

# Sub Rosa

An Ars Magica Magazine

Issue 4, November 2008



A Pointless Mental Cruelty Production

[www.subrosamagazine.org](http://www.subrosamagazine.org)

# Contents



Issue 4

November 2008

## Regular Columns

Under the Rose	Page 3
News from the Line Editor	Page 5
Letters	Page 6
Who's Who	Page 8

## Features

Faeries of Sub Rosa	Page 4
Comment from Atlas-Games By Michelle Nephew	Page 4
The Dying Drake By Phil Chase	Page 9
Elementals and Provenance By Ben McFarland with James Parks	Page 15
Explosive power in Mythic Europe By Mark Shirley	Page 18
Covenant Location: Seuthopolis By Ben McFarland	Page 22
Templars: Infernal Brotherhood By Alexander White	Page 27
Beasts of the Realm II By Ben McFarland	Page 32

## Contribute to Sub Rosa

Sub Rosa is made up of fan driven content. Contributors receive a complementary copy of the issue their work appears in.

To contribute articles or illustrations, visit the Sub Rosa website (<http://www.subrosamagazine.org>) and follow the guidelines.

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Sub Rosa



# Under the Rose

## Alex White

Welcome to the fourth issue of Sub Rosa!

This issue represents a milestone: we've now reached a full compliment of issues for a complete four-issue subscription. This is particularly good news for the many four-issue subscribers.

I want to do note the excellent response to the last competition, which called for comments on previous issues of Sub Rosa. As I said in the previous issue, authors and artists work very hard on their articles. Getting feedback – positive or negative – is one of the constant follow-up queries I get from authors: “where there any comments on my article?” As I have said, I often get “looks good” or “great articles”, but rarely is there anything specific. This is why the last competition – and this issue’s competition – was about getting subscribers to give feedback to authors and artists. After all, this fan magazine is supposed to be “by fans, for fans”. Without a dialogue between subscribers and contributors, the articles would not remain relevant or interesting.

To this end, two of Sub Rosa’s many active supporters, Ben McFarland and Lachlan Hayes, recently organised a survey – on the Atlas forums and on Survey-monkey – about what content people liked the most. This survey showed that mystery cults, adventures and mythic locations were most highly rated. This information is potentially of use to aspiring authors wondering about what kind of article to write.

Visitors to the Sub Rosa website may have also noticed a new design. This redesign is aimed at improving the subscription service, which until now has been entirely

manual (and time consuming). I have also sought to ensure that more information is available about current and past issues. This should be the last re-design for some time, and hopefully there won’t be any more spam attacks. Please send us through an email if you have any suggestions on how the website can be improved.

In this issue I want to draw particular attention to the illustrations. Thanks to Ben McFarland again for helping source all of the art. This issue I think has some of the best art of any Sub Rosa so far. I am very grateful to all the artists in this issue and in previous issues, for producing work of the highest standard.

There is already a great group of contributors around Sub Rosa. But for the next few issues, I really want to expand that. If you have ever considered sending something in, do so today. If you need help or mentoring, we can find experienced authors to give advice and assistance.

As Sub Rosa matures, we are receiving more and more support and encouragement. Since the outset, there have been some Ars Magica fans that have given the magazine extraordinary help and advice. The most recent support that I would like to mention is that of Atlas Games. Atlas has generously agreed to support Sub Rosa’s competitions by donating an Ars Magica supplement. Michelle Nephew has a short column on the next page, explaining how Ars Magica fans can get more involved in the thriving and vibrant Atlas Games community. I encourage subscribers to have a look and consider getting involved in the Special Ops demo teams.



*The new Sub Rosa website, has been launched in secret through October 2008. New features include a shopping cart that integrates with Paypal (not particularly exciting I know, but a big deal for me).*

## Issue Four Competition

### Write an email to Sub Rosa to Win

Subscribers that write an email to Sub Rosa will go into the running to win an Ars Magica supplement of their choice. Former winners and entrants may enter.

Thanks to Atlas-Games for kindly donating an Ars Magica supplement for this competition.

Emails should be sent to [subrosa@pointlessmentalcruelty.com](mailto:subrosa@pointlessmentalcruelty.com). Only subscribers may enter.

To subscribe, simply visit [www.subrosamagazine.com](http://www.subrosamagazine.com).

The email should comment on one of the articles in either Issue 1, 2, 3 or 4. Entries may be published (and may be edited). Existing and new subscribers may enter.

The winner will be drawn on Monday 22 December, and announced in Issue 5.



# Faeries of Sub Rosa

Timothy Ferguson, one of the authors of *Realms of Power: Faeries*, has generously offered Sub Rosa subscribers a special chance to suggest faeries to be written up.

## How it works

After *Realms of Power: Faeries* is released, each subscriber will get the opportunity to choose one faerie race or type. Timothy will then write up statistics for a selected number of suggested faerie types, which will be published in following issues of Sub Rosa.

Suggestions must be emailed to [subrosa@pointlessmentalcrueity.com](mailto:subrosa@pointlessmentalcrueity.com) before 1 March 2009 (date will be revised depending on the release date of *Realms of Power: Faeries*).

- ❖ If two subscribers chose the same type of faerie, only one will be given statistics and the subscribers do not get another choice.
- ❖ Subscribers may collude to get the list of faeries they most want, however all suggestions must be submitted before the deadline of 1 March 2009. Collusion may be public, or subscribers may choose to be secretive.
- ❖ If subscribers choose something that is clearly a simple variation of one of the faeries already in *Realms of Power: Faerie*, then the statistics may be “a gnome is just a dwarf in a funny hat”. Statistics from *Realms of Power: Faeries* will not be repeated.
- ❖ Subscribers that suggest a particularly obscure type of faerie will be required to provide an electronic source in English.
- ❖ If a faerie is suggested that another author of *Realms of Power: Faerie* is working on, the suggestion will be disqualified.
- ❖ Publisher’s discretion will be applied on when, where and if suggestions will be published in Sub Rosa and/or other forums.
- ❖ Only suggestions from subscribers will be considered.

## Comment from Atlas Games

### Michelle Nephew

Atlas Games releases 3 to 4 new sourcebooks a year for *Ars Magica*, but they also support *Ars Magica* in ways you might not know about...

The Atlas Games website has a huge section devoted to *Ars Magica*, where you can find a lot more than just sell text and character sheets. There are also design notes, excerpts from the books, and useful fan-produced materials like special indexes and worksheets, all at [atlas-games.com/arm5](http://atlas-games.com/arm5).

The Atlas Games forums host a large and vibrant *Ars Magica* discussion community at [atlas-games.com/forum](http://atlas-games.com/forum). With over 30,000 posts, you can find the answer to pretty much any question there. And the forums feature Atlas’ popular *Ars Magica* play-by-post games, as well.

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**DOWNLOADS**

David Chart, developer of this

Whether you want to dive into a game yourself or just read along, there's something there for you.

Over 40% of Atlas' Special Ops demo team are *Ars Magica* players! They do demos of *Ars Magica* at their friendly local games stores and conventions to earn Hazard Pay, which they exchange for *Ars Magica* sourcebooks (or any other Atlas product). Joining is easy and has

no obligation, so download an application at [atlas-games.com/specialops](http://atlas-games.com/specialops).

And remember that *Ars Magica* is more than just books! Grand Tribunal is the board game inspired by *Ars Magica*. Players use Vis to install spells into their magic items, then have them judged at Tribunal. You can learn more about it at [atlas-games.com/grandtribunal](http://atlas-games.com/grandtribunal).



# News from the Line Editor

As John Nephew recently posted to the Atlas blog, we have just reprinted a couple of *Ars Magica* supplements (*Realms of Power: Infernal* and *Ancient Magic*). This is generally very good news for the line, for two reasons.

First, the first printings of the books sold out. Print runs selling out is always good, because it guarantees that the book has made a profit. John Nephew, being a good businessman, sets each book up so that it will make a profit even if the first printing doesn't quite sell out, so if they all do, that's even better.

Second, it means that the continuing sales of the book are good enough that John thinks a reprint will be profitable. In some ways, this is even better news. When we release a new *Ars Magica* book, there is an initial surge of sales, as the fans following the game at that point buy it. They then tell their friends what they think of it, but within a month or so of a book coming out, all the "buy everything" people (and we love you all) have it. Continuing sales indicate that people are continuing to get into *Ars Magica*, or are playing it enough that the book suddenly becomes useful, and that the older supplements are sufficiently well-regarded for people to recommend them. And those are very good signs for the future financial health of the line, a necessary condition for its continued artistic health.

So, despite troubles in the wider world (I know I said last time that we were somewhat insulated against economic problems affecting one country, but that doesn't seem likely to help much right now), I'm cautiously optimistic about *Ars Magica's* future.

## Realms of Power:

The next book due out is the last of the *Realms of Power* series, covering Faerie. We did this one last because Wizards of the Coast published a Faerie book for their fourth edition, making it the realm that had been covered most recently. What's more, that was the second Faerie book; the other realms were a higher priority.

There was another problem with Faerie. The distinction between Faerie and Magic is one that has no foundations in medieval myth that I have been able to find. It seems to have been, essentially, an innovation of *ArM2*. For a long time, the distinction between Faerie and Magic was deeply unclear, so I tried to clarify it a bit in *ArM5*: Faeries are essentially concerned with people, while Magic is independent.

For the new Faerie book, Timothy Ferguson has taken that concept and developed it in a way that I think is brilliant. Faeries are about stories of change. They get vitality when people live through stories of transformation, of any sort. This can include the youngest son of the king becoming the heir, or a poor boy finding his fortune in London. Sometimes, the faerie is the dragon that the hero has to kill, and in that case the faerie gets vitality from being killed. A vampire might get vitality from blood, or from the garlic that people put on the windows to keep it out. All faeries, therefore, want people to live through their stories.

When the story is one of horror, the faerie wants people to be terrified. But suppose that the story is

## David Chart

one of an orphan boy, abused by his foster parents, who grows up to be a great wizard and defeat a mighty villain. (Just a plot I chose at random, that.) The faerie will, of course, help the boy to become a great wizard, and may well be the mighty villain, ready to be defeated. But before that, it needs to kill the boy's parents and drive his foster parents to be abusive. Even when the story has a happy ending, you are unlikely to want to live through the earlier sections, and that makes faeries frightening, and good antagonists.

I think this is a wonderful conception of the fay, one that makes them clearly different from Magic creatures, and that opens up a lot of new story possibilities in the game. I hope that you will all like it as much as I do.



# Letters

## Competition Winner:

**Darren Miguez**

I must confess, I subscribed to Sub Rosa initially to support any efforts to give Ars Magica a magazine. I own all of Mythic Perspectives, Hermes Portal, and so on. However, as a new Ars Magica saga is in the offing, I decided that I should peruse the magazines that I had downloaded and set aside until providence threw a game my way. Well, happy surprise! All three issues thus far are fantastic! I knew from my brief look-overs that they were nicely made and had some fantastic writers, but reading them cover to cover made me realize what a gem Sub Rosa is.

