characters to encourage the mundane community to harvest the truffles of her competitor or harvest the truffles themselves. If the characters assist in this, she may later return to the characters and ask that they kill the competing daughter and her entourage. If the characters assist one side over another and are discovered, they may be blackmailed by one of the other daughters. If they kill any of the competing truffles, the survivors report their acts to the Truffle Matron.

Should the Matron learn of the characters' actions, they must explain themselves. The Truffle Matron is likely to forgive the characters, if no citizens were killed, but she does have a price. She requests that they complete a task for her, without the normal remuneration. If the characters have killed any citizens, the Truffle Matron demands reparations. She requires a payment of vis in double the amount harvested by the characters and demands that one of the characters spend one season in service for each citizen killed.

Should the characters pass the Truffle Matron's tests a second time and complete her tasks, she may propose a deal for them. In exchange for protecting one of her magical forests, she offers a yearly stipend of vis. During their yearly visits to collect the vis, the Matron offers the characters additional tasks. The amount of vis should be equivalent to a typical vis source in the saga.

The Matron's Tasks

The "Requests of the Truffle Matron" insert describes several possible requests that the Matron could make of the characters. The storyguide may parcel out the requests such that the characters have additional reasons to return to the regio. If the characters are successful in completing the tasks, the Matron may make additional requests of them. She may ask

the characters to set up a laboratory in a truffle woods in the mundane world. She knows that locations with magical activities can expand their auras and become more powerful over time. Her conception of time is vastly different from the characters' and she has no idea how long the process might take. If the characters are freshly out of Gauntlet or looking to found their own covenant, the Truffle Matron may offer them a perfect location and their first vis source in exchange for growing the aura and protecting a truffle forest.

Successor for the Wild Boar

On one of their trips to the truffle regio, the characters enter the first level to find the Wild Boar of the Woods missing and the normally bucolic woods is in disarray. When they

The Wolf's Court

Deep in the forest, a forgotten spirit grants revenge to those who have been failed by mundane instruments of justice. Transforming her petitioners into wolves, she sends them back against those who have wronged them.

This location is written as being placed in the eastern reaches of the Provençal Tribunal, but can be sited in any part of Mythic Europe that was once part of the Roman Empire with virtually no changes needed. It requires minor adjustment to the background material to change the setting to any other location within Mythic Europe, but no substantial changes to the setting itself are needed.

Myths, Legends, History, and Rumors

The Wolf's Court is truly ancient, predating the advent of mankind in the region. The She-Wolf exists as pure revenge, a universal form that is independent of human existence. However, injustice and retribution are ultimately human institutions, and the She-Wolf gains fulfillment of her need to punish wrongdoers through the agency of mankind.

COURT OR COURTS?

It is quite possible that there is more than one Wolf's Court. The She-Wolf is an Aspect of a Daimon (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 102); this Daimon resides in the Magic Realm and

embodies the philosophical concept of revenge. Daimons can create multiple Aspects, which are the part of the spirit that interacts with the mundane world; each is capable of independent action. The spirit's need to dispense vengeance might cause it to create several Wolf's Courts throughout Mythic Europe.

A Spirit of Vengeance

The She-Wolf is an ancient spirit from the Magic Realm who embodies retribution. She has never sought out the attentions of humans, but they find her nevertheless, and she has been worshiped as a goddess, albeit a minor one. She finds her petitioners useful tools for furthering revenge but has no actual need for them: vengeance is a universal concept, and exists whether or not humans ask for it. She has gone by a number of names individual to those cultures that have adopted her, but it is under the name of Luperca that she achieved the most with her human tools.

The Mystery of the Lupercalia

The cult of Luperca is native to Rome, but not to the Roman people. Before Rome was built, another city called Pallantium was on the same site. This city was founded by Evander, the son of the god Mercury and the Cumaean Sybil Carmentis. He had come here from Greece, and he brought with him the Greek pantheon, the rule of law, the alphabet, secrets of architecture and magic, and the cult of the wolf. Evander had been initiated into the wolf-cult on Mount Lykaion in Arcadia

(see Locations for the Wolf's Court, nearby), and he founded a secret society devoted to wolves and based around the *lykaia* rite which turned men into wolves. After Rome's birth, the survival of the wolf-cult was assured by the perpetuation of the legend that its eponymous founder Romulus was suckled by a she-wolf along with his brother Remus. Romulus and Remus later argued over the precise site of their new city, and Romulus slew his twin in revenge for the insult he offered. This fratricide may have been to appease Luperca, or it may have instead sparked her interest in the wolf-cult; either way the cult found a niche within Roman society.

The rites of the cult were managed by a college of priests called the *luperci*, or the brothers of the wolf. Originally the *luperci* were drawn from the equestrian class — Marcus Antonius was a former chief priest of the *luperci* — but by the fifth century the cult was entirely plebeian. Each year the cult staged the two-day festival of Lupercalia, commencing on the Ides of February, to honor the she-wolf who had nursed the sacred twins. The *luperci* would run naked through Rome, whipping those they came across with wolf-skin thongs; people would deliberately get in their way to assure luck or pregnancy. The festival was eventually abolished in the fifth century by Pope Gelasius I, but this only removed the public face of the cult. Unknown to all but its innermost initiates, the cult of the wolf was more than just a fertility cult. Through their interaction with Luperca, the cult guarded the Roman people against evil spirits attracted to envy, spite, and injustice. The cult taught that if an evil-doer escapes justice, the community in which he dwells is ritually polluted by his crime and the failure of the people to purge

What You've Heard

Rumors indicated in this section are true unless indicated otherwise, or unless the storyguide wishes to incorporate them into the story. All rolls are made using the Area Lore: Narbonnais Ability.

WHAT IS KNOWN BY ALL

- There has always been a problem with wolves in the Auvergne, and particularly in the County of Gévaudan.
- The woods are very thick, and it is easy to get lost. The locals avoid the denser parts altogether; of those who have entered, not all have returned. No nobleman hunts the woods.
- Wolves with short tails are werewolves. (False)

WIDELY KNOWN

- Wolves normally prefer livestock to humans, but Gévaudannais wolves seem remarkably bold, and have entered villages and even houses to kill people.
- Some of the men and women killed by wolves were involved in disputes with their neighbors.
- There is a witch who lives deep in the

mountains who can cast a spell that marks someone out for wolf attacks. (False)

- A local family trains wolves to hunt their neighbors. This family can speak the language of the wolves, a gift from their Satanic master. (False)

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

- The wolves in the forest have man's ability to reason. (mostly False)
- If a man fails to get justice from human authorities such as his manor court or the curial court, he can appeal to the Wolf's Court. A man approaching the Wolf's Court needs a stout heart and a clear head; their justice is swift and brutal, but may fall on the petitioner's head if his crimes are greater than those for which he requests judgment.

LOST SECRETS

- There was once a temple nearby devoted to a spirit of vengeance.
- A secret cult exists nearby that captures and executes those who escape justice; this cult serves the Wolf's Court.

it. This moral pollution results in infertility and ill luck. The *luperci* purified a community by adopting the form of a wolf and taking bloody vengeance on evil-doers. This lifted the curse of barrenness, and empowered the *luperci* to grant fertility to the community during the Lupercalia.

The Interpretatio Romana

As the boundaries of Rome's territories expanded across Mythic Europe, the conquerors encountered native cultures and religions. As part of the process of bringing all tributary people under the yoke of Rome, the gods worshiped by them were subjected to the *interpretatio romana*, or 'Roman interpretation'. The priests of the Roman state examined the attributes of each barbarian deity, determined which Roman god or goddess they matched

most closely, and co-opted the native name and rites into their own cultus as a means of controlling the natives.

When Roman pioneers came into the Auvergne in southern France, they discovered a shrine deep within the woods dedicated to a wolf goddess. The *interpretatio romana* identified the local deity with Luperca, mostly because they were both depicted as a she-wolf. The irony was that this native 'Luperca' was approached principally to gain vengeance upon the invading Romans, and she was adopted as the patron of the guerrilla fighters who opposed the invaders. Rome prevailed, and the shrine was abandoned and forgotten by most.

