



An Ars Magica™ Story Supplement

by W. D. King



**Mythic
Places**

by Carl Schnurr



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Ars Magica created by: Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•Hagen

Special Thanks

Carl "I'm glad to hear it's going well." Schnurr, for having a working knowledge of the English language, a rare skill.

Ken "Who's the mac?" Cliffe, for learning firsthand about the American health insurance system.

Sam "Do you wanna know what happens?" Chupp, for conducting unsolicited fortune tellings.

Ken "Sure, I'll do it." Widing, for accepting a job on *very* short notice.

Richard "Who did the Eagles beat?..." Thomas, for showing up his last Special Thanks.

Tom "No problem at all." Dow, for being one of the easiest artists around to work with, and for being great at his craft.

Eric "I've got three projects going now, but I'll have your maps done next week." Hotz, for having a superhuman scheduling capacity.

Stewart "Turn that music down! Everybody be quiet!" Wieck, for coming out of his office and learning what it's like to work in the trenches.

Mark "I call it *Christmas in Hell*." Rein•Hagen, for being premature with this year's seasonal festivities.

Josh "I'm an artist, not a writer!" Timbrook, for switch hitting and learning the difficulties of writing in a noisy room.

Wes "Heat Element" Harris, for doing the job that everyone else on staff should be.

Chris "Back Cover? What Back Cover?? Oh yeah..." McDonough for not getting "behind" in his work.

Andrew "Vacuum-Buster" Greenberg, for being two kills toward an Ace.

In appreciation: Carla, for endless help and boundless patience with late night editing sessions and tag-team computer fests, and Mark "Mr. Treat" Anthony, for insightful comments, support, and general fun.

Also in appreciation: Emma Bull, Charles deLint and Robert Holdstock for writing the wonderful tales that inspired the concept of *regio*.

Dedicated to:
The Scribbling Primates.

The page is framed by a highly detailed, black and white decorative border. The border features a repeating pattern of stylized floral motifs, including what appears to be a thistle, and heraldic elements like a bird crest. At the top center, there is a circular emblem containing a figure. At the bottom center, there is a rectangular vignette depicting a scene with several figures, possibly a classroom or a study, with a sign that reads 'S.C.P.' and 'P'. The entire page is rendered in a high-contrast, woodcut style.

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Introduction

Mythic Places is designed for use with the fantasy roleplaying game **Ars Magica**. Though this supplement could certainly be used with any FRPG, it is particularly tailored to the nature and character of **Ars Magica**. On a superficial level **Ars Magica** is a game that emphasizes the intricacies of magic use by medieval scholars known as magi (a fancy term for wizards). On a more thematic level, **Ars Magica** investigates how magi manipulate magic and at the same time interact with human society, and how they manipulate magic and interact with the lands they live in. In the **Mythic Europe™** setting of the game, most peasants, nobles and clergy have an aversion to the use of magic, fearing it as the work of the Devil. Thus, in order to survive in a human world, magi must learn to practice their art covertly, simultaneously maintaining relations with mundanes. To also survive in an inherently magical world, magi must learn to contend with that world's magical inhabitants. So, to use magic and preserve social contact with the outside world, magi employ two instruments: the Covenant and helpers, known as *custos*. To interact with the magic of the lands themselves, magi must look to their morales, for those ideals determine how magi deal with magical entities.

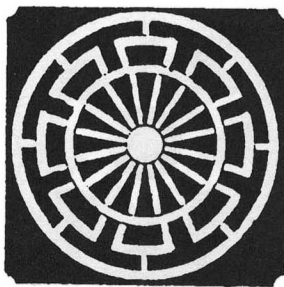
The Covenant is the first tool used by magi to study magic and interact with common folk. A Covenant is a closed society in which magi insulate themselves from the day-to-day lives of human society. The institution is often located in some isolated region, away from the travels of the common person. The Covenant can take any form, often a fortress of some kind, to ensure the safety of its occupants, and in it many magi work together on their Art. Ostensibly, the Covenant would seem to isolate magi from the human world rather than ensure their continued relations with it. However, by isolating themselves

from common man, magi can work their magics without fear of inciting widespread panic. Thus, by establishing the Covenant, magi take steps to ensure that their social relations with the mundane world are not severed entirely, and ensure further practice of their craft without interruption.

Another necessity for maintenance of social ties with the mundane world, given the isolation of the Covenant, involves the service of nothing other than common folk. Magi employ servants known as *custos* who serve multitudinous functions. Not only do they service the Covenant, living within its walls, but they perform duties on behalf of scholarly magi, and act as envoys to the outside world. Often times these folk have their own reasons for serving “diabolists,” but some do so for reasons as simple as tradition; their ancestors served the magi. Regardless of the motive behind their service, *custos* are invaluable because, as common folk, they know how to deal with and interact with other mundanes. Common folk outside the Covenant therefore receive *custos* with less apprehension than they do magi. Accordingly, *custos* function to preserve social relations between magi and the outside world, simply by virtue of their origins in that world. Without *custos* magi could not fulfill the day-to-day activities that involve social interaction, and therefore could not survive.

Thus, by investigating the tools that magi utilize to maintain their practices, we understand more about magi. On a superficial level magi would seem to study magic alone, protecting themselves with fortresses and servants. By studying and spinning magic, magi inherently ostracize themselves from the human world, which cannot bear such “diablerie.” However, magi do require human social contact in order to maintain their practices, not only for supplies but for news of the outside world. To allow for this social interaction, magi employ fortresses and servants. Therefore, magi are not solely machines of magical investigation. The tools that they utilize to practice magic, the Covenant and *custos*, are actually tools to ensure continued relations with the common man of the mundane world. Such insight into the complexity of magi allows greater understanding of them.

There is more to the lands outside the Covenant than mundane mortals, though, and those other parts of the land allow further investigation into the essence of magi. Indeed, *Mythic Europe* is inhabited by many beings and forces that are as much or more of a threat to magi than the simple masses. Part of magical study demands laboratory and library research, but part also demands interaction with



the beings and forces of the world. Such interaction is necessary for innumerable reasons, and the greatest involves solving and profiting from the land’s magical mysteries, which often involves contention with strange creatures and strange locales. It is this interaction with the magic of the land that further delves into the nature of magi, as magi must come to terms with their motives and powers in

an effort to further magical academia. The magi must decide what treatment of the land and its inhabitants is justifiable, in relation to their magical needs, or vain desires. If the land’s magical essence is respected and protected, magi are defined by their virtue. However, if the land’s magical essence is greedily plundered and abused, magi are defined by their vice and avarice. Essentially, then, the magic inherent to the lands of *Mythic Europe* is a defining factor to the lands’ magi and their identities. If magi were to realize this, they might even learn about themselves.

Mythic Places, the book you hold in you hands, contributes to the definition and characterization of magi. It therefore perpetuates the themes of and motives behind *Ars Magica*. *Mythic Places* performs these functions by studying the relationship between magi and mortals, and by studying the relationship between magi and the magic inherent to *Mythic Europe*. *Mythic Places* presents magical locales that consist of realms of magical potency, called *regio*. Each *regio* represents a departure from the mundane world into a magical realm, as *regio* belong to such powers as Magic, Faerie, Heaven and Hell. However, *regio* still have basis in the mundane world, and are often inhabited by common folk unaware of the true nature of their home. By progressing from the mundane world into the *regio* of a mythic place, magi find themselves interacting with the mundane folk and magical entities that reside in those realms. Sometimes those people and entities are receptive to the magi and their servants. At other times, those people and entities are hostile. In either case, the characters are forced to interact with ordinary people and are forced to contend with magical powers of the land. In coming to terms with those people and powers the magi must decide what their motives are, and must decide how

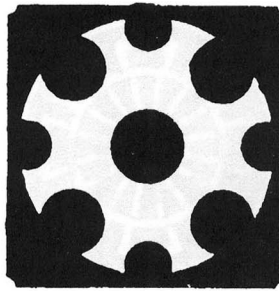
their magic is used to fulfill their motives. Altruistic intentions may establish good relations with *regio* inhabitants. Self-serving intentions are certain to create animosity. Either way, *regio* inhabitants are initially wary of magi — peasants may be frightened or angered by magic and magical beings may be hostile to magic use in their realms. Favorable or hostile response from *regio* inhabitants



is the determining factor in any further relations with those residents. Characters' intentions and interactions with the inhabitants of a mythic place therefore determine relations with those inhabitants, which in turn are indicative of characters' identities, illustrating characters' motives and morales.

Note that character action in a mythic place is not necessarily indicative of character identity in that place alone. Indeed, magi's actions in a *regio* may be suggestive of their behavior in other encounters with the mundane and magical world. If magic is used to single-mindedly pursue personal goals once, it is assuredly used to do so again. Likewise, if magic is once used to nurture and protect, magi are probably prone to do that again. Either action is indicative of a moral proclivity, defining magus identity.

Thus, in presenting magi with situations, people and beings to contend with in **Mythic Europe**, **Mythic Places** forces magi, and all characters, to examine themselves. By dealing with the world, characters learn more about who they are. And, by investigating the interactions and behavior of magi, **Mythic Places** furthers the themes of and motives behind of *Ars Magica*.



inhabitants as real, three-dimensional characters with feelings and thoughts of their own. Finally, each mythic place description concludes with a short selection of story ideas, intended to help you introduce the setting into your next *Ars Magica* game.

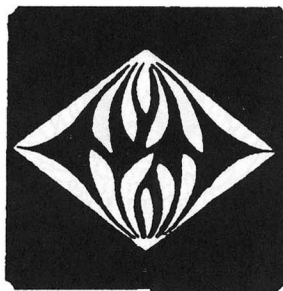
Note that this supplement is *not* a collection of complete, ready-to-run stories. Rather, each mythic place is a foundation

on which stories may be built. Sample story ideas are certainly presented, but in the end, it's you who's left to decide how these primal and magical locations fit into your Saga. After all, it is your Saga and you, not some faceless author, are the inspiration behind it. You might use the locations presented here with little advance preparation, letting the group's actions and ideas completely determine the course of a free-form game session. On the other hand, you might concoct a carefully scripted, sweeping Saga, covering several decades of time, linking several separate mythic places into a gratifying whole. Yet again, you might simply use **Mythic Places** as a source of ideas, browsing through its pages, heavily customizing places for use in your own stories and Sagas. In fact, no one says that the material in **Mythic Places** must be used solely for *Ars Magica* — the locations presented here could easily be adapted to the roleplaying game of your choice.

STORYGUIDE'S INTRODUCTION

This supplement consists of five carefully crafted mythic places, each one ready to enter your *Ars Magica* Saga. Some are places of evil, filled with infernal dangers to both body and spirit. Others are places of good, touched by the hand of God and kept pure by the power of the faithful. Some are havens of enigmatic Faeries, both dark and bright in their terrible beauty. Still other places flow with raw magical power, waiting patiently through the eons for someone to unlock their secrets. In short, each location is unique, and capable of sustaining several gaming sessions for you and your players.

Each mythic place presented in this supplement is just as its name implies — a mythic setting in which stories may be told. Each location is described in detail, its history given, and any special rules necessary to deal with the area presented. In addition, the inhabitants of each place are described, their profiles given, and notes concerning their personalities and motivations presented. All this information is intended to help you, the Storyguide, portray area



How to Use This Book

The purpose of this supplement is to provide you with settings rich in story ideas for use in your Saga. Five such settings are included in this supplement. Each is based on the concept of *regio* (pronounce the *g* as in *go*: *REH-gee-oh*), an idea introduced in two previous White Wolf products, **Faeries** and **The Pact of Pasaquine**. For those not familiar with those supplements, a *regio* is simply a different way of looking at a place possessing a Divine, Faerie, Infernal or Magical Aura (these Auras are discussed in *Ars Magica*, p. 71-73). If you're not clear on the nature of *regio*, fear not. The first Chapter of this supplement explains them fully.

Once you understand the ideas and rules governing *regio*, you are ready to explore the rest of the supplement. Each Chapter details one mythic place, or concentration of *regio*. These places are not linked by a large, pervasive story (though they certainly could be), so the order you read them is not important. Try browsing through the book and reading about a few places that look interesting. Keep in mind, though, that if you read them all you won't be able to enjoy any as a player — you might want

to set a few places aside for another Storyguide. Each Chapter in the supplement begins with an overview of its mythic place, then moves on to detail the place's levels of *regio*, its inhabitants, and its history. Subsequent sections go over any special rules needed for the mythic place, and give brief notes on placing the *regio* within your Saga. Each Chapter concludes with a selection of story ideas. For more information, see *Format*, below.

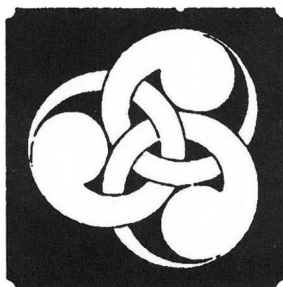


Hopefully, one or more of the settings presented herein will appeal to you and beg to become part of your Saga. If you like, pick one such *regio* and familiarize yourself with it, taking careful note of any changes you might need to make in it — perhaps your Saga is set in Spain and you need to change the names of Storyguide characters to reflect that fact. Next you need to come up with a story idea to introduce the *regio* to your troupe. After reading the Chapter you might have some ideas of your own, or you can flesh out one of the story ideas provided. Of course, you don't have to use these *regio* as complete settings, you could just use one or more as a jumping off point for another story during the main course of your Saga. Or, you could take several of the *regio* and build a huge story, like an interwoven tapestry, that takes many years of play to resolve. Several of the *regio* could even be used as advantages or disadvantages during Covenant creation, making those mythic places part of the lands surrounding your Covenant.

In the end, of course, you know what your troupe's needs are and know how this supplement can best serve them. You might use each location intact and build only on the provided story ideas, or you might make such drastic changes in a location that the place become unrecognizable. However you decide to use **Mythic Places**, we think you'll find something within these pages to both challenge and inspire your troupe.

Location and Time

In order to make these settings useful to you regardless of your Saga's location, care is taken to make each mythic place as general as possible. By doing so, it is hoped that the places are useful to characters located throughout Mythic Europe (or any other fantasy setting, for that matter). Thus, a *regio* is described as being "on the pinnacle of a snowy peak" rather than being located on a specific peak in a particular mountain range. To use this particular mythic place, simply find a mountain range near your Covenant and choose an appropriate mountain. Of course, not every Covenant has a mountain range nearby, in



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which case you may choose not to use the place or may modify it to suit your particular location. Nominally, these mythic places assume a generally European setting and climate, with deciduous and evergreen forests, hills, mountains, grasses, rivers and streams. That doesn't mean each *regio* can't be adapted to fit into a unique Saga, say one located in east Asia or in a desert, but such adaptation certainly takes some work. For the most part, though, work required should be minimal.

As with location, the time of place settings is left undetermined. None of the settings presented in this book are tied to a particular time period, and they are suitable for use at almost anytime from the Fourth to Fourteenth Centuries.

Format

Each mythic place begins with a short listing of pertinent information, so that you can determine at a glance its general nature. These headings are:

Type: This indicates the nature of the *regio*'s Aura. The choices are Divine, Faerie, Infernal, or Magical.

Focus: This is the source of the *regio*'s power, or the main feature of the *regio*.

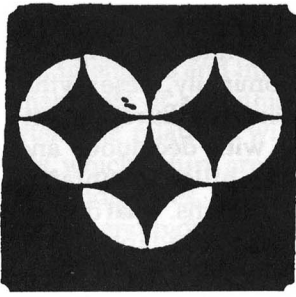
Levels: This is a listing of the levels within the *regio*. M, 1, 3, for example, mean that the *regio* has a (M)undane level, a level with Aura strength 1, and a level with Aura strength 3.

Overview: This is a short description of the important features of the *regio*, and a brief note on where it's located.

After this listing comes a description of the main body of the *regio*. Most *regio* follow the same format, with a description of each level, from lowest to highest, then a brief history if needed (entitled *What Has Gone Before*), followed by notes on any inhabitants, any special rules needed for the *regio* (*Mechanics*) and a few brief notes on location. Each mythic place concludes with a short list of story ideas. Of course, every *regio* is different and the format varies as needed to present each in as clear a fashion as possible.

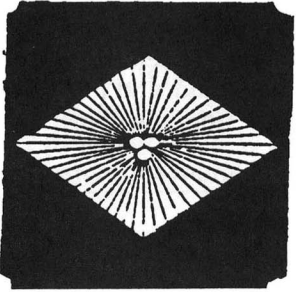
Designer's Notes

Mythic Places is a bit of an experiment — it's not a complete story, it's not a description of single, large location or geographical region, and it's certainly not a collection of additional rules. What is it, then? To me, it's something I always wished someone *else* would write. Often, I found store bought modules too linear and confining. At the same time I was



overwhelmed by supplements detailing large cities or vast continents in minute detail. Many times I wished for a collection of interesting, *small* places, places easily dropped into a campaign here or used for a spontaneous night of gaming there.

Glimmers of these desires surfaced in my first product, *The Pact of Pasaquine*, though its small places were part of a larger whole. A concept introduced in *Pact*, however, provided the final ingredient in the mix that has become *Mythic Places* — that of *regio*.

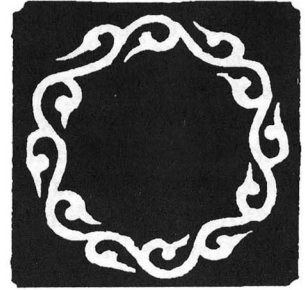
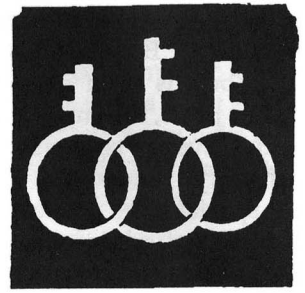


While *regio* were introduced primarily to deal with a specific place in *Pact*, the idea behind them just kept growing. Before long it became apparent that the *regio* appearing in *Pact* barely scratched the surface of the concept's full potential. Why not, then, put together a "showcase of *regio*" as well as write that supplement I always looked for in the stores? The people at White Wolf were interested, and now *Mythic Places* is a reality. I hope you enjoy our little experiment.

Carl Schnurr

Durham, North Carolina

October, 1991





What Are Regio?

The concept of *regio* has been presented before, in other *Ars Magica* supplements (see *Faeries* and *Pact of Pasaquine*), but as *regio* are an intrinsic element of this supplement, their rules are presented here as well. Essentially, *regio* are magical areas that intertwine with, but are separate from the mundane world. Rules for finding, traveling into, and exiting from *regio* are presented, as are guidelines for creating your own *regio*.

Introduction

The areas of power, called *regio*, that pervade the mythic places of this book are similar to “normal” magical regions (see *Ars Magica*, p.71-73). Both have a strength, rated one through ten, and both are associated with a particular power, be it Faerie, Magical, Divine or Infernal. *Regio* are different from “conventional” areas of power, though, because they are tied to, but separate from, the mundane world, whereas conventional areas of power are often firmly established in the mundane world. However, *regio* can also differ from one another. *Regio* of great power, like a Faerie mound, are far removed from the world we know, while *regio* of lesser power are close to, but have slight differences from, the mundane world.

By way of clarifying what a *regio* is, let us look at a magical Faerie spring. Using the standard Aura rules, this spring has an Aura of strength three to five, depending on its importance to its locale. Characters could wander about and find this spring if they search long and hard enough. And, faeries might hide the spring with illusions or they might mislead the humans’ senses, but the spring’s

actual physical nature does not change; it's still a physical part of the mundane world.

The same spring, when thought of as a mythic place, is treated as a *regio*. The spring now exists on several interconnected but separate levels of differing Aura strength that *occupy the same space*. Each level is physically real by itself, though somewhat different from the rest. The highest level is most removed from the mundane world and has the highest Aura. There, the spring could be as the faeries made it; perhaps with a low, engraved marble wall surrounding it, and a fountain located in its middle. A lower *regio* level finds the Aura reduced and the spring less noticeably Faerie in origin, with the engraving faded and the marble wall looking more like a jumble of rocks. The lowest level of the *regio* is the mundane world, with *no* Aura, and the spring is just a plain spring with a few rocks strewn about its edges.

People and creatures normally exist on one level at a time within a *regio*, completely independent of the other levels. Exceptionally powerful beings might cast shadows across a few adjacent levels, and gross physical happenings on the mundane level can affect higher levels. If, for example, someone destroys the spring in the mundane world, the highest level's spring might begin to dry up. Likewise, if a faerie tears apart the marble wall in the highest level, the rocks might move in or disappear from the mundane level.

One way to picture a *regio* is to imagine a series of thin magical layers stacked upon each other in increasing order of strength. The layers rest on the mundane world with the layer of highest strength at the top. And, each successively higher layer (with higher Aura strength) is physically smaller than the level below it. Thus, a person wishing to travel from the mundane world to the highest level crosses into the lowest level, then into the next lowest, and so on until he reaches the level with the highest Aura. Or, that person might fail to enter one of the higher levels and remains on a level somewhere in the middle of the *regio*.

Creating *Regio*

Regio are associated with a power and have a strength rating from one to ten. Each individual *regio* is made up of one or more levels, each with a different Aura strength. One level is recommended for every few points of Aura strength (see insert), though this is only a guideline. Feel free to create *regio* with greater or fewer levels if you desire.

Once you have decided the power, strength, and number of

levels for your *regio*, draw an overall map showing the boundaries of each level. When finished, it should look something like a contour map, with each boundary clearly labeled with its strength for easy reference. Don't worry too much about the exact locations of the contours. They're magic after all, and can wander about depending on the time of year, the phase of the moon, or on your whim. See the maps provided for each mythic place for some sample *regio* designs.

The next step is to decide what the *regio* physically looks like at its various levels. Each successive level is slightly more attuned to the power (e.g. Faerie) behind the *regio*, so is physically different from the other levels. Remember, though, that the levels are related, so important physical objects in the highest level cast mundane "shadows" in the normal world, and vice versa. Essentially, the levels between the mundane level and that with the highest Aura demonstrate progressive development between those two extremes, either becoming more Faerie or more mundane, depending upon the "direction" of travel. Thus, if the characters decide to explore a level you haven't detailed, simply look at the two extremes of the *regio* (the mundane and the highest level), and create a level that lies somewhere between, having some characteristics of both.

Entering *Regio*

Most beings, unless native to a particular *regio*, cannot travel freely from level to level. Crossing from the mundane world to the lowest level of a *regio* often happens accidentally, especially during special times of the year like Midsummer's Eve. Normally, entry requires a strong will, a subconscious desire, knowledge of the boundary, or magic to help one across. Higher levels within a *regio* can be quite difficult to enter, as one must work upward from level to level to reach them.