I very much enjoyed the adventure in issue 3 - "The Northwych Yew". I plan on

tweaking a few names here and there and using it as the first game in my saga for new players. Likewise, the article on Flambeau Apocrypha - "Societas Flambonis" - continued in the 5th edition tradition of making Flambeau so much more than a stereotype. I hope all of the Houses receive such enriching treatment as Flambeau and Bjornaer have in the in first few issues of Sub Rosa.

I have also enjoyed the articles on the Templars as they have always managed to find a place in my Sagas. The various spins on them are enjoyable and frequently a springboard for fresh ways to incorporate them into sagas. Issue 4's Infernal Templars I await eagerly.

Additionally, the Hohens-tauber articles in issues 1 and 2 were fun. Sadly, they missed my Holy Roman Empire saga by a few months, but they were an

enjoyable read and sure to find use with the northern Italian noblewoman turned maga who will be featured in my new saga.

Overall, there have been gems in all of the issues. I think issue 3 is the issue with the most 'must use' items in it thus far. Bravo, and consider my next subscription a given.

**Mark Lawford**

I'll direct this to Alex as he's the very public (if near-anonymous internet communication can be considered public) face of Sub Rosa.

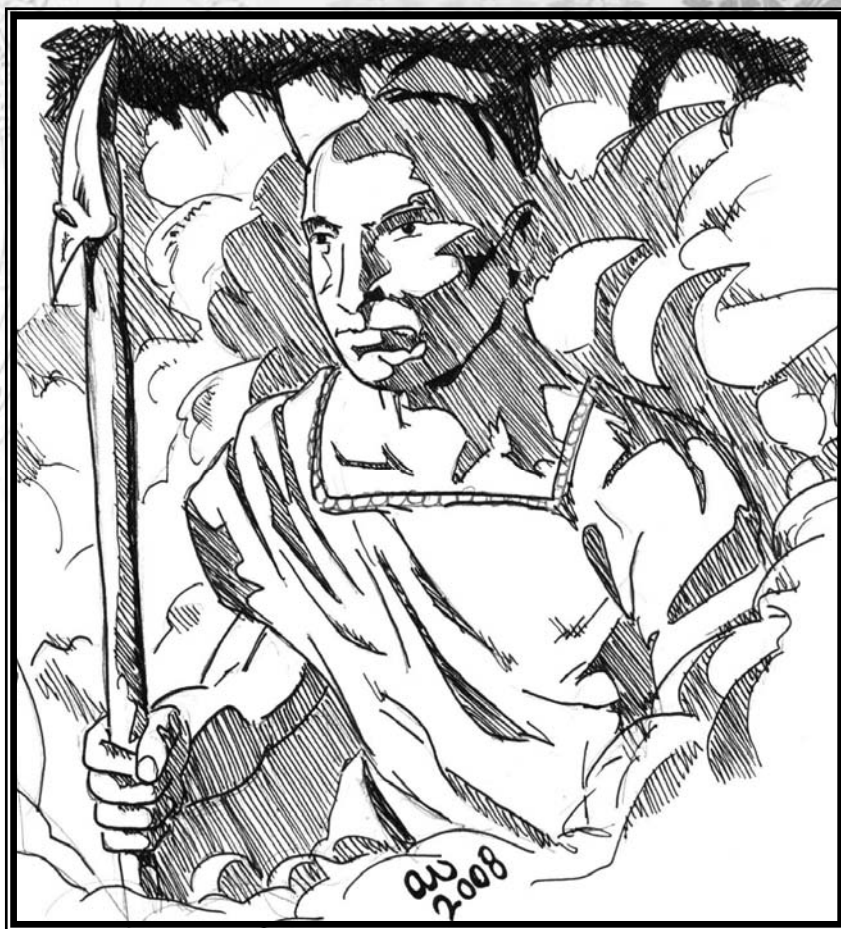
The first two issues of Sub Rosa were very good examples of how Ars Magica, as a game, spawns off more ideas from more players than can perhaps be accommodated in the four official supplements we get each year. We've had ready-to-run stories, rich characters, in-depth descriptions of mystical,



mythic, and mundane places, and common in-period ideas given a thorough shake. As both a player and a story guide I lap this stuff up as it gives me more options for play that I didn't have to fret over.

But the third issue, for me, shows the value of Sub Rosa itself. We live in the internet age. And if the internet age has delivered one thing it's knee-jerk criticism. It's very easy to throw a few derisory comments into an email or the message box of some web forum or other. And once that's out there, someone else will either step in to decry it or attempt to outdo the wit or vitriol or even just length of the original comment. It's easy to enter the throw-away comment and hit submit, but perhaps not so easy to take a step back and be a little reasoned; "reasoned" doesn't work on internet time.

But Sub Rosa, either by accident or intent, throws down the challenge; if you don't like it, let's see what you can do. That's brilliant! If you don't like it... actually do something about it. Redress the balance. Show us how it should be. But because whatever you write is a candidate for publication, you have to make it good, you have to make it work otherwise it doesn't make the cut. From armchair-critic mentality to author mentality in a single step. And all of a sudden, lots of



different factors come into play that help shape that gut feeling about "how it should have been" into something that fits seamlessly into *Ars Magica* and then actually becomes "part of the game".

So for me, while the articles have all been great so far, Sub Rosa is more than just the articles it runs, it's the opportunity to present a new approach or a new take an idea. It's only a game, and maybe it doesn't mean much because of that, but it's a catalyst to get people writing. And that has to be brilliant.

### John Post

I wanted to write to express my appreciation for the adventure "The Northwych Yew" written by Mark Lawford. This adventure was great. It is a complete story that I can use to fill an evening of gaming when I'm not ready to advance one of the saga's main storylines, or it

can be run by a beta story guide for an evening without introducing some saga-changing element into the game. Although the Hermetic apocrypha, historical background information, covenant locations, and mythic organization articles are interesting to read and helpful for ideas, they are less useful to me once a saga has started. These kinds of one-shot adventures, which I can drop into a saga without completely rewriting them or introducing some long lasting element into the game, are perfect for my needs.

Please tell Mark to keep up the good work and thanks for making my life easier.

### Sheila Thomas

I dropped the study of English Literature when I left school because I was entirely fed up with analysing what I read but since you urge it, here are a few brief comments on issue 3.





I was lucky enough to be at Grand Tribunal in Cheltenham so had already heard what the Line Editor divulged in his 'News' column, but now I have writing!

It was good to see another interesting application of the Mystery rules in 'The Circle of the Cabeiri'. Thick with classical references, this one is very nicely mythic. I can see why the illustrations needed to be rather dark but it seemed a shame to hide the details in the first one.

When I started reading 'Societas Flambonis', I was expecting to find another application of the Mystery rules. As it is, I was delighted to find an excellent contrast to the first article in this interesting treatment of a period and place that are amongst my favourites - El Cid has been one of my great heroes since school days. The only thing I was uncomfortable with was those 3rd-edition style demons, and I very much hope that we get a revision

of the Iberian Tribunal book for 5th edition that banishes them all.

I feel sure that the Ignem vis producing aura mentioned on p.17 is an aura aligned with Ignem, as described in 'Realms of Power: the Magic Realm'. I particularly liked the illustration on page 12 and that on page 14 is eye-catchingly dramatic.

Moving on from Arab-rich Spain, the Caravanserai fitted in splendidly. I love the idea of this unusual location for a covenant, the map and the details. It is a pity that the apparently rushed checking evident in several parts of this issue left us with an incorrect caption to the pretty map on page 24.

I found 'The Northwch Yew' an interesting scenario with good potential for players - a satisfying scenario with details well thought through. The splendid pictures suited the text

perfectly. I was rather worried to find the "Old Mother Mattie" is only 50 years old but her Great Weapon specialty (Pitchfork) more than makes up for this. I would be wary of allowing the Virtue "Inured to the Gift" for player characters.

It is good to see 'Mythic Zoroastrianism' updated to 5th edition and I especially enjoyed the description of the books.



## Who's Who?

### Patrick Demo

Patrick Demo is a resident of Saginaw, Michigan, and is an aspiring teacher currently working on his Bachelor's degree in English and Literature. Role-playing has been his favorite hobby for 20 years, and has served as a Game Master for his friends for almost as long.

Sub Rosa





# The Dying Drake

## Overview

Deep in the western expanses of the wilderness, roughly three day's march from the covenant or comfortable inn where the characters are located, is the lair of a forest-drake. Most drakes, being related to dragons, are ferocious and brutally territorial, and create lairs for themselves in areas that are rich in resources ripe for the taking: gold and other precious metals, *vis*, or even food. This particular drake, who calls himself Thangdrimm, has come to the area for quite a different reason. He is preparing for his own death, having lived now nearly three centuries.

## Beginning the Scenario

The characters can learn of the appearance of this forest-drake from different optional sources at the Story guide's discretion. Each of them are story hooks in themselves, and an experienced Story guide may want to use a combination of more than one of these ideas.

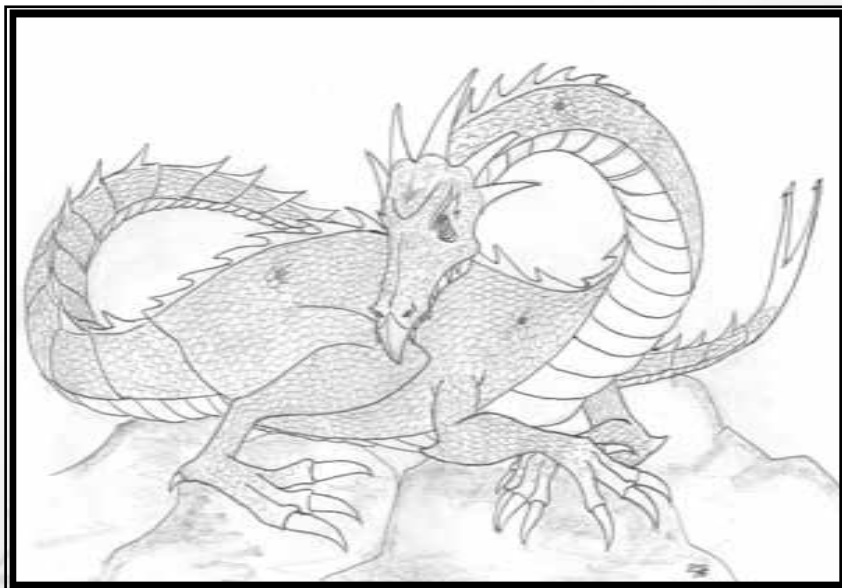
- ❖ Thangdrimm has diverted the underground water source so that it rushes along the floor of his cave, sustaining him somewhat with fresh, cool water (although he will not hunt, and plans to slowly starve himself until he dies). For this reason, local peasants or farmers will see an important water source dry up over the course of a few weeks, and naturally request help from the local wizards, monks, or nobility.
- ❖ Thangdrimm may be old, but the low, ethereal hum of a drake's breathing, however belabored with illness, can still be heard clearly by those

woodcutters who are adventurous enough to cut the higher quality wood off the usual trails. A woodcutter will then report strange sounds coming from deep within the wilderness, and the player characters can thus be alerted.