Luperca was not wholly abandoned, however. Those in whom vengeance burned like an ember would hear stories that the wolves could provide the satisfaction of raw, savage retribution. A few would be guided deep into the forest, hounded by wolves toward the ancient temple. There they would meet Lu-

perca, and strike a deal with her. Vengeance would be satisfied.

Variants: The She-Wolf in Other Cultures

Most of Mythic Europe was occupied or influenced by the Roman Empire, but the storyguide may wish to go outside Roman mythology to flesh out the origins of the Wolf's Court. This section gives a few alternate options. Note that these may not be true variants; the She-Wolf is merely an Aspect of the Daimon of Vengeance, and she may have a manifestation several different regions simultaneously.

- The myths of a she-wolf who turns men into wolves is as old as civilization itself. The goddess Ishtar worshiped in ancient Babylon was the patron of both love and war, and she was known to punish unfaithful lovers and straying husbands by transforming either the petitioner or the perpetrator into wolves.
- In Thrace, Artemis Lykeie ("Wolfish Artemis") prowled the wilderness, and was known for tearing the sacrilegious limb from limb. Although Artemis is a faerie, the spirit may have been worshiped under her name. Elsewhere in Greece, the fearful Erinyes or Furies were three sisters born of the primal powers that created the universe, and were the instruments of retribution for the most heinous of crimes such as violence done to family members, oath-breaking, and treachery. Even the gods had to bow to their authority. The Furies were wolf-headed women with snakes for hair, coal-black bodies and bats' wings.
- The Irish annals speak of the three unnamed wolf-daughters of Airitech, who dwelt in the Cave of Cruachan on the northern side of Bricriu's Glen. They emerged from the cave once a year to slate their hunger on sheep, but they were equally partial to the flesh of criminals and traitors. The faerie hero Cas Corach was said to have killed the daughters of

Airitech, but it is possible that they were merely transformed instruments of vengeance, and that Airitech herself is the spirit of retribution who still waits in the Cave of Cruachan.

- In the frozen lands of the North it is said that a frightful giantess lives in the mythical Ironwood to the east; there she is breeding an army of wolves and witches. This nourisher of wolves has many names, but her most famous is Gullveig, the Jotun of Witchcraft and patron of the Muspelli (see *Rival Magic*, Chapter Four).

The Fane of Vengeance

The Wolf's Court is located deep in the Majarida Mountains in south-central France. The name is Occitan, like the people who live here (in French these are the Monts de la Margeride), although they are under the nominal suzerainty of the French crown through the Bishop of Mende, who is also Count of Gévaudan (or Gavaudan in Occitan). The Majaridas, covered in dense woodland and deep valleys, are rich hunting grounds for wolves. The mountains themselves are virtually uninhabited; just a few trappers and poachers have (mostly temporary) residence here. The surrounding hills are sparsely populated since the soil makes for poor agricultural land.

The Forest

The forest in which the Wolf's Court lies is most likely a broad leaf forest with a dense understorey. There may be paths that connect the hamlets to one another, but these are infrequently traversed, and usually by travelers in groups for protection. Game trails lead deeper into the forest, but these soon peter out.

The Wolf's Court itself is situated in the most inaccessible part of the Majarida Mountains. To reach it, one must traverse untamed wilderness, cross treacherous rivers in deep deep gullies, and climb steep hills. It is not the

sort of place that one can easily come across by accident, even for magi who sometimes search the strangest places for vis.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE FOREST

Getting to the Wolf's Court is difficult for characters, and the storyguide can play this up as much as she desires. If they are intended to visit this place more than once, then it is perhaps best to save some encounters for future visits.

Forest inhabitants: Very few people would choose to live away from the safety of a

hamlet, but there are three groups of outcasts that one might expect to meet in this forest. The first are charcoal burners: a strange, clannish profession whose members almost seem a race apart. Charcoal burners are at the very bottom rung of society's ladder; they often speak a rough dialect of the local language, and are the subject of many strange tales. The second group of inhabitants are outlaws, unable to claim protection from a community thanks to a crime in their past, or current criminal behavior. The forest might also be home to a witch or hedge wizard; it is up to the storyguide as to whether she is a simple herbalist, a folk witch, or

Variants: Other Locations for the Wolf's Court

The Wolf's Court can be placed in any heavily wooded area, preferably around mountains. The population density should be quite low: scattered hamlets occupying cleared areas within the greater forest is ideal. The region should be known for wolves, which in Mythic Europe could be just about everywhere. Despite the legend that King Edgar rid England of wolves in the 950s, he must have missed a few, for wolves are still very much a problem throughout Britain and Ireland in the thirteenth century. Only the lands immediately bordering the Mediterranean Sea are either devoid of wolves or have them in low numbers. In Iberia, the central plains of Leon, Castille, and Grenada are free from wolves, as is the southern portion of Italy. There are very few wolves on the islands of the Aegean sea, but mainland Greece has them aplenty.

There are a number of places in Mythic Europe that are specifically associated with wolves, which might make good sites for locating the Wolf's Court. The storyguide could easily draw inspiration from these places if none of them lie near the characters' covenant.

The region around Ansbach in the Holy Roman Empire (Rhine Tribunal) is another site strongly associated with wolves and wolf attacks. In the past, unpopular mayors of the city have been parodied by dressing up the corpse of a wolf in a wig and gown, this serves as an indicator that they have lost the support of the town, and they should leave before violence is done to them. This might be a

hold-over of a previous rite or event that has been lost to time.

The city of Gubbio in Umbria (Roman Tribunal) has been terrorized by a man-eating wolf, even holding the city under siege by waiting at its gates. However, Saint Francis of Assisi has recently tamed the wolf, making it promise not to attack humans or animals again. That is not to say that the Wolf of Gubbio does not have family still within the Umbrian mountains.

A secret rite called the *lykaia* used to take place in ancient times upon Mount Lykaion in Arcadia (Theban Tribunal). Plato records that the youths of a certain clan would gather on the mountain slopes every nine years, and partake of a ritual meal sacred to Pan Lykaios; one portion of which would include human flesh. The individual who ate it would transform into a wolf, and could only become human again if he avoided tasting human flesh again until nine years had passed.

In Bulgaria (Transylvanian Tribunal), the *vultchi praznitsi* (Wolves' Holiday) are seven days in November (from the 14th to the 21st) where sinners are frightened to leave their houses lest the wolves catch up with them and make them pay for their crimes. The worst day of all is the last, called *Koutzoulan*, which commemorates the day that a lame wolf first tasted human flesh. On this day, no work involving sharp or pointed implements should be done, for the wolf spirit can take control of them and exact its revenge. The Wolf's Court might have to be approached during the *vultchi praznitsi*.

something far more sinister. Note that it is widely known (see Insert: What You've Heard) that a witch lives in the forest; she may or may not have the abilities that rumor claims she has, and she may or may not know about the Wolf's Court. Despite living off the forest, all three of these groups stick to the fringes of the true wilderness.

Difficult terrain: Most of the forest is virgin woodland, never or barely visited by humans. It is exceptionally easy to get lost, since external references for navigation such as landscape features are hidden by the trees and terrain. The mountainous countryside is rife with narrow gorges, ravines, and sinkholes that could trap the unwary; escaping from such pitfalls is doubly dangerous in the rain. The mountains are the source of many small springs and streams that feed larger lowland rivers; these wear caverns into the rock. While these could provide protection from inclement weather, they are not safe, but prone to sudden collapse. Hostile at any time of year, in winter the danger is multiplied, with thick snow making accidents more likely, combined with the risk of exposure.

Wild animals: The most obvious danger to characters spending any time in the forest are the wolves. At least one pack (and maybe several) live here, and they have little fear of humans. See later for details of wolves and their hunting strategies. Wild boar are nearly as dangerous, particularly if they are startled or with youngsters. Adult red deer, the principle prey of the wolves, can also be dangerous at certain times of the year. During the rut in the fall a group of characters could find itself caught between competing stags. Wolves do not usually tolerate bears within their territory, but outside of Britain and Ireland (where bears are extinct), one might stray into the region in search of food or a cave in which to hibernate.