Levels in *Regio*

Strength of Aura	Number of Levels	Aura of each level
1	1	1
2	1-2	2 or 1, 2
3	2	1, 3
5	3	1, 3, 5
8	4	1, 3, 5, 8
10	5	1, 3, 5, 8, 10

Thus, if a *regio* has a strength of eight, it has four levels: the first level has an Aura of one, the next an Aura of three, the next one of five, and the last and highest an Aura of eight.

The base chance to enter any *regio* level is two times the Aura score of the level being entered, plus six. For example, you need an 8+ to enter level one of a *regio* (2 x 1 + 6) and a 26+ to enter a level ten of a *regio* (2 x 10 + 6). Many things can modify this roll, depending upon the individual situation. A person's Characteristics, Virtues and Flaws, Personality Traits and Abilities may all help or hinder an attempt. A person tracking

something that goes into a *regio* may add her Per + Tracking score to the entry roll, for example. A short table of sample modifiers is presented below.

Normally, only one person, the guide or leader of a group, rolls to enter a *regio* with that roll applying to everyone in the group. If the group is separated, however, each person rolls individually and enters (or fails to enter) the *regio* separately. You may also decide

Modifiers for Entering Regio

This table lists the most common things that can modify a person's chance of entering or leaving a *regio*. It is by no means complete and is meant only as a guideline for possible modifiers. You may often have to make judgment calls on a case-by-case basis. An (F), (M), (I), or (D) symbol following a modifier indicates the bonus is only good for Faerie, Magical, Infernal or Divine *regio* respectively. For more specific modifiers that apply to different *regio*, see the individual mythic places. Remember that such modifiers add to or subtract from die rolls made to enter *regio*; the modifiers do not apply to the difficulty number sought to enter a *regio*.

Season or Particular Day:

- 5 for Winter (F) (M).
- +5 For Winter (I).
- 3 for Autumn (F) (M).
- +5 for Summer (F) (M).
- +10 for Midsummer's Eve, and proportionately less for other pagan holidays (F) (M).
- 10 for Christmas Day, and proportionately less negative for other predominantly Christian Holidays (F) (M) (I).
- +10 for Christmas Day, and proportionately less positive for other predominantly Christian Holidays (D).
- +10 for All Hallows' Eve (I)(F).

Time of Day:

- +8 for a full moon, down to no bonus for no moon (F) (M) (I).
- +5 for dusk or dawn (All, respectively—dusk, D; dawn, I).
- +3 for nighttime (F) (I).
- 3 for daytime (F) (I).
- 5 for high noon (F) (I).
- +3 for daytime (D).
- 3 for nighttime (D).

Weather:

- +1 to +5 for fog or mist (I) (F) (M).
- 2 for fog or mist (D).
- +3 for rain (F) (M).
- +3 for terrible storm (I).
- +1 for clear weather (D).

Previous Knowledge:

+1 to +10 for familiarity with the *regio* (previous visits, reading about it in books, etc.). A good rule of thumb is +1 for the first visit, and an additional +1 for every two visits thereafter to a maximum of +10.

Help/Hindrance From Others:

A variable modifier (+ or -) for the aid or hindrance of a being who is native to and can travel through the *regio* freely. Most beings can add or subtract up to half of their Might (i.e. Faerie, Infernal, Divine or Magical) score to another's at-

tempts to cross boundaries. Lower this modifier to one-quarter if the being imposing the modifier is not native to the *regio*.

Characteristics:

Per— for finding a boundary or following someone through at a distance.

Virtues and Flaws:

- +3 for Faerie Blood, Faerie Upbringing or Feral Upbringing (F).
- +3 for Magic Susceptibility (M)
- +5 for Susceptibility to Faerie Power (F), Infernal Power (I), Divine Power (D).
- +5 for Simple-Minded (All).
- 6 for Withstand Magic (M).
- +2 for Dark Secret (I).
- +5 for Diabolic Upbringing (I).
- 10 for Faerie Enmity (F).
- 2 for Hatred (D).
- +3 for every Faith Point (D).
- 3 for every Faith Point (I).
- 2 for every Confidence Point (D)
- +2 for every Confidence Point (I).
- +3 for Charmed Life (All).
- 1 for Offensive to Animals (F).
- +2 for Clumsy (F).
- +3 for Haunted (I).
- + Flaw score for Cursed (I).
- Flaw score for Cursed (D).
- +3 for Ghostly Warder or Guardian Angel (D) (F) (M).

Modifiers / Entering Regio, continued

+4 for Magic Resistance (All).

+3 for Ways of the Woods (F).

+4 for Tainted with Evil (I).

-4 for Tainted with Evil (D).

+ or - half Demon's Might score for Demon Plagued (I or D, respectively).

+ or - value of each Hermetic Virtue or Flaw possessed (M).

Useful Abilities:

Awareness Talents, Magic Sensitivity, Visions, Track, Concentration, Magic Theory, (Area) Lore, Faerie Lore, Legend Lore, Sense Holiness and Unholiness, Hermes Theory, Hermes Lore, Church Lore, and Occult Lore. Modifiers to regio entry rolls are equal to Ability score and may have a positive or negative effect (i.e. Occult Lore helps one get through Infernal regio, but impedes travel through Divine regio).

Useful Techniques and Forms:

Intéllego Vim (for finding and understanding regio), Rego or Muto Vim (for entering). Modifiers equal Technique and Form scores, but only scores from an appropriate Form and Technique may be applied at any one time. For example, if a

magus is using his mind to search out regio boundaries (i.e. InVi), his score in Muto does not help him cross those boundaries. For Muto score to apply, Muto must be utilized as a means to cross a boundary. You may decide whether such Muto use eliminates the influence of previous Intéllego use (i.e. Intéllego is no longer used as a modifier to boundary crossings).

Emotions:

variable modifier (+ or -) for strong feelings of loss, sadness, fear, anger, desperation, hope or cheer that make travel through regio easier, as long as those emotions coincide with the emotions of most regio inhabitants. Those feelings make crossing more difficult if they oppose those of regio inhabitants.

State of Mind:

variable modifier (+ or -) for a person in a contemplative or reflective state. She may find her feet unconsciously leading her to the peace of some regio (D) (F). Likewise, a person lost or paying little attention to where they are going may stray into a regio (any power). On the other hand, a person paying

close attention to her travels, or having a mind filled with everyday worries, is unlikely to leave the mundane world. And, a person occupied by holy or unholy thoughts, or by prayer, receives a modifier to enter Faerie, Divine or Infernal regio, as appropriate.

Magic Items:

variable modifier (+ or -) for magic items that may help one enter regio (all powers). Carrying charms or amulets against faeries, for example, hinders passage, while carrying certain flowers or trinkets helps to cross boundaries (F). If an item has an Aura rating, that score is the modifier to move through regio. If an item lacks an Aura rating, you must determine the passage variable.

Maps:

variable modifier (+) for a set of arcane directions, whether memorized or printed on parchment, which can help lead one into a regio. In certain cases such directions might make entry automatic (e.g. "Walk round the dying elm thrice, face the setting sun, and walk until you pass between a pair of oaks.")

when a leader's roll does not apply to the group, making all characters roll separately.

One can enter a regio either accidentally or deliberately. Examples of accidental entry to a regio include: following or tracking a being who enters a regio, stumbling upon a regio, or unknowingly being helped into one by a regio inhabitant. When a character comes to a border accidentally, simply have him roll a stress die, altered by any modifiers that seem pertinent. If the roll fails, the character remains in the mundane world and doesn't notice anything strange unless the charac-

ter is tracking someone, then tracks suddenly come to an end in open ground. If the character's roll succeeds, he enters the first level of the regio and may notice slight differences in his surroundings as compared to the mundane world (see *Noticing Regio*). Once in the lowest level of a regio, it is entirely possible for the character to continue to the next level, and onward. Each time the character comes to a boundary of the next highest level, roll to see if he crosses it as well. It is possible to work to the highest levels of a regio in this manner, though highly unlikely.

Exempli Gratia: Entering Regio

Róbert the forester wanders through his local forest all the time, normally in broad daylight. Every time he crosses a level one boundary, he must check to see if he enters it or remains in the mundane world. On a normal autumn day he must make a stress roll of 8+ (6 + 2 x level of one) to enter, with his die roll modified by -9 (-3 for autumn, -3 for daylight, and the Storyguide determines his charms are good for -3). Thus, as long as Róbert stays away from the forest on pagan holidays, dusk, dawn and nighttime, he shouldn't have any trouble avoiding the regio.

Here's another example: A prince of Faerie (with Faerie Might 40) leaves his *regio* on Midsummer's Eve and chances upon a beautiful maiden. He takes a walk with her and, without her knowledge, wishes

to take her back to the heart of Faerie (Aura strength 10). The modifiers to the stress die are: +10 for Midsummer's Eve, +3 for Summer, +20 for his help (half his Faerie Might of 40) and +3 for the phase of the moon, for a total of +36. He needs to beat an 8+ to enter the first level, then a 12+, 16+, 22+ and finally a 26+ to get her all the way to the highest level (across the boundaries of level 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10). Our prince shouldn't have any trouble unless he botches. However, the girl probably notices something is amiss before the prince takes her too far (see *Noticing Regio*), unless he takes care to keep her distracted.

Let's say the girl wakes up the next morning and wishes to leave by herself. She needs to roll a 26+ to leave the highest level (what she needed to get in), modified by +9 (+3 for summer, +5 for dawn, and +1 for some familiarity [from a generous Storyguide]). It looks like she'll be wandering for a while unless her player gets lucky and rolls doubles.

Characters may also try to enter *regio* deliberately. The procedure for entering is the same as for entering unintentionally, except that characters probably use spells or some other means to aid their cause. You have to judge the effectiveness of such preparations on a case-by-case basis. Possible deliberate entry methods include: willing oneself into the *regio* (requiring Concentration or Meditation rolls to receive a bonus), saying certain arcane phrases or using charms learned from books or learned people, trying to attract faeries to help in the endeavor, or using Muto or Rego Vim spells. Be sure to take into account the time of day, the time of season, and any previous encounters had with the *regio*.

Leaving Regio

The rules for leaving *regio* are basically the same as for entering them. When a character comes to a boundary leading to a lower level, she must make a roll equal to six plus two times the level *the character is trying to leave*. Modifiers to the die roll are applied as normal with the exception that each time one tries to leave a level and fails, the difficulty of the succeeding attempt goes up by one. Beings who unsuccessfully try to leave a level find themselves inexplicably doubling back on their tracks, and all paths or trails lead in circles to keep the characters within the *regio*. It is possible for someone to become permanently trapped in a high level of a *regio* when he lingers too long (as decided by you). And, a person may find it easy to enter a high level of a Faerie *regio* on Midsummer's Eve, but find it difficult to leave the next morning. A common faerie trick is to aid an unwitting mortal into a high Aura level, and

then leave the mortal there to find his own way out. Fortunately, faeries soon tire of mortals blundering about in their realm and often lead them out before too much damage is done.

Some *regio*, however, bear mystical charms that make it difficult for people to leave of their own volition. Usually, this effect is restricted to the highest level of a powerful *regio* and not all people feel its effects. When a group enters the highest level of a *regio* that has an Aura of eight or more, you should carefully consider the demeanor of each character as well as noting the actions and reactions of each character to the *regio*. If any characters seem naturally drawn toward or fascinated by the area, those characters must make a Personality roll that equals or beats the level of the *regio* in order to leave. Examples of Personality Traits that could add to the die roll are: loyal, reliable, distrustful and practical. Examples of Personality Traits that subtract from the die roll are: easily charmed, gullible, curious and love of nature (F). Other Personality Traits certainly have value, depending on the power of the *regio*, and the motives of its inhabitants. You have to determine which Personality Traits apply on a case by case basis.

Noticing Regio

For a character to notice the fact that he has left the mundane world and is traveling in a *regio* requires a base stress roll of Per + Area Lore (or Faerie Lore, Church Lore, Occult Lore, Hermes Lore, Sense Holiness and Unholiness, or whatever is most applicable) of 10+. Add the Aura of the level the character is in to

Summary of Regio Rolls

Entering Regio: Rolled to cross any *regio* boundary. Stress die plus appropriate modifiers vs. $2 \times$ level Aura + 6.

Noticing Regio: Rolled to determine whether a character realizes he's in a *regio*. Per + Area Lore (or other appropriate skill) stress roll of 10+. Add Aura of level to roll.

Spotting Others on Other Levels: Per + Alertness roll of 15+.

Spell Use in Regio: Aura of level occupied modifies spell rolls. Magi roll double the normal number of botches for spell use.

Leaving Regio: Rolled to exit a level, crossing its boundary. Stress die plus appropriate modifiers vs. $2 \times$ Aura of level currently occupied +6. For each failed roll, the next suffers a -1 modifier.

his roll. For example, if the character wanders into level one, add one to his roll, and if he enters level ten, add ten to his roll. Be subtle about successful rolls, especially if they occur on low levels. For example, describe how the light seems different, the colors brighter, the air sweeter, and indicate how characters feel they are being watched, or add any number of small details that subtly indicate characters' new surroundings. Characters may also feel a slight tingle or shiver up their spines when they cross a boundary.

Magic in Regio

Magic cast in a *regio* receives the bonuses (or penalties) for the Aura of the level the caster is on (see *Ars Magica*, p. 73). If, for example, a magus casts a spell on a level with a Magical Aura strength of five, five is added to his roll. But, if the magus casts the same spell on a level of Divine Aura, his spell roll suffers a penalty equal to the level's value.

It can be dangerous to use magic, especially *vis*, in *regio*. Magi are required to make twice the normal number of botch rolls when casting spells in *regio*. Multiple botches while using *vis* might result in the warping of the *regio*, briefly distorting reality or even trapping magi inside a *regio* "bubble." Another danger of magic use lies in the potential for attracting curious or angry creatures to magi — many beings in *regio* are closely attuned to magic and might sense its nearby use.

Time and the Senses in Regio

Time within *regio* is quite unpredictable. Sometimes, no difference can be detected between time passing in

the mundane world and in a *regio*, but large discrepancies often arise. Hours can become weeks, and years can shrink to minutes or seconds. How time flows in a particular *regio* is completely up to your whim, but it's recommended that the effects become increasingly severe as the characters travel into levels with higher Aura strengths (i.e. Rip van Winkle-type time effects should probably be reserved for strength ten Aura levels. If time discrepancies between mundane and regio levels are minimal, a person could wander in and out of the lowest level of a *regio* without realizing it. However, that same person might lose or gain a few hours or days when entering a regio's higher levels, as time discrepancies there are extreme.

Also note that, though people who are in adjacent levels of a *regio* can not see each other directly, they might catch fleeting glimpses of each another (Per + Alertness rolls of 15+). This "shadow" effect is magnified for more powerful beings; Faerie Lords cast wavering images through several adjacent levels within a regio (add half the being's Might score to others' chances of noticing him). Magi can try spontaneous and formulaic spells (see *Appendix*) to see briefly across levels of a regio. Characters' necessity for die rolls and spell use contrasts the ease that regio inhabitants experience in looking across levels of their home.

Options

The preceding sections attempt to formalize and make rules for a common concept of folklore and mythology; that certain magical realms coexist with, but are magically separated from, our own. The best known example of such a realm is Faerie — a fantastic place filled with elves, nymphs and dryads, which mortals stumble into from time to time. Other examples include: mystical isles that only appear during a full moon; magical towers that can only be seen on a certain equinox; or, hidden glades that can only be reached by people wearing certain charms. Of course, many such places are presented in *Mythic Places*.

Any rules developed to deal with these diverse magical realms are, by necessity, of a general nature. The rules presented above are merely that; guidelines to help you deal with *regio* in a consistent and fair manner. If the rules need to be altered for a *regio* you have created, or need to be altered to reward a particularly creative player's idea, feel free. In fact, it is perfectly reasonable to change these rules slightly from time to time to keep the players guessing — *regio* are strange places and what works for characters one time might not work a second.

With all this in mind, here are a few examples of alternative rules concerning *regio*. Use them as you see fit.

Entering and Leaving

Many methods of entering and leaving magical realms can be found in fantastic literature and, while all are not appropriate to the world of *Ars Magica*, many can be transplanted to Mythic Europe with ease. Physically crossing a regio border is perhaps the most common way to enter a *regio*, and has already been discussed. Other important ways of reaching *regio* don't involve movement at all, but rather use magic of some kind to transport beings upwards or downwards through a *regio's* layers. An example of this is a person inadvertently going to sleep on the mundane level of an important *regio*, and waking on some higher level. Another example involves magi casting spells from the mundane level of a *regio* to move upwards into the higher levels. Game mechanics for the latter are provided in the Appendix of this book.

Rules governing special entry cases can be extrapolated by you from the existing rules on a case-by-case basis (assuming spells used aren't already covered in this book's *Appendix*). You might rule, for example, that a person sleeping on mundane soil, within the bounds of a *regio*, must roll upon waking to see if he or she has been transported to a higher level. The roll is made normally, with appropriate modifiers for time, place and the person's mood. If the roll is lower than an 8 (the minimum needed to enter a level one *regio*), the person remains in the world which he is familiar with. If, however, the roll is 8+, the person enters the *regio* at the highest level allowed by the roll. For example, if the person rolls a 13, he wakes on level 3 (if it exists) because the roll needed to enter level three is 12+. Likewise, using similar rules, you may rule that it is possible for a person sleeping on a higher level of a *regio* to move down levels, into the mundane world.

Exempli Gratia: *Entering Regio Without Moving Physically*

A group from a Covenant makes camp deep in a forest, directly below the center of a powerful *regio*. A curious elf-lord decides it would be entertaining to bring the characters to his home on level 8 of the *regio*. He makes his way to their camp, disguised as a bard, and offers to sing in exchange for his dinner. As he sings and strums his lute, the lord begins to try and make the entire group move upward with him into the *regio*. It is Summer (+5), at night (+3), there is a slight mist covering the ground (+1), the elf-lord tries to get his guests in the proper state of mind by singing stories of Faerie (the Storyguide gives this a +3 modifier), and the elf-lord is helping the characters' transition by way of his own will (half of the elf-lord's Faerie Might of 20 gives +10), for a total of +22. The Storyguide decides that the elf-lord must bring the characters into the *regio* one level at a time, in the increments of 1, 3, 5, and 8, but more than one level can be traveled with a single roll. The Storyguide also rules that it takes fifteen minutes of music to allow one roll.

After fifteen minutes of the elf-lord's singing, the Storyguide rolls a $3 + 22 = 25$, more than enough to bring the characters into the first level. At this time,

extremely perceptive characters might notice slight differences in their surroundings as per *Noticing Regio*, but no one rolls high enough. Similarly, the elf-lord's roll is high enough to bring the characters through level 3 and into level 5 without a problem. The characters are allowed Perception rolls on each level to realize they are "traveling." No one notices any change on the third level. However, on the fifth level things look different enough that one companion makes his Per roll and notices something unusual about his surroundings. The Storyguide tells the companion's player that trees look taller and a bit paler than they did a moment ago, that grass seems softer, and that rocks around the fire seem different somehow. The companion decides that these perceptions merely result from fatigue mixed with too much good wine, so he continues listening to the bard.

After another fifteen minutes (half an hour after the "bard" started playing), the Storyguide rolls a $5 + 22 = 27$ for the final step. The result is high enough for the lord to successfully bring the group to level eight of his *regio* (he only needed 22+). At this time, everyone in the group makes their Per rolls. Some notice that the stars are different, others that the trees are now enormous and silver, and still others that the fire now burns in a ring of carved rock. The characters jump up in alarm. The elf-lord lays down his instrument and welcomes the group to his realm.





Chapter One: The Monolith

Type: Magical

Focus: An ancient monolith

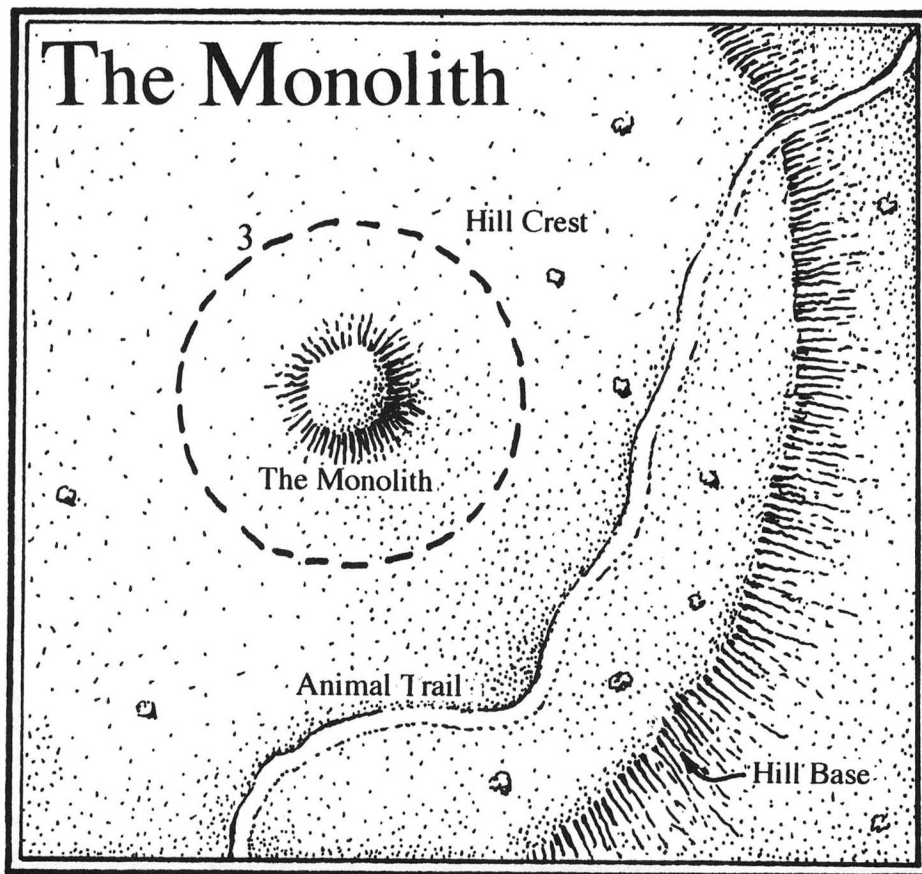
Levels: M, 3

Overview: This *regio* centers on a worn and well-weathered monolith such as those common to many parts of Mythic Europe. Unknown to most, this monolith is actually a human tribal king named Khras-nagar, who was turned to stone by the ancient gods for his hubris. Freeing Khras-nagar is a difficult task, but the effort can result in a powerful ally, for Khras-nagar is a brilliant leader of men. This *regio* should fit easily into almost any Saga or location.