- ❖ Since Thangdrimm's resting place is set somewhat deep underground, it is possible that miners have accidentally broken through to the cave complex where he rests, and have thus found the slumbering drake alongside his water supply. This might be a good option for Story guides who like to present their players with a "back way," allowing them to strategize how they want to confront the creature.
- ❖ A hedge wizard or wise woman visits the covenant or a nearby inn where the characters are commonly found, and demands help in killing the drake. He or she knows Thangdrimm well—in fact, perhaps on a personal level, since Thangdrimm is a being of mythic intelligence and has

## Phil Chase

been known to answer questions of deserving supplicants in the past. The drake either has wronged the hedge wizard or wise woman somehow, or this person simply wants Thangdrimm's scales, eyes, teeth, or blood for use in laboratory experimentation. Due to this person's familiarity with the creature (or research done to track the creature) this person knows that Thangdrimm will die of old age soon, but does not represent this to the player characters; if the drake dies of old age, his body will rapidly decay into fine dust, useless in a laboratory. Alternately, if the drake is allowed to simply die, this hedge wizard or wise woman cannot exact the revenge on Thangdrimm he or she desperately wants. An additional level of complexity to this scenario or side adventure might be the question of the legitimacy of the hedge wizard's or wise woman's approach to magic. Is this person a (barely) Hermetic maga or magus Ex

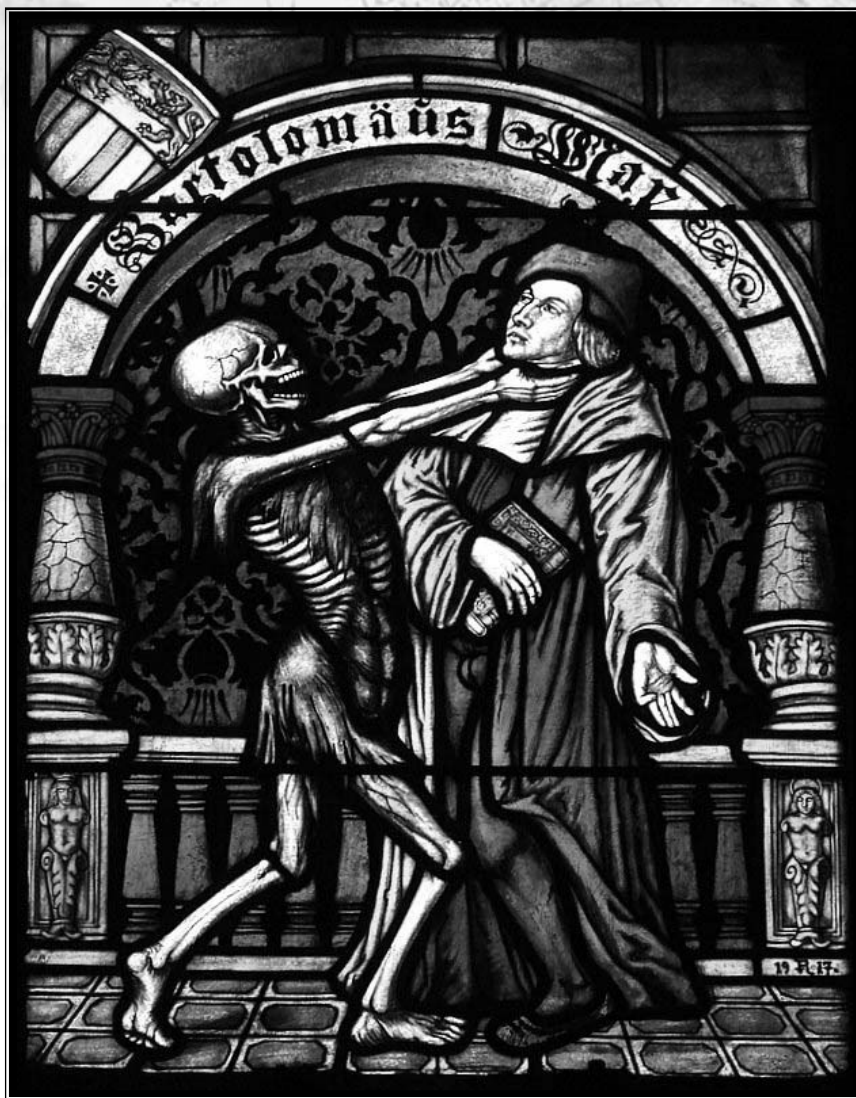


Miscellanea, or a particularly confident or bold non-Hermetic wizard who is approaching the magi in the spirit of alliance toward a common goal?

- ❖ The drake has actually announced his presence to one of the non-magus characters (a Companion with a connection to or sensitivity for magical creatures, a lone Grog who knows well enough not to fight the drake alone, or even a comically anxious covenfolk member). Thangdrimm wants to simply scare, but not kill, the person in question, believing this a better deterrent to exposing the truth about his advanced age and frail state—but Thangdrimm has not accounted for the witless recklessness of the player characters, who end up wanting to confront the drake, not leave him alone. There can be some interesting incentive for characters to hunt a drake. Perhaps they believe he has treasure (which he doesn't), perhaps someone has told them of the value of a particular draconic body part, or perhaps a Magus character has learned of forest-drakes, or about Thangdrimm himself, during routine study on another topic (for example, a *Herbam summa*).

## The Ravine

Since the aging Thangdrimm simply wants to be left alone during the last few weeks of his life, he has chosen a rather strange location for his final resting place: an Infernally-tainted and precarious ravine, which cuts into the land like a horrible black scar. At the far end of the ravine is a cave which had at one time been the location of a dark temple, used for gruesome and arcane sacrifices to a pantheon of lesser demons. Thangdrimm simply happened to find an enchanted underground well-spring set deep behind the



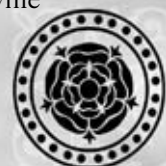
awful cavern where the vilest of atrocities was committed, and plans to use the evil aura of the temple to ward away unwanted visitors.

The entrance to the ravine, far to the south-east, is steep, rocky, and dangerous. Player characters will need to make use of area-exploration strategies as well as Athletics in order to safely descend the sixty feet into the darkness of the gorge. A *Per* + Athletics roll of 9+ can identify the safest way down; a failed roll would result in additional time being needed to descend, and a Botched roll might result in a way down that has unforeseen loose rocks, resulting in a fall or accident for the character in the vanguard. The floor of the ravine is set at a gentle slope toward the cave entrance at the

extreme north-western edge, and is about twenty feet wide at its widest and five feet wide at its narrowest. Even in the brightest noonday sun, player characters will immediately notice that shadows seem to oppress the area, getting even darker as they approach the cave entrance; once on the floor of the ravine, they will smell the sickening scent of decay and death. A *Stm* roll of 6+ is required to avoid vomiting and the loss of one *Fatigue* level that can only be recovered if the character leaves the area. A Botched roll in this case will result in the loss of two *Fatigue* levels.

## The Skeletons

About halfway down the ravine is a point where only one character of *Size 0* can advance at a time due to the narrowness of the ravine





walls; a character of a greater Size will have to double-back and find an alternate place to descend. At this point, player characters will find a disturbing sight: affixed to the walls of the ravine, at various heights, are a number of decayed and moldy skeletons. Still with scraps of clothing and armor on, these skeletons are all facing the wall, and their bodies seem to be angled away from the cave entrance—hands apparently clawing at the rocks of the ravine, faces of skulls turned to the side, and legs seeming to push away from the ground. It looks very much like masses of armored humans were once here, but fled in a terrified panic, and were instantly killed where they were, keeping their poses of horror intact into death. Player characters can find generous amounts of broken weapons and shields littering the ravine floor. In all, there are roughly three dozen skeletons here, many piled directly on top of

each other. A Magic Sensitivity roll of 6+ or a InVi spell of level 5 or greater will reveal a faint aura of evil magic that begins here and intensifies as one moves toward the cave entrance.

## The Cave

The cave is shrouded in absolute darkness. Light sources will function, of course, but even these are oppressed by the sinister evil of the place: torches and lanterns will appear dimmer, and the shadows they cast will seem incongruous and strange to the eyes of the more perceptive player characters. This is, in fact, a MuIm effect of level 20 that begins as a permanent enchantment at the mouth of the cave. Magical illumination will have full effect, but casting a spell in this area will trigger the animation of the skeletons, who will immediately attack the group. In a frightening scene,

skeletal hands and legs will unmoor themselves from the rocky sides of the ravine, and one by one the skeletons will locate their weapons and attack the player characters, pushing them further into the recesses of the cave. Story guides are certainly free to scale the number and attack abilities of these undead creatures to fit the desired difficulty level of the scenario; sample statistics are included below.

The portion of the cave that was used as the dark temple is located off a side corridor and down a small set of natural stairs. Player characters who are alert will notice that the corridor is plainly accessible because the stout wooden door that once separated it from the back of the cave entrance has been smashed to flinders. The smell of sulfur hangs heavy in the stale air, and particularly cruel Story guides may



decide to include a spike or pit trap in this corridor, detectable by a Per + Alertness roll of 12+. Once they have descended down the stairs and made their way along another forty feet of stone-worked passageway, they will find a round chamber with a floor of polished black marble.

## The Temple

The last twenty feet of the corridor has another disturbing feature: the walls of the corridor differentiate from hewn stone to a coppery metallic surface, in which runes are etched at various heights. The last ten feet of this corridor feature leering and grotesque humanoid faces with various expressions of anguish and torture; these continue to line the walls of the round chamber beyond.