Supernatural creatures: The Wolf's Court may not be the only supernatural location in the forest, although it might be best if it is the first that the characters encounter.

Depending upon its size, the forest could be home to any number of faeries, magical denizens, or demons. Both faeries and demons tend to stick close to humanity's side, feeding off the vitality or sin that they produce. Magical creatures are less constrained, and they probably utilize scattered pockets of Magic auras or caches of vis to avoid Acclimation.

The Court

The Wolf's Court itself is situated in a Magic aura of 5. This is concentrated around the ruins of a shrine, which are mostly buried beneath centuries of moss and ivy. The shrine was originally built in a clearing, but the trees have since encroached on the sacred space, and their stately columnar trunks add an air of majesty to the location. The light filtering into the glade is dappled by the overhead canopy.

Within minutes of entering the Wolf's Court, the characters get the impression that they are not alone. The She-Wolf that dwells here prefers to form a corporeal body out of sight of mortal eyes, allowing people to mistake her for a magical creature rather than a spirit entity. She then strolls into the clearing and jumps up onto one of the ruined walls, forcing the characters to look up at her. A meeting with the She-Wolf often does not involve words: she gauges the worth of her petitioner with her powers, and takes action without discussion or negotiation. However, she can speak using her *Voice of the Wolf* power whether in material or immaterial form.

Inhabitants

The She-Wolf is the only permanent inhabitant of the Wolf's Court. She is an Aspect of the tutelary spirit of retribution and vengeance, and as such she is utterly opposed to injustice. She places little emphasis on the magnitude of the crime committed: to her, there is little difference between a thief who absconds with a loaf of bread and a man who has murdered his own children. If either goes unpunished, then the cosmic scales of justice are out of kilter, and she uses mortals — often

those wronged — to redress the balance.

The She-Wolf only occasionally has visitors seeking vengeance. At other times she runs with the wolves of the forest and trains them to serve her. The strongest male from the largest pack is her devoted companion, and usually dens with her at the Wolf's Court, with the rest of their pack nearby. Her Master of Animal Creatures Virtue (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 46) allows her to train unintelligent creatures whose Might is aligned to the Animal Form, and she uses this to exert control over the magical wolves in her forest.

Note that because the She-Wolf is a spirit who creates a material body with a power, if she is close to death she can dismiss the body and use the power again in the following round to create a fresh uninjured body should she so desire. Additionally, the She-Wolf is an Aspect of a Daimon (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 102) that resides fully within the Magic Realm. If the Aspect is destroyed, the spirit can send another to the Wolf's Court after a day has passed. The Aspect of the She-Wolf is vulnerable to Acclimation (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 52), but all effects vanish if the Daimon forms a new Aspect for any reason. By using her powers on mortals in pursuit of retribution, the Aspect avoids Acclimation most years, but granting Virtues or Flaws to mortals erodes her Might score in any case.

When planning encounters with the She-Wolf, remember that she provides the tools for vengeance, but is not a direct antagonist of the player characters. If they are the target of her powers it is because she has been asked to provide justice not obtainable otherwise. She levels the playing field, allowing peasants to get revenge against knights, bishops, or even magi. Characters who try to destroy her may well succeed, and if she is justly slain, the Daimon holds no resentment against the characters and its next Aspect does not wish them harm. Anyone giving the Daimon itself cause for vengeance (such as repeatedly slaying the Aspect as a source of vis) should be warned of the foolishness inherent in antagonizing the Universal Form of Retribution. The She-Wolf is just one incarnation of an even more powerful being, and its other Aspects are unlikely to be so passive.

The She-Wolf

Magic Might: 40 (Animal)

Season: Autumn

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

Size: +1

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit; Daimon, Magical Champion; Animal Ken, Inoffensive to Animals, Master of Animal Creatures, Piercing Gaze; Hatred (unpunished villains); Animal Companion, Obsessed (vengeance)

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Powers, Ritual Powers x8; Improved Abilities x3, Improved Attack (trip), Improved Characteristics x2, Improved Powers x2, Lesser Powers x3, Minor Virtue (Puissant Hunt), Personal Powers

Personality Traits: Vengeful +6*, Wolf +4*, Scrupulously Fair +3, Greedy +1

* this is an Essential Trait, and cannot be altered with magic (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 54)

Reputations: Goddess of Retribution 1 (Local)

Combat:

Teeth: Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +7, Damage +4

Trip: Init +2, Attack +12, Defense +7, Damage n/a*

* see Hunted by Wolves

Soak: +3 (thick fur)

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 4 (wolves), Animal Ken 4 (wolves), Awareness 6 (within regio), Bargain 3 (petitioners), Brawl 4 (trip), Civil & Canon Law 4 (ancient laws), Dead Language* 4 (local dialect), Hunt 6+2 (oath breakers), Intrigue 6 (vendettas), Leadership 4 (wolves), Living Language* 4 (local dialect), Magic Lore 4 (magical animals), Penetration 5 (*Scales of the Heart* power), Philosophiae 4 (moral philosophy)

* vary by region; the Dead Language could be Latin or an extinct tongue spoken by former inhabitants.

Powers:

Confession of the Penitent, 3 point, Init Qik -6, Mentem: Imbues the target with the desire to confess. This power may cause someone to admit to a crime different to the one requiring vengeance; it is usually the most burning crime that is blurted out. If the target is not given the opportunity to confess immediately after this power is used, the desire passes. ReMe 20 (Base 10, +2 Voice) Lesser Power (20 levels, -1 Might cost)

Donning the Corporeal Veil, 0 points, Qik -1, Animal: Produces and animates a physical body in the shape of a she-wolf for

the spirit. This body may be maintained indefinitely, but is subject to aging, fatigue, deprivation, and damage. The spirit can recreate the body anew at any time. Cr(Re)An 25 (Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 requisite): Greater Power (25 levels, -3 Might cost, +2 Init)

Endow the Servant of Retribution, 10 points, Init Qik -20, Vim: Imposes the Spiritual Pact Major Virtue (*Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 88-89) upon a target. The effects of this Virtue are reprinted in a nearby insert. No Hermetic equivalent: Ritual Power x 2 (50 levels)

Gift of Silver Fur and Red Teeth, 5 points, Init Qik -10, Vim: Imposes the Skinchanger Minor Virtue (ArM5, page 48) upon a target. The character must discard his clothing and turn his skin inside out to effect the change, since the wolf fur grows inwards rather than outwards. To revert to human form he must take possession of his human clothing once again; if it has been hidden or destroyed he is trapped in wolf form until he can retrieve them, or until he has spent nine years in wolf form, whichever comes first. No Hermetic equivalent. Ritual Power (25 levels)

Inescapable Sense of the Quarry, 0 points, Init Qik -8 Corpus or Animal: The She-Wolf can sense an individual person or animal to which she has an Arcane Connection. Each use of this power gives her a feeling of the direction and approximate distance to her target. InCo(An) 20 (Base 3, +4 Arc, +1 requisite) Lesser Power (20 levels, -4 Might cost, including three points from Improved Powers)

Scales of the Heart, 1 point, Init Qik -6, Mentem: The She-Wolf can determine whether a petitioner believes he has a just or unjust desire for vengeance. An unjust desire for revenge might include someone who has received justice in a mundane court, but still wants revenge on his victim. InMe 15 (Base 10, +1 Eye) Lesser Power (15 levels, -2 Might cost)

The False Gift of Revenge, 5 points, Init Qik -10, Vim: Imposes the Delusion Minor Flaw (ArM5, page 53) upon a target. The target believes wholeheartedly that he can transform into a ravening wolf, and acts in a manner that fits his perceptions of how a wolf acts. He strips naked, crawls around on hands and feet, and attacks anyone in sight with his teeth and nails. No Hermetic equivalent: Ritual Power (25 levels)

The Shape of Vengeance, 6 points, Init Qik -20, Vim: Imposes the Lycanthropy Major Flaw (ArM5, page 55) upon a target. The character changes shape immediately, and remains that way until the sun sets, from then on the transformation

takes place as normal on the nights of the full moon. No Hermetic equivalent. Ritual Power x 2 (50 levels, -4 Might cost from Improved Powers)