DESCRIPTION

The Mundane Regio

On the mundane level, a passing observer might not look twice at this unimposing monolith. Made of pocked and scarred gray-green basalt, its crudely rounded top stands just above eye-level. It leans slightly forward and to one side but, strangely enough, this merely enhances its aura of strength and solidity. It has roughly the same thickness from top to bottom; a large man could embrace the stone and touch his fingertips on the far side. Someone scrutinizing its uneven surface finds little of interest other than the numerous mosses and lichens that cover its length in a pale patchwork of subtle greens, blues and yellows. On the other hand, someone standing farther away might get the impression (Per + Scan of 7+) that the rough bumps and irregularities form a pattern barely discernible as a large, crude humanoid figure.



open-sleeved tunic. A master stone-cutter, carver or mason (on a roll of Int + Craft of 4+) who spends a few moments inspecting the statue declares it a masterpiece, for though much of its detail has been lost to time, the amount remaining is unparalleled, even compared to those works of the ancients. Perceptive people (Per + Search roll of 8+) might also notice a series of runes carved on the rim of the shield. If cleaned of lichen and deciphered (Int + Scribe appropriate language roll of 7+), the runes read, "Here stands Khras-nagar the mighty, whose eternal kingdom lies before you." The specific language of these runes is left to you, for it depends upon where you place Khras-nagar within your Saga. Whatever language is used, it should have belonged to a long gone tribal people once indigenous to the area. The easiest choice is to make the runes an archaic form of a language currently spoken by the characters.

The Magical Regio (3)

The highest and only magical level in the *regio* extends beyond the monolith in a rough circle some fifteen paces across. On this level, the monolith stands straighter and, while less weathered and worn, remains sparsely covered with lichen. Its human likeness is now obvious. Featureless eyes stare out of its broad, rough-hewn face, which is framed by well-worn ears, one chipped halfway off and one enveloped by green moss. Enormous arms hang from its broad shoulders to end in clenched fists the size of a child's head. The "man's" massive legs extend into the ground at mid-calf.

Closer examination of the statue reveals its wealth of carefully carved details: a stone torque as thick as a thumb around each bare arm, long braided hair hanging over the round shield on its back, a strangely delicate circlet on the brim of its bare head, a sword and dagger of ancient design hanging from a broad sword belt, and an intricate emblem emblazoned on its simple,

currently spoken by the characters.

Anyone staying on this level of the *regio* for more than a few minutes has the strange sensation that someone is watching her, though she is unable to pinpoint the sensation's source. The feeling intensifies if the group searches for the source. After some time a perceptive person (Per + Search roll of 6+) notices that the statue's eyes, though blank, seem to rotate and follow him wherever he goes. Once informed of this fact, each character has the distinct impression that the eyes are following him as well. If anyone asks a rhetorical question or directs a question to the statue, the statue speaks (see *Khras-nagar's Story*, below).

Khras-nagar's Story

"I am doomed. I must speak, and speak truth. You see before you the remains of a proud king, whose kingdom is no more and forgotten by all. Khras-nagar was his name, and while he lived, he was proud, for he began his life with nothing and rose to a position of greatness through strength of arm and quickness of mind. He ruled for many years and became prouder still, for it seemed that no force could shake his rule, no army withstand his attacks. His pride grew to

Khras-nagar's Profile

Int (quick-thinking) +1 Per (discerning) +2
Str (bulky) +3 Stm(unflagging) +2
Prs (commanding) +3 Com (stern) +2
Dex 0 Qik (methodical) -1

Confidence: 2

Age: 29

Size: +1

Personality Traits

Haughty +3 Impatient +2
Tired +2 Humble +1

Important Skills

Some of Khras-nagar's skills change depending on whether he is in human or statue form. If there is a difference for a particular skill, two numbers are given in the following fashion: human skill level/statue skill level. Otherwise, the listing of a single number is applied to both statue and human forms. The entry "na" implies that the skill in question does not apply to the statue — Drinking, for example.

Alertness (ambush) 2
Scan (countrymen) 4
Athletics (run) 2/na
Charisma (warriors) 6/3
Charm (young women) 3/2
Folk Ken (countrymen) 4
Subterfuge (convince) 6/4
Pretend (no pain) 3/6
Survival (no food) 3/na
Brawl (throw) 5/na
Drinking (contests) 3/na
Intimidation (yelling) 4/5
Intrigue (blackmail) 3
Leadership (combat) 4
War Maul (mighty blow) 7/na
Parry (pole arms) 5/na
Throw Spear (distance) 5/na
Area Lore (history) 8
Legend Lore (battles) 5

Reputations

None

Statue Form

Trapped as a statue, Khras-nagar can be physically destroyed. Due to the power of the spells

already cast upon it, only magical weapons can harm the statue, and only spells of Level 25 or higher affect it directly (remember that the *regio's* magic value of 3 applies to any spell rolls). Furthermore, spells cast directly against the statue immediately cost the caster a short-term Fatigue Level, due to the effort required to pierce the statue's curse. Wily spellcasters may realize that spells are more effective against the statue when cast indirectly, such as *The Earth Split Asunder*, which affects the land surrounding the statue. Of course, if characters intend to destroy the statue to harvest its *vis* supply (see below), they need to collect its remains, so indirect spells that obliterate the statue counteract *vis* gathering efforts.

bursting and he pronounced his kingdom to be, 'eternal as the halls of the gods'. The evening after Khras-nagar spoke these words a third time, a messenger of the gods appeared, and mocking him said: 'The gods have listened carefully to your words, and worry lest you not live long enough to see your kingdom grow and flourish in the ages to come. This is their wish: that you shall be blessed with lifetimes beyond counting, strength that never fails, sight better than the keenest of birds, hearing above the prowling wolf and, above all, memory to match the wisest sage. Walk with me now and you shall receive your gifts.'

"So Khras-nagar walked with the messenger onto a hill overlooking his great camp and was there turned into a living statue, and his likeness hidden from his people, and his feet rooted in the ground. 'So you shall live,' said the messenger, 'and silently watch your kingdom dissolve, your people scatter, and your children's children die. You will learn the true meaning of eternity and the foolishness of your proud words. You may speak, if spoken to, and your first words will always be this story, told without fault. So will the people of distant ages learn of your hubris.

"While you may answer questions freely after this recitation, two things may never cross your lips, though they will burn in your mind eternally. The first is the name of your kingdom, race, and lineage. For, if the memory of these things is kept alive it will not be through you. The second is the means of your freedom. For the gods are merciful, and freedom you may have should someone unravel the riddle and find the power to release you."

What Has Gone Before

In fact, the statue is Khras-nagar (see *Khras-nagar's Story* for details), an ancient warrior-leader who long ago offended the ancient gods and was cursed into the form of a statue. While his physical body is solid granite, his mind and spirit continue to inhabit his former body, unable to leave or find final peace in a quiet death. He has seen much, for the ancient gods also cursed him with preternaturally keen eyesight and hearing (+10 to all pertinent Per rolls) which he cannot help but use when something of import happens nearby. In this fashion, he watched his carefully constructed empire crumble within months of his departure, torn apart by internal strife and external warfare. The following years saw his name fade from memory as his people were scattered or killed. Now he has only one thought: to escape his stony prison.

The ancient gods have allowed him one and only one avenue of escape: before at least five witnesses, Khras-nagar must tell his complete story, admit his sin of pride, humbly beg forgiveness, and be granted it by all present. In addition, one of the witnesses must be descended from the blood of Khras-nagar's tribes. A further complication is that Khras-nagar is forbidden to speak to others about the particulars of his release except by answering yes and no questions.

Throughout the centuries following his curse several people have stumbled upon Khras-nagar in statue form. A few have even solved the riddle of Khras-nagar's release, but none, however moved by his plight, have made more than a half-hearted attempt to locate one of his scattered tribesmen.

So Khras-nagar waits, hearing and seeing all that goes on around him, hoping without hope that his next visitor learns his secret and takes pity upon him.

Khras-nagar

Note: Khras-nagar's full physically human description is included below in the event that his curse is lifted.

The first thing that one notices about Khras-nagar is his size, for his muscled bulk looms above all but the largest man. Second, his piercing gaze, called by some the "look of the eagles," can make brave men wither or inspire cowards to fight against great odds. Then, observers might notice that his raven black hair, braided carefully with war-ribbons, falls well down his broad back. His cheeks are also heavily scarred, as are his forearms and thighs. Khras-nagar's voice is rich and commanding, though not as deep as his barrel-chest might suggest.

Khras-nagar is instantly aware of all beings who wander within half a mile of the *regio*. Additionally, he can focus his attention anywhere within ten miles of the *regio*, hearing and seeing everything clearly as if he were no more than a few paces away (treat this as a variant of *Visions of the Wandering Eye*, InIm 45, with sound). Unfortunately, Khras-nagar does not have complete control over this power and he

must watch any violence that occurs within his range, and *must* listen in on any gatherings of five or more people. In this way the ancient gods insure that he sees almost all that is a reminder of his original sin.

Khras-nagar can speak while in statue form, but only if questioned or directed to speak on a particular topic. Thus, you should listen carefully to the players' banter as they explore the *regio* to see if any of their statements can be interpreted as questions to the statue (rhetorical questions included). Khras-nagar *must* respond with his story (see insert) to the first question put to him that day. This happens regardless of how many times the interrogator has heard the story — if



someone leaves the *regio* and returns on a later date to resume questioning, Khras-nagar must tell the story again. After his story has been recited, Khras-nagar may answer questions as he wishes, with one exception. He must respond to any questions regarding the removal of his curse with a simple yes, no, or with silence if neither of the former apply.

As Khras-nagar interacts with the characters, keep the following thing in mind: Khras-nagar has one goal and one goal only, to be freed from his curse. Every question he answers, every word he chooses, and every thought he thinks revolves around his freedom. When new visitors first appear in the *regio* he watches them carefully, noting their words and deeds, evaluating them and their motivations, asking himself, "*How can I convince these people to free me?*"

Once visitors have crossed the barrier of asking the first question, Khras-nagar's first task begins: making the group interested in solving his problem. Sometimes he is lucky and the visitors begin asking questions about his curse without prompting. Otherwise, he tries to steer conversation in that direction with subtle hints. If asked, for example, when he became a statue, he might answer, "*Long ago, when the hands of Rome stretched far, though weakly so. Hundreds of winters have passed, and more will pass still unless I am released from this accursed form. . .*" If this doesn't work, he uses broader and broader hints until he loses his temper and flies into a rage. Khras-nagar's rage is something to behold; to keep from cowering or running in fear from his bellowing tongue-lashing, each character must roll a Brave + a stress die versus Khras-nagar's Com + Intimidation + a stress die. Those beating his roll are not affected, those below his roll, but within five of it cower, and all others run. Another successful Brave roll, of 6+, is needed to stop running, and nothing stops a character from doing so until a Brave roll is made (or the character is physically restrained). Successive Brave rolls are made per Round. Once he loses his temper with a group, Khras-nagar refuses to answer any further questions that day.

Khras-nagar does what he can to maintain the interest of anyone attempting to solve his puzzle. He is amiable and extremely patient, perhaps even telling stories or answering unrelated questions in return for a continuing effort. The solution of his riddle could take weeks or even years to complete, so he does what he can to make the task pleasant, even going so far as to humbly thank his assistants from time to time. During the characters' efforts, it is important to roleplay their developing relationship with Khras-nagar, for their relationship plays an important role if the curse is ever removed. Allow the characters to see Khras-nagar's different moods: depressed and moody, hopeful, defiant, and anxious. Throughout the characters' pursuit of Khras-nagar's salvation, he hints that the solution to

his problem is not an easy thing to master, as the characters soon learn.

Khras-nagar's reaction, once someone discovers the way to remove his curse, can vary wildly depending upon the kind of relationship that has developed between he and his saviors. If their relationship is business-like, Khras-nagar tries to make a deal — ten years of his services to the Covenant in return for his restored human form. This should be a tempting offer, for Khras-nagar is quite a soldier and statesman, offering much to the development of the characters' Covenant. To scholars he offers information, particularly on the history of his empire and the magical powers he encountered in life (maybe he even knows the location of some magical cache, once hidden by his people). To someone he dislikes Khras-nagar lies and cheats to get his freedom. He makes any promise he could conceivably fulfill, and then breaks his word in not living up to his promise. The potential agreements that could be arranged between statue and characters are limitless, but those made should come as a result of roleplaying that's previously occurred.

Khras-nagar's body (in statue form only) contains 10 pawns of *Rego vis*, due to the powerful nature of the spells affecting him. Once he becomes human, the *vis* in him dissipates with the release of the curse. The only way to gather this *vis* is to physically destroy the statue (see *Khras-nagar's Profile*, above). If the statue is destroyed, Khras-nagar cries out and becomes a ghost (Spirit Might 32). As in life, he cannot be laid to rest until he has humbled himself before a kinsman, though now he is free to roam the earth in spirit form. He certainly attempts to possess (see *The Broken Covenant of Calabais*, p. 24-25) and harm those responsible for the destruction of his statue form.

Roleplaying Tips

Speak in a weary, gravely voice while reciting your speech — you've said it a thousand times. You might even tape the speech and replay it each time the players return to the *regio*. If the group starts showing interest, allow your voice to become lively and show some variation. Make yourself unto a statue — sit rigidly in your chair and stare fixedly at one point regardless of who you're speaking to. Try always to be humble, but allow terrible anger to overcome you when dealing with impertinent visitors.

Lifting the Curse

Removing Khras-nagar's curse should not be an easy task. Otherwise it would have been done long ago. The curse was created by ancient gods to punish Khras-nagar and, while they allow him one avenue of escape, they wish his release to require a great deal of



effort, by which to teach him a lesson of humility. The first problem confronting would-be rescuers is learning the names of tribes Khras-nagar ruled, for he may not say their names himself. This search should require some adept scholarship, magic, or both. Characters doing research into the lands of the once-king must make Scribe + Area Lore (appropriate to the local lands) rolls of 12+ to learn the names of the tribes that once resided there. For each failed attempt, the difficulty level of the next attempt increases by 1 point, reflecting the increasing rarity of references on the subject. You may allow as many research attempts as you please, but if one library would conceivably be exhausted, characters must look elsewhere to continue their research rolls. Research may be undertaken in the characters' Covenant, but if Khras-nagar's lands are distant from the character's home, research may have to be conducted at some other institution, maybe at another Covenant or at a monastery. In either case the characters must convince the locals to give them library access, which in itself may result in another quest, demanded by the locals.

Spells used to learn the names of Khras-nagar's tribes depend entirely on the inventiveness of the magi. A spell like *Eyes of the Past* could be used to look back into the past, showing what the former king's

people looked like. Of course, that particular spell isn't powerful enough to look back centuries, so characters may have to improvise a more powerful version, or may have to expend *Imágonem vis* to improve upon the spell's effects. However, even though the spell lets magi look into the past, they may not get the name of a tribe visually. One way to do so might be by seeing a parchment written by the ancient people, but that assumes the people had a written language, and one that the characters can translate it. A more effective spell used to gain a tribe's name might have auditory rather than visual access to the past.

Also keep in mind that though one tribe may not lend itself to the characters' task, another might have a name the characters can learn. Of course, searching numerous tribes requires repeated attempts at research and spell use.

After one of Khras-nagar's tribes has been named, someone descended from that tribe must be found. Again, this task should be quite difficult as Khras-nagar's tribes scattered shortly after his disappearance

and have been absorbed into other tribes and kingdoms over the centuries. Ritual magic or specialized formulaic spells are almost certainly required to track down a descendant. For example, a variant of *The Inexorable Search* can be cast, but one that tracks a lineage rather than a single person. The variant is Level 30, at least, and requires the expenditure of 5 *Córporem vis*. Indeed, several sessions and many years could pass in the search. Over that time the characters may undertake other adventures, repeatedly returning to Khras-nagar's dilemma. The characters may also frequent Khras-nagar's statue during the search. Who knows, maybe one or more characters could befriend the once-king.

If characters have real trouble tracking down a descendant of Khras-nagar, remember that his curse does not state how pure of blood his descendant must be. This "loophole" is something left to you as a means to adjust the difficulty of the quest, though it should not be revealed to the group. Rather, the characters might think of the loophole as a clever way to outwit the curse. The magi, for example, might have little trouble finding a descendant who is one-eighth Khras-nagarian stock.

On the other hand, if you want to complicate the ancient king's release, imagine the characters' (and Khras-nagar's) dismay if the humbling of Khras-nagar to his descendant fails to release him! Maybe the descendant's blood is too thin to appease the ancient gods. Or, the descendant may want something in return for his forgiveness, requiring that the characters fulfill some dangerous quest. If the descendant refuses to help the king, or the characters refuse to fulfill the descendant's demands, the characters must renew their search for the bloodline. If the first descendant's blood is too thin, his forgiveness having no effect on the statue, the characters must also track down a descendant with at least one-quarter Khras-nagarian blood.

If you're feeling particularly cruel you might even make the descendant of Khras-nagar a companion or grog at the Covenant. The magi probably don't think to search so close to home. They should get a hint that a descendant is nearby, though, when *Intéllego* spells used to track one down simply fizzle. Of course, the characters may misinterpret this magical distortion as interference by the ancient gods, or as a magical attack from some other force. Maybe the characters even root out an enemy suspected of interfering, only to learn that he's innocent. And, imagine the characters' disgust when, after a long and unsuccessful search for a descendant, one is inadvertently discovered among the covenfolk.

Mechanics

For the most part, entering the *regio* surrounding Khras-nagar is managed as described in the previous Chapter, the *regio* Chapter. Some special conditions apply to entering the *regio*, though. Grog or companions whose main occupation is war may add their best combat skill as a bonus to rolls made when attempting to enter the *regio*. In addition, any person who can legitimately claim to be a countryman of Khras-nagar can add 5 to his entry rolls. It's up to you whether characters can claim descendancy. Maybe they can somehow fake it, using spells to "trick" the *regio* into granting them access when they are otherwise denied it (i.e. normal entry rolls fail).

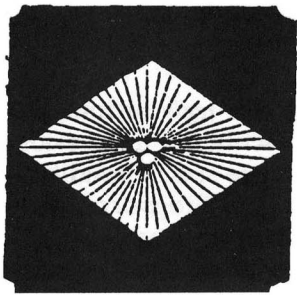
Location

This *regio* can be placed almost anywhere, though for best results it should be placed on a lonely hill or mountainside that commands a majestic view. If you're ambitious you might do a bit of research to find out what kind of tribes wandered the lands of Mythic Europe eight to ten centuries ago, and might locate the statue of Khras-nagar on an appropriate tribe's lands. To better suit Khras-nagar to the tribe you decide to associate him with, feel free to change his name, dress, speech and the writing on the former king's shield.

Stories

Stories concerning Khras-nagar divide neatly into two categories: discovering him and attempting to release him. He can be found any number of ways ranging, at one end of the scale, from simply stumbling into his *regio* by accident, to, at the other end of the scale, finding him only after an exhaustive scholarly and magical search. Some sample story ideas for introducing Khras-nagar into your Saga are provided below. The question arises, though, as to what happens once Khras-nagar is found? That's entirely up to you and your troupe.

In finding Khras-nagar some groups may be immediately interested in his plight, while others may shrug their shoulders and say, "So what?" First, note that neither approach is right nor wrong, they're just different. As previously stated, if everyone took a huge interest in freeing Khras-nagar he would have been freed long ago. Ideally, Khras-nagar should be introduced into your Saga in passing, in a short scene during another story (if desired, Khras-nagar could even provide information to help complete that story).



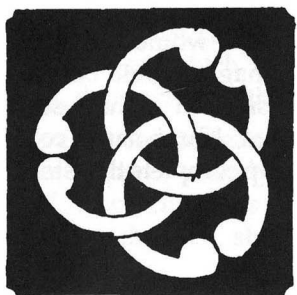
The group may or may not bother to find out how he can be released at this time, but they at least know of his existence. If the characters are curious enough, they might pursue the statue's puzzle at a later time, or might think to use Khras-nagar as an information source in later

stories. Conceivably, the characters may even forget Khras-nagar exists and be none the worse for it. They may regret their memory loss, though, when the once-king's services could be invaluable in another story. Regardless of how the characters encounter Khras-nagar, let a few sessions (if not several game years) go by after their meeting, and then spring a problem on the characters that can easily be solved with Khras-nagar's direct assistance or knowledge. Of course, he doesn't help unless the group promises to free him. . .

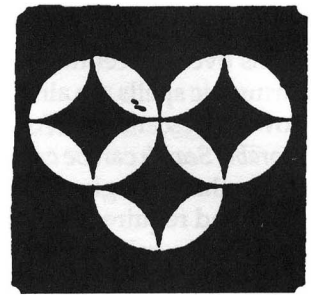
The above introductions are just a few ways to enter this *regio* into your Saga. Also keep in mind that not all stories involving this *regio* need be resolved in a single or sequential series of game sessions. On the contrary, the richness and depth of your Saga can be drastically enhanced by spreading out a single story about the *regio* over several separate game sessions (as in *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*). Several examples for ongoing stories are provided below.

- Locate Khras-nagar near your Covenant (perhaps part of the Covenant's lands — the statue could be chosen as a minor magic during the Covenant creation process). The monolith could be a well-known local feature that no one in the Covenant thinks twice about. However, rumors circulate among the locals that the statue can speak, though no one from the Covenant has heard it do so. Imagine some grog's surprise if he wanders into the *regio* while mumbling a rhetorical question to himself (remember that Khras-nagar must be asked a question to speak), triggering Khras-nagar's speech. Once induced to speak, he can't be made to stop, trying to get aid in his predicament.

- A grog reports the following events to his Covenant's magi. *"I was traveling along (while on patrol or after getting supplies in a local village), and I noticed a strange fellow wandering along ahead of me. At first I thought he was one of you, cause he was dressed in robes and such, but when I got closer I saw he was a stranger. 'Now, what's a strange mage doing wandering around these parts?' I asks myself, so I ups and follows*

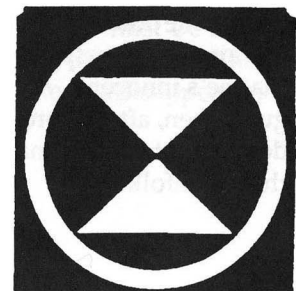


him. This fellow goes straight for this hill — you know the one — the one with the monolith on it? And he goes up it a bit, waves his hands and mumbles some, then he just takes a few steps and disappears into thin air! I was tempted to leave right then, but I knew you'd want a full report, so I set myself down and waits a bit. And what do you know, a short while later this mage comes popping back out from wherever he went, grinning like he's gonna split! I hid in some trees till he left, then came here as fast as I could."