One of the first things the player characters might notice besides the faces is the strong heat that radiates from the room. The copper walls act as a type of convection oven, reflecting and intensifying the pulsating heat of a single glowing coal found in the

center of the room. The coal is roughly the size of a human head; it is red-hot and illuminates the room. Player characters who enter the room

will have to check their fortitude in order to be able to continue exploring here. A Stm check of 6+ is suggested for characters at the periphery of the room, intensifying

### Skeleton Stats

**Infernal Might:** 3 (Corpus)

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

**Size:** 0

**Age:** n/a

**Decrepitude:** Already dead

**Virtues and Flaws:** None

**Personality Traits:** Mindless Killer +3

**Reputations:** None

**Combat:**

*Axe.* Init +5, Atk +9, Dfn +5, Dam +6

*Mace.* Init +6, Atk +10, Dfn +5, Dam +8

*Short Sword.* Init +6, Atk +10,

Dfn +6, Dam +5

*Short Spear.* Init +7, Atk +9, Dfn +10, Dam +5

**Soak:** +5 (various bits of armor)

**Fatigue Levels:** n/a. Skeletons are tireless, being animated by Infernal magic.

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incap (13-16)

**Abilities:** Single Weapon (parry) 4, Stealth (backstab) 2, Awareness (in combat) 2

**Powers:** None

**Equipment:** Weapon and pieces of armor

**Encumbrance:** 0

**Vis:** The skulls from three skeletons can yield one pawn of Infernally-tainted Corpus vis.

## Thangdrimm Stats

**Magic Might:** 36

**Characteristics:** Int +7, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +4, Str +3, Sta -2, Dex -1, Qik -4

**Size:** +2

**Age:** 325

**Decrepitude:** 2

**Virtues and Flaws:** Second Sight, Magic Sensitivity

**Personality Traits:** Reclusive +2

**Reputations:** The Wise Drake of the Forest (hedge wizards) 4, depending on the scenario

**Combat:**

*Bite.* Init +3, Atk +14, Dfn +12, Dam +21

*Claw.* Init +2, Atk +12, Dfn +15, Dam +16

**Soak:** +15

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

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (11-27), Incap (28+)

**Abilities:** Second Sight (regiones) 9, Magic Sensitivity (enchantments) 8, Speak Latin (questions) 6, [Area] Lore (history) 7, Order of Hermes Lore (Tytalus)

5, Faerie Lore (creatures) 6, Magic Lore (regiones) 8, Infernal Lore (undead) 3, Philosophiae (natural philosophy) 6, Guile (protect home) 4, Etiquette (addressing magi) 2, Awareness (in lair) 3, Hunt (oxen) 3

**Powers:**

*Command Of The Forest:* 2 or more Magic Points, Init 0, Herbam: Thangdrimm can duplicate all Hermetic Rego Herbam spells of the fifth magnitude or less at the cost of 2 Might points per spell cast. He does not need to use voice or gestures to activate this effect. For every additional Might point he spends, the level of the spell increases by one magnitude.

*Wisdom of the Forest:* 1 or more Magic Points, Init 0, Herbam: Thangdrimm can also duplicate all Hermetic Intellego Herbam spells of the third magnitude or less at the cost of 1 Might point. He does not need to use voice or gestures to activate this effect. For every additional Might point he spends, the level of the spell increases by one magnitude.

**Equipment:** None.

**Encumbrance:** 0

**Vis:** Four of Thangdrimm's dark green scales yields 1 Herbam vis. He has thirty-two such scales.



The temple area itself has an Infernal aura of level 2 and a InVi spell of level 5 or greater will confirm this, even though the spirits or demons who were summoned and bound here at one time have not returned for a number of years now. Player characters who can stand the heat enough to conduct a careful examination of the room (Per + Alertness 9+) without disturbing the pedestal in the center might find a secret compartment set into the wall—a twisted face can be pushed in, revealing a recess that contains an ancient tome. Written in an obscure magical code, the tome has recorded the names of the terrible spirits that have been brought here through the offering of blood sacrifice. Careful reading of the book (which can only be done during a Season) will reveal the exact incantations and rituals needed to contact at least one of these spirits, acting both as an Infernal Lore summa of Level 10 and Quality 12, and as a Mentem Tractatus at the same Quality. No author is ascribed to the tome.

Once the skeletons have been defeated, the glowing red coal can, in fact, be removed. It is very heavy, but more importantly, requires special handling, as its intense heat will melt and bore through most base metals used to encase or transport it. Magically-enchanted metals such as *hepatizon* or metals that dampen the effects of magic such as *orichalchum* could

to a 9+ and a 12+ as one approaches the coal, with failure indicating the loss of a Fatigue level, and a botch resulting in dizziness and incapacitation. Characters should make each check only once for the scene.

The coal is set upon a basin atop a pedestal of black stone; around the conical pedestal is cut a deep moat or channel. Cut into the floor at symmetrical intervals are five straight channels that lead into the circular one around the pedestal. These channels each terminate in a larger basin-like depression, as if they are sinks of some kind that drain into a central

repository. Careful examination of the basins will reveal caked-on dried blood from what must have been hundreds of victims. If the coal is disturbed in any way, the skeletons from the ravine will animate and attack, if they have not already been defeated. They will stalk slowly down the corridor in columns of two; only the most alert of player characters will hear them coming (Per + Alertness 9+). A Magus who can safely remove the coal (see below) will find that it is worth 8 Infernally-tainted Ignem vis.



be used as part of a device to house the red-hot rock. Another idea is to use the concavity of a magic shield to carefully take the coal away; this may well damage the shield, however, depending on the Magic Resistance the shield. If the coal can somehow be recovered, it can be something of considerable value to the player characters in different ways, for example:

- ❖ It can be divided and used for its *vis* if the Infernal taint can be removed;
- ❖ Nearby Faeries might trade handsomely for the coal, in order to power a forge or an artifact;
- ❖ A section of it can be used as part of a laboratory apparatus in the crafting of magical items. If the Troupe uses the Personal Laboratories rules given in the Covenants supplement, this would translate into a +3 bonus Ignem Feature.

An obviously smashed and caved-in wall opposite the entrance to the temple gives a clue as to the location of the sleeping drake.

## Thangdrimm's Lair

Several weeks ago, Thangdrimm found this place and, ignoring the temple itself, bored a hole into the loose rock, eventually emerging into a smaller cavern supplied with fresh water. The rocks partially caved in behind him as he dug, and the player characters will have to do some muscle-work (or magic) to clear out enough of the tunnel to allow entry into his final resting place.

The lair itself is a jagged, twisting cavern, about a hundred feet wide at its widest, and with a ceiling of about thirty feet at most points. The ground is rough, with stalagmites that glitter, as if

hinting at precious metals or gems worked into the rock itself. A trickle of fresh water can be found, eventually pooling in a large depression, in an area to the south-east. Thangdrimm himself lies coiled up at the far end of the cavern. In the sputtering light of torches or lanterns, he is a magnificent sight, even at his advanced age: twenty feet long and lizard-like, with an aquiline, elongated muzzle, razor-sharp claws ten inches long, and a segmented, slightly barbed tail. He is covered in scales that alternate in green and gold patterns, sparkling lustily in the dim light. Perceptive characters will notice that several scales are missing in different areas of his body.

At the Story guide's discretion, the player characters might well find an alert and awake Thangdrimm due to the noise that would be made in clearing away the rocks manually. It's also certainly possible that the drake will be awake but immobile due to a weakened state, which is something the player characters may not expect. A violent confrontation with Thangdrimm, assuming powerful and experienced characters, will still be somewhat difficult owing to the low light, the large obstacles, and constrained space. Thangdrimm's statistics are listed below for that purpose.

However, this scenario was designed for a much different proposition: if the player characters negotiate with Thangdrimm, he might well prove to be a boon to them, for the short time that he will still remain alive. The Story guide may want to consider one or more of the following options:

- ❖ Thangdrimm is highly intelligent and articulate and speaks either in a tongue common to most player characters, or in a magical

language that somehow can be understood by privileged player characters (such as wizards or magical companions). He has sage-like knowledge of local history, alchemy, philosophy, spellcrafting, and herbalism and might agree to teach as much as he knows on one subject in return for being left alone long enough to die peacefully.

- ❖ The drake may agree to explain to the player characters a secret necessary to completing a different adventure or quest in return for being left alone. This may be the location of a certain treasure, the answer to a riddle, the weakness of a particular powerful beast, or the words needed to activate a powerful magical effect.
- ❖ The drake may well agree to give away a part of its body it no longer needs in return for being left alone. This may be an old tooth, a claw, or a vial of blood. If the Story guide decided to include the hedge wizard or old crone as part of the scenario, this might be the payment required for the wizard or crone to perform a service of some kind for the player characters.
- ❖ When Thangdrimm dies, his magical essence will be captured by the very earth that surrounds him. As he was a forest-drake, the outside plant life above the cavern will double and produce magical plants or herbs. In addition, the area will be given a permanent Magic Aura, enhancing spell effects or laboratory work done at this location, either back inside this cavern or in the midst of the wilderness above. Thus, all the player characters need to do is to protect his privacy until he dies, and they can reap these benefits.



# Optional Rules: Elementals and Provenance

*Acumenis marked the last symbol with the chalk in his hand and then lit the candles with a small oil lantern. In a deep voice, he started chanting the syllables that composed the spell's preamble, a weak echo reverberating from the cavern walls. The Vis stored within the white quartz crystals glowed faintly and the air began to smell of overturned earth. The heavy flowstone spur within the circle shuddered, almost imperceptibly. For a moment it looked as if a pebble dropped into a large pool of water, as the formation rippled and shifted. Then, along the natural lines of the rock, it began crack and grind as limbs freed themselves and extended for the first time...*