Virus Lunae, 7 points, Init Qik -20, Vim: Imposes the Greater Malediction Major Flaw upon a target. The target can now temporarily transmit the effects of the Lycanthropy Flaw (ArM5, page 55) to anyone he causes even the slightest of scratches using his natural weapons (nails, claws, teeth, etc.). He need not be a lycanthrope himself. Against an opponent in partial or no armor, assume that a successful strike causes a scratch even if it does not cause a wound. Against an opponent in full armor, the target must inflict a wound to transmit the curse. The curse must Penetrate any Magic Resistance using the She-Wolf's Penetration Total for this power. If transmitted, the target undergoes a transformation at the next Full moon, as described under the Lycanthropy Flaw. If the curse is transmitted during the night of the full moon, then the target's transformation occurs immediately, and the werewolf probably attacks the character who gave him the curse. Once the full moon passes, the effects of the transmitted curse disappear, although the original target of this power still infects others until he loses the Greater Malediction Flaw. No Hermetic equivalent: Ritual Power x 2 (50 levels, -3 Might cost from Improved Powers)

Voice of the Wolf, 0 points, constant effect, Imaginem: The She-Wolf can produce an audible illusion of her voice at any point within 15 paces of her actual position. This permits her to speak to material beings in animal form or in her immaterial form. Crlm 15 (Base 1, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +1 intelligible speech, +1 constant effect) Personal Power (15 levels, -2 Might cost)

Vis: Eight pawns of Animal vis in the heart. If the She-Wolf is slain in any form, her remains only contain vis if the Daimon desires it (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 101).

Appearance: When physically manifest, an oversized wolf; about six feet long and standing four feet at the shoulders. She has a grizzled coat with dark markings around the eyes and light patches around her mouth and chest. She has remarkable, human-like blue eyes. In spiritual form she has a similar appearance, but is only perceptible to those with Second Sight.



HOW THE SHE-WOLF GRANTS REVENGE

Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Genesis 49:27

The She-Wolf is driven by her Essential Nature to secure revenge for those who ask it of her. Those who come to the Wolf's Court are confronted by the She-Wolf, and she uses her *Scales of the Heart* power to determine whether their desire for vengeance is justified. She needs eye contact to use this power, so she must confront them in physical form to do this. Note that this power does not determine guilt or innocence, only whether the character approaching the court genuinely believes he has a right to vengeance. For the powers that grant Virtues and Flaws, the She-Wolf can decide whether to bestow the effects permanently or temporarily. If permanent, the power is a ritual-like power and costs points from the creature's Might score

as well as Might pool. If temporary, the power lasts until the She-Wolf dismisses it, but the Might points spent on this power are not recovered while it is ongoing.

The She-Wolf has a number of ways in which she can provide a character with the means of his revenge. Most of these involve using her Ritual Powers to grant Virtues or Flaws to the character.

If she determines that a character has been wronged by another, her normal method is to use *The Shape of Vengeance* to turn the petitioner into a ferocious wolf. As mentioned in the Flaw description, lycanthropes still recognize enemies, and unfettered by morals tend to hunt down and attempt to kill those who have wronged them. In the first instance she uses this as a temporary effect. She watches her agent in spiritual form, and if justice is done she withdraws the effect. If the petitioner misuses the power, she uses the power again to inflict it permanently. Those who seek a higher justice rather than revenge for a personal slight are granted *The Gift of Silver Fur and Red Teeth*. For those whose vengeance

requires a greater investment from the petitioner — someone wronged by many others — the She-Wolf might use *Endow the Servant of Retribution* to allow the individual to recruit others to achieve her aims.

For petitioners who attempt to mislead her, she uses her *The False Gift of Revenge* and *Virus Lunae* powers. The character believes he becomes a terrifying wolf, and attacks the object of their hatred at the full moon. The true curse of lycanthropy is then passed to the character's victim, who then transforms into a real werewolf and likely kills the false petitioner. If the petitioner manages to escape, he will continue to transmit the curse to others until he is killed by a vengeful community. The She-Wolf might use *Confession of the Penitent* to cause him to admit his crime to those he has wronged. The She-Wolf never grants the *Virus Lunae* as a permanent Flaw, for fear of it running rampant. She normally dismisses the power after the full moon.

THE RITUAL OF PASSING ON THE POWER

When the She-Wolf accepts a petitioner and decides to grant him or her one of her powers, she enacts a ritual to solemnize the endowment, preferably just before the full moon. Under her instruction he must gather certain herbs and grind them to a paste with his own blood. This must be smeared over his naked body. She then takes his name from him, insisting on a birth name rather than a baptismal name since this has nothing to do with Christianity. She licks him clean of the ointment while he suckles milk from her teat, like the depictions of Romulus and Remus on the stones about her. Finally, she gives him a new name, a name of vengeance. He is told that this name must be kept secret; it is the source of his new power. The names she grants relate to the savage nature of wolves: Bloody Tooth; Killer-by-Moonlight; Throat-Tearer.

This ritual is not strictly necessary, but it provides an appropriate amount of mystery and formality to the seeking of vengeance. It is also a useful way for the She-Wolf to gain both an Arcane Connection (his blood, which she regurgitates later) and sympathetic connec-

tions (both his birth name and a new name) to her supplicant.

Variants: The She-Wolf

The nature of the She-Wolf could vary if this location is put into a different Tribunal, as discussed earlier. However, another variant would be to change the She-Wolf from an Aspect of a spirit of retribution into a creature belonging to a different supernatural realm.

VARIANT: THE SHE-WOLF AS A FAERIE

Possibly the easiest variant is for the She-Wolf to be a faerie. As written, the She-Wolf has already been worshiped as a goddess, for her to be a faerie requires her to desire that worship and take steps to actively encourage it. A faerie She-Wolf gains vitality from both worship and acts of revenge. Because a faerie is intimately connected to the emotions of humanity, a Faerie She-Wolf would probably actively recruit new worshipers; the region close to the Wolf's Court might be home to a secret pagan cult that worships the She-

Wolf. This cult is directly involved in the maintenance of social order, and believe it is their right to correct travesties of justice. Wrongdoers who escape justice may be subjected to the vigilante actions of the worshipers of the She-Wolf. The Holy Vehm (*Guardians of the Forests*, page 76) is an example of this type of society, known for kidnapping its victims, holding midnight trials, and executing summary justice.

VARIANT: THE SHE-WOLF AS A DEMON

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matthew 7.15

Vengeance is a dark emotion, and the She-Wolf could easily be a demonic force seeking to corrupt mankind through the sins of envy and wrath. Most men denied justice seethe with anger but do not act on their evil thoughts; at worst a venial sin. By offering the tools to obtain much needed revenge — and the ability to get away scot free, the demonic She-Wolf tempts men to act on their murder-

ous thoughts, and damn their soul with mortal sin. Of course, the hue-and-cry arising from a man-eating wolf in the region ensures that the werewolf is dispatched before he can obtain absolution for his spiritual crime.

VARIANT: THE SHE-WOLF AS A DIVINE INSTRUMENT

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord
Romans 12:19

As a Divine servant, the she-wolf becomes a tool of justice rather than revenge. She may be the form taken by an angel, or else a Divine creature. A Divine variant of the She-Wolf would not grant a human the power to commit a sin, as the quote from Paul's Letter to the Romans states, God reserves the right to enact retribution on behalf of Christians. In this variant, human petitioners would approach the Wolf's Court and present their case. Once the Divine She-Wolf was satisfied that an injustice had been committed, she would then take vengeance either person-

New Virtue: Spiritual Pact

Major, Supernatural

The character has made a pact or agreement with a powerful Magical spirit, and in return for loyal service is granted access to that spirit's power. The pact serves as an Arcane Connection to the character of indefinite duration, which the spirit can use to make itself aware of the current location and state of health of its servant.