The magus is from a rival Covenant who recently discovered Khras-nagar's location from an old text. The foreign magus and his brethren believe that Khras-nagar knows the whereabouts of certain powerful magical items, items belonging to a powerful magus once associated with their Covenant. This lost magus is believed dead, and the enemy Covenant believes that he entrusted the secret of the items' location to Khras-nagar. What do the characters do? If they can get Khras-nagar to reveal his knowledge of the items, and if the characters can recover those items, they snub the rival Covenant and increase their own power. Of course, Khras-nagar demands his freedom for any information given, and gladly plays the rival Covenants off each other in an attempt to be freed quickly. And, if the characters do get the rival Covenant's items, how do those rivals react? They might stage a secret war against the Covenant, or might claim the items are rightfully theirs and demand their return at a Tribunal meeting. If the items are of a dispensable variety, like *vis*, and the characters spend them before the Tribunal meeting, they must come up with some sort of replacement, maybe even useless forgeries. Finally, let's not forget the magus who hid the magical items with Khras-nagar. Maybe he didn't die and returns now, angry that his possessions have been tampered with.

- A marauding army is sweeping through lands adjacent to the Covenant, burning and pillaging all in its way. Though the magi are powerful, even they might be overcome by a concerted attack upon their Covenant. Even if attacks upon the Covenant are thwarted, the surrounding lands are certainly ravaged, leaving the Covenant with no source of food, clothing or lab equipment. Furthermore, the local nobles bicker constantly, and none



are competent military leaders. What do the magi do?

One option is to free Khras-nagar and hope that he can use his considerable skills in forging and commanding an army to divert or defeat the threatening armies. Perhaps a small, highly trained force of grogs led by Khras-nagar, coupled with the power of magi, can stave off defeat. Or, the magi could strike a bargain with the local rulers: "*We'll provide a leader-king that can defeat this horde if you'll levy an army for his command.*" Whatever the means of their salvation, the magi have

to work quickly, for they must free Khras-nagar before the invaders make their decisive strike against the Covenant.

Historically, the invading horde could be anything from a force of religious crusaders (from the Albigensian Crusades in southern France), to the raiders of wild tribes (like the Picts in northern England), to a band belonging to the numerous migrations of tribes through Germany and eastern Europe (something like the historical Huns or Goths).





Chapter Two: The Flower Lady

Type: Faerie

Focus: A garden

Levels: M, 5

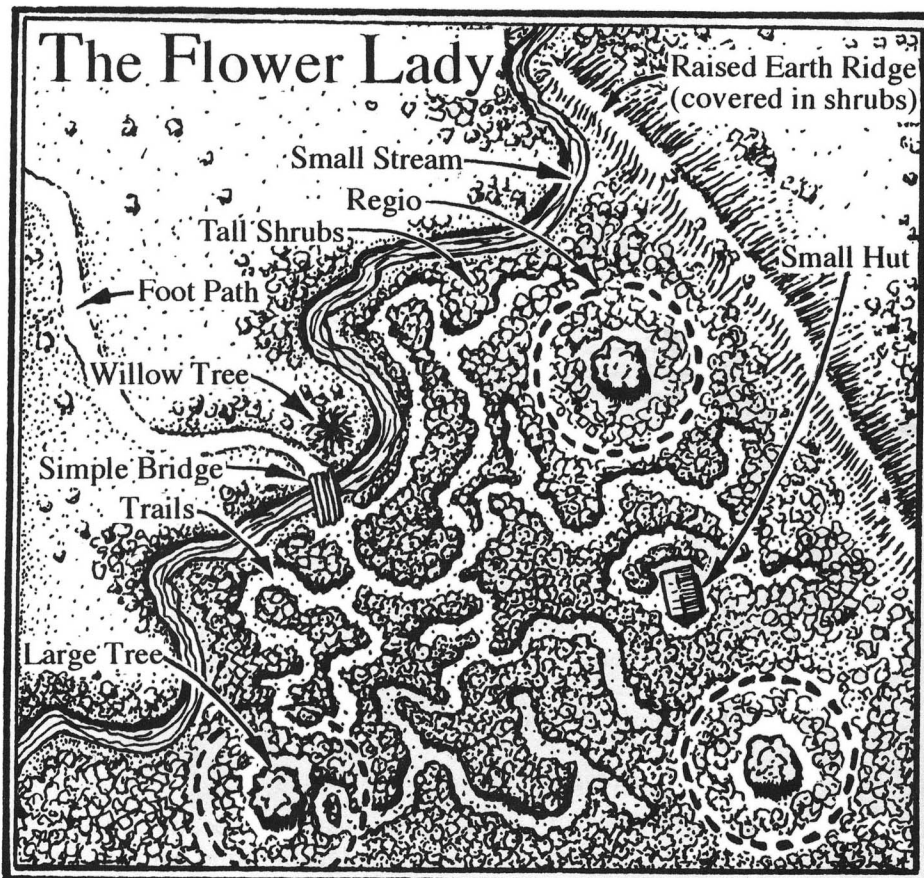
Overview: This Faerie *regio* features a beautiful, magical garden, tended by an old and knowledgeable blind woman. She is not magical herself and does not know that she inhabits a *regio*. This magical place can be placed on the outskirts of any small village.

DESCRIPTION

The Mundane Regio

This *regio* rests upon a garden, but it's not just any garden for it has roots in Faerie. The whole of the garden covers a patch of ground perhaps thirty yards across and is roughly triangular in shape. Bordered on one side by a small, lazy stream, and on another by a waist-high ridge of earth covered in shrubs and berry-bushes (some say the remains of a Roman road), the garden's greenery rises to meet its final border: a forest. Within these confines the garden's wild profusion of plants is broken only by a small, single-roomed habitation, clearly at peace with the creeping vines that cover most of its sun-washed walls.

The garden is connected to the rest of the world by a small but sturdy split-log bridge. The bridge spans the stream a few feet above the green waters, the logs at either end lost amid batches of



of a wild, green maze, wherein is scattered pockets of edible, medicinal and otherwise useful plants.

One of the myriad paths eventually leads to the hut at the center of the clearing. As the hut is overgrown with flowering vines and assaulted on all sides by clumps of bushes and tall grass, it is hard to see exactly what the hut is made of. Closer inspection reveals the hut to be of standard daub-and-wattle construction, though much of its beams and wooden thatching sprouts leaves and green shoots. The hut is square, about fifteen feet to a side, and is covered with a steeply pitched, thatched roof that almost reaches the ground on two sides. A red-clay brick chimney pierces the thatching to the rear of the house, its ivy covered heights reaching skyward with thin wisps of smoke. A split oaken door faces the

cattails. A willow tree surveys the village end of the bridge, small bells and strips of metal hanging from most of its many branchings. Playful breezes send a quiet susurrus of bell-tones from the tree, providing a point of reference for the garden's blind keeper. It is customary for visitors to announce themselves by shaking the tree gently before crossing the bridge. Often, crudely made corsages of aromatic flowers can be found decorating the tree as well — heartfelt gifts from the local children.

Once across the bridge, visitors find their feet following a narrow footpath that immediately branches in several directions. The paths are hemmed in by a variety of tall grasses, flowering bushes, interwoven saplings, and vine-covered trellises. Coupled with the chaotic meanderings of the paths themselves, these brambles almost ensure that newcomers have a difficult time finding their way about the garden. At seemingly random points paths also end in small cul-de-sacs: one containing a collection of weed-like, aromatic herbs; one encircling a rosebush that bears small, tight, fragrant blossoms; another ending in carefully packed ground that shows the tops of green onions and turnips; and another, surrounded by thorny blackberry bushes, filled with creeping plants whose green pods are barely formed. Overall, the effect is that

path, its upper half open to the fragrant breeze.

Beyond the door lies the single room of Marisa, the Flower Lady. After their eyes adjust to the dim light, visitors first note a stout table along the entirety of one wall. The table is covered with clay jars of all shapes and sizes, some empty, some capped with pale yellow wax, and others half-full of mysterious items. In the corner lies a straw mattress, and in another sits a strong wooden chest, unlocked. It is filled with various bags and jars of precious unguents, herbs, and potions. The walls are covered with pegs from which hang all manner of things: odd-shaped bits of leather, a dried fish, an old hat, a strand of garlic, a well-worn cloak, and a bunch of feathers. As you need to, you may identify potions and ingredients to investigative characters. For instance, one unguent might be brown and foul smelling, but helps heal skin diseases (+8 to any disease recovery roll). Of course, characters don't know exactly what all concoctions do until they're tested. A cauldron hangs on a hook near the fireplace and various cooking utensils make their home nearby, adding to the general chaos.

The Faerie Regio (5)

Instead of several nested levels of increasing strength, this *regio* features several small *regio* “pockets” of identical strength. Three of these pockets exist in Marisa’s garden, one near each of its corners. Circular in shape and about twenty yards across, they are not connected to each other in any way except through the mundane world they rest upon. Time behaves oddly in these small *regio*, for though it passes at a normal rate throughout the pockets, each is out of synch with the others by several months. Thus it happens that at any time during the year, each of the seasons can be found somewhere in Marisa’s garden. If the mundane garden is in the full bloom of summer, then one pocket is swirling with snow in the grip of winter, another is experiencing the first chills of autumn and the last is filled with budding plants and green shoots seeking the springtime sun. Thus, part of Marisa’s garden is always producing something, be it food, herbs or medicinals.

The pockets are similar in layout to the mundane garden, each with winding, branching paths that lead to small areas of cultivated growth within them. The plants that grow within each *regio*, however, tend to be hardier, brighter, crisper, more succulent and more fragrant than their mundane counterparts. In addition, many strange and magical plants make their home in the pockets — some plants are quite rare even in Arcadia (see *Faeries*, Chapter 4). Anyone searching for a specific plant without Marisa’s approval has little success, for not only are the *regio* veritable mazes of greenery, but their faerie inhabitants constantly harass and pester trespassers (see below for more).

In the center of each pocket stands a large oak tree (seen as a sapling in the mundane world), the guardians of the garden. Given to Marisa by a council of High Faeries over a century ago, these trees come alive at the first sign of any danger to the woman, converging on her attackers in an attempt to drive them off with branchy flailings and hearty bashings. If the attackers seem undaunted, one of the trees gingerly picks up Marisa and promptly disappears with her to a safe haven in Arcadia, all the while assaulted by Marisa’s loud and creative protests. As soon as any immediate danger seems past, the trees return Marisa and take up guard positions along the perimeter of the garden to watch for returning interlopers. Once they are sure the garden is safe, they return to their normal spots within the *regio*. The trees can move freely between the *regio* pockets and the mundane garden, though they may not remain permanently outside their native pockets.

The garden contains large amounts of *Creo* and *Herbam vis* (about 25 pawns of each, replenished each

year), though anyone brash enough to collect it without permission faces the wrath of all Faerie.

Marisa, the Flower Lady

If seen walking through a village lane, Marisa appears little different than any other elderly female peasant. Her height is not great — she hardly clears five feet — and her garb is simple: dirt-brown and homespun, with a considerable number of patches. Her hair is loosely tied with a pale green scarf. Careful observers might note a few wisps of pearl-white hair peeking out above Marisa’s worn face, which is lined and craggy with age. Those taking a second look particularly note her fierce nose which, undiminished by age, stands like a mountain peak between the shrunken pits that were once her bright eyes. Well-tanned skin hugs her broad cheekbones, which hang over her determined jaw not far below. From the firm set of Marisa’s lips and full cheeks it is clear that she still possesses most of her teeth, unusual for someone so old. Those slowing their steps to match Marisa’s shuffling, though purposeful gait, may be surprised to find her emanating, not the sour smell of age, but rather the smell of new hay, tinged with a hint of lilac or rose. Also surprising is the fact that she bears her stout walking stick firmly in hand instead of sweeping and tapping it about as those lacking eyes are wont to do.





Marisa lives in the one-room hut at the center of the *regio* but spends most of her time tending her beautiful, but wild, child — the garden. Up before the dawn, she quickly washes and breaks her fast, makes a short circuit of her realm, then gathers her tools and begins the day's tasks. She knows every square inch of her garden by heart, and makes no distinction between the mundane world and the pockets of *regio*. To her, the pockets are simply a natural part of the garden, the way things are and always have been. She cannot (or will not) remember a time when she did not live in her garden.

Strangers find Marisa secretive and brusque, if they get to meet her at all. She does not like to be disturbed by mortals, and often ignores them entirely, as though she is deaf as well as blind. The few humans she does deal with have learned that a certain ritual must be followed to assure her attention. First, the willow tree must be politely shaken and a small bouquet of fragrant flowers left in its branches. Then, while remaining on the far side of the bridge, visitors must clearly state their name and purpose for coming, and must apologize for disturbing the Flower Lady, all the while commenting upon the beauty of her garden. The final and most important step involves stating loudly, "*Bring a gift of brown, a gift of green, and a gift of color to grace your garden.*" These gifts are: a handful of seed, a small growing plant, and something possessing a bit of color

from the plant world; berries, fruit, or flowers are common. If everything is to her liking, Marisa appears and welcomes the petitioner across the bridge. The best way for characters to learn of this ritual is from a friendly villager, perhaps a child. Or, they might get thrown out of the garden once, and then seek assistance in the village.

Anyone who steps across the bridge without permission risks Marisa's wrath, and thereby the wrath of her faerie friends (see below) or the guardian trees. Marisa does, however, have a weakness for children and often allows them to wander her garden freely, provided they don't pick too many fruits and berries. She loves to spend time with children, teaching them the ways of the earth, shaping their hands around a carefully planted bulb, or singing them songs of ancient times in her harsh and unmelodic voice. Marisa has given a select few children responsibilities within the garden, which they take very seriously. Anyone straying into a part of the garden where a child is working is likely to be challenged by the resolute waif, who wields a trowel or shovel. Usually, as the children get older they lose interest in the garden or become too busy to visit, something Marisa accepts with quiet sorrow. Occasionally, however, a child maintains interest into adulthood, and often becomes an apprentice healer in a nearby village.

The Guardian Trees

Faerie Might 23

Int -3

Per +5

Str +7

Stm +5

Prs +3

Com -5

Dex +2

Qik -2

Size +5

Bash: 1st +6 Atk +9 Dam +21

Crush: 1st +3 Atk +7 Dam +26

Fat +5 **Def** +3 **Soak** +26*

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

*Soak is modified by -5 for edged-weapon attacks and by -10 for fire-based attacks.

Notes: When attacking, the trees first try to sweep any attackers off their feet with great swipes of their branches. Anyone hit must make a Str + Athletics roll of 6+ to remain on his feet. Next, the trees try to crush anyone underfoot by moving over them. The trees are not vindictive and only seek to protect Marisa and her garden. They do not pursue anyone past the confines of the garden and usually heed cries for mercy from clearly penitent humans.

Beyond children, Marisa has as little to do with mortals as possible, though she does make exceptions for those truly in need her healing expertise. For those in need, Marisa is kind and generous, giving completely of herself and her garden — her wrinkled hands feel the nature of ills more surely than the keenest pair of eyes. The villagers rarely rely on Marisa's services, though, fearing her strangeness and skill at witchcraft. And, when villagers do seek Marisa's aid, they only bring the afflicted as far as the bridge, then turn tail after announcing their presence. Their fears keep them from going farther, and after treated by Marisa, a person is forever looked at with curiosity and a hint of suspicion by his fellow villagers (-2 to all Com rolls with villagers). After all, who knows what tainted magic Marisa works upon her patients in her hidden garden?

Where peasants fear Marisa for her Faerie power, Marisa feels great love for those truly Faerie. She loves faeries for it was their kind who took her in and sheltered her, a scared and trembling little girl running from mundanes terrified of her powers (for more

details, see *Stories*). In time, the faeries too learned of Marisa's power, and have come to revere her for it. Now Marisa is known throughout Faerie as the Flower Lady, the One Who Heals. Faeries come from far and wide to seek her aid and advice. Even the lords of the Daoine Sidhe have been known to frequent her garden. Marisa asks for no payment in return for her services, but is paid nevertheless: bits of twig and moss, or a handful of smooth pebbles from shy forest faeries; loaves of sweet nut bread from smiling brownies; a newly mended shovel courtesy of a gruffly thankful dwarf; and especially prized, a seed or cutting from some far corner of Arcadia, usually placed on her doorstep by unseen hands.

Other Inhabitants

Many faeries make the garden their home. Most have affinities for particular types of plants found within the garden (lilac faeries, thyme and rosemary faeries, rosebush faeries) or are general helper-type faeries. The Flower Lady does not tolerate loafers and troublemakers in her domain, a rule strictly enforced by the faeries. All the faeries are useful in some way: some round up and direct earthworm aerations, others keep Marisa's hut tidy and clean, others prune, trim or weed, and all vie for the important post of The Flower Lady's Aide, sitting on her shoulder and providing visual details when asked. In addition, some of the faeries have been trained as nurses to assist with Marisa's cases. All the faeries love the Flower Lady dearly and don't hesitate to give their all for her.

In case of danger to the *regio*, each faerie does its best to defend it: pelting intruders with rocks or acorns, pinching or sticking attackers with thorns, obscuring ruffians' vision with clouds of pollen shaken from nearby flowers (or making them sneeze from the same), tripping mortals, or setting gardening tools so intruders step on them, and so the list goes on. You are left to determine the precise game results of these defenses. Just keep in mind that faerie interference is mainly an annoyance and distraction, it's not overly harmful. If the faeries can't drive intruders off by themselves, one of the faeries alerts each of the guardian trees, who move into the fray, limbs swinging. If you need the profile of any given faerie, refer to those provided in *Faeries*, or create your own.

Mechanics

It is extremely difficult to enter the *regio* pockets without Marisa's permission, for the garden's faeries hinder any such attempts, disorienting and distracting intruders (-8 modifier to characters' attempts to enter the pockets). On the other hand, those welcomed to the garden can slip from one *regio* to the other with ease,

and are even helped through by the faeries (+8 to entrance rolls) .

Location

This *regio* is best placed near a forest in a slightly out of the way place. Villages can be nearby, but paths to the garden should be overgrown and difficult to find. Legends of the “*strange old garden witch*” should abound in these villages, and should be followed by warnings to travelers not to go too near. You may wish to locate one or more people in a village who are willing to help characters meet Marisa. Such people might include an enthusiastic child or secretive healer.

Stories

This *regio* can be worked into your Saga in a number of ways. Note that Marisa’s past has purposefully been left vague so that its details can easily be incorporated into your stories. What is known: Marisa lost her eyes at an early age, and chased by those frightened by her powers, escaped to the clearing where the faeries tended to her. The guardian trees were given as gifts which, with the help of Faerie, created the *regio* as it is today. But, how did Marisa lose her eyes? This and other story possibilities are discussed below:

- Marisa’s eyes were destroyed by a short-tempered Herbam magus, jealous of her natural powers. Even today faeries eagerly search for news of this magus, wishing to punish him for his evil deed. Unfortunately, the magus is quite elusive and has constructed powerful barriers to keep himself safe. What do the characters do if they learn of this story? The Herbam magus might be known to them. He might even be the parent of a covenmember. Or, he could be a valuable friend or ally to the Covenant. In any case, the powers of Faerie pay dearly to get their hands on the magus. Do the characters help the faeries?

- Marisa’s parents were diabolists who sacrificed her eyes in a horrible ritual. Fortunately, she was able to escape before the ritual was complete, destroying years of careful preparations on the part of her parents’ coven. The diabolists have looked for Marisa ever since. A Demon has found her, but cannot enter the garden without mortal help. This Demon approaches someone in the characters’ group, someone who knows of the *regio*, and tries to trick the character into helping him into the garden. The exact nature of this treachery is left to you, based on what a character might fall for. If a character can’t be duped into helping the Demon, the being tries to strike a deal with the character, and the Demon is a powerful bargainer. If the character helps the Demon, even without his knowledge, the character gains the eternal enmity of Faerie. Taken far

Marisa’s Profile

Int (good memory) +1

Per (keen-eared) +3*

Str (weak knees) -2

Stm (resilient) +2

Prs (aura of respect) +4

Com (biting tongue) +2

Dex (nimble hands) +1

Qik (shuffling step) -4

Confidence: +4

Age: 60-70 (apparent)

* For taste, touch, smell and hearing only.

-4 for sight.

Personality Traits

Secretive +4

Direct +3

Content +2

Important Skills

Alertness (sounds) 5

Search (by smell) 4

Healer (faeries) 6

Premonitions (danger to garden) 4

Weather Sense (rain) 3

Charm (youngsters) 3

Guile (about garden) 4

Folk Ken (peasants) 3

Sing (ancient rhymes) 1

Diplomacy (Faeries) 3

Intimidation (visitors) 3

Gardening (tending) 7

Evaluate (plants) 5

Garden Lore (locations) 4

Faerie Lore (gifts) 3

Reputations

Healer/Faerie (5)

Recluse/local adults (3)

Wonderful/local children (2)

Powers

Marisa can talk with plants whenever she likes, though it takes her a while to learn a new plant’s particular “dialect.” She constantly mutters and sings to her charges, inquiring after their health and needs, or tells them to prepare for winter, or to stop

crowding their neighbors. In addition, the plants do as she wishes in times of need, regardless of their own well-being. Devoted to Marisa, the plants strive to protect her against intruders. Vines wrap around opponents' legs, and grasses and thorn bushes whip out with scratchy branches. This is not so much a power as a manifestation of the plants' love for Marisa. Treat these attacks as similar Herbam spells, like *Trap of the Entwining Vines* (CrHe 15) or *Whip of Thorns* (ReHe 5). Feel free to use other spell-like attacks as desired.

Roleplaying Tips

You are old and have little time for nonsense, even from faeries. Be abrupt and get to the point quickly, especially with pesky mortals. Treat faeries and their like with respect, though. No matter who you speak to, don't be afraid to speak the truth, no matter how much it hurts others.

When speaking as Marisa, close your eyes and speak in a husky, alto voice.