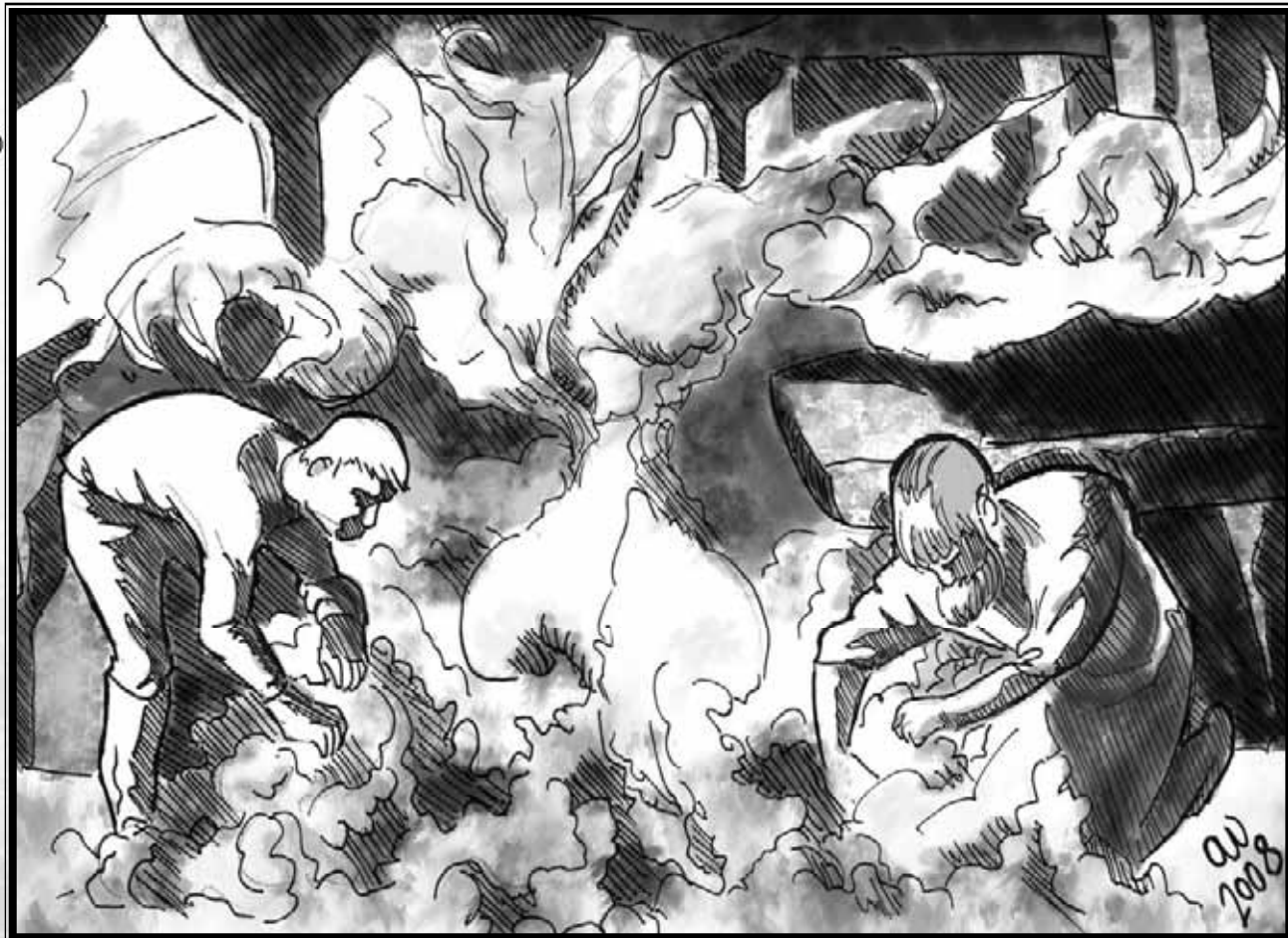
## Provenance

A magus may invent a ritual to create an elemental by rarefying a portion of chosen material. In doing so, he establishes a connection between the magus and the spirit he has awakened. A craftsman maintains arcane connections to his tools and handiwork, and a parent maintains an arcane connection to a child. While the elemental is not exactly either, there are aspects of both relationships in the process that draws forth the spirit. To better detail that connection, the idea of Provenance is suggested.

**Ben McFarland  
with James Parks**

Provenance is expressed in Degrees. An Elemental has one Degree of Provenance per 5 points of Might, rounded up, to the magus that purified its matter. (e.g. A Might 13 earth Elemental has 3 Degrees of Provenance to its creator.) Elementals that arise naturally in a magical environment have no Provenance.

*Standing with heavy footfalls that vibrated through the floor into Acumenis' very bones, the man-sized creature flexed and undulated. Large cubes of stone pulsed to the surface like apples in a barrel of water. The*



## Virtues and Flaws

### Strong Provenance

#### Minor Virtue, Hermetic

Any Elemental you create maintains its Degree of Provenance for twice the normal period. Any arcane connection you fix to maintain Provenance has one and half times its original Degree of Provenance, rounded up. (Fixing the Provenance to a Might 15 elemental with this virtue gives a benefit as if the connection had 5 Degrees of Provenance.)

### Elemental Sympathy

#### Minor Virtue, Hermetic

Your bond to the base elements is such that Elementals are not immediately hostile and do not attack without provocation. You may use the Bargaining skill to create agreements with the creatures. Simple tasks that do not involve danger have an Ease Factor of +9 and might involve adequate recompense. Complex tasks, or combat against mundanes has an Ease Factor of +12 and involves compensation. Very complex tasks or combat against magical creatures has an Ease Factor of +15 and demands rich compensation. Magic Realm Lore, Ease Factor +12, would suggest appropriate items an Elemental could value. You may not take this

virtue if you have Flawed Provenance or Foe of (Element). The Parma does not prevent this effect.

### Friend of (Element)

#### Minor Virtue, Hermetic

Your nature is tuned to a particular element such that creatures associated with this element are pleasantly predisposed to you—approaching peacefully, possibly seeking you out for aid, and willing to provide very limited cooperation on most tasks after a short promise of recompense. The Parma does not prevent this effect.

This virtue may be taken four times, once for each element. You may not take this virtue if you have Flawed Provenance.

### Flawed Provenance

#### Minor Flaw, Hermetic

You have nearly no Provenance with the Elementals you might create, as connections only last for days rather than weeks. Even a fixed Provenance is only half as effective, rounded up. Elementals in the area sense this disparity and are actively hostile towards the character, seeking them out even when provided targets in a group and only stopping when magically

compelled. Those specifically attuned to an element will feel that this character has the blatant gift. The Parma does not prevent this effect.

### Foe of (Element)

#### Minor Flaw, Hermetic

Your nature is offensive and vulnerable to creatures aligned with or composed of a specific element. Your score in this art does not contribute to your magic resistance against this Form. Creatures associated with this element sense this disparity and are actively hostile towards the character, seeking them out, attacking them even when provided targets in a group. The Parma does not prevent this effect.

### Sorcerous Reputation

#### Minor Flaw, Story

Because of your traffic with Elementals, many believe you to also be a Summoner of Demons, Ghosts and Spirits. You start with a negative Hermetic Reputation of "Sorcerer: 3." From time to time, you may find yourself approached by those who seek terrible powers, lost souls, or genii loci—but you may also find yourself under the Quaesitor's eye, accused of crimes you did not commit.

*Elemental opened and closed its thick-fingered fists and looked at the magus with hungry eyes of glittering milky quartz.*

## Benefits

Provenance provides a benefit to the magus that created the Elemental. Each Degree of Provenance grants a +2 penetration bonus to spells cast upon the Elemental by the creator. Likewise, spells cast by other magi

upon the Elemental must overcome this additional bonus. For example:

A Might 15 Earth (Stone) Elemental is controlled by a ReTe30 spell (Baseline 5, +1 for stone, +2 for voice, +2 sun) cast with a total of 37. The caster has 3 Degrees of Provenance to this Elemental and Penetration of 3. This results in a total of 46 (37 roll + 3 Penetration + 6 Provenance.), which penetrates and places the Elemental under

the control of the creating magus. In order for another magus to wrest control of the Elemental from the creating magus, they would need a casting total of 52—one greater than the Elemental's Might plus the Provenance bonus.

*The Elemental cocked its head and reached for Acumenis, the sound emanating from it more akin to gravel pouring down a hillside than anything else. Quickly, the magus cast his spell of control, the Latin bursting from his mouth and reverberating down the*





## Arcane Connections

Duration	Source
1 week/degree of Provenance	Creation, Remnant Vis after destruction

### Guideline

#### Perdo (Elemental Form [Vim Requisite])

Level 15: Destroy an unfixed arcane connection between an Elemental and its creator magus.

#### Destroy the Summoner's Sigil

PeTe(Vi)25, Baseline 15, +2 voice.

This spell eliminates an unfixed arcane connection that exists between an Elemental and its creator magus. It must penetrate the Elemental's Might, and any Degree of Provenance does apply.

arcane connection, as one would any other arcane connection. A magus who has mastered the mystery of True Names and Synthemata (TMRE, page 86-88) also learns the Elemental's True Name when this connection is fixed. Using that True Name against the Elemental earns the spirit's enmity.

With a fixed Provenance, Elementals might take on aspects of their creator magus' sigil or personality, gaining cosmetic modifications to their appearance and appropriate personality traits. Depending on the nature of the relationship, the Elemental may actually become congenial or perhaps grow to hate its creator and any filii. As such creatures evolve over time, they could provide enemies or magical companions.

*From the distance came the faint noises of baying hounds and the shouts of angry men. "Quickly. Go to the entrance of the cave and remain there. Allow nothing to enter. Destroy any who attempt to pass until I order you to cease." Wordlessly, the Elemental nodded and clomped off into the darkness, trailing a cloud of dust as it passed.*

it seeks—the sealed and never-opened manuscript containing the True Name, it might reveal the location of the wizard's translated ritual laboratory notes.

## The Soul of a Craftsman

Does the act of fixing a Provenance invest the Elemental with a tiny portion of the creator's soul? What is the place of this arcane connection in the greater scheme of Hermetic Theory, and does it imply more types of arcane connections than previously considered? Perhaps there is a relationship like the Folk Mystery of Charm Magic? (HoH:MC, page 96-98) While some might consider this a worthy Breakthrough, possibly establishing a system similar to a familiar's cords, various Verditius and Bonisagi fear for the exploitation of unknown connections lingering through a variety of avenues.

tunnels. The creature paused in mid step. Ordinarily, the hurried formulaic would have been insufficient, but given his connection to the Elemental's origin moments before...

17

## Aspects and Guidelines

Provenance, however, does not last indefinitely—at least, not without effort. The effect remains for a number of weeks equal to the Elemental's Might divided by 5, for a time no less than one week. Any Vis gathered from the destroyed elemental within this timeframe acts as an arcane connection to the creator for an equal period, as well. Before it is fixed, the connection can be immediately destroyed with a PeFo(Vi) spell, Baseline 15. The connection can be made permanent by acquiring a pawn of Vis from the Elemental's source location, and affixing it as an

## Story Seeds

### The Power of Barter

A skilled Elementalist created and controlled an elemental spirit for decades—building its power and strength through rituals only explained in his lab notes. While he learned the Elemental's True Name, he never told the creature, and used it as a bargaining chip to ensure obedient service. After twilight experience, the Elemental was trapped by wards and bound to the magus' final commands. If the characters can bring the spirit the information



# Explosive power in an Aristotelian world

Mark Shirley

The invention of gunpowder stood on the cusp of science in Medieval Europe, and was directly or indirectly responsible for a shift in scientific thinking that, along with other scientific developments, lead to the Renaissance-level understanding of natural philosophy. It was the study of ballistics in particular which caused a revelation in the science of motion, since Aristotelian ideas broke down in the real world with the speeds obtained from gunpowder, and generated ideas of impetus and momentum.

As revealed in *Art & Academe*, Mythic Europe operates under different rules to Medieval Europe, but this does not invalidate the discovery and use of gunpowder, but its impact on the intellectual, political, and martial stages is likely to be very different. This article is principally about the Aristotelian concepts behind explosions and a method for introducing them into an *Ars Magica* saga. It is not intended to be a history of cannons or blackpowder weaponry — I will leave that to the better informed — although I have included some ‘quick-and-dirty’ ideas for weapons at the end of the article.

The explosive power — rather than a simply incendiary one — is described by the authors of gunpowder recipes as “lightnings” or “thunders”. Roger Bacon in the *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae* or *Opus Tertium* (1267) states “sed tamen 7 partes salpetrae, 5 partes coruli et 5 partes sulphuris et sic facies tonitrum et coruscationem, sic scias artificium” (take 7 parts of saltpetre, 5 parts of hazelwood charcoal and 5 parts of sulphur and that makes thunder and lightning,

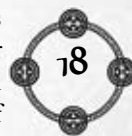
provided you know the art). In the *Liber ignium ad comburendos hostis* attributed to “Marcus Graecus” recipes for ‘flying fire’ (rockets) and ‘thunder’ (blasting power) are given. This source is probably an Arabo-Spanish compilation whose oldest parts are eighth century; although the gunpowder recipes are probably the newest section and date 1275-1300.