The character can channel the power of the spirit by spending a Confidence Point. Make a Presence + Magic Lore + stress die roll: this is the amount of Magic Might Pool that the character acquires from his spiritual master. The Might points acquired are always less than the current Might points of the spirit, regardless of the roll's result. On a botch, the character loses all current Confidence points. This action is equivalent to spellcasting in with regards to the concentration it requires. The character can spend these Might points on any of the spirit's powers. Penetration is calculated in the usual way for magical creatures using the

initial Might Pool in place of Magic Might, and including the character's Penetration Ability, if any.

The character using this power does not have a Might score, just a Might pool. She does not gain Magic Resistance from the use of this power, nor does she leave behind vis if she is slain. She cannot be affected by Vim spells (or similar magics) that target the Might score of supernatural creatures. Without a Might score, the pool does not replenish, once the character has spent all of his Might points this power ends. All powers used have their duration lapse when the character uses her last point of Might Pool. If this power is evoked again whilst the character still possesses Might Pool, then the new points gained replace the points left over, the two pools do not add. The points acquired by the character are lost from the spirit's Might pool and cannot be returned by the character, but the spirit regenerates the spent points as normal.

While the connection to the spirit is

active, there is some visual manifestation of this, which makes it clear that some supernatural effect is taking place. For example, if contacting a fertility spirit, fruits and grains might spring from around the character's footsteps. In contact with a war-spirit, a character might appear to be clothed in ghostly armor. When the character is actively channeling the spirit, he acts as an Arcane Connection to the spirit of indefinite duration, although this connection lapses when the Might Pool is exhausted.

The storyguide should decide upon the powers of the spirit. With the agreement of the troupe, this Virtue could be used to channel the power from a spirit of a different Supernatural Realm, or from a group of closely related spirits, such as a small pantheon of pagan 'gods', but care should be taken not to grant the character too much flexibility with this single Virtue. A character can only have a single pact.

(first appeared in *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 88 – 89)

Werewolves in Mythic Europe

Modern werewolf lore describes afflicted humans transforming into hideous creatures that are half-wolf, half-man on nights of the full moon. Such creatures are not part of the werewolf legend in most of Mythic Europe; rather they stem from a variety of vampire called the *vukodlac* (see *Against the Dark: The Transylvanian Tribunal*, page 118), and stories of them do not permeate into the rest of Europe until the eighteenth century.

Werewolf legends abound throughout Mythic Europe, but they feature men and women who can transform into wolves — albeit often exceptionally large and vicious ones. In English, such a man is called a werewolf or werwolf, possibly from *wer* meaning man, literally “man-wolf.” This becomes *Währwolf* in High German, *wera-wolf* or *ghierwolf* in Low German, and *garwulf*

or *garulf* in Norman. The French *loup-garou* derives from *garulf*, with a redundant prefix *loup* meaning “wolf” — a *loup-garou* is a “wolf man-wolf.” Other Romance languages have variants on the same: *loubérou* in Occitan, *lobombre* in Castilian, *lupo mannaro* in Italian. In Brittany, a werewolf is called a *bisclavret*. In Basque they are called *brouch*, and in Ireland *fáelad*. In the Transylvanian Tribunal, a man who can become a wolf is called a *varcolac*; when he dies he will become one of the horrific bestial vampires mentioned above. There is no Latin cognate of “werewolf.” The most common term used is *versipellis*, meaning “a turning of the skin”; based on the concept that a werewolf has fur on the inside of his skin, and turns it around to change form. The Greek term *lukanthropos* is also Latinized to *lycanthropus*.

ally, or through her pack. The perpetrator of the crime is torn apart by wolves, and at the same time his crimes are laid bare to the community so that they know why God’s justice had paid a visit. The She-Wolf would need to be careful to limit her activities; it does not usually serve God’s plan to scare humans into avoiding sin for fear of worldly punishment. To save one’s soul, a person must choose to be good without coercion.

The Wolf Brothers

As described earlier, the *luperci* were a secret college of Roman priests of Luperca who guarded their communities against ill fortune and barrenness by extirpating unpunished sin. This priesthood still exists as a Mystery Cult, and its members make occasional visits to the Wolf’s Court. The court is a sacred place to them, a site where they can perform their Initiations, and the She-Wolf is magical patron for the cult as a whole. The location becomes a literal court on these visits, since the *luperci* bring individuals here to face the justice of the She-Wolf.

The extent of the Wolf Brothers is up to the storyguide. They may be a continuous tradition reaching back to the days of Pope Gelasius, or instead a modern recreation of an ancient tradition. The storyguide should de-

termine whether they are a purely local tradition, or whether the cult has a presence on a national or even Europe-wide scale.

THE LUPERCI

The Wolf Brothers have a simple mandate: to punish the guilty when the usual methods of justice fail. It is incumbent on the *luperci* to uncover proof of wrongdoing before they exact the wolf’s judgment. The traditional means of dispatch is for the guilty party to be killed by a wolf, either a natural animal or one of the brotherhood in wolf form. It is sometimes necessary to restrain the guilty individual first. For more information about Mystery Cults and Initiation, see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, Chapter Two.

The Mystery society is divided into three grades. The most junior grade is called the *lupellis*, which requires an Organization Lore: Luperici of at least 1. At this grade, the postulant joins the cult through a rite invoking Luperca: he gains the Skinchanger Virtue while acquiring the Dark Secret Flaw. (Initiation Script +9 for the Major Flaw; Ease Factor 15). He is now a member of a secret cult that murders those who escape justice, which is basically a death sentence should anyone discover it. The second grade is called the *lupercus*, and requires an Organization Lore: Luperici of 3 or

The Luperci as a Hermetic Mystery Cult

The Luperci could be replaced by a Hermetic Mystery cult. Nothing prohibits magi from joining a non-Hermetic cult, but they gain no special rank because of their Gift. As a Hermetic cult, however, only magi are eligible to join the Luperci. The crimes that they avenge are those committed by magi who are subsequently found innocent by a Tribunal of a Hermetic crime through politics, subterfuge, or through a legal loophole. The Dark Secret Flaw gained during Initiation represents the fact that the character knowingly flouts the Hermetic Oath every time he participates in inflicting the wolf’s judgment. This punishment usually takes place in a cave that has been prepared with an *Aegis of the Hearth*, limiting the condemned magus’s ability to fight back. The power to dispel curses is usually weaker than Hermetic Perdo Vim magic, but can affect a Boundary without needing to cast a ritual spell.

Unlike unGifted characters, Gifted individuals do not have to take an Ordeal at every Initiation, and they can benefit from previous Ordeals (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 14). A Hermetic Mystery cult may have different Initiation scripts to those detailed here to account for these differences. The same is true for a non-Hermetic cult that recognizes Gifted characters as different from the unGifted, perhaps in having their own tradition of hedge wizards.

more. This grade can be Initiated just after the postulant has made a vengeance killing, and the blood is still wet on his face. The character can acquire either the *Scales of the Heart* or the *Confession of the Penitent* Power possessed by the She-Wolf as the Lesser Power Virtue (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 45). The power costs one Fatigue level to use, but requires no words or gestures. It has a Penetration Total of 0 + Penetration Bonus. Some spiritual stain lingers on the person from the murders he has committed, which manifests as the Judged Unfairly Flaw (Initiation Script +9 for the Minor Flaw, Quest, and special place/time; Ease Factor 15).

The *luperci* are divided into two colleges called the Fabiani and the Quinctiliani, after two genera (families) of ancient Rome, the Fabia and the Quinctilia, that ran the Luperci. Each college has its own *magister luperci*, which is the third and final grade of the cult. There are only ever two *magistri* at any time, and a character must have an Organization Lore: Luperci of 5 before being considered for this rank. A prospective *magister* undergoes the *lykaia* rite at the next Lupercalia: he consumes a meal tainted with human flesh, and must remain in wolf form for at least nine seasons (symbolic of the nine years in the original rite), dwelling with the She-Wolf's pack. If during this time he withholds from eating human flesh again, he can resume human form and become *magister*. The *magister* acquires the Spiritual Pact Virtue (see earlier), but uses his Organization Lore: Luperci Ability in place of Magic Lore when invoking the power. This Virtue can be used to invoke the She-Wolf, or other Aspects of the same Daimon of Revenge. This rite attract the attention of the Daimon, who sends a creature of judgment to watch over the new *magister's* actions and punish him when he acts inappropriately, amounting to the Plagued by Supernatural Entity Flaw (Initiation Script +18 for the Quest, sacrifice of time, Major Flaw, and special place/time; Ease Factor 21). The *magister* is the mystagogue for all Initiations within his college. If the cult is an extensive one, then all members in a given region are members of the same college.