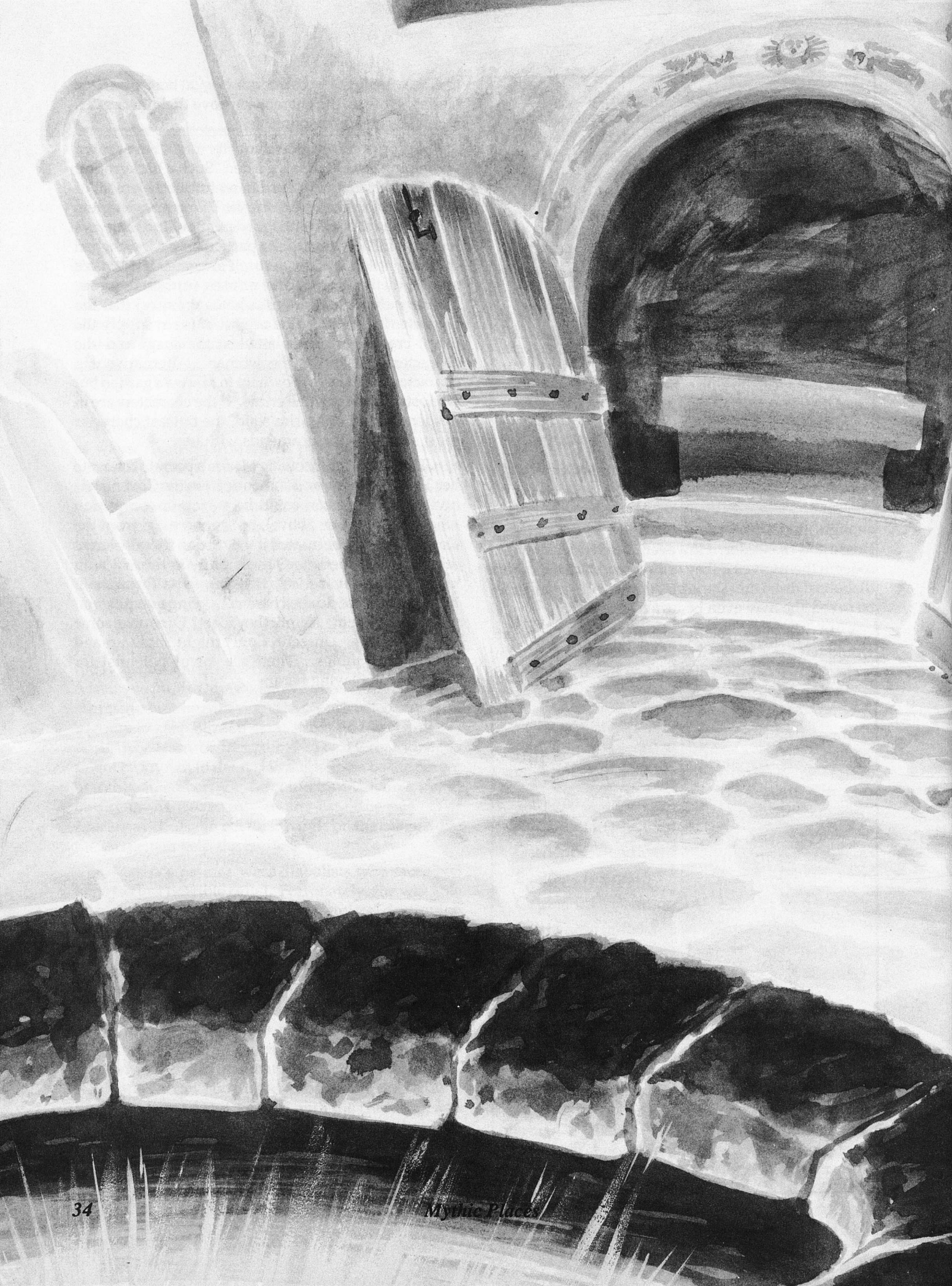
enough, this anger could turn into a war between Faerie and the Order. However, the characters might redeem themselves if they can rescue Marisa from the diabolical ritual that she is made a part of. If she cannot be saved she may even be turned to evil.

- Marisa has mysteriously disappeared. As fate would have it, a group from the characters' Covenant is staying at a nearby village when the disappearance

is discovered, so is confronted by a host of angry faeries. How do the characters prove their innocence, and who is really responsible?

- A grog or companion character might have grown up helping tend Marisa's garden. Such a background makes Marisa and her garden an intrinsic element of the character's Covenant, for the character who grew up there may return to the garden often, and is always welcome. That welcome is particularly handy when the magi need a rare herb. However, if Marisa's generosity is abused, she refuses further requests. Furthermore, what if Marisa hates the magi that the character lives with? She might refuse to supply the magi, creating tension between the magi and the character who knows the woman. Alternatively, a character might have grown up in Marisa's garden but was ostracized for some crime. If the characters are in desperate need of Marisa's aid, the outcast character must somehow make amends with her.

- The faeries are throwing Marisa a party to celebrate her 300th birthday, and someone from the Covenant is invited! This person could be a grog or companion who knew her (see above), or several magi from the Covenant might be invited if they are on friendly terms with the local faeries. Quite a party is thrown with many important faeries attending from throughout the realm. What do the characters bring as a gift, and what strange beings might they meet? Of course, some faeries from the Unseelie Court might show up and plot to ruin things. There's a lot of potential for comedic roleplaying here.





Chapter Three: The Well of St. Alban

Type: Divine

Focus: A town well

Levels: M, 3

Overview: This *regio* centers on a well whose waters have healing powers. It can be located almost anywhere, including uninhabited areas, but the following description assumes it is found in a square or courtyard in a moderate- to large-sized town.

DESCRIPTION

The Mundane Regio

Surrounded by roughly cobbled stone, a small, unassuming well sits in the middle of a town square. A busy throng bustles and flows through the square, swirling around merchants' sturdy stalls and farmers' fragrant carts. Senses are assailed from all directions: brightly colored bolts of cloth hang fluttering in the wind, coins jangle, mules bray, and the tang of spiced, roasting meats, polished leather and fresh dung collide while dirty, sweaty, barely clothed shoulders briefly touch those resplendent in velvets and silks. All in all, a typical scene for market day in the big city.

On quiet days, one might take time to browse in the narrow shops fronting the square or catch brief scenes of family life through half-shuttered upper windows. A small church breaks up the string of

two-storied buildings on one side of the square. Made of dirty gray stone and looking none too impressive with its small bell tower and simple stained-glass windows, the church seems a forgotten orphan to the grand cathedral a half-mile south. One might also note a low, circular well directly in front of the church towards the center of the square. It is made of the same gray stone, worn and weathered from over a century of use. Walking closer brings other details into view: a trickle of water leaking from a sturdy wooden trough butted against the well, a small step leading up to the waist-high well, and a rope and bucket anchored to the well with a rusty iron hook. The well's opening is five feet wide and leads deep into the earth. Far below one can see the glimmer of water. An almost unreadable bronze plaque, embedded in the rim of the well, reads, "The well of St. Alban, the forsaken."

The Divine Regio (3)

The Divine level of this *regio* is quite small and entirely contained within the well itself. It begins just below the inner edge of the well, and descends into the water below. Because of this arrangement, few people, if any, have actually entered the *regio*. Instead, whenever a bucket is lowered there is a chance that it enters the *regio* and is filled with Divine, rather than mundane,

water. Other than the presence of this blessed water, the well is identical to its mundane counterpart in every way.

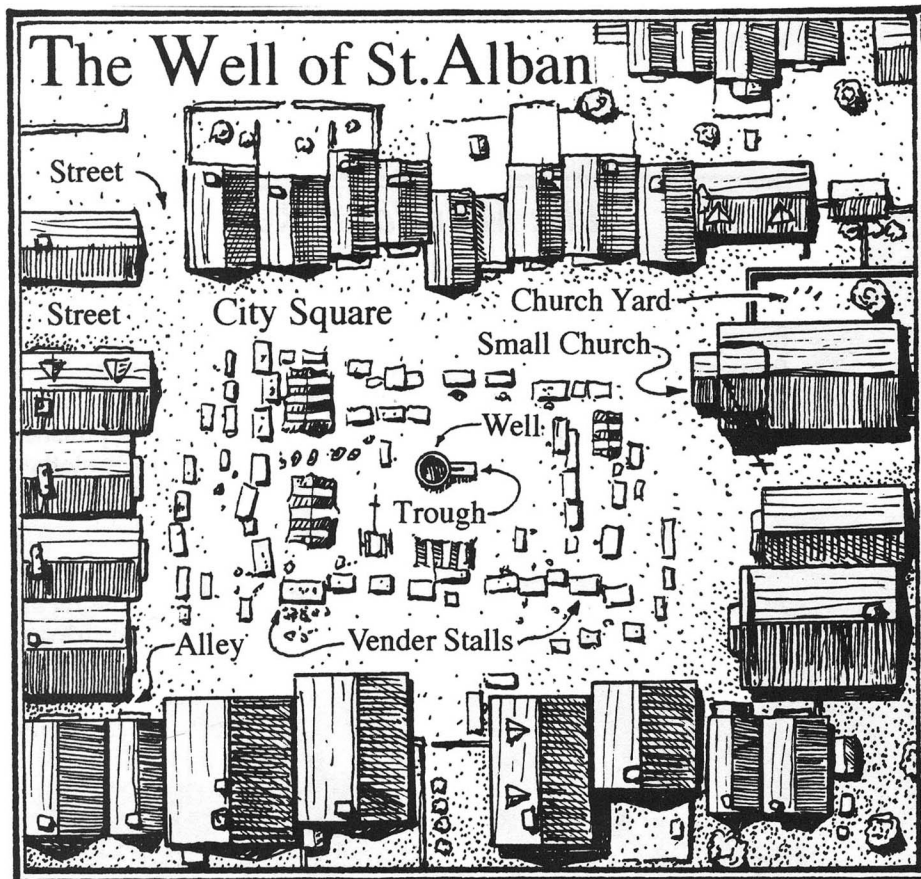
Those drinking the blessed water find it refreshing, cool, and extremely satisfying — perhaps the best drink of water they've ever had. More than a few swallows result in a calm, clear state of mind regardless of the drinker's initial emotional state. A Personality Trait of Calm +3 is gained until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first. Drinking quantities of this precious fluid can heal the physical body as well as the mind. In short, the water is blessed and has healing powers limited only by you.

In game terms, a few sips restore two Fatigue Levels instantly, long- or short- term. Drinking deeply can also help heal wounds. Those who are Hurt immediately become Unhurt, and those Wounded may roll a simple die using the Wound Recovery Chart (*Ars Magica*, p. 53) with a +10 modifier to the roll to determine how long wounds take to heal fully. Chirurgy and Stamina are *not* used as modifiers to this roll. Repeated trips to the well have no effect on healing the same wounds; only new wounds may be treated by each trip to the well.

In addition, people suffering the effects of a malign spell are allowed a roll to see if the spell is dissipated,

even if those people normally have no Magic Resistance (in fact, Magic Resistance is not used here at all). Both magi and non-magi roll a simple die and add to the result to the value of any Personality Traits, Virtues and Reputations that are considered Christian. On the other hand, evil or heretical Personality Traits, Flaws and Reputations act as penalties toward efforts to remove a spell. No bonuses from magical abilities, forms, or techniques can be used. A roll greater than the spell's Level, divided by three, dissipates the spell. If an effort to lift a spell fails, successive attempts may be made, once per day.

The well may also have a chance to alleviate other types of ailments, both physical and mental. Simply assign a person's sickness or disease an equivalent Wound Level and allow a roll on the Wound Chart, as above. At your dis-



cretion, the waters can do even more miraculous things, such as cure blindness, lameness, or leprosy, but such salvation should be an extremely rare occurrence.

It is important to note that only the person who actually draws water from the well benefits from its powers. Exceptions to this rule are made for those who are unable to draw their own water, for whatever reason. Additionally, the water must be drunk quickly, for its powers weaken and completely dissipate a few short minutes after being drawn from the well. Characters may fill their canteens from the well, but the water soon loses its Divine power, though characters might not realize that until it's too late.

What Has Gone Before

Over one hundred years ago, an exhausted nun named Sister Alban made her way shakily towards the village well in the middle of the night. Her cheeks stained with tears and soot, she collapsed on the shallow lip of the well, sobbing. She had much to cry about, for not only had a group of lawless bandits violated her convent earlier that evening, but they had stolen its sheep and burned its outbuildings. Two of the sisters were near death from their efforts to save some of the livestock. As Sister Alban wept, her tears fell to the water below. Praying, she wrestled to control emotions and thoughts that pierced her beliefs almost to the core.

In the middle of the night, she awoke to see an angel standing over her, telling her not to cry, whispering that she was not forsaken, *not* forsaken. . .

Sister Alban then slept the most peaceful sleep of her life that night by the well and when she awoke, she anointed the well with tears of joy. From that day forward, the well was blessed, and healed those who came in hurt and despair.

Note: This story is well-known to the well's local inhabitants. Any number of people — from talkative peasants to the local priest — can relate the story to an inquisitive group.

At the Well

In the years since its blessing, the well of St. Alban has gained some local notoriety, but little widespread fame. This is due in part to the strictly regional knowledge of St. Alban, but it can also be attributed to the subtle nature of the well's miracles. After all, the water is not guaranteed Divine each time a bucket is drawn, and if it is Divine, it usually only speeds the healing process; it does not cure outright. Thus, drinking well water is thought of as "healthy" by many within the town, and is simply added to the list of things a person does to remain so, like wearing garlic



or sleeping with the windows closed. Occasionally a scholar, pilgrim or monk makes the trek to pay homage to or drink from the well, but this occurs only a few times a year.

The well is tended by the priests of the local charitable church, the Church of St. Alban (briefly described above). They know of the well's powers, but like to keep them quiet for fear of being overrun by pilgrims. The priests draw all of their holy water from the well, and have been known to draw water for those too seriously ill or injured to draw it themselves. Perceptive townsfolk know that the priests draw water only after the church bells have rung, usually for Prime (at sunrise). Otherwise, the well is used as is any other town well; the trough is filled for thirsty oxen or livestock at market, people drench themselves with bucketfuls on blistering days, and weary apprentices carry sloshing leather bucketfuls at day's end to rinse out their masters' shops.

Anyone visiting the well can drink without drawing attention. Blatant spellcasting, climbing inside the well, or similar acts of overt strangeness are certainly noted. The first response to such activity comes from nearby townsfolk, shouting "Hey, just what do you think you're doing?" or from those screaming and running, if appropriate. Then, priests from the church appear on the scene, followed shortly by the town watch if things get out of hand. Characters find the priests extremely protective of the well, for they do what they can to



protect it, even sacrificing their lives. Any lasting damage done to the well earns the priests' and town's enmity.

Mechanics

As described above, whenever someone lowers a bucket into the well, there is a chance that it enters the *regio* and is filled with blessed water. Roll for entry as usual, giving bonuses for Personality Traits, Virtues and Reputations that are considered good or Christian, while penalizing for Traits, Flaws and Reputations that are evil. Under no circumstances can a practicing diabolist draw Divine water from the well. The local priests have found that the chances of drawing forth holy water are increased if one prays to St. Alban (+1 bonus) and rings the church bells (+3 bonus). Since one needs to roll an 8+ for success, the devout priests of St. Alban's church are usually successful. Remember that the water is only special for the one actually drawing it, unless the person in need of it is physically incapable of drawing, in which case another may draw for him. Furthermore, if the person drawing water from the well is himself sick or wounded (or drawing water for someone who is), you might give a bonus of +2 to +4 to attempts to enter the *regio*.

Magi find it difficult to examine the well with spells. Most *Intéllego* spells note the Divine Aura, but are unable to penetrate to the *regio* unless a magus physically enters the *regio* by climbing into the well (an roll to enter the *regio* is also required, against a value of 15). The water contains no *vis*, and no amount of arcane research yields information concerning its healing properties.

Location

While the well is described as being in a large city, feel free to place it elsewhere. For example:

- Place the well in a forest near the ruins of a monastery. The characters could stumble upon it while exploring the monastery.
- The well could be a jealously guarded secret. Perhaps it is in the courtyard of a local manor or castle.
- The well could be placed in an out-of-the-way spot, like an island or cave, to await discovery.

Stories

Unless you make other plans, stories concerning the well are probably of an incidental nature (i.e. the group sees and learns about the well in passing, while visiting the city on another agenda). The well can be central to

a story, however, if the magi need to find it and use its powers. Here are a few examples of the latter story type:

- A plague is sweeping through the characters' Covenant and the magi have tried fruitlessly to stop its effects. Somehow they hear of the well (through research, rumor, or from knowledgeable covenfolk) and as a last hope decide to travel to it en masse. The way could be fraught with danger; bandits, hostile noblemen, clergy, or even enemy Covenants might cause problems. If pilgrims do travel to the well to be healed, be sure and remind them of how they're turning to God for help when their magic has failed. Who knows, perhaps drinking of the well causes magi to lose their Gift.

- A trusted companion is cursed and the magi either don't care or have tried all they can to save him, but to no avail. Secretly, the cursed person and some

covenfolk devoted to him leave to visit the well. How do magi react to such insubordination?

- Legends say a vision of St. Alban, weeping and bereft, appears every year upon the anniversary of her visit to the well. The locals flock to the well on this evening, holding a candlelight vigil, and bring their sick and maimed in the hopes of a miracle cure. Visitors to the city might observe this vigil in passing, or might take part in the vigil themselves.

Also keep in mind that though characters may seek the aid of the well, it may purposely refuse to help them. The characters may have committed some sin in the past that they have yet to atone for, and might have to do so before the well accepts them. Such a necessity offers a lot of roleplaying potential and reminds players that characters have lives outside each individual story; actions in the past can have direct bearing on the present and future.





Chapter Four: The Animal Powers

Type: Faerie

Focus: A glade filled with Animal Spirits

Levels: M, 1, 3, 5, 8

Overview: This ancient *regio* is centered on numerous wise Animal Spirits who reside in fetishes at its heart. Those entering the *regio*, and seeking enlightenment from the Spirits, risk taking on the characteristics of the animal they most resemble.

DESCRIPTION

The Mundane Regio

The mundane foundation of this *regio* consists of a large tract of virgin forest. Largely untouched by humans, this dark wood has withstood all concerted attempts to tame it through a combination of impenetrable thickets, rugged terrain, and a host of animals dangerous to mankind. Humans live nearby, but few venture far into the forest unless desperate or lost. A few trails wind through the outskirts of the wood, though most fade out before penetrating its dark interior. Legends speak of a trail that leads directly to the forest's heart, but those who tenaciously seek it seldom return.

Anyone wishing to explore the forest on this level find little out of the ordinary. Everything is as it should be for a primal wood; it is dense, dark, and mysterious. People from the local villages have numerous stories to tell concerning the wood, ranging from verifiable

tales of wolf and wild pig attacks to whispered accounts of shadowy monsters and witches. A group seeking aid in exploring the forest finds little help from the locals — they shun the woods except for a bit of wood gathering and hunting when food is scarce.

There are several ways to reach the center of the forest. The hardest is with brute strength, relying on axe and torch to clear a path. Those choosing this method must first make woodcraft rolls to find what seems like the easiest route (Per + Track or appropriate skill roll of 10+ to find it), and then must make numerous Fatigue checks (long-term; rolled once per hour against a value of 6, which indicates a hundred feet of headway) as they fight and slash their way through tangled undergrowth, densely packed tree limbs, and thickets of thorny bushes. In a short time, perceptive people (Per + Alertness roll of 9+) notice flickers of motion on the edges of their vision, but aren't able to identify the source. Tell the players, "They might be some curious squirrels or birds, but you're not sure." Some are just that, but others are Keepers (see insert, below), the eyes and ears of the Animal Spirits. Groups who barge through the forest in a physical manner certainly gain the enmity of the Animal Spirits, who do their utmost to make the trespassers pay (as described below). In addition, once the Spirits are aware of a group hacking its way through the woods, the Spirits make it difficult for the characters to enter higher levels of the *regio* (see *Mechanics*).

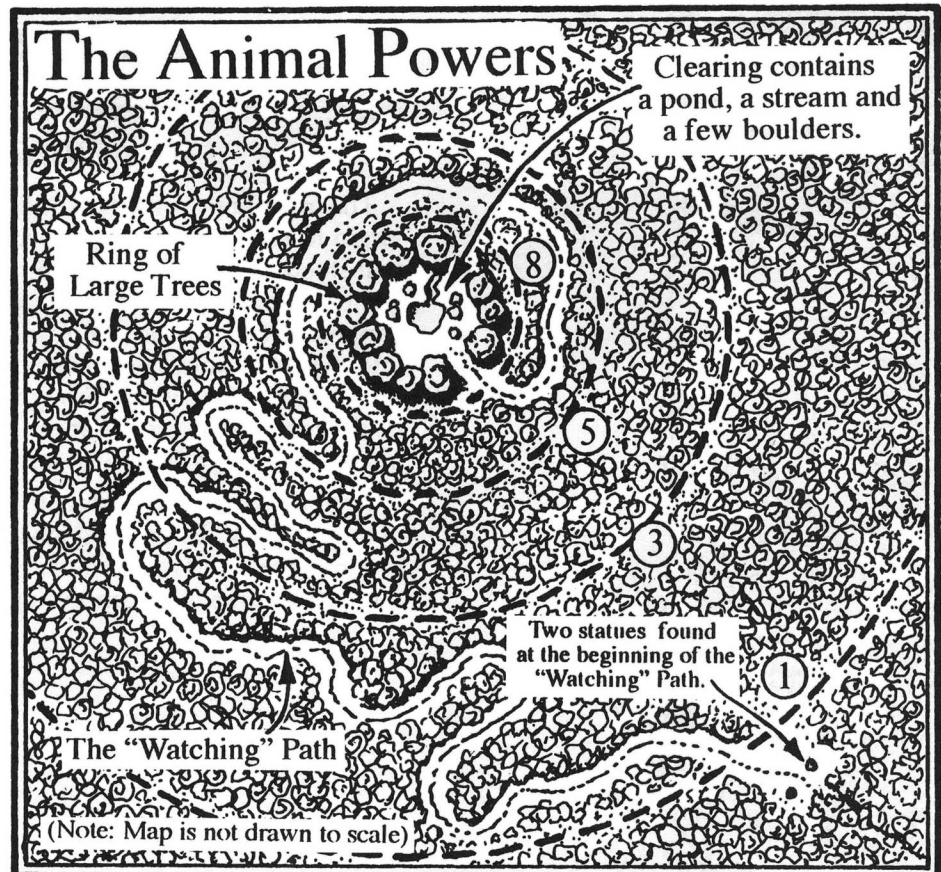
A much easier and safer way into the *regio* requires the discovery of the Watching Path (see insert, below), an ancient trail leading to the heart of the forest. The beginning of the path is anchored to the mundane world by two, crumbling, moss-covered statues standing five feet apart. Close inspection of the statues reveals little, except that their stone is granite and they might once have been crudely carved humans. *Intéllego* spells reveal the statues are a strong source of faerie magic, though they contain no *vis*. Finding these statues is difficult, for they stand in a secluded glade well away from known paths. Sometimes people even mistake them for mossy tree trunks at a distance (Per + Scan roll of 9+ to notice and recognize the statues for what they are at a distance). In spite of the statues' elusiveness,

a few people discover them each year, sometimes with the aid of magic or an ancient map, and at other times by accident. Those that search for the statues, without the aid of magic or maps, find them on a Per + Search roll of 12+, modified by any Virtue like Faerie Blood or Faerie Upbringing, or by any appropriate Talent, like Magic Sensitivity. All who pass between the statues, towards the center of the forest, find themselves in level one of the *regio*, on the Watching Path.