To understand the concept of explosive power it is therefore useful to review the Aristotelian concept of lightning. Lucretius likens the whirling winds within the clouds to a furnace. The winds shut in the clouds growl like wild beasts in a cave. They “seek an exit, whirl and roll together out of the clouds the seeds of fire; they gather a host of them into a single mass and make them rotate in the hollow furnace within till they’ve burst the cloud and glitter out in forked flashes”. He goes on to make another vital analogy: “At times the force of the wind, aroused from outside, falls on a cloud hot with a full-fledged bolt; and when it has burst, at once the vortex falls down, fierily eddying—which in our tongue is called fulmen [...] At times, also, the power of the wind, though discharged without fire, yet chafes afire in the course of its long travel [...] and out of the air itself it gathers and carries along other minute atoms which mix with it, producing fire by their flight. Very much as a leaden ball gets hot in its course as it loses many bodies of cold and takes up fire in the air.”

In 1358, Jean Buridan — still working from an Aristotelian viewpoint — will write in his

*Quaestiones de libris metereologicorum Aristotelis* that “the force of such wind is manifest in those instruments that are called tubes (*canales*), from which is emitted, though the wind generated by a little bit of powder, a great arrow or ball of lead with such force that no armour can withstand it.” An explosion therefore is a great turbulent wind trapped in a confined space, just like the winds trapped in a cloud. The whirling of the air attracts atoms of fire, and either bursts the confining vessel if it is too weak (inflicting a mighty blow), or else rush through any opening providing the *generans* (initial mover) for anything in its way. In this case, the fire atoms dragged along with the vortex of spiraling winds reduces the resistance of the air and thus distance travelled is both further and more forceful. (Buridan himself introduces the concept of impetus, but that has no place in an Aristotelian universe.)

The question remains as to the origin of these turbulent winds within the explosion. Clearly their origin must be within the explosive powder. The saltpetre (a.k.a. nitron) is the source of the wind, generated within the earth as an incrustation of noxious air. This is evident in that the more saltpetre, the heavier the blast; to such an extent that a mixture which is nitron-rich will burst the vessel asunder rather than propel a missile from it. The sulphur and the charcoal intensify the ignition flame with their fire-rich nature, and provide separation and motion, as is the wont of hot, dry atoms.



Impetus and momentum are not necessary to explain ballistics in Mythic Europe. The speed of a bullet is by virtue of the thinning of the air's resistance by its enrichment by fire. The whirling tube of air extending from the cannon's mouth also keeps the missile on track and from following natural motion too soon. In *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, "fulmen" (i.e. gunpowder; it didn't really have a name until the C18 when it was coined "black powder") is an Alchemical Reagent (*Art & Academe*, page 74), and thus will not go into mass production in the same way as in the real world. Unless it can be mass-produced, there would be no "gunpowder revolution", and the Renaissance would be very different indeed.

As Alchemical Reagents, explosive and incendiary substances usually have a base level of 3, since they involve an enhancement of a secondary quality of air — force and motion. Because of the dangerous nature of these substances, an alchemist must roll a stress die for every season spent in the laboratory manufacturing it; this die is only significant if a botch is rolled, in which case the reagent explodes during manufacture. One botch die is rolled for every dose being manufactured (the more explosive present, the more danger), and an alchemist would be well-advised to invest in a Safety bonus for his laboratory (*Covenants*, page 111). There are a number of incendiary and explosive reagents that stem from alchemical enquiry into fire and air; some of them are detailed below. All these reagents are very sensitive to moisture; a batch can easily be ruined by light rain or even dew.

### Ignis volans

Reagent Level 4

Alteration: Minor

Produced as a wrap of reed paper enclosing a fine powder,

when the twist of paper is lit, the natural motion of the air is enhanced and the Ignis Volans flies off at great speed as the wind produced is funneled through the paper. There is usually a great deal of smoke, and the missile explodes with a small flash of flame. This flame can be of any colour, decided when the Ignis Volans is manufactured, but every dose made in the same season must be the same colour.

(base 3, +1 Minor)

### Ignis Vivax

Reagent Level 5

Alteration: Slight

Julian Africanus is the first to mention this automatic fire, a mixture of native sulphur (*vivum* or *theion*), rock salt, konia (quicklime), *keraunion* (pyrites, literally 'thunder stone'); ground together in a black mortar and mixed with sycamore resin and asphalt from Zakynthos to make a greasy paste. It must be kept from



light and heat for it readily bursts into flames. He describes its use to spread over siege weapons at night, so when the morning sun strikes it, ignition is achieved, but it has any number of other uses. The fire inflicts +5 damage, which is sufficient to ignite a flammable substance such as dry wood.

(base 4, +1 Minor)

### Coruscatio

**Reagent Level 10**

**Alteration:** Major

When triggered by the tiniest of sparks, this powdery reagent releases an exceptionally bright flash of light; as brilliant as briefly staring directly at the sun. anyone facing in the direction of the flash is left blind for at least a round, and may make a Stamina stress roll of Ease Factor 9 in the following round to clear his vision. If this roll is botched then the character has the Blind Flaw for the next month. If the roll fails, the blindness lessens to a -3 penalty to all actions. Affected

Type	Init	Atk	Def	Dmg	Rng	Str	Ld	Cost
Ribald	+5	+5	n/a	+10	50	n/a	n/a	Exp
Gonne	+5	+1	n/a	+15	75	n/a	n/a	Exp

characters can make a Stamina simple roll every minute; achieving an Ease Factor of 9 restores vision.

(base 3, +3 Major)

### Fulmen

**Reagent Level 10**

**Alteration:** Substantial

Named after the lightning itself, this reagent releases a whirling torrent of air and fire which provides sufficient force to propel a projectile down a tube; see the section below on *Gonnes and Ribalds*. The Size modifier ensures that the tube of heated air extends from the barrel mouth and guides the missile to its target.

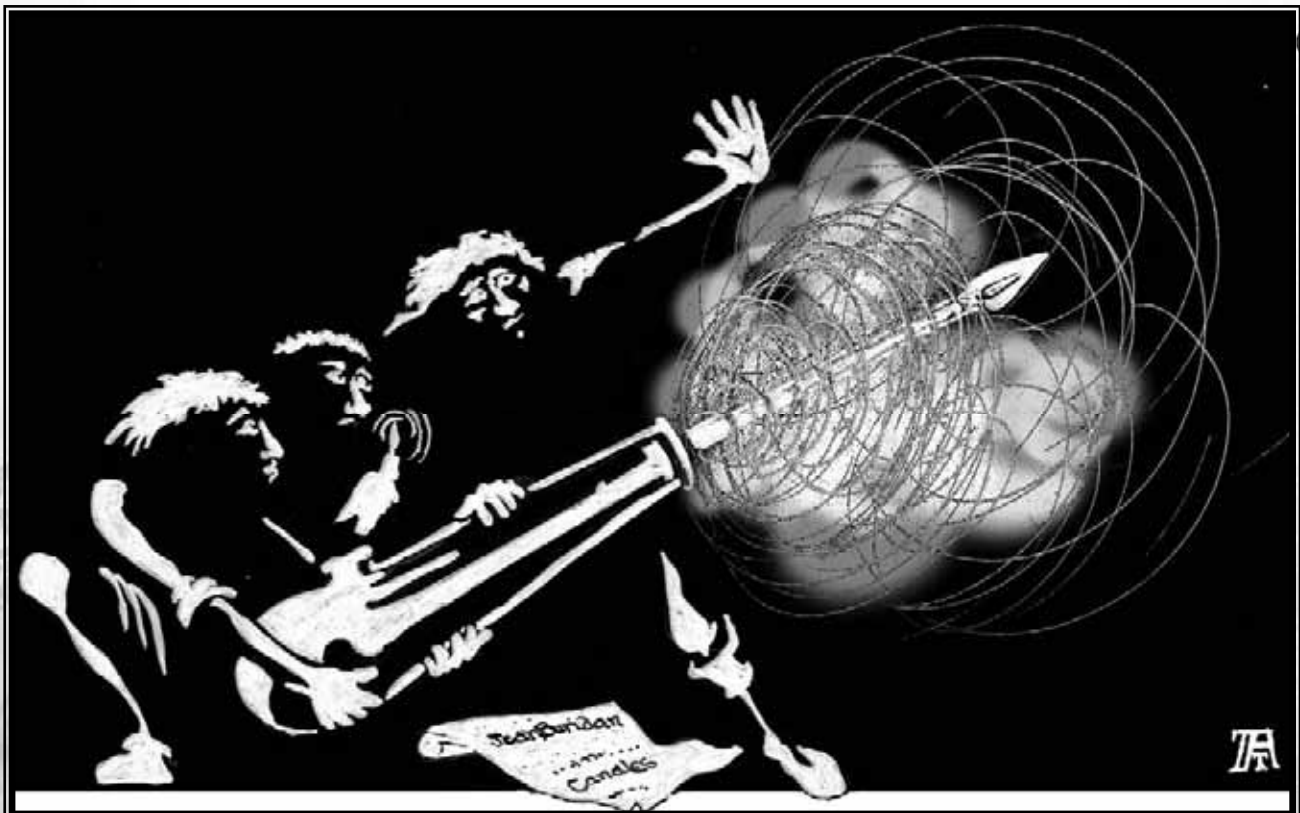
(base 3, +2 Substantial, +1 Size)

### Flamen Internecinus

**Reagent Level 15**

**Alteration:** Major

This dark grey or black powder is highly explosive, releasing an immensely strong and hot wind in the presence of fire. If simply lit in the open it will produce a flash of fire inflicting +5 damage to anyone within one pace. Its true power, giving it its name of “murderous blast”, is igniting it within a sealed vessel. When the wind is released from the powder, the Flamen creates a deafening noise and +10 damage to everyone within ten paces. Anyone failing a Stamina stress roll of Ease Factor 9 is temporarily deafened (or deafened for a month on a botch), and may re-attempt the Stamina roll on a simple die every minute. The Flamen also causes any object



within range to make a Stress Check (*City & Guild*, page 77); failure results in losing one damage level per five points of the Damage Total.

(base 3, +3 Major, +1 Size)

## Gonnes and Ribalds

The discovery of explosive reagents is not the only development that is needed for firepower to enter Mythic Europe. Once natural philosophers have discovered the potential for Fulmen to project a missile, a vessel suitable for firing the missile must be invented, with a strong enough blast chamber to contain the explosion, the correct shape barrel to funnel the whirling torrent of air and fire, and an appropriate missile. This requires technological advancement of the type described in *City & Guild*, page 65; a workshop innovation in the Craft: Siege Engines Ability. Such an innovation would require a good supply of Fulmen in the testing process, at least one dose per season.

Engines designed to hurl missiles into the enemy ranks already exist in the thirteenth century, and the words *gonne* (English) and *gunnum* (Anglo-Latin) are already in use to describe mechanical siege engines. The terms stemmed from the habit of naming such machines with the Old Norse feminine radical Gunn-, such as Gunhilda. Since gunn-r and hild-r both mean 'war', the name is highly appropriate. The word cannon appeared in Historical France in 1339. The smaller varieties of firearms were called *ribaldi* (Latin), *ribaudequin* (French) and *ribalds* (English).