THE LUPERCALIA

Each year all the *luperci* of a region participate in the festival of Lupercalia on the 13th–15th February. During this rite, they can attempt to dispel any curse laid on the community or its members. The power for this comes from the Daimon of Revenge behind the She-Wolf and the Luperci cult as a whole. To evoke this power requires a Communication + Organization Lore: Luperci + stress die against an Ease Factor equal to the level of the spell that generated the curse (or 5 x the Supernatural Ability used to lay it). This roll is made once per curse by the most senior



member of the cult present, and it receives a bonus of +3 for every individual who has been brought to justice in the last year.

Wolves of the Majarida Mountains

The mountains have one or more packs of wolves, depending on the amount of woodland available. Each pack requires anywhere from 25 to over 100 square miles depending on the richness of prey and the size of the pack. The nucleus of any pack of wolves is a breeding pair, and it may contain five to twenty other individuals. The biggest packs are found in northern regions where the main prey is moose; those that subsist on deer average around ten to twelve. Wolves do not tolerate other packs in their territory, but there is usually a zone of overlap between territories about half a mile wide which is

common ground for both packs; these often contain deer yards where prey congregate in winter.

The breeding pair are usually the leaders of the pack's two hierarchies, one for the males and one for the females. The leading male rules the pack, but is not entirely autocratic, much as a king listens to his council of advisers.

Amongst the Majarida packs are one or more Wolves of Virtue, animals aligned to the Magic Realm that express the essence of what it is to be a wolf. A Wolf of Virtue is often (but not always) the leader of its pack. These magical wolves have been trained by the She-Wolf (using her Master of Animal Creatures Virtue), placing her at the top of the hierarchy of all wolf packs in the region.

Hunted by Wolves

It is likely that characters investigating the Wolf's Court will at some point be hunted by a pack of wolves. Wolves are very adaptable predators, able to modify their hunting strategy to account for different varieties of

prey. Humans are not usual prey for wolves, but those of the Majorida are unusually bold, and may also be guided by the She-Wolf. A hunting pack normally consists of three to twelve individuals. A wolf hunt has five main phases: the stalk, the encounter, the rush, the chase, and the kill.

THE STALK

Unless a wolf pack has a chance encounter with a prey animal, all hunts begin with the stalk. The wolves generally walk in single file, with the lead animal tracking and the others confirming the lead's findings. They rely on direct scenting and tracking. A Perception + Awareness roll is needed to find tracks, and a Perception + Hunt roll is needed to follow them. The Ease Factor is usually 9, but this can be modified by factors making it easier (e.g. snow) or harder (e.g. dry conditions) to find and follow a trail. Groups are easier to follow (subtract 3 or more from the Ease Factor), but intelligent prey can deliberately obfuscate its trail if traveling alone (add its Stealth Ability to the Ease Factor).

As the pack closes the gap to their prey, the wolves become excited but are kept restrained by the pack leader. This restrained approach is important; the wolves need to get as close to the prey as possible. The distance at which the prey is first sensed directly is variable: in open grassland the prey can be sighted over 500 paces away; whereas in dense woodland the prey could be first heard or smelled as close as 15 paces. The wolf pack should make a Dexterity + Stealth roll, the Ease Factor is the Perception + Awareness roll of the prey. Pack animals that habitually stalk prey need to make just one roll for the whole pack; other creatures unused to pack hunting need to make individual rolls. Each success made by the pursuers allows them to creep (10+Qik) paces closer to their prey. A failure makes the prey alert, preventing the stalkers from approaching without being seen; two consecutive failures or three failures overall spook the prey, and the hunt

enters the encounter phase. Likewise if a pack of wolves gets within ten paces of the prey it stops stalking and moves directly to the encounter.

THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter is the point where the prey and predators confront each other. This is usually the time that the prey first senses the wolves. If the animal holds its ground, the wolves abandon all stealth and prepare for the kill (see later). The animal usually only holds its ground if the pack has managed to get within ten paces of it. If the animal flees — as it nearly always does — then the wolves initiate the rush (see later). During the encounter wolves attempt to break up groups of prey, preferably isolating one or two from the rest.

THE RUSH

The rush is the most critical part of the hunt. If the wolves fail to get close to their quarry during this stage, the prey runs off at its top speed, and the predators may never get close to it. A four-legged creature can run at $6 \times (10 + \text{Quickness} - \text{Encumbrance})$ paces per round; depending on the distance at which the encounter occurred and the speed of the prey, the wolf pack may be able to go straight for the kill. Humans have a disadvantage, in only being able to run at $4 \times (10 + \text{Quickness} - \text{Encumbrance})$ paces per round; see *Lords of Men*, page 120.

In the rush phase, each round lasts the usual six seconds. The starting distance between predator and prey is that determined by the success of the stalk. Each round, make a Quickness + Athletics – Encumbrance stress roll for each side. If the pursuer rolls higher, then the distance between predator and prey closes; decrease the distance between predator and prey by $(10 + \text{predator's Quickness} - \text{Encumbrance})$ paces. If the prey rolls higher then the distance opens; increase the distance between predator and prey by $(10 + \text{prey's Quickness} - \text{Encumbrance})$ paces. Once again, two-legged creatures are at a disadvantage; they can only modify the distance by $(6 + \text{Quickness} - \text{Encumbrance})$ paces. For every round of the rush, both pursuer and prey must make Stamina + Athletics – Encumbrance stress rolls against an Ease Factor of 9; failure indicates the loss of a Short Term Fatigue level. Note that wolves have the Long-Winded Virtue which helps on this roll.

RUSH TOTAL:

**Quickness + Athletics – Encumbrance
+ stress die**

CHANGE OF DISTANCE FOR WINNER

(FOUR LEGS):

(10 + Quickness – Encumbrance) paces

CHANGE OF DISTANCE FOR WINNER

(TWO LEGS):

(6 + Quickness – Encumbrance) paces

RUSH FATIGUE ROLL:

**Stamina + Athletics – Encumbrance
+ stress die against Ease Factor 9**

If the distance between pursuer and prey is reduced to zero paces, proceed to the kill (see later). Otherwise, the pursuer may end the rush phase whenever it desires and move into the chase phase (see later) or else break off pursuit altogether. Wolves typically abandon the rush for the chase when they lose a Fatigue level, or when the distance between them and their prey exceeds 100 paces.

THE CHASE

If a chase ensues, the wolves try to catch up to their quarry and attack. Wolves rarely expend energy on a long chase; if they fall behind they give up quickly. This said, a hungry pack might occasionally chase a large prey animal to exhaustion, relying on their superior stamina. Attacking an exhausted animal is a safer strategy for the pack, but there is still danger unless the wolves can gain an advantage, such as driving the animal into a snow-

drift. Each round of a chase lasts five to thirty minutes, depending on the terrain: chases are quicker on flat open ground than they are in thick snow or heavy woodland. Every round, both pursuer and prey must make a Stamina + Athletics – Encumbrance roll of Ease Factor 12 or lose a Long Term Fatigue level. Again, remember that wolves have the Long-Winded Virtue. Where groups are chasing or being chased, make a single roll for the whole group based on the most fatigued individual. However, wolves are efficient at the chase, taking it in turns to be in the lead, so they make their rolls based on the least fatigued individual. Then, calculate a Pursuit Total for the wolves and an Evasion Total for the prey. If the Pursuit Total is higher then the wolves have won this round, otherwise the prey have won. On a tie, neither side has won. If the prey wins four rounds (which need not be consecutive) then it has escaped and the hunt is over. If the wolves win four rounds they have cornered the prey, ready for the kill.