The Animal Within

This *regio* is strongly aligned with the Animal Spirits, and those who seek them often take on animalistic traits as they travel through the *regio*. In essence, the *regio* causes the animal that lies within each person to come alive and strive to make itself known. Some may fight this change, while others may welcome it wholly and risk losing themselves in the transformation. After reaching the center of the *regio*, some people may be slightly altered from their former self, while others may not resemble the person they once were.

Effectively, as each magus approaches the center of the *regio*, each must make a Resistance roll as she crosses *regio* boundaries. The technique and form of the Resistance are either *Rego Animál* (for those trying to control the animal within) or *Muto Córporum* (for those trying to keep their body from changing). A magus's *Parma Magica* score adds to this roll as usual.



The Keepers

A wide variety of creatures inhabit the forests of Mythic Europe, ranging from tiny shrews and voles to elusive birds and deer. Most have little to do with man, and simply avoid him whenever possible. Larger animals, like the wolf, the bear, and the wild pig are an exception to this rule, for they certainly defend themselves if threatened and occasionally attack man with no apparent provocation. Nevertheless, people are usually safe wandering through a wood, provided they use common sense and have a bit of woodcraft.

This forest is different, however, for the presence of the *regio* and the Animal Spirits it contains are felt throughout its shadowed expanse. The Animal Spirits act as guardians for the entire forest, watching over the wood, doing everything within their power to protect it from the ravages of man. To help in their task, they employ not only ordinary forest creatures but some extraordinary ones as well. Chief among these are the Keepers, animals possessing human-like intelligence and a fanatical devotion to the Animal Powers.

These Keepers come in many shapes and sizes, each suited to a different task. The Watchers are the Animal Spirits' eyes and ears, and consist of small, unobtrusive animals possessing keen sight, smell, or hearing. Birds, snakes, squirrels, and mice all make excellent Watchers. Watchers are difficult to recognize, often being mistaken for ordinary animals. To recognize these animals' unusual behavior, characters need make a *Int* + *Animal Ken* roll of 10+. Regardless of whether one of these creatures is captured and ensorcelled, nothing may be learned from it for the enormity of the Animal Powers' presence resists any magical efforts to open a Watcher's mind.

Next come the Trackers, those animals that roam the boundaries of the forest, finding and following trespassers noted by the Watchers. Trackers are swift and silent, able to trail a human closely without giving themselves away (*Per* + *Track* roll of 12+ to realize a Tracker is following). Foxes, birds, deer and mink are commonly used. Trackers also carry messages among the Animal Spirits' defenders, when required. If a Tracker is detected, it must still be captured, and even if captured, resists all efforts to reveal the Animal Powers that it serves.

The last group of Keepers are the Biters, ones who enforce the Animal Spirits' wishes if all other efforts to waylay intruders fail. Biters are animals known for their strength, courage, and tenacity. Common Biters include wild pigs, bears, wolves, wolverines, mountain lions, and large stags. Again, like

Watchers, their minds are closed to efforts to reveal the Animal Powers. Rolls to detect Biters' presence really aren't necessary; when they're around Biters are ready to attack.

All the Keepers follow the wishes of the Animal Powers in all things, though many have performed their duties for so long that they need little guidance. For more information on the Keepers, see *Interacting with the Animal Powers*.

The ease factor of each roll equals 5 + two times the level entered. A successful Resistance roll indicates the magus is not affected in any way. A failed roll mean the magus's animal within comes a bit closer to the surface, and results in the effects given by the table below. These effects are cumulative, so a magus who fails his roll at each boundary shows all four effects, while one who fails a single time shows only the first effects of change, regardless of the boundary crossed when the failed roll occurs.

As most *custos* lack magical power (and so techniques and forms), and don't have a magical rating (like *Faerie Might*), they have little defense against the physical changes imposed by the Animal Powers. Magi who want to protect their *custos* from change may share their Magic Resistance with the group, in sharing their *Parma Magica*. This shared protection results from magi's conscious efforts to keep *custos* in human form,



The Watching Path

Old though the wood is, older still are the Animal Powers. In ancient times, a sacred path led to their resting place, lined with simple offerings and solemn effigies. With the passing of the last shaman-keeper and the coming of civilized man, the Powers drifted from conscious memory and so too did the Path.

The Path still exists, however, for those who seek communion with the Animal Spirits. It begins in the mundane world between two ancient statues, then twists its way through to the heart of the forest. The Path itself is about five feet wide and is lined with fist-sized, smooth, gray river-stones along most of its length. A thin but even carpet of fragrant pine needles stretches between the rocks, and the towering pines on either side form a living wall, blocking out all direct sunlight and most view to the surrounding forest. A variety of offerings still line the Path: a bedraggled clump of feathers tied with a leather thong, a circlet woven of browned-grass, a small red-clay bowl covered with runes, a broken flint arrowhead, a dark-stained walnut figurine, and a small woven bag filled with tiny seeds. These objects are set on either side of the Path; one can be found every few yards. A few possess some pawns of *vis* (amounting to a total of 10 pawns of *Animál vis*) but the characters feel a strange reluctance (easily overcome, with no roll needed) to take them.

It is possible to enter the Watching Path in two places only: at its beginning between the statues in the mundane world, and at its end in the heart of the *regio*. Anyone attempting to find the trail elsewhere fails, though that person might find the faintest hint of an ancient game-trail instead. Those traveling the Path experience the forest differently from those outside the Path, as explained in individual level descriptions. In addition, Path travelers need not roll to cross over *regio* boundaries. Crossing is automatic as long as the Animal Powers approve of the characters' passage (see below). Anyone straying more than a few feet off the Path loses sight of it and finds herself alone in the forest, at level of the *regio* last entered. Those so lost cannot rediscover the Path, but do find a game trail on a Per + Search roll of 8+. If the character can make her way back to the ancient statues, she may resume the Path. Finding the statues again requires three successful Int + Search rolls of 8+, modified as was the first attempt. Any failed roll causes the character to become lost. Survival skill is then needed to get back out of the forest alive (Int + Survival roll of 10+ to do so). You are free to deal with lost characters

as you see fit. They may wander aimlessly for days, or may be led from the woods by Keepers who want them out. Keep in mind that lost characters effectively fall out of the game, so if you want to keep players interested, you may fudge things and let a lost soul rejoin her friends at some point.

so Muto Córpoem applies. If two or more magi are protecting the *custos*, only the highest of their Magic Resistances is used; the others are made redundant by the highest. Thus, a powerful magus could protect the majority of the group while less potent magi protect themselves. Alternatively, magi could agree to each protect a separate group of *custos*.

Protecting a group of *custos* from physical change is not an easy task. A magus can protect another person for each point of *Parma Magica* he has. Sharing that protection immediately lowers the magus's *Parma Magica* score by 3 points, the resulting number protecting him and all those he shares his Arcane Skill with. If the magus doesn't have *Parma Magica*, he can't protect his *custos*. Magic Resistance rolls are made for each character protected, not for the group as a whole. Each character's roll is comprised of the shared *Parma Magica* score (x 5), the protecting magus's form score (Córpoem), and a simple die. As protected characters' rolls are made individually, magi might be able to protect some *custos* from change, but maybe not all. Furthermore, as each boundary of the *regio* is crossed, the protecting magus must make a Fatigue check against a value of 6. If failed, a short-term Fatigue Level is lost, and any Fatigue penalties that arise apply to successive Magic Resistance rolls, for all those protected.

Various modifiers also apply to Magic Resistance rolls, whether magi are protecting themselves or a group. These modifiers vary from character to character, so each companion or grog protected by a magus has a different Magic Resistance total, as determined by his specific modifiers. These modifiers are as follows:

-5 for crossing the boundary while on the Watching Path (the Animal Powers are especially strong here).

-8 for belonging to House Bjornaer (these magi's animals are closer to the surface to begin with). At your option, a Bjornaer might automatically revert to her heart-beast at the first or second failed Magic Resistance roll.

-3 for magi following the way of Criamon, Ex Miscellanea, or Merinita (these magi are usually closer to their animal than most).

+5 for Flambeau magi (these magi are much more aligned with their element than with their animal).

+3 for Jerbiton magi (close association with mortals obscures their animals).

-10 for giving in to the change. This could be a conscious choice on the part of a player, or a decision made by you if a character seems to revel in her changes.

+ (variable) for Personality Traits that deviate from animals' instinctuality, like calm, cool-headed, or clear thinking, unless those Traits are true to the nature of a character's particular animal, in which case those scores help bring about the change. The value of the modifier equals the value of the Personality Trait.

- (variable) for animalistic Personality Traits like rash, brash, impulsive, or violent, unless those Traits oppose the nature of a character's particular animal. The value of the modifier equals the value of the Personality Trait.

+ (variable) for particular Virtues and Flaws that deny animal instinctuality, like strong-willed, clear thinker, withstand magic, true faith, or magic resistance. The value of the modifier is equal to the score of the Virtue or Flaw.

- (variable) for Virtues and Flaws that indicate a kinship to the bestial, like animal companion, berserk, faerie upbringing, free expression, magic susceptibility, faerie blood, or way of the woods. The value of the modifier equals the value of the Virtue or Flaw.

Also feel free to use other modifiers that seem appropriate to a character's nature, or to the animal within a character.

Guiding the Change

The information below indicates the changes characters undergo with each failed roll at a *regio* boundary. The bold number at the beginning of each entry indicates the number of failures a character has received. It's advised that you draw up character sheets for the changed characters before play begins. That way the game doesn't slow down and you can explain characters' changes as they happen.

First—The first failed roll affects Personality Traits. Determine the Personality Traits of the character's animal within, then add those Personality Traits to the character's sheet. If the character already has some of her animal's Traits (very likely), double the Traits or add 2 to them, whichever results in lower totals. Many examples of Personality Traits for mundane creatures are listed in *Ars Magica*, p. 117, but feel free to add to these or make up your own as desired. It can be quite fun to let the rest of the troupe in on these decisions.

Your job is to explain to players that their characters are suddenly experiencing strange emotions and attitudes, never before experienced or never before experienced to this extreme. In explaining these changes to players, you help them roleplay their characters'

transformations, though players probably don't know their characters are turning into animals at this point.

Second—The second failed roll affects a character's body in a minor way as the animal within begins to surface. The change is entirely cosmetic and covers a small part of the character's body. Examples include:

Wolf or dog—furry ears, elongated snout or canines, or fur growth on face.

Bear—snout, deepening voice punctuated by growls, or transformation of fingernails into claws.

Fish—change of patches of skin into scales, webbing between fingers or toes, or loss of hair.

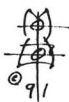
Snake—change of some skin into scales, hissing voice, flattening of the nose, growing a second eyelid.

Bird—change of some skin or hair to feathers, shrinking of ears, hardening of lips, or growth of talons.

Just choose one of these effects, or make up one of your own. Be sure to tell the players of their characters' changes indirectly, then let the characters (or other members of the group) discover them on their own. If a person grows claws, for example, say, "*Your gloves are feeling a bit tight and uncomfortable today—must be the hot weather,*" rather than, "*You've grown claws.*" If characters do something that should reveal their changes (e.g. remove gloves), then reveal those changes and let the characters react as they will—let the players roleplay their discovery. If you need a roll to decide whether physical changes are discovered, they are on a Per + the value of a new or heightened animal Personality Trait roll of 6+. The exact Trait used is left to you to choose. Characters spotting physical changes in others use this same roll.

Third—The third failed Resistance roll continues the physical manifestation of the animal within, and also affects characters' abilities. Simply add another physical change (make one up or use the above list) or make the existing condition more pronounced. A person whose animal is a bobcat, for example, might find her ears pointed and tufted after the second failure, then find she's grown whiskers and cat-like claws after the third. As before, the change is instantaneous upon crossing a boundary.

In addition, certain skills native to the animal within become available to the character. Choose one or two abilities that seem appropriate for the animal; Climbing and Alertness might be appropriate for our bobcat. Secretly make a note of these skills and let the characters find out they have them through experience—though you might wish to give them hints like, "*Normally, you wouldn't think of trying to climb that tree, but today, it doesn't seem so bad. In fact, you have this strange desire to sink your fingers into its bark.*" The level of the skill given to each character is up to you, but it's suggested that



someone who completely lacked the skill before now gains a score of 3 in it, while someone who already possessed a skill gains 2 more points in it.

By this time characters can't help but recognize their changes if they haven't already spotted them. Let the players have fun with their changes. Of course, some characters may not relish their transformations and may want to abandon the forest. That's fine, but other characters may want to press on, maybe enjoying their bestiality, or maybe obsessed with some goal ahead. Whatever the reasons for proceeding into the *regio*, confrontations may arise between characters with different intentions. Only roleplaying can determine what course the characters ultimately take.

Fourth — The fourth failed Resistance roll brings the animal within even closer to the surface, in the form of major physical changes and alterations to characters' statistics. Anybody missing this final Resistance roll becomes recognizably animal-like in their overall physical appearance, to the point that no one has difficulties telling what animal resides in that person's soul. This metamorphosis is instantaneous and completely painless. Also note that even though changes are numerous, characters are still mostly human — consider them one-quarter to one-third animal. And, while these changes affect most aspects of a person's life, they do not keep the person from functioning like a normal human being. A person whose animal is a snake, for example, might end up covered in scales,

have his nose and ears shrink into his head and his tongue grow in length, but he still retains normal arms and legs and has no problem moving about normally.

This external physical change is mirrored by a change in a character's statistics. Simply think of the Characteristics (e.g. Str, Stm, Int) that define an animal and make changes you feel are appropriate to a character's Characteristics. Feel free to add or subtract as many points as you feel necessary, but limit yourself to a total *addition* of 2 points. Any additions beyond this should be balanced by equivalent *subtractions* from other Characteristics. At this time you might also adjust other parts of the character. Any of a character's remaining, untouched skills, Virtues, Flaws, Personality Traits or Confidence points may be changed, eliminated or replaced. Our snake person, for example, might gain 1 point of Intelligence and gain the equivalent of Scale Armor at no Encumbrance cost.

Also inform players that their characters are now the personifications of animals, to be roleplayed in any way the players choose. Ideally, as the animals represent the true, inner self of each character, players may roleplay what they perceive characters' inner natures to be.

Any transformation effects caused by failed Resistance rolls fade with the passage of time. Nothing, *except* the intervention of the animal powers, can speed along the process. Magic and the Church alike can do nothing to help characters, for their changes are tied

intimately to the characters' inner beings. To determine how long the effects last, make a simple Magic Resistance + Stamina roll for each character on the morning after leaving the *regio*. (If a magus protects other characters, the Magic Resistance score assigned those characters, after their individual modifiers, is the score used in this recovery roll.) Apply the number rolled to the Wound Recovery Chart (Ars Magica, p. 53), assuming a Light Wound. The value resulting from the table indicates how many days must pass before the effects of transformation fade. Features of transformation fade in the reverse order they are gained. Thus, those features resulting from a fourth failed Magic Resistance roll disappear first, while those changes incurred by the first failed roll disappear last. To determine how long each level of transformation is maintained, divide the total number of days determined on the Wound Recovery Chart by the number of failed Magic Resistance rolls endured.

A result of 'X' on the Wound Recovery Table indicates that some small vestige of an animal remains with a character forever. A bear-person might remain extremely hairy or talk with a growl, for example. To reflect this change you might even alter a character's profile, changing a Characteristic, adding a Virtue or Flaw, or altering a Personality Trait. If a character is particularly unlucky or unhappy with any lasting results, you can come up with a story to remove the effects — perhaps a trip to faerie or a return to the Animal Powers.

One question still remains, though: how do you determine each character's animal within? In some cases the animal within is obvious, as in the case of magi who have a heart-beast (see *The Order of Hermes*, p. 64-65), or as in the case of characters who were once animals themselves (like Vulcris at Mistridge), or as in the case of characters possessing a nickname of a certain animal. In most cases, however, choosing an animal within isn't so cut-and-dried. Care must be taken in choosing the proper animal, for the animal within rarely changes with time. If a few moments of thought on your own don't yield the perfect animal for a character, you might consider bringing the rest of the group into the decision. It can be a fun exercise to ask, "If this person was an animal, what animal would he be?" for each of the characters in the group. In fact, if you're devious you might raise this question "for fun" many sessions before the *regio* is encountered. Alternatively, you can allow each player to decide on an animal for his own character. Perhaps as each person enters the forest you can ask, "You see a brief vision of yourself transformed into the animal closest to your heart. What animal do you see?" This option runs the risk of forewarning players of events to come, though. Of course, these are only suggestions for determining inner ani-

mals, and you are encouraged to come up with your own.

The Faerie Regio (1)

The first level of this *regio* covers a roughly circular area several miles across, centered on the glade at level eight (see below). The boundary of this level corresponds to the point in the mundane world where trails die off and passage becomes exceedingly difficult, a hundred yards or more into the forest. The gateway to the Watching Path is found at such a point. Anyone who crosses the boundary must make a successful Resistance roll, as detailed above, or have their Personality Traits affected. Otherwise, this part of the forest is not much different from its mundane counterpart — still primal, dense, and dark. Those staying on this level for more than a few moments may get the feeling they are being watched (Per + Alertness or Premonitions roll of 8+). The characters are being watched, by the Watchers (see insert). To discover just who or what is watching requires an Int + Animal Ken roll of 10+, and then characters only see a small bird or animal staring after them. And, in the next moment, the animal darts for cover.

Those traveling the Watching Path, the only easy path into the heart of the *regio*, find themselves deep in the forest, where little sound penetrates. Few beams of direct sunlight reach the Path, making everything seem soft and muted. The Path rarely travels in a straight line, but neither does it twist excessively; it gently curves from side to side, rolling up and down the terrain like a slow-moving stream. Shortly after crossing between the statues and assuming the Path, each character has the distinct impression that he or she is being watched, though any attempts to pinpoint the source are to no avail. The group should also notice the offerings at the sides of the Path for the first time, though the offerings are fairly infrequent on this level.

The Faerie Regio (3)

This level, like the rest, is centered on level eight of the *regio*. It is circular in shape and about a mile across. The forest here is farther removed from its mundane cousin, and the occasional stand of faerie oak or faerie maple can be found among more ordinary trees (Per + any Faerie background roll of 6+ to notice them). The feeling of being watched also increases here (rolls of 6+, not 8+, are now needed), and the still air is punctuated by strange animal noises from time to time. Anyone who is destructive to the forest that gets this far is met by a party of Biters. The Biters try to drive the marauders off by staging attacks of their own (see below for more details). As always, anyone entering

The Forest at Night

Though your group may never plan on spending the night in the forest, it's quite possible that it does anyway. A person could wander off the Watching Path and become lost, the Animal Powers could desire that the characters become separated as they cross a boundary (requiring individual Magic Resistance rolls with wildly different modifiers), the Animal Powers could hinder everyone's attempt to leave a particular level, or a person could be turned into an animal and be chased through the forest till nightfall. Any of these possibilities could strand the characters overnight.

As the sun falls, the mood of the forest changes toward its most primal and dark aspects. The already mysterious forest becomes more so, with its tall, towering trees looming like giants in the moonlight, and its shadowy undergrowth hiding a host of gleaming eyes. The ominous nature of the nocturnal forest can be quite unnerving, and may create the need for successive Bravery rolls (6+) from characters to keep them from quivering and jumping at every sound. A particularly bad Bravery roll may send a grog or companion running, screaming through the night, to reemerge in the morning with ragged clothes, bloody, thorn-scratched limbs, and red-rimmed, crazed eyes. Whether or not any real danger confronts nightly visitors is left to your whim, though Biters certainly visit anyone harming the forest. In addition, the Keepers sometimes make a harmless game of tormenting those trapped in the forest at night, alternately leading them astray with human-like calls for help, and then driving them through the dark wood with haunting animal sounds.

Night is also the time of councils among the Keepers, and a sufficiently discreet and clever human can learn much of the forest and its ways by eavesdropping. Such subterfuge requires several Stealth rolls and an ability to understand the animals, though, and woe to him who is caught by the forest's guardians; the eavesdropper is chased into the forest in an effort to make him lost. If the eavesdropper does not become lost, the Animal Powers have their revenge (see *Interacting with the Animal Powers*). Occasionally, the Animal Powers themselves hold great moonlit meetings in the central clearing to discuss matters of import to the animal world. Even if a mortal can go undetected at such a meeting he learns little, for the Spirits speak in a tongue older than humankind and much of their dealings take place in a shadowy netherworld.

this level of the *regio* must make a Magic Resistance roll to see if some aspect of his animal within emerges.

Those traveling the Path find few changes in its atmosphere, except for a growing stillness and an increase in the number of offerings lying at the wayside. Perceptive folk (Per + Scan roll of 7+) notice that these offerings are in better shape than those seen previously — feathers are brighter and dyes are more bold. All of these signs are indicative of travel deeper into the *regio* (which may be realized as described in the introductory *Regio* Chapter). The feeling that someone is watching is now constant (and need not be rolled for), as are hidden rustlings and odd animal calls that occur just out eyesight, beyond the trees bordering the Path. Remember that anyone stepping far from the Path now finds himself in level three of the *regio*, with no Path in sight. If someone leaves a sacrifice on the Path, they feel (on a roll of Int + Faerie background roll of 6+) that *something* is pleased, but aren't sure what that something is. Likewise, any discourtesy shown to the forest, the Path or the sacrifices (like their theft or destruction) results in a wave of displeasure and a sense of uneasiness in the forest, both automatically felt by all.

The Faerie Regio (5)

The level is a crude circle a half-mile across centered on the highest level, eight. Here the forest has an almost overpowering presence; characters feel the inexplicable desire to whisper expressions of reverence and to make apologies for disturbing something unknown. The trees are mighty and dark, though little more than their trunks and lower branches can be seen. Those versed in plant lore find a plethora of faerie plants (Per + Herb Lore or any related skill roll of 4+), though those trying to take any plants without offering their respects or without leaving a token payment bring the wrath of the Animal Powers upon them (see *Interacting with the Animal Powers*, below). Time here is difficult to gauge, as are distances and directions (all attempts to do so suffer a -5 modifier). Many are the people who have wandered here for weeks before finding their way out. Again, everyone must make a Magic Resistance roll upon entering the level to keep their animal within from developing further.

Those on the Path find it much as before, though a sense of anticipation seems to fill the air. Like those traveling through the forest, sojourners here have little feel for how far they have gone or for how long it has taken. For all the group knows, the sun has ceased to exist, to be replaced by a diffuse glow that evenly illuminates the forest's muted browns and greens from above. By this time, the feeling of being watched is a mere fact of the forest. Note that those who fail an appropriate Personality roll, say against a value of 6, may break into fits of yelling or cursing, collapsing

under the pressure of the forest's hollow stare. The results of such a breakdown are left to you and the players.