By the 1320s firearms were becoming commonplace in Historical Europe; owned by Florence in 1326, illustrated in the

English manuscript of Walter de Milemete's *De notabilibus sapientiis et prudentiis* in the same year, and in the *Secretum secretorum* a little later. Aix-le-Chapelle in 1346 possessed an "iron vessel for discharging thunder arrows".

In Mythic Europe such cannons may develop for a more efficient — if more dangerous — method for hurling huge missiles at the enemy. However, the difficulty of making Fulmen, plus the time and expense involved in manufacturing reagents, might inhibit the development of gunpowder weapons even if gunpowder itself exists in your Mythic Europe.

You may choose to alter the rules for alchemical reagents — or just gunpowder — to allow its manufacture in quantities sufficiently great enough for cannons to be viable weapons of war. Small bore weaponry such as muskets and rifles will never be developed in any case due to the laws of motion in an Aristotelian universe: without momentum, or even its poor relation impetus, a small pellet does negligible damage since greater force is not imparted with greater speed. A bullet propelled by Fulmen would do as much damage as a peashooter, although it would travel further.

Operating a gunpowder weapon requires the Profession: Siege Artillerist Ability instead of a Martial Ability. Employing such a weapon against moving targets is almost impossible unless one is firing into a large crowd (such as an army) and have no interest in designating specific targets. A single projectile from a *gonne* (used here to indicate the largest class of cannon) can hit up to 10

targets as it careers into a crowd; the Artillerist inflicts a number of wounds equal to his Profession Ability. If deployed against structures, make a Stress Check (*City & Guild*, page 77) for the object; if this roll fails then the structure takes a number of damage levels equal to one fifth of the Damage Total, rounded up. Once all a structure's damage levels have been taken, the structure collapses.

A *gonne* or *ribald* takes (10 – Profession: Siege Artillerist) minutes to reload and fire again. Missiles are either iron balls or massive spears (*sagittae*). A botch while using the Profession: Siege Artillerist Ability results in a misfire and inflicts +5 damage on the character for each zero on the botch dice. Add this extra damage to the Damage bonus of the weapon to generate a Damage Total applied to the misfired weapon; if this exceeds the damage levels of the *gonne* or *ribald* then it is destroyed. *Gonnes* are more dangerous and less reliable than *ribalds*, and incur an extra botch die on any Profession: Siege Artillerist roll made when using one.

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# Covenant Locations: Seuthopolis

*“The gods which they worship are but three, Mars, Bacchus, and Dian. Their kings, however, unlike the rest of the citizens, worship Mercury more than any other god, always swearing by his name, and declaring that they are themselves sprung from him.”*

— Herodotus describes the customs of various Thracian tribes, Book 5.

For many sagas, the choice of covenant location sets the tenor of more than just the first arc, it can define the whole game-- or, at the very least, determine its direction for a number of sessions. Sometimes it is the region itself that the Story guide intends to hold the focus, and players might be provided a number of possible sites from which they will select their characters' new home. In an attempt to add variety to the old saw of 'a castle on a hill by a faerie wood,' the following location is presented. It isn't intended to be a full reference, but provide an overview for further research.

Located in Bulgaria's Rose Valley at the foot of the Balkan Mountains, this covenant is designed as a sort of medieval commune established in the ruins of Seuthopolis (approx. 42°35'60"N 25°18'0"E). In 1220, Bulgaria was ascendant, as Ivan Asen the Second consolidated his rule in the Balkan Peninsula and prepared to expand through the region. Conflicts festered with the powers left in the wake of the Fourth Crusade's sacking of Constantinople and with the progress of Crusaders from the Fifth Crusade. This golden period of autonomy built to the attacks of the Tartar Hordes in 1241 and Bulgaria's decline through the end of the 13th Century. This covenant would be positioned to face some of the Order's greatest coming challenges firsthand.

## The Region

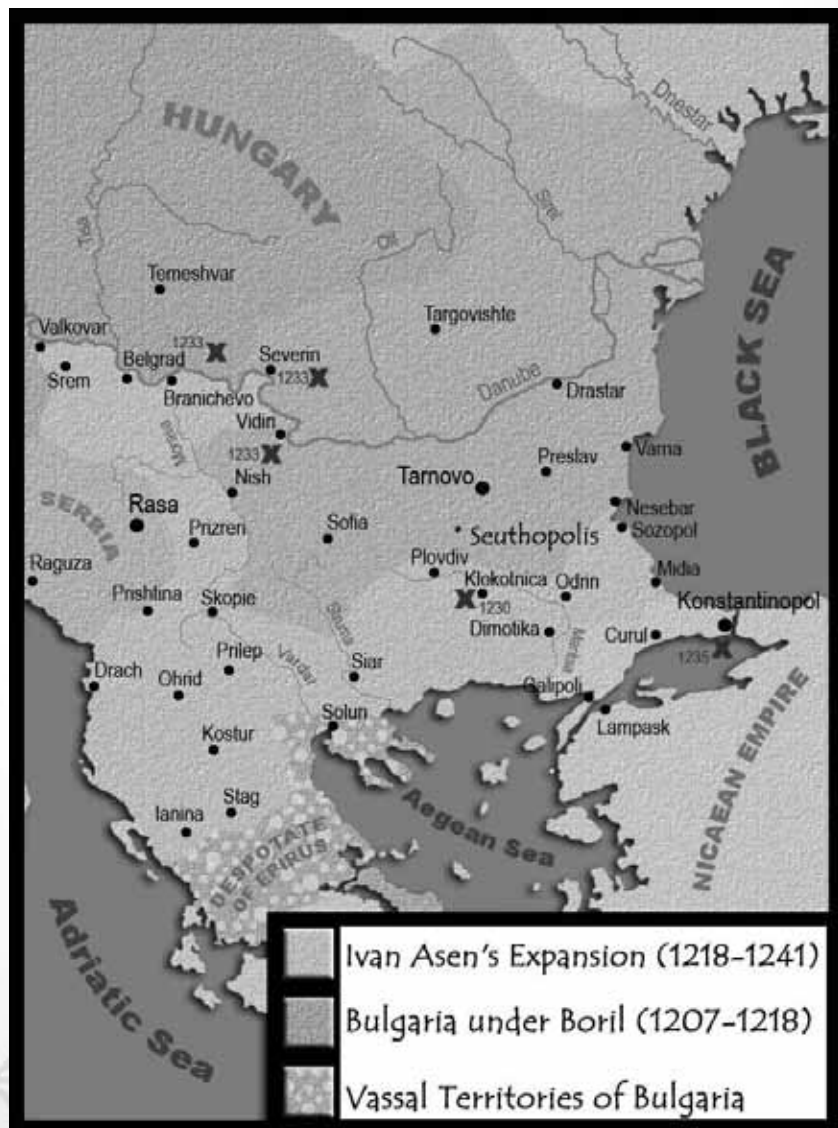
Nestled in the foothills of the Balkans, along the banks of the Tundja river, is the Rose Valley. Large towns in the area include Plovdiv, Boruy, and Kopsis. Plovdiv, sometimes called Philippopolis in the late 12th and 13th centuries, was always a center of culture and commerce. It traded hands no less than six times from 1204 to 1225, and an enormous Asian army of the Byzantines was destroyed near there in 970 AD. Boruy is also known as Beroia, a mining town since antiquity and the site of an 1122 battle where the

## Ben McFarland

Byzantines crushed the remnants of the Pechenegs—a group of nomads from southwestern Asia. Kopsis is a fortress town sustained by the village of Sushitsa. The whole area is renowned for its roses and the rose oil production.

## The History

Bulgaria has a rich history, allowing for many threads and sagas. From the late 12C through the middle of the 13C, the Asen Dynasty dominated the area. Under these leaders the Bulgarian people flourished; particularly





from 1218 through 1242, as Ivan Asen II consolidated rule across Albania, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. Widely considered a just and capable monarch, the region prospered with numerous monasteries established, the capital improved, and the arts and literature encouraged. Such an environment can provide opportunities for the magi to either maintain or disrupt this growth.

during this time would need to find a way to either remain unknown or untouched through the battles.

Ivan Asen II took back the throne from Boril in 1218, when the pretender found himself without allies and locked in war with Serbia. Boril hid within the capital, Tarnovo, where Ivan captured him after a seven-month siege. Boril was blinded and relegated to a monastery. Ivan Asen II died in June of 1241 and was succeeded by his son, Kaliman Asen I, then only 8 years old.

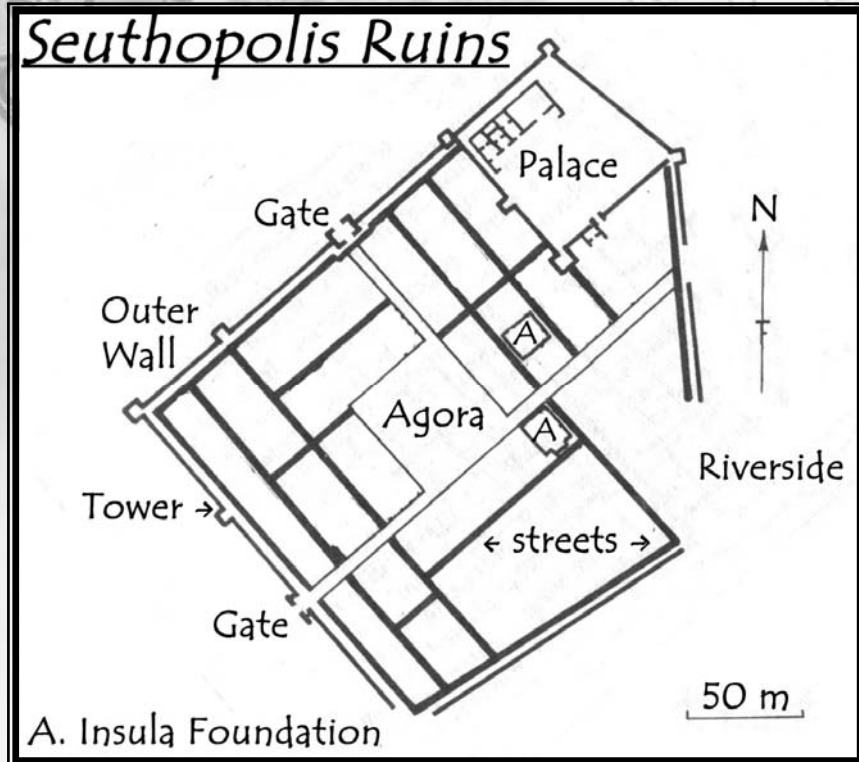
The child Tsar, guided by a regent, prevented the sacking of Bulgaria in the following year with what would become an annual tribute to Batu Khan's Golden Horde. Lacking a strong leader, Bulgarian influence in Thessalonica and Serbia ended. Kaliman was killed five years later and succeeded by his half-brother, Michael Asen. Michael was also underage, and found his ten-year rule controlled by various figures in his court—such as his mother Eirene, a Russian prince, and a Nicaean matriarch operating out of Belgrade. This pattern of ascension followed by murder and usurpation continued through the rest of the thirteenth century, as each claimant to the throne attempted to find some link in their lineage back to Ivan Asen II. The only exception was the commoner Ivailo, who rebelled in 1277. Ivailo competed for power with a noble-born Tsar, until Nogai Khan murdered him as he and the noble simultaneously approached the Khan in search of support for unifying Bulgaria. Not until 1300 would another Tsar rule Bulgaria for any significant period of time, and always under the shadow of the Golden Horde.