CHASE FATIGUE ROLL:

Stamina + Athletics – Encumbrance roll
against Ease Factor 12

PURSUIT TOTAL:

Perception + Hunt – Fatigue penalty
+ Pursuit modifiers + stress die

EVASION TOTAL:

Dexterity + Athletics – Fatigue penalty
+ Evasion modifiers + stress die

The Pursuit modifier is –3 if the pursuer is two-legged and the prey four-legged, and +3 if the prey is two-legged and the pursuer four-legged; it is zero otherwise. The Evasion modifier can vary from –6 to +6 depending on the relative knowledge of the terrain between pursuer and prey. If the prey has never been in this terrain before but the pursuer knows it intimately then the modifier is –6, if the situation is reversed then the modifier is +6. If it is the home territory of one party but the other has only passed through occasionally, then the modifier is –3 or +3 accordingly.

A Large Wolf

Characteristics: Cun +2, Per +1, Pre –2, Com +1, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Large, Puissant Brawl, Improved Characteristics x3, Ferocity (when leading a pack), Long Winded; Compulsion (killing), Infamous

Qualities: Aggressive, Hardy, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Leader, Pursuit Predator, Sharp Ears, Thick Fur, Tough Hide, Vocal

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Cowardly +3

Reputations: Bloodthirsty 4 (Local)

Combat:

Teeth: Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +3

Trip: Init +1, Attack +9, Defense +8, Damage n/a*

* see Hunted by Wolves

Soak: +5

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 5 (distance running), Awareness 2 (smell), Brawl 5+2 (teeth), Hunt 4 (track by smell), Leadership 5 (wolves), Survival 3 (winter)

Appearance: Much like a normal wolf, but up to twice the weight, and appearing even larger due to its thick fur. Wolves of this size are usually the leading male, using its superior size to gain the top spot.

The wolf gains a +3 bonus to all rolls involving the senses of smell and hearing.

A Wolf

Characteristics: Cun +2, Per 0, Pre –2, Com 0, Str –1, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: –1

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics x2, Ferocity (when hungry), Long Winded; Compulsion (killing), Infamous

Qualities: Aggressive, Hardy, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Animal, Pursuit Predator, Sharp Ears, Thick Fur, Vocal

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Cowardly +3

Reputations: Bloodthirsty 4 (Local)

Combat:

Teeth: Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +9, Damage 0

Trip: Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage n/a*

* see Hunted by Wolves

Soak: +4

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

Wound Penalties: –1 (1–4), –3 (5–8), –5 (9–12), Incapacitated (13–16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Athletics 5 (distance running), Awareness 2 (smell), Brawl 5 (teeth), Hunt 4 (track by smell), Survival 3 (winter)

Appearance: The wolf has erect triangular ears, a narrow muzzle, and a coat of shaggy fur; his eyes are usually yellow and have a steady, unsettling gaze. His color may be any shade from pale gray through dark brown, often with lighter patches on the sides of the face and around the eyes. The wolf is known for its eerie, piercing howl.

The wolf gains a +3 bonus to all rolls involving the senses of smell and hearing. If a wolf is a pack leader, increase its Communication by 1 and add Leadership 5 (wolves) to its Abilities.

THE KILL

Once harbored, the pack goes in for the kill. Wolves typically attack the rump, flanks, or shoulders of a prey animal. Some of the hunting wolves (the exact number is determined by the pack leader's Leadership Ability) attack as a trained group with the pack leader as the group leader; the remainder cut off any

routes of escape for the prey. The leader can exchange any of the attacking wolves in the trained group for any of those in waiting by making a roll of Communication + Leadership + stress die against an Ease Factor of 9; the pack can still attack in that round unless the wolf exchanged is the vanguard of the group.

Every few rounds a wolf breaks away from the group and attempts a trip maneuver

A Wolf of Virtue

Magic Might: 10 (Animal)

Season: Spring

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

Size: -1

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Magical Monster; Ferocity (when hungry), Inspirational, Lesser Immunity to Exposure, Long Winded, Puissant Brawl, Puissant Hunt, Wilderness Sense, Greedy; Infamous

Qualities: Aggressive, Hardy, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Animal, Pursuit Predator, Sharp Ears, Thick Fur, Vocal

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Abilities x4, Improved Attack (Trip) x2, Improved Characteristics x4, Improved Powers, Lesser Powers; Minor Flaw (Restricted Power — Transfix fails to work if target sees wolf first), Reduced Might

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Hungry* +3, Wolf* +3, Brave When Seen -3

* these are Essential Traits

Reputations: Rapacious 4 (Local)

Combat:

Teeth: Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +1

Trip: Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage n/a*

* see Hunted by Wolves

Soak: +4

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Area Lore 1 (prey), Athletics 3 (distance running), Awareness 3 (food), Brawl 4+2 (trip), Hunt 4+2 (track by

smell), Leadership 3 (wolves), Music 3 (wolf-songs), Stealth 3 (woods), Survival 4 (winter), Wilderness Sense 2 (weather)

Powers:

Transfix: 2 points, Init +1, Corpus or Animal: While the wolf maintains eye contact with its prey, the prey is unable to move, including being unable to speak. Note that because of the wolf's Restricted Power Inferiority, this power fails to work if the wolf is spotted by its target before it makes eye contact. ReCo(An) 20 (Base 5, +1 Eye, +1 Conc, +1 requisite) Lesser Power (20 levels, -2 Might cost, +4 Init, including Improved Powers).

Vis: 2 pawns of Rego vis, in eyes

Appearance: A perfect expression of wolfhood, this lithe but well-muscled wolf has dappled gray fur and amber-colored eyes.

The wolf gains a +3 bonus to all rolls involving the senses of smell and hearing. Note that as a magical animal, the Wolf of Virtue does not need to eat (or drink, or breathe), but true to its lupine nature, it is always ravenously hungry. In a pack with a strong leader, a Wolf of Virtue might take a subordinate role, as an obedient and loyal pack-member is as much the perfect wolf as a cunning leader. When with a pack of wolves, the Wolf of Virtue's Inspirational Virtue can make them braver, more loyal, or more prone to taking risks. The Wolf of Virtue has seven points of Flaws and an equal number of Virtues: it can be personalized by taking more Flaws in exchange for Virtues; or by taking Magical Inferiorities with which to buy more Magical Qualities.

her as a threat because of this. Her very nature makes her exceptionally difficult to stop, and she is more akin to a force of nature than an enemy to be defeated.

There are three basic ways that the Wolf's Court can be introduced into a saga. First, the characters might be asked to look into attacks by a wolf, and during their investigations encounter evidence that the attacker might not be a natural animal. Shapeshifters and their ilk are hardly unknown in Mythic Europe, but a rash of them in one place might arouse suspicions. Research might reveal local legends of the Wolf's Court, leading characters to approach the site. Once reaching the Wolf's Court, the characters might be tempted to simply slay the She-Wolf, but if they do not initiate violence she explains that the transformations she wrought were requested by the "victims," and done in pursuit of vengeance.

The second method to introduce the Wolf's Court is as a supplicant. A character (probably a companion character, but not necessarily so) might be seeking justice for a crime committed against him. This might form part of a Story Flaw (Enemies or Feud are most appropriate), or the situation might have arisen during play. As part of his quest for retribution he hears about the Wolf's Court, and seeks out an audience with the She-Wolf.

The third method of involving one or more characters is as the target of revenge. This is a good way to get a magus involved, since they seem to be outside the jurisdiction of manorial and canonical courts, leaving the common man few avenues for obtaining justice. A werewolf is probably no match for a magus, but the player character may become curious as to how their opponent obtained the power to change form — thus leading them to the Wolf's Court.

Story Hook: The Murdered Brother

A curious incident occurred recently in a village near to the woods. A man, Baudouin, claims to have been attacked by a wolf, which he managed to kill. When others arrived at the scene drawn by the commotion, there was

(ArM5, page 175). The wolf makes a Brawl Attack against the target's Defense. If the opponent is running from the wolves or unaware of the attack, then it can only use a Brawl Defense or an Evasion (Qik + Athletics - Encumbrance - Size + stress die, see *Lords of Men*, page 125). If the Attack Total exceeds the Defense Total by three or more, then the target is tripped and must take an action to stand back up again, during which time his Defense total is just equal to his (Qik - Encumbrance + stress die). This is usually the point at which the pack leader applies the Group Advantage to the Attack Total and moves in for the kill.