The Faerie Regio (8)

Here lies the source of the *regio's* power: the Animal Powers. The smallest of all the levels, it is just large enough to contain a clearing about fifty yards across. The glade is filled with a knee-high grass going to seed, and is spotted with boulders, fallen trees, and clumps of marsh-willows. To one side of the glade lie two ancient statues, twins to their counterparts at the other end of the path. When the group first enters the glade, they feel a sense of power and peace; the sun shines brightly straight overhead and a slight breeze swirls through the tall grasses. Gone as well is the oppressive silence and solitude; squirrels, mice, birds and other creatures can be seen on the edges of the wood.

Those who failed any of their Resistance rolls on the way through the forest (including the one for this level — don't forget!) feel inexplicably drawn toward the clearing. Anyone wishing to deny this feeling may do so easily; the compulsion to proceed is more a factor for roleplay, not die rolling. Those giving in to the feeling enter the clearing and find themselves unconsciously looking for something, something dear and close to them. Unknown to them, they are looking for their Animal Spirit, residing in a fetish somewhere within the clearing.

Nestled in seemingly random places throughout the glade lie the Animal Powers, housed in a startling variety of forms and shapes: there atop a tree stump sits a wooden image of a squirrel with black stones for eyes; there lies a carved stone otter within a bed of grass among the cattails; there in the hollow of a boulder nestles a snake of dyed and woven rushes; there near a log sits a large, grey, clay wolf with broken shell teeth and eyes; there stone birds sit in sapling branches, encircled by feather-decorated leather thongs. All animals are represented in some fashion in the clearing, though the clearing doesn't seem crowded. Indeed, from any given point only a few fetishes are visible to the careful observer.

Each of these fetishes houses the Animal Spirit for that creature and that creature alone. Normally the Spirits slumber, allowing their consciousness to wander the earth, sampling the thoughts and dreams of their respective animals. Even mortals walking through the clearing do not draw the Animal Spirits from their reverie. Touching or handling a fetish, however, instantly draws a Spirit into contact with the handler (see *Interacting with the Animal Powers*, below).

As stated above, any character who had part of her animal within surface (by choice or by failing any

Resistance rolls on the way into the forest) feels drawn to the fetish housing that character's kindred Animal Spirit. Anyone who chooses to give into this longing enters a heightened dream-like state. In it all colors seem brighter, all smells stronger — all senses are intensified. Once in a dream state, a character wants to remain in it. Only physical pain, caused by another character, can draw a character out. Otherwise, to free herself, a character must make an Int + Concentration or appropriate Personality Trait roll of 15+. Without conscious effort, characters in the dream state walk slowly through the clearing, almost floating above the ground. A minute or more of walking finds them near their kindred spirit, visible, not as a fetish, but as a larger-than-life-sized, perfect-in-every-detail representative of the species, slightly shimmering, eyes fixed on the mortal before it. "Welcome, mortal," the Spirit says, "long is the time since we last met." The Spirit refers to a time before the character's existence, when the character's essence was true to its bestiality. Of course, each Spirit is visible only to the character it speaks to. For more details on relations with Animal Spirits, see below.

Anyone *not* having released his animal within, or anyone resisting the summons of his Animal Spirit, sees nothing but the clearing and a few fetishes scattered about. Such characters may wander the area as they wish, though they feel a strong compulsion not to touch any of the fetishes, another sensation left to roleplaying. Be sure to point this sensation out to everyone who's still human. Essentially the feeling suggests that characters think, "touching one of the fetishes would be a bad idea." Of course, characters not demonstrating bestiality can act against their better judgement and touch a fetish or do anything else they want, but they might have to pay the consequences for rash actions (see below). Magi casting information gathering spells on fetishes find that the objects contain large amounts of Animal *vis* (15-30 pawns each). Tempting as this is, anyone foolish enough to try and make off with a fetish is dealt with harshly (again, see below). If a "human" character tries to find a particular animal, he must spend thirty minutes looking, and must then make a Per + Search simple roll of 15+. A modifier of +1 is awarded for each consecutive search. At your option, a bonus of +5 is allowed if the fetish sought is akin to the person's own animal within (though keep in mind that the character has resisted change into that animal).

Interacting with the Animal Powers

The Animal Powers are aloof, strange, and capricious. Most do not like being disturbed unless it is by

one of their own kind, or at least by one possessing a similar animal within. Their primary concern is, first, for the safety of themselves; second, for the safety of their charges; and third, for the safety of animal-kind as a whole. They have immense power, far surpassing that of even the most powerful of magus, and they are not afraid to use their might.

The first time the characters might encounter the Animal Spirits, or more specifically their minions, is within the forest. Everyone wandering into the forest without taking extreme precautions is observed by a Watcher (remember that not only do the Watchers use the senses of sight and sound, but also of smell). Once the characters are detected, several Trackers are assigned to watch the characters and their actions while in the forest.

If the group treats the forest or its inhabitants cruelly or without proper respect, the Trackers confer among themselves and decide upon the proper course of action. Usually, they first assemble a group of Watchers and try to scare the group from the forest. The characters find their ears assailed by strange noises, ranging from high-pitched screams to low, rumbling growls. When accompanied by shaking tree limbs and rustling bushes, even the most stalwart grog might bolt. Under such conditions, characters must make Bravery rolls against a value of 6. Those that fail lose their resolve and prefer to turn back. Unless influenced by a commanding authority figure (Prs or Com + Leadership roll of 6+), the frightened refuse to proceed further and should be roleplayed accordingly. However, the frightened can still be bribed or goaded into proceeding, as determined by you and your players. If scare tactics don't drive out the invaders, Watchers pelt the group with pine cones, dirt clods, and pebbles from their hidden retreats. Such an attack requires further Bravery rolls from the characters, this time against a value of 8, for the whole forest seems pitted against the characters.

As a last resort, if the characters continue to assault the forest and the Animal Spirit's subjects, a group of Biters (around two for every character) are summoned to deal with the persistent or foolhardy. The Biters wait until the moment is right, then attack the group in the most cunning and efficient manner possible (you decide what that is). They do not stop their attack until everyone is unconscious, dead, or chased from the forest. If the first wave of Biters is defeated, more are sent until the characters give up their assault on the forest. The Biters do not hesitate to kill, though they prefer not to. Any subdued or unconscious person is taken to the Animal Powers on level eight, to be judged. Unless the perpetrators have an excellent excuse, they are stripped of their humanity, changed into their inner beast, and left to wander the forest. Some die within the first weeks as they struggle to adapt, while others eventually become Keepers of

worth, serving the Animal Powers wholeheartedly. Perhaps once in a century such a Keeper is allowed to return to human shape if that person so desires. Alternatively, characters on trial may be forced to perform some task for the Animal Powers, with the option of being transformed into animals. If the characters successfully complete their quest, they are spared by the Animal Powers. And, if the characters can demonstrate regret over their previous attack, the Animal Powers allow the characters to make contact with their kindred Spirits.

Those reaching the clearing of their own volition, without harming the forest, have an opportunity to interact with the Animal Powers in quite a different way. Anyone who has released part of her animal within, and responds to her Animal Spirit's call (described above), is subjected to an initial barrage of questions: *"Who are you? Where do you dwell? Whom do you serve? Why do you hide your animal within? What is my name? Do you like your new form?"* Anyone answering brashly, or openly insulting his spirit feels the full force of the Spirit's wrath. Usual punishment involves a complete transformation into animal form: *"By insulting me you insult yourself, for I am more than you know (the transformation occurs). Prepare to learn this lesson well, my servant."* No amount of power can stop the physical transformation, but a successful Magic Resistance roll of 25+ (vs. ReAn) allows the hapless mortal to retain his human memories and intelligence. Alternatively, those incurring the wrath of the Animal Powers could be made to assume a task, as previously discussed, with success resulting in the characters' salvation. This task is left to you to develop, but certainly provides for a number of game sessions.

Those possessing more tact and those using a bit of flattery find their Spirit asking one more question: *"What do you wish of me?"* An answer of *"nothing"* results in, *"Goodbye, then,"* as the Spirit shrinks back into its fetish. The abandoned person still possesses any animal characteristics gained in entering the *regio*, but they fade normally. Other bargains can certainly be struck, for a price (see insert).

Anyone touching a fetish other than that of his specific animal risks disturbing the Spirit within. Roll a simple die. On a 4-10, nothing happens and the person has a strong compulsion to let go (Stm roll of 15+ to resist). On a 1-3, the Spirit angrily awakes. The Animal Power demands, *"Who are you to disturb my rest?"* Extremely swift talkers might be able to get themselves out of the situation (Com + appropriate Social Skills roll of 12+), but don't let this roll take the place of roleplaying. Rather, have the roll reflect the results of roleplaying. The roll should also be modified by the relationship between the Animal Power and the character's own animal within. For example, a rabbit-person who accidentally disturbs the Wolf Spirit stands

Bargaining with the Animal Powers

People often make their way into the forest to ask a boon of the Animal Powers. These are often granted, though always for a price. Likewise, a fraction of the seekers incur the wrath of the Powers and are never again seen in the world of humans. Dealing with the Spirits is always dangerous, for they are moody and fickle.

The Animal Powers can confer almost any power pertaining to animals to a desirous mortal. These gifts range from the ability to understand animal speech, to heightened senses of hearing or smell, to the ability to freely shapechange into a heart-beast. The Powers do not mind sharing these natural gifts with mortals (provided the proper price is paid, of course), but they reserve for themselves certain gifts — powers of animal control and mastery, for example.

In return for gifts granted, the Animal Powers expect remuneration. Sometimes, they ask that the person serve for a number of years as a Keeper (in animal form) within the forest; two to three years is typical for an average boon. Other times they say, *"Before your life is over, one of our kind will come to you and ask of you a boon. You must do your utmost to fulfill it, regardless of other obligations or ties, and the task cannot be delayed for more than a year."* Still other times the Animal Powers may require the supplicant's services as a human for a year or two, running strange and dangerous errands for the Powers throughout the world and throughout Faerie. In return for small gifts, the Spirits may be happy if a human agrees to carry some visible sign of their agreement upon his body. A snake-person, for example, might retain a face covered with scales for the rest of his days, in return for the ability to speak with all snakes.

If someone in your group asks for a boon from an Animal Power, it might help to consider the following things. How much of their animal within did they release, and was it done willingly? The Powers look favorably upon those who do. Was the person properly obsequious and humble? Did she make a good impression upon their Spirit? Don't be afraid to make rash or hasty folk pay for their impertinence. If, however, you judge the Animal Powers kindly disposed, deciding that they grant a boon, think carefully upon the boon requested and any unbalancing effects it might have on your Saga. If you need more time to think of an appropriate payment made by the character, tell the seeker to return to the *regio* in a fortnight. When he returns

his payment is announced. That payment may result in a story in another session, or payment may be left unspecified, to be claimed at a future, unanticipated time. Those renegeing on their payments are hunted down and taken by the Animal Powers' minions, to be brought before the Powers and turned into animals themselves. The arm of the Powers reaches far and wide, and can rarely be resisted. You may also decide that the Powers revoke a gift given to a character who does not return his services. Of course, that character is also punished for his arrogance, and is turned into an animal or made to perform a terrible service. Ultimately, you are left to create a story that accounts for a character's denial of the Animal Powers' price.

little chance of evading some dire punishment. Again, punishments take the form of animal transformation, though quests might still save endangered characters.

Anyone trying to harm a fetish finds himself immediately turned into his inner animal. Try as the person might, he cannot hope to prevail against the primal power of the Animal Spirit. When all is over, a confused looking animal stands in the place of the offender. That animal is driven into the forest by a host of the animal's natural enemies, to be hunted for the rest of the character's/animal's brief existence. Alternatively, the transformed character could survive the wood and be found by a mundane. That person might rescue the character/animal. Saved for now, the character/animal must "convince" the mundane to help him further. A story like this would certainly be fun, playing on an old Lassie cliché. Maybe the mundane realizes, *"Fluffy wants me to take him to the wizards on the hill!"* Once reunited with former allies, the character may be able to fabricate some means of restoring himself.

A Brief Note

When running stories using this *regio*, it is important to keep in mind the nature of the Animal Powers. Simply put, they are like gods. They may not be worshiped much by humans anymore (for which they are bitter), but they each have thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of animal worshipers to give them strength. Their powers far surpass anything a mere mortal — or most venerable and revered magus — can ever hope to possess. If the Animal Powers deem a thing is so, it is so, unless it is at cross purposes with an equally powerful Divine (God or an archangel), Infernal (the Devil or a high-ranking Demon) or Faerie power (the King or Queen of Faerie). Basically, the characters put their lives and souls on the line each

time they decide to interact with the Animal Powers—the Powers are not beings to be taken lightly.

Hopefully your group doesn't incur the wrath of the Animal Powers, simply because your group probably isn't stupid enough to assault the forest, killing animals and torching trees. Likewise, your group probably isn't foolish enough to destroy a fetish in the clearing, or foolish enough to talk back to an obviously powerful being. If the characters do so, don't be afraid to impose a harsh punishment (usually transformation into an animal, maybe indefinitely) on the offender. After punishments are inflicted, the rest of the group can certainly plead the wrongdoer's case to the Powers. If the pleaders do an exceptional job (Com + appropriate Social Talent roll of 15+), the Powers might allow some difficult service or quest to be performed in return for the changed character's redemption. Otherwise, the offending character is doomed.

You may think the Powers' punishments harsh, but keep in mind that the offending character, of his own free will, chooses to perform the punishable action. It's your job to ensure that the players know their characters are dealing with exceptional beings, and your descriptions of those beings should suggest their power. Try to instill in the characters the same reverence for the *regio* and the Animal Powers that they have for God, the King of Faerie, and for Lucifer himself.

Mechanics

Most of the mechanics for this *regio* have been covered elsewhere. Just remember that those traveling the Watching Path are likely to succeed at entering (or leaving) each level, unless the Animal Powers wish it otherwise. If the Animal Powers intend to make characters' entry or escape difficult, the characters must roll to cross boundaries with a -10 modifier. It's up to the group to deal with those individual members who don't get across a boundary; to them the rest of the group simply disappears. Also remember that the Animal Powers can make it extremely difficult or amazingly easy for a group to travel through the forest in areas other than the Watching Path. The forest is their domain and they rule it absolutely.

You should allow bonuses to crossing rolls for creative ideas and actions. If, for example, the characters decide to make a sacrifice to the Animal Powers the night before entering the forest, they might wake next to the entrance of the Watching Path or be led there by helpful animals.

There are few combat opponents to be faced in this *regio*. The only ones found consist of animals. For simplicity sake, choose animals that are Watchers, Trackers, and Biters from the animal profiles listed in the *Ars Magica* rules and in *The Medieval Bestiary*.

Location

This *regio* should be located in an unexplored, virgin forest. Any nearby settlements should hold plenty of rumors about the forest and its animals. You may wish to locate a shaman or hedge-wizard in the vicinity of the *regio*. That spellcaster knows something of the forest and is willing to share information... for a price.

Stories

Legends and rumors of this *regio* abound, making its introduction to the characters fairly easy. What to do once the characters know about the *regio*? A few ideas are presented below:

- One day, a strange person seeks refuge at the characters' Covenant. She says she has been cursed by a hedge-wizard, but actually offended the Animal Powers and was cursed with some animal features. The visitor, if a hard worker, might be given a job at the Covenant, or if she befriends the characters, is allowed to stay at the Covenant. Before long the visitor is forgotten or her presence is taken for granted. Indeed, if the characters' Covenant is big, the magi need not even know of the person's arrival. Alternatively, this person could be played as a companion or grog, with her curse taken as a "dark secret," chosen during character creation.

The particulars of the visitor's curse are left to you to create. The person might have reneged on a deal made with the Animal Powers, and is now being punished. Maybe the Spirits still intend to collect what's owed them. Regardless of the circumstances behind the curse, a year or so after the visitor arrives, Covenant grogs start reporting a preponderance of birds near the fortress. The birds just sit and stare at the Covenant for days on end, refusing to be driven off. Later, small animals (like squirrels) appear as well, and before long, grogs become alarmed by the number of wolves, bears, and other large animals moving to the vicinity. The animals begin harassing Covenant flocks, devouring crops, and even ambushing people on routine business. The animals also act quite intelligently, working together to make life for everyone in the Covenant difficult. If spells are cast on the animals, it's found that they have a Magic Resistance of 15, a Resistance of Faerie origin.

If any of the animals are magically asked why they loiter about the Covenant, the animals respond, "It is our Masters' will." If asked who their masters might be, they say "The Animal Powers." No more is learned from spells that read animals' minds. If persistent (through research and conjuring), magi learn of the *regio* and where it is located, but the animals still refuse to say any more about it. The magi must travel to the *regio*

and speak with the Animal Powers to determine how to rid themselves of the troublesome animals. How do the characters deal with the Animal Powers? And, do they give up the cursed visitor to the Powers as requested?

- The Animal Powers learn of the existence of House Bjornaer and begin actively recruiting worshipers from its ranks, particularly within the characters' Tribunal. As the years pass, the local House Bjornaer slowly drifts farther and farther from the Order and its ways, for its members find greater kinship with the Animal Powers than they do with the Order. Eventually, Bjornaer magi begin practicing new forms of magic, as taught by the Powers, and come forth as magician-priests, serving the Animal Powers. Needless to say, this development causes quite a stir within the Order, threatening its stability like nothing since the great Schism War. What do the characters do to mend this rift in the Order, and are any of the characters magi of House Bjornaer, who join the revolutionaries?

- A Wizards' March is declared on a powerful Bjornaer magus, who takes refuge in the *regio's* forest. As the magus has taken animal form, any magus hunting him must tread carefully or risk offending the Animal Powers, for the Powers accept the Bjornaer as one of their subjects. The Bjornaer magus knows this and tries to trick the group into angering the Powers, distracting his hunters with the Powers while he makes good his escape.

As a final note to all stories involving this *regio*, keep in mind that characters who assume animal form,

whether by choice or punishment, may still be used by their players; they need not be discarded or made into Storyguide characters. To continue playing a transformed character, the player must roleplay the animal. You must also decide what Characteristics and abilities the animal has, and must determine which of the character's former abilities persist in animal form. Furthermore, you must decide how others respond to a beast-character. If a character is fully transformed into a wolf, for example, mundane farmers might hunt the character down, and trappers might seek his pelt. And, remember that characters don't always make complete changes into beasts. If few *regio* borders are crossed, only a few, temporary, animal features may be assumed. Still, you must remind a character's player to enact his character's new personality. You must also decide how others respond to a partially changed character. Presence and Communication rolls undoubtedly suffer penalties of -4 in encounters involving mundanes and other civilized folk. On the other hand, a partially transformed character might receive bonuses to Prs and Com rolls directed to shamans, Bjornaer magi, and those in touch with their animal side.





Chapter Five: The Battlefield

Type: Infernal

Focus: An ancient battlefield

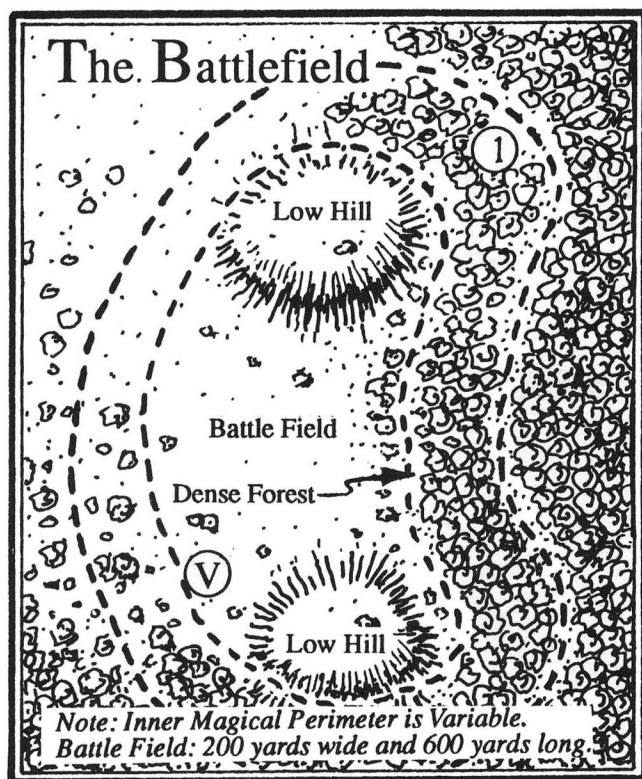
Levels: M, 1, variable

Overview: This Infernal *regio* covers the site of an ancient battle between two warring tribes. So strong were the factions' passions (and so unjust the fight) that the combatants' ghostly forms refight the battle every year. Infernal forces planted the seed for the original conflict and now they take an active part in its annual reenactment, gleefully leading the ghostly armies against one another.

What Has Gone Before

Long ago, two tribes lived in peaceful coexistence, each respecting the other's hunting grounds, livestock, and fields. Meetings were common between the tribes, for trade, marriage, games, hunts and protection were arranged between them. Left to their own devices, who can say what the tribes' fates might have been? Perhaps a great leader might have emerged from their midst, unifying them with other tribes into a great nation, or, perhaps the societies might have died away, victims of a horrible plague. Such conjecture is no matter for concern, though, for the tribes did not survive long.

As it happened, two evil spirits, wandering the earth in search of amusement, happened upon the tribes' settlements and resolved to have some sport. They looked upon the peaceful tribes and made a wager. The wager was this: each spirit would choose a tribe. Then, using whatever means available (without calling up any Demonic



brethren for assistance), each spirit would attempt to not only destroy a tribe's peace, but to madden each so that they would go to war against each other. The spirit whose tribe defeated the other's would be declared the winner. And so, the spirits began their evil work.

At first, the spirits contented themselves with subtle manipulations. Remaining invisible, they sowed the seeds of doubt and mistrust with quiet, whispered falsehoods and gentle dreams (for the tribes put great stock in dreams). Then they began actively interfering in tribal matters, delaying or befuddling messengers, spoiling vegetables and meat used in trade, and causing hunting dogs from one tribe to attack livestock and children from the other. Mortal tempers flared, and the two spirits carefully spread rumors to attribute the year's poor crops, fouled water, and bad weather to curses from the other tribe's shaman. Initial confrontations between the tribes consisted of words of anger, but words of hatred soon emanated from speakers of both sides. Before long, even the wise tribal leaders were touched by the spreading evil, and all contact between the opposing tribes was severed.

Even after the tribes went into seclusion, the spirits worked their evil, ensuring that the mortals lived in perpetual pain and anger. The spirits spread insomnia, broke mundanes' dear items, caused headaches, stubbed toes, broke thongs, and droughted fields — a multitude of small discomforts designed to make emotions flare and tempers rise, even in the most sedate of

tribesman. It only seemed logical to each tribe that the other was responsible for these hardships.

In time, talk of raids and war arose in both camps, much to the pleasure of the spirits. They fostered talk of battle by possessing a respected warrior on each side of the feud, and the spirits' efforts were finally rewarded. Each tribe formed a raiding party, and each set out on a circuitous route to the other's camp, in the light of the full moon. Finding their only resistance in old men, women, and children, the raiders plundered with abandon. Driving before them captured slaves and livestock, and leaving behind burning fields and houses, both raiders jubilantly returned to their homes. However, cries of anguish arose as the tribesmen returned to their families and found the remains of their homes.

The spirits were glad, for now the true battle could begin. Still possessing honored warriors, the spirits raised the men of each tribe to fevered pitch with speeches of blood and revenge. Then, the spirits led their men unerringly to the chosen battlefield. The two tribes met and fought not as men, but as savages, with hearty screams and animal cries, resorting to tooth and nail when weapons were lost or broken. Here and there a man regained his senses, his mind reeling in an effort to understand the carnage, but always he was cut down, or nudged gently back into the fray by a gloating spirit.

By morning, the spirits' work was done. The laughing Infernals surveyed their work one last time, and made their way home. The tribes were utterly destroyed — the wager, a tie.

In the centuries that have followed, the battlefield has become famous among Demonkind. Every seven years, the wandering and tortured ghosts of the tribesmen gather to refight their hopeless battle. For the first few decades, the original spirits returned to command their ghostly legions, reveling in the memories of that "beautiful" night. Eventually, however, the spirits tired of their game and allowed two other Demons to assume their places. Now, the battle is quite an affair, with Demons spending decades vying for the privilege (and pleasure) of commanding one side of the ghostly battle. Each time souls are wagered, bets are made, and an Infernal host gathers to watch the outcome. About a century ago, the Demons decided to spice things up with some live humans, so they scoured the countryside, grabbing hapless peasants from their beds to partake in the melee. Few of those peasants survived, and those who did left their sanity on the battlefield. Now, the introduction of a few live humans into the battle is tradition, though those humans must be gathered from farther and farther away each time — people living close to the battlefield now spend the unholy night in local churches, praying and singing psalms.

DESCRIPTION

The Mundane Regio

Little exists in the mundane *regio* to suggest the horror of what happened there so many centuries ago. It consists of a broad field several hundred yards across, covered in knee-high grass and dotted with shrubs and small, twisted trees. The land rolls slightly, with a low hill at both ends of the clearing. Someone wandering through the area might find the absence of ground animals, like mice, rabbits and shrews disquieting (Per + Alertness roll of 8+ to notice), but birds certainly feel no compulsion to avoid the area; their darting shapes can be seen carrying on as normal. Someone who spends a half hour or more digging might come up with a human bone or two, a spear tip, a rusted dagger, or some other relic of the battle (Per + Search roll of 8+ to find anything). However, nothing suggests that this site was anything other than that of a minor battle, even if extensive excavation is performed.

The Infernal Regio (1)

This level of the *regio* exists year round, unlike the higher level (see below). This level closely borders the mundane field. Little difference exists between this level and the mundane world below, except that visitors can occasionally hear faint sounds of battle carried on the wind: the clash of arms, the screams of the wounded and victorious and, every now and then, deep, cackling laughter (Per + Alertness, Magic Sensitivity or Sense Holiness & Unholiness roll of 7+ to notice most sounds, 10+ for the laughter). On moonlit nights the sounds are more apparent (-3 to difficulties), and sometimes, staunch visitors can catch glimpses of ghostly warriors aimlessly wandering the field, weeping and apparently searching for something they've lost (Per + Scan or Second Sight roll of 7+ to see ghosts). The ghosts ignore all attempts to communicate with them unless magic is used.

The Infernal Regio (variable)

This level is unique, for its strength varies from year to year, following a seven year cycle. It begins each seven year period with an Aura strength of 1, then increases by 1 each year, until the seventh year when the level reaches its maximum strength of 7. The following year the cycle starts anew, imbuing the level with a strength of one. Additionally, this level only

exists one night a year, on the anniversary of the original battle. It comes into being that night as the sun sets, and disappears again at the first rays of dawn.

Physically, the level is oval-shaped, following the outline of the battlefield, just to the inside of level one. The particulars of the level's appearance and inhabitants vary depending on its strength on a given night, as outlined below. One aspect of the level remains the same on every night, however. Every year, on the battle's anniversary, the moon shines an evil, dull, blood red, sending peasants scurrying for charms and crosses. The following is a breakdown of the highest level's appearance and inhabitants on any given night of the *regio's* appearance:

Year One — Undistinguishable from level one, as described above.

Year Two — As Year One, except the sounds of battle are easier to hear (+5 to all rolls) and faint, shadowy forms might be seen in the mist (Per + Alertness roll of 5+ to see them), though they have no substance and cannot be interacted with in any way. Horrifyingly vivid nightmares of the battle haunt any who are foolish enough to sleep here.

Year Three — Now the sounds of battle ring clearly throughout the *regio*, seemingly coming from all around. At times, actual ghosts can be glimpsed, fighting briefly before dissipating. The ghosts ignore any mortals unless those mortals actually interfere in





the melee. Then the spirits notice them and treat them as enemies, attacking them if given the chance.

Year Four — As for year three, except the field, lit by the blood-red moon, looks somewhat like it did the night of the original battle. Fresh corpses dot the field, complete with ancient weapons and armor. Groups of fighting ghosts are more common, and any visitors must constantly move to avoid them. If you wish, the characters might encounter a weak Demon or two if they linger for very long.

Year Five — As for year four, except for the following additions: corpses and other physical manifestations of the battle are common, and ghosts look slightly more substantial. Now, visitors have a hard time avoiding the ghosts as they sweep back and forth across the field; ghosts automatically recognize mortals and take them for enemies. A few minor Demons are also present, roaming the field and yelling orders. The ghosts obey the Demons' orders only if they are close by; as soon as the Demons move on, the ghosts return to the battle as they fought it long ago. If the group is noticed by the Demons (an opposed roll made once every fifteen minutes, involving a Demon's Per + Alertness (5) versus whatever skills the characters use in an effort to avoid the Demons), the Demons each gather a group of ghosts and charge the characters.

Year Six — The battlefield looks exactly like it did many years ago. Corpses lie everywhere, the din of battle is deafening, and the ground is broken and slick with blood. The ghosts look substantial, and might be mistaken for real people (Per + Scan roll of 4+ to notice they're not). The battle is commanded by two powerful Demon-generals and several Demon-captains per side. Any humans caught here are almost certainly seen by the Demons (Demons' opposition rolls for spotting receive a +9 bonus). As before, the Demons delight in marshalling hordes of ghosts and attacking live humans. If possible, the Demons even engineer events so that characters are sandwiched between the charges of hostile ghosts.

This year, the Demons actively collect humans from the nearby countryside, summoned to the battlefield by Infernal dreams. Roll a simple die and add five to determine how many peasants are present. Dragged from their beds, many of these mortals still appear to be sleepwalking, and those who are awake think themselves in a nightmare. The Demons gleefully lead charges against any peasants they notice, and use peasants as shields if magi prove too dangerous. It's unlikely that groggy, confused and unarmed peasants survive the night without protection.

A Typical Ghostly Warrior

Spirit Might 16

Int 0

Per +1

Str +3

Stm +2

Prs +4

Com -2

Dex +1

Qik +1

Spear: 1st +10 Atk +7 Dam +11

Short Sword: 1st +6 Atk +8 Dam +10

Fat +2 Def +6 Soak +5

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

Personality Traits

Brave +4

Grief-Stricken +2

Notes: Many of the ghosts, though certainly not all, have statistics similar to the above. This profile is that of a tribal warrior, the equivalent of a grog, armed with a spear, short sword, and round shield, with a skill level of 3 in attack and parry (with both weapons). Feel free to make up your own warriors.

These ghosts believe so strongly in their physical existence that a few special rules are needed to deal with them. They fight, move, and give and take blows as living humans do. Conduct combat as normal, except that it *costs* a ghost one Might point per Body Level of damage *caused* to an opponent. This price reflects the ghost's efforts to harm the physical world, an act normally beyond the dead. If a ghost is "incapacitated," it falls in a heap until the next battle. For notes on dispelling ghosts, see *Mechanics*.

Year Seven — If it's possible, the battlefield is more nightmarish and horrible than ever before. Wild, Demonic screeches and heartrending cries rise above the sounds of battle. The ground is covered with the detritus of battle; severed limbs, broken weapons, corpses, blood and filth lie everywhere. Gruesome, mutilated heads hang crazily from bloodstained standards, and great war drums pound the air incessantly. The trees on the edge of the field burn with a hellish light and ghosts are indistinguishable from living people, except for their dress and speech. Powerful Demons control each side, and many lesser Demons captain squads of ghosts on either side, while others simply roam at will, wreaking havoc.

This year the Demons go all out, grabbing peasants out of their beds as they wish. Roll four simple dice to determine how many peasants are gathered for this grand melee. Woe to any mortals unfortunate enough to be trapped in this *regio* on this night.

To fully express the horror of the *regio* on this night, describe small, horrific vignettes to any who enter. These visions are truly scenes from Hell. For example, a cackling Demon lopes after a hapless, screaming peasant, hamstringing the woman, toys with her for a while, and then slowly eats her. Or, a severed head bounces, with a sickening squelch, off a group member. Or, a ghostly young woman, holding a baby, makes her way across the battlefield, killing the "wounded" with dagger thrusts before "killed" herself. Such small scenes of terror better convey the unholy essence of the entire battle. More encompassing descriptions deny such graphic, grisly detail.

Mechanics

Rolls to enter the *regio* are made normally, unless Demons are within or in the area of the *regio*. On those occasions (the anniversary of the battle, fifth to seventh years), the Demons help any mortals they notice into the *regio* (adding half their Might to any attempts), and hinder any mortals' attempts to leave the *regio* (subtract half of their Might). At your option, a Demon might even physically carry a human across, then leave her in the *regio* (this is how most of the peasants arrive).

The highest level of the *regio* (the variable one) exists only as long as its ghostly inhabitants do. If they are all somehow dispelled, the level ceases to be. The most straightforward method of dispelling the ghosts is with magic, casting something like *Lay to Rest the Haunting Spirit* (PeMe, Gen, see *The Broken Covenant* of Calebais, p. 24-25) on each spirit. However, use of this spell could take some time as there are three to four hundred spirits in the *regio*. The traditional way of laying ghosts to rest also works (i.e. resolving or dealing with the feelings or situation that binds the souls to earth). In that case, the ghosts dissipate if they are convinced that they were not responsible for the destruction of their tribes — that Demons are actually to blame. Of course, the Demons don't take kindly to anyone meddling with their battlefield and do all they can to keep characters from interfering.

Location

This *regio* is best located in a broad field or clearing. If you wish to place it elsewhere, just use common sense and remember that a battle was fought there once. The surrounding countryside should be sparsely

A Typical Lesser Demon

Infernal Might 19

Int -2

Per -1

Str +4

Stm +3

Prs +3

Com -3

Dex +1

Qik +1

Talons (2): 1st +8 Atk +10 Dam +14*

Bite: 1st +7 Atk +7 Dam +15

Fat +3 Def +5 Soak +16**

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

* The Demon can attack twice per Round with its talons. If both attacks are successful the Demon immobilizes its victim unless the victim can beat 7 + a simple die with a roll of Str + Brawling + a simple die. Damage done in a grabbing attempt is at -10 (per talon). The attacks need not cause damage to be successful. An immobilized victim can automatically be carried away or bitten, your choice, in the next Round. If carried away, the victim must make a higher roll of Str + Athletics or Contortions (stress) than the Demon can with Str + 4 (stress) to break free. A Demon also usually drops his burden when next injured. A character being picked up can roll to break free or attack in the Round after he's picked up (he loses all actions in the Round he's picked up).

** The Demon is only affected by metal weapons, spells and powerful attacks, like a dragon's bite.

Personality Traits:

Crazed +3

Purposeful +2

Notes: Lesser Demons act as servitors to the powerful generals, who preside over the ghost battle, or wander the countryside in search of humans to torment. Ofttimes they capture unsuspecting mundanes to be taken to the *regio* for the battle. After grasping a victim, a Demon strides or flies off (3 Might points) to the *regio*.

Other Demons

The chance of randomly encountering one of the Demon-generals is slight, since the two are surrounded by lesser Demons and warrior Demons, as well as by hundreds of ghosts. If the characters make an effort to attack one of the Demon-generals, they first have to fight their way through 5 to 10

Lesser Demons and then through 5 to 6 Warrior Demons (see *Ars Magica*, p. 119), not to mention swarms of ghosts. In short, it's unlikely that the characters get to the generals. But, if they do, you need Demon-general profiles. For their profiles, use the Warrior Demon statistics, but give them a Spirit Might of 58, an extra 0 and -1 Body Level, and +6 to all Attack, Defense and Soak rolls. Or, make up your own super-powerful Demon Lord for the characters to square off against.

settled and legends concerning the battlefield should abound in local communities. The closest villages may hold candlelight vigils in their churches each year on the battle's anniversary, in an attempt to keep the Demons at bay.

Stories

You can introduce the battlefield into your Saga in many ways, though most fall into two simple classes: purposeful or accidental discovery. In the first case, the characters are seeking the battlefield for some reason. Perhaps Demons from the battlefield are troubling a nearby village that owes the Covenant fief, or the magi need to capture a Demon or speak to one of the ghosts. Likewise, accidental discovery can take many forms: a group of grogs might stumble into the middle of the battle, Demons might steal some grogs on patrol, or Demons might whisk away an entire group, one that had the misfortune to camp too near the *regio*. Several story possibilities are given below:

- Some people did survive the original battle: many women and children managed to hide in the woods as the raiders attacked, or escaped from their captors. The descendants of these survivors still feel the doom of their tribes calling them. Any descendant within a week's journey of the battlefield begins to feel a strange urge to travel to the site as the anniversary approaches. This urge is fairly weak during years one through four, but increases in strength until year seven, when the urge becomes an obsession. Once at the site of the battle, descendants lose touch with reality and join in the horrible battle.

A story could easily be built around one (or more) such descendant. A grog, companion, or even a magus might have some tribal blood running in her veins, and feels the call to battle. How does she react to this strange call? And what do the rest of the covenfolk do in response?

- A rival Covenant to the characters' learns of the battlefield and dispels several of the ghosts in year six, thus raising the ire of the Demon leaders. The rival magi are careful to make it appear that their home is the

characters' Covenant, so the Demons direct their hatred towards the characters. The magi from the rival Covenant hope to wander into and plunder the characters' Covenant once the Demons have had their way with it. On the anniversary of the battle, the Demons attack the characters' Covenant, making off with several grogs and other covenfolk, to be deposited at the site of the battle. Meanwhile, the enemy magi wait near the characters' Covenant, and attack once several magi characters have left in pursuit of the Demons.

- The magi have learned, through an old scroll, of an ancient treasure hidden in the vicinity of their Covenant. Apparently, several tribes from the area made an extensive migration towards Italy, plundering as they went. After several decades abroad, some of the tribes decided to return home, while the rest continued onward. All accumulated wealth was given to the returning tribes for safekeeping — until the tribes were reunited. As far as the magi can tell, a reunion never occurred and the treasure remains

hidden. The magi may be interested in this treasure because much of it was plundered from temples in northern Italy—it might contain invaluable books and items from an era before the Order was established. Perhaps the booty even includes complete rituals of ancient Mercurian magi. In any case, one of the tribal leaders, who now haunts the battlefield, knows the location of the treasure. To find the treasure, the magi have to locate the battlefield, travel there on the proper night during year six or seven, find the appropriate leader, and convince him to reveal the treasure's location. Between the confusion of the battle and the interference of Demons, treasure hunting is no easy task. Also keep in mind that the tribal ghosts still believe themselves alive, so the tribal leader must be convinced that he's dead before he reveals the location of the treasure. After all, still being "alive," he still awaits reunion with the lost tribes. The players are left to devise a way of proving the tribal leader's death. If any rolls are involved, they should be based on Com and Social Talents, and have difficulty ratings of 12.



Appendix: Magic in Regio

Spells are an integral part of *Ars Magica* and it is inevitable that enterprising magi try to affect *regio* with their magic. When that happens, you and your troupe have to make a number of important decisions regarding the attempted spell: its level, duration, technique and form, just to name a few. Or, magi might want to invent formulaic spells in the safety of their own Covenant to help them with a nearby *regio*, in which case the same questions must be answered. This appendix offers a few examples of *regio*-related, formulaic spells, and by studying them you may derive parameters for other *regio*-related spells that magi may wish to create.

Spells

Sensing the Mystic Place: InVi Lv 5

Spec., Inst.

Allows the caster to determine if he is currently within an area with a Magical, Faerie, Infernal or Divine Aura.

Feeling the Font of Power: InVi Lv 10

Sight., Inst.

Allows the caster to determine the nature of an area of power (a place with an Aura) or *regio* (i.e. Infernal, Divine, Faerie, or Magical) if the caster is currently without its bounds, but within sight of the *regio*, even its mundane level.

Scales of Power: InVi 15

Spec., Inst.

If the caster is currently within a *regio* or area of power (a place with an Aura), he may get a feel for its strength (i.e. weak, powerful, stronger than the last level entered). As a rule of thumb the spell indicates whether an Aura is powerful (rated 7 to 10+), moderate (rated 4 to 6), or weak (rated 1 to 3).

Seeing the Elusive Boundary: InVi Lv 15
30 paces, Conc.

Allows the caster to see the boundaries of a *regio* as faintly glowing lines. Specifically, the spell detects boundaries to the next higher or lower level within the magus's normal line of sight. The magus must specify when casting whether she is looking for a higher or lower boundary. If a boundary is observed using this spell, the caster may add +3 to future attempts to cross it.

Glimpse Through the Mystic Veil: InVi Lv 20

Sight, Conc., Spec.

Allows the caster to see into levels of *regio* other than the one currently occupied. In order for the spell to take effect, the magus's Penetration roll must equal or beat the number needed to normally enter the level of the *regio* looked into. All normal modifiers for entering *regio* apply to the Penetration roll, including bonuses or penalties from magical creatures aware of the intrusion. If a magus desires to look up or down several layers, each must be entered in sequence, just as though the magus is physically traveling through them. Any movement while the spell operates, aside from simple turning on the spot, requires a Concentration roll from the magus, rolled for every Round of travel. The roll consists of Int + Concentration, and must be made against a value equal to 6 plus the value of the *regio* level looked into. The need for a Concentration roll reflects on the caster's difficulty of moving over one physi-

cal reality while seeing into another. If a Concentration roll fails, the spell is broken.

The spell has one other requirement. For the magus to see into any *regio* level, he must hold an object taken from that level. Thus, to look into a level, the caster must have visited the level, or must hold an object granted by someone who has been to the level. To look into a level without an item from it imposes a -10 penalty to all Penetration rolls to visually cross that level's boundary.

Warping the Magical Veil: MuVi Lv 20
5 paces, Conc.

This spell, when cast within range of a *regio* boundary, allows the caster to momentarily warp the contour of the boundary a few paces in a specified direction. If the caster causes the boundary to cross over someone, that person must roll to enter (or leave) the level with a bonus equal to the caster's Penetration total for the spell, and with a penalty equal to the level of the *regio*. After the caster's concentration is broken, the boundary slowly flows back to its original position. If anyone caught behind a boundary has not yet escaped the level, he is freed when the boundary returns to its normal position, assuming the victim has not moved since the spell was cast. If the victim has moved, say further into the *regio* level, he may remain caught within that level.

Traversing the Magical Path: ReVi Lv 10
Self, Spec.

This spell gives the caster a +5 bonus for crossing the next *regio* boundary encountered. If not used by sunrise or sunset, the spell dissipates. Previous knowledge of a boundary is not necessary for the spell to work. If a boundary is crossed, the spell can be cast again in anticipation of the next boundary, maybe the same one already crossed.

Tearing the Mystical Veil: ReVi Lv 25

Touch, Spec., Perdo

This spell creates a temporary magical opening into a *regio* one level higher or lower than the one currently occupied by the caster. When casting the spell the magus actually reaches out with bare hands and tears a hole in the fabric of the *regio*, so the width of the tear is limited by the magus's arm-span, and the height of the tear is roughly twice the width. The opening must be physically held open by the caster and snaps closed one Round after released. Each Round that the tear is held open, the caster must make a Fatigue roll of 6+. A failed roll simply indicates a lost Fatigue Level (short-term) and does not affect the spell, unless the magus falls unconscious.

For the spell to have any effect, the Penetration roll of the spell must equal or exceed the roll needed to enter the *regio* under normal circumstances. Beings passing through the opening automatically cross into the next level of the *regio*.

Anchoring the Mystic Veil: ReVi Lv 50

Reach, Perm., Ritual

Creates a permanent point of entry from the mundane world to a particular place and level within a specific *regio*, above the mundane level. The spell must be cast twice; first from within the *regio*, then on the corresponding point in the mundane world. Don't forget that the value of a *regio* level influences the spell's casting (modifies spell rolls). In this particular case, the higher level's value even affects the casting of the spell on the mundane level. You may also apply other modifiers to the spells' castings, dependent

upon *regio* inhabitants' willingness to have the tunnel formed, and dependent on other related factors. The castings must both succeed and be performed within the space of a sunrise to sunset (or visa-versa) for the gateway to form.

The actual spell must be anchored to two objects which have some semblance, however remote, to a door or gateway (e.g. a space between two sets of stately trees, between a pair of rock columns, or between a set of ever-burning, magical braziers). Those "gates" must also exist on both levels of the *regio*, mundane or otherwise. Furthermore, the caster must invest 6 *vis*, three pawns into each gateway, when establishing the gates. This *vis* must be of a kind appropriate to the gateways (i.e. Herbam if the gates consist of trees). And, every time a person or group of people passes through the tunnel, 1 pawn of appropriate *vis* must be carried per person. This *vis* is expended when the person emerges on the far side. If either of the gateways for the spell are destroyed, the tunnel between levels is dispelled. If either gate is destroyed, or the tunnel is dispelled, all *vis* invested in the gates is lost.

Be warned that the inhabitants of *regio* do not usually appreciate dangers to their home, nor disturbances of their peace. They may therefore take an active role in destroying a gate or tormenting its creators. If a person is in the tunnel while a gate is destroyed, there's no telling what happens to the person. She might be deposited in the *regio* level that still has a gate intact, or might be deposited elsewhere in the *regio*. Casting requisite: a form appropriate to the nature of the gate-anchors (e.g. Terram for a gateway of stone pillars).

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