Introducing the Wolf's Court into the Saga

The She-Wolf is less of an antagonist in herself, than she is a way in which antagonists are created. Most characters do not possess the powers of a magus and thus have little recourse when denied justice by mundane authorities. The She-Wolf redresses that imbalance through her powers, and magi might see

a naked human corpse on the floor instead of a wolf's body. This was identified as Guillot, Baudouin's brother. The only other witness was a local maiden Odette, who was present when Baudouin was attacked. She supports Baudouin's story. Common gossip has it that Guillot and Baudouin were in competition for Odette's affection. The local lord does not believe Baudouin's story about a wolf (and the testimony of a woman is inadmissible in court), and he stands accused of murdering his brother. A player character could be related to Baudouin and Guillot, or to Odette, and asked to investigate on behalf of their relative. Alternatively, the characters could be friendly with the lord, and hear of the curious story and decide to investigate.

Story Hook: The King's Wolf

A year ago, an important nobleman (perhaps a king) gained a pet wolf. It was encountered on a hunt when it greeted the nobleman like an old friend. It is a gentle, noble animal, so it is a great surprise when it savagely attacks a knight. The wolf is penned, and the nobleman consults some wise men (the characters) for advice. He is loathe to destroy his loyal pet, but feels he cannot trust it if it is going to attack his vassals. The wounded man is clamoring for its destruction.

The wolf is actually a loyal vassal of the nobleman. When he discovered that a brother knight was intent on seducing his wife, he approached the Wolf's Court. Granted the power to become a wolf, he sought out his opponent. Unfortunately, his faithless wife knew something of magic, and was able to trap him in wolf form by stealing his human clothing. With her husband gone, his wife married her lover — the man that the wolf attacked at the nobleman's court. The betrayed knight can assume human form once more if his clothes are restored to him; his ex-wife has them hidden, fearful of what might happen if she burnt them.

This story seed is a reworking of *Bisclavret* ("the Werewolf"), a *lai* (Breton folk tale) retold by Marie de France in the twelfth century. The author is keen to make a distinction be-



tween a savage werewolf (for which she uses the Norman word *garulf*) and one with a human intellect (denoted by the Breton *bisclavret*, also used as the hero's name). In the original story, when the king visits *Bisclavret*'s former lands, the wolf attacks and disfigures his wife, forcing her confession. She is outcast with her lover, and their daughters are born without a nose, a sign of their mother's faithlessness.

Story Hook: A Wife's Revenge

This story places a magus as the victim of a werewolf attack. It requires the character to be responsible for the death of a man in a way that could be considered unjust. The man's wife — or other relative — approaches the Wolf's Court for vengeance. Most magi are law-abiding individuals, but this is where the She-Wolf's dispassionate concepts of retribution could come into play. For example, the characters could have been tracking down a villain for several years. He could be

responsible for several heinous crimes, and a powerful hedge wizard to boot. When they finally encounter him, he is killed in a climactic battle by a magus's spell. This is not an uncommon resolution to a story. However, the magus had no judiciary power entitling him to commit this act; in effect he has committed murder. No matter that the victim was a notorious criminal, the fact remains that he was not put on trial by the laws of the land, nor legally executed by the mandate of the court. The She-Wolf looks favorably on a petition from the dead man's wife; she is now bereft of a husband thanks to the illegal actions of the magus.

When the player character defeats the werewolf that attacks him, the creature turns back into the shape of the woman. The character might recognize her, or else have to discover her identity through other means. The Wolf's Court is the source of her power, and he might be interested enough to investigate this phenomenon.

Researching the Wolf's Court

The main repository of information about the Wolf's Court is the peasants who live close to and within the forest in which it is sited. Much of their knowledge is contradictory, fabricated, or mere rumor, and teasing out useful facts takes a lot of patience.

Details of the Roman history of the She-Wolf can be gleaned from books on the history of the city of Rome, although the focus tends to be more on the festival of Lupercalia rather than her involvement in vengeance-taking. The best source for this is Ovid's poem *Fasti* ("Festivals"), which is a summa on Organization Lore: Roman Empire of Level 3, Quality 8.

Amongst the writings of Tytalus the Founder is a discourse on Daimons, particularly those representing emotions he admired — rivalry, victory, force, persuasion, and so forth. His *Prosofopoeia* is a Summa on Magic Lore of Level 4, Quality 9. It mentions the She-Wolf as an Aspect of Poine, the titan of vengeance and retribution and mother of the Erinyes. He may have been wrong about the specifics, nevertheless there is useful information here about the nature of the She-Wolf. Characters with Magic Lore may also divine that the She-Wolf is an Aspect if she is slain and yet returns unharmed.

Hooks for using the Wolf's Court Again

There are always more crimes to be avenged, so there are always ways to bring the Wolf's Court back into a saga.

Story Hook: An End to Vengeance

Characters may decide that the Wolf's Court is an undesirable location so close to

them, and seek to limit its use or destroy it altogether. Needless to say, the She-Wolf does not take kindly to attempts to limit people's right to her form of justice. After all, if the characters are being bothered by her powers it is likely because they are acting unjustly. If the characters try to prevent people approaching the Wolf's Court, they find their efforts foiled — or at least made more difficult — by packs of wolves acting in an unusually intelligent manner. Each pack is lead by a magical wolf trained by the She-Wolf. The remnants of the Roman fane of vengeance are not essential to the Wolf's Court, and if the characters destroy it, the She-Wolf may simply move to another Magic aura. These attacks, if unprovoked by actions of the She-Wolf herself, may push her into direct action.

Story Hook: A Wolf's War

After first encountering the Wolf's Court, the characters themselves have a need to gain the power granted by the She-Wolf. A player magus has made an enemy within the Order of Hermes. He might know that the magus is guilty of a crime, but have no evidence to bring to a Tribunal. With his opponent's allies he is unlikely to secure a conviction on just his testimony, which could be declared suspect or in error. The opponent is too powerful to be challenged to Wizard's War without help — help that could be provided by the She-Wolf if the character has a legitimate cause for retribution.

Becoming a werewolf won't grant the character sufficient power on its own to allow the character to win a Wizard's War, but the She-Wolf can offer other resources. She has centuries of experience in planning revenge, and her knowledge could be invaluable. She has packs of wolves at her beck and call, and has trained the court's magical wolves.

If it suits the story, the She-Wolf might be able to manifest as a different Aspect, offering different powers suitable to helping a magus attain revenge. Alternatively, a different Aspect of the Daimon might already have just the powers needed by the character, but he will have to approach this Aspect separately.

Story Hook: Echoes of Wilkis

Members of House Bjornaer are possibly very interested in the Wolf's Court. It can serve as an Ancestor Site (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 25) for that House, a place strongly resonating with shape-changing and the Magic Realm. The focus on a single shape meets with the approval of the House, although it is granted by magic and not innate power. It maybe that amongst the wolf packs in the forest is a Great Beast: a magus with a wolf heartbeast who has passed into Final Twilight. Further, the house has a vicious feud with a Shapeshifter Cult (the Pomeranian Witches), and the She-Wolf might grant them the edge they need — assuming that their enemies have not already obtained her assistance.

A Bjornaer magus who reports encountering the Wolf's Court to his house will be tasked with approaching the She-Wolf on behalf of the Bjornaer Council. Unfortunately, the She-Wolf doesn't receive embassies; she has no interests outside facilitating vengeance. To get her attention, the character may have to acquire one of the gifts of the Wolf's Court by obtaining revenge on one of his enemies.

Story Hook: The Wolf Brotherhood

Characters who have pursued an enemy and are close to capturing him might feel dismayed if the Luperci get to him first. Discovering the link between the Luperci and the She-Wolf, the characters might travel to the Wolf's Court to confront the Luperci, especially if the enemy they were chasing had knowledge or plunder that the characters need.

The Luperci are likely to develop into an enemy — or at least a hindrance — to the player characters. The Order of Hermes is founded on principles of fairness and equity, and the concept of a vigilante group is likely to be repugnant to them.