Prior to Ivan Asen II, Bulgaria stuttered through a series of rulers. For a bulk of the medieval period, it was a part of Constantinople's holdings. However, after claiming independence through rebellion from Byzantium in 1185, two brothers, Peter IV and Ivan Asen governed Bulgaria. They sporadically battled the Byzantines even after being recognized. Ivan was murdered in 1196, and Peter IV in 1197. Peter's younger brother Kaloyan took the throne until 1207, when conspirators, led by Kaloyan's nomad cavalry commander and supposedly organized by his successor, Boril, killed him outside the walls of Thessalonica in October.

Boril reigned from 1207 to 1218, and fought several battles against the Byzantines in the vicinity in 1208. A covenant located here





## The History of Seuthopolis

The Thracian king Seuthes III built Seuthopolis in 320 BC, and it stood for forty years—more a religious complex than a true city. While it survived the turmoil that followed the struggle of Alexander the Great's successors, the Celts would sweep down from the north crush it before a legacy could be established. Ptolemy II eventually gained control over Thrace, and the Pharaoh had little incentive to rebuild it.

Seuthopolis was modeled after a Greek polis with a grid layout and used the river Tundja to help guard three sides; it had only two gates. While not an extravagant city, it boasted underground sewers, an agora, many apartment filled insula, and the temple-palace of Seuthes. This temple-palace not only held court, but Seuthes III maintained a Cabeiri Sanctuary with hearth-altar dedicated to Haephestus. The Thracian kings' claim of descent from the god Mercury heightens the rich magical background, and the many tombs in the region add to the possibilities. Celts

supposedly destroyed the city in 279 BC, but its ruins were said to be the best-preserved Thracian structures ever found.

## The Structure

A covenant established here could utilize the ruined walls and remnant foundations, a dirt covered agora, choked sewage system, but most importantly, the (possibly only partially) buried ruins of the temple-palace and four nearby tholos, or beehive tombs—generally reserved for royalty or high ranking members of society, like priests, and lavishly appointed with goods and painted murals.

On that compound, a medieval commune would easily thrive. The natural defensive position of the river could be restored and the walls rebuilt. These communities often sported a tower or two for observation of the countryside, and nearly always had a wall. Otherwise, communes were the basis for walled towns and held many of the usual structures: smithies, mills, potters, weavers, etc. The agora might be uncovered to provide a

marketplace or an easy source of dressed stone. Once found, magic could clear sewers and pre-established foundations would ease some construction efforts.

Referencing City and Guild, communes usually possess a self-defined charter. In this instance, the existence of a charter is probably best decided by the troupe—remembering that the fairly regular shift in mundane rulership might make such a document seem reasonable, depending on the time period.

## Hooks and Boons

### Site, Minor Boon:

Aura—the ruined temple-palace combined with the proximate tholos tombs provide a decent aura for the area.

### Site, Minor Hook:

Poorly Defensible—though the river Tundja provides a source of drinking water and acts as a barrier to most mundane forces, enemy magi could divert its course and impact the covenant.

### Site, Minor Hook:

Road—the Tundja is the most significant tributary of the Maritsa river, the largest river in the Balkans; traffic is inevitable.

### Fortification, Minor Boon:

Writ of Crenellation—with sequence of rulers and the numerous battles and skirmishes fought in the region, it is easy to have 'acquired' a Writ from one of the last several lords of the region to help protect the location's resources.

### Fortification, Free Boon:

Small Tower—one or two of these towers would serve as observation points for the immediate countryside.

### Resources, Minor Boon:

Hidden Resources—the wreckage of the ancient Thracian





capital could provide many possible finds, from a cache of wealth, to dressed stone blocks, to a couple of lost non-Hermetic artifacts.

#### **Resources, Minor Hook:**

**Regional Produce**—located in the Valley of the Roses, this portion of Balkans is renowned for its rose oil and roses, prized in the creation of perfumes.

#### **Residents, Minor Boon:**

**Strong Community**—this is the cornerstone of the commune.

#### **Residents, Minor Hook:**

**House Church**—with a fairly insular community, this kind of house of worship is a certainty.

#### **External Relations, Major Hook**

**War Zone**—the constant conflict between Bulgaria, the Latin Empire, the Byzantines, and the Mongols makes this hook an obvious choice.

#### **Surroundings, Minor Hook**

**Fallen Temple**—the ruins of the Cabeiri Sanctuary have portions buried and yet unreclaimed.

**Net Total:**



Four more minor Hooks than Boons.

Minor Hooks that could be easily accommodated include **Refugee (Residents)**, as one of the many displaced nobles attempts to seek sanctuary within the covenant, **Slavery (External Relations)**, as the covenant borders non-Christian lands and could trade in captured pagan Mongols, and finally **Roman Ruins (Surroundings)**, as this region was part of the Empire for nearly 500 years and over 100 legionary fortresses were constructed during the reign of

Justinian to defend against the Gauls. The **Beholden or Mundane Politics** major Hooks might also be appropriate, as a mundane Lord or General's oversight explains how the covenant escaped much of the recent violence untouched. The minor Boon, **Veteran Fighters (Residents)** would also be appropriate, depending on nature of the saga. That gives the players three to twelve points in Boons left to customize.

### **Story Seeds**

**Seekers of What Was Lost:** Members of a Mystery Cult—a few **Verditius**, **Mercurians**, **Disciples of Worms (TMRE)**, or the **Circle of Cabeiri (SR#3)** approach the covenant, believing it to contain items, texts, or spirits of great interest to their particular beliefs. They may be coy or open, willing to trade, commit subterfuge, or even initiate the members if the magi will allow them to investigate certain areas. How will the magi respond, and what will be the Cultists counter response? Will this escalate into a **Wizards' War** or become an opportunity for expanding **Hermetic Theory**?

**Only One May Pull the Strings:** A **Tremere** covenant across the border in the **Transylvanian Tribunal** prefers





the state of instability and regular change that has dominated Bulgaria since the end of the 12th Century. Unhappy with the covenant's growing power, they begin to summon pagan ghosts from several of the known battlefields and use them to harass towns nearby—all while mundanely spreading rumors that the scholars within the commune are responsible. Can the magi discover these necromancers and put a halt to their sabotage before the Bishop is called to act?

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# The Templars: Infernal Brotherhood

Alex White

On Friday the thirteenth, in October 1307, the Knights Templar within the kingdom of France were placed under imperial arrest. Five years later, with the Papal Bull *Vox in excelso*, Pope Clement V declared before assembled Church princes that the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon was abolished 'by an inviolable and perpetual decree'.

The charges to which the Templars went to their deaths 'like sheep to the slaughter' were crimes 'horrible to contemplate, terrible to hear of... an abominable work, a detestable disgrace, a thing most inhuman'. The Order, it was alleged by Phillip the Fair, king of France and man responsible for the fall of the Templars, had fallen to the worship and service of the devil, renouncing Christ and engaging in inhuman and repugnant acts.

While the record of history now doubts these charges, what if they were true?

What if the New Knighthood hid a diabolical heart so black that it would take the combined effort of the 'most Christian king' and

the Pope himself to eradicate the stain that had spread across Europe?

## The Diabolical Order

The Templars did not begin their existence as a corrupt institution, and by 1220, diabolism has only just taken full reign in the Order. Many of the Poor Knights are unaware of the infernal nature of their superiors, or remain in pious ignorance at the direction they are being led. How could the Knights of Christ fall to such depths?

## Fallen from the outset?

Alternatively, diabolical forces could have corrupted the Poor Knights of the Temple from the beginning. When Hugh of Payns arrived in Jerusalem, he was searching for a hidden infernal relic: the head of Baphomet, a Saint or Duke of Hell and patron of lust, greed and male sexual potency. It took nine years to recover the head from the vault that the Solomon had imprisoned it, in the hope that

## The Charges

I. That during the reception ceremony, new brothers were required to deny Christ, God, the Virgin or the Saints on the command of those receiving them.

II. That the brothers committed various sacrilegious acts either on the cross or on an image of Christ.

III. That the receptors practiced obscene kisses on new entrants, on the mouth, navel or buttocks.

IV. That the priests of the Order did not consecrate the Host, and that the brothers did not believe in the sacraments.

V. That the brothers practiced idol worship of a cat or a head.

VI. That the brothers encouraged and permitted the practice of sodomy.

VII. That the Grand Master, or other officials, absolved fellow Templars from their sins.

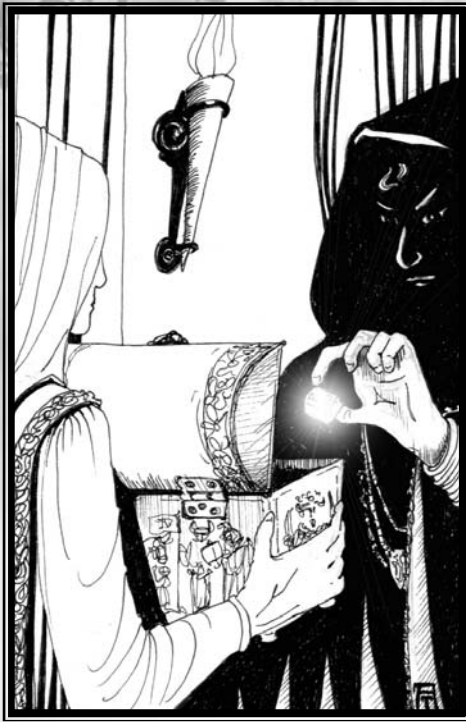
VIII. That the Templars held their reception ceremonies and chapter meetings in secret and at night.

IX. That the Templars abused the duties of charity and hospitality and used illegal means to acquire property and increase their wealth.

the prison's holiness would trap it forever.

The extent of the diabolical conspiracy could vary, from involving high church officials and abbots (such as Pope Honorius II and Bernard of Clairvaux) and princes such as Hugh of Champagne and Henry II, king of England. Or it could be relatively minor, with only the Knights Templar being minions of Hell, and slowly corrupting Europe's





most pious knights over many generations. The desire for the Templars to be housed in the Holy Temple of Solomon is to despoil the prison of Baphomet. Likewise, churches and cathedrals built under the guidance of the Poor Knights are diabolical sinkholes, gaining Infernal Auras at night-time and other inauspicious times.

### The Lapis Exillis: Lucifer's Crown Jewel

One interpretation of the von Eschenbach's lapis exillis was that the stone was in fact the emerald from the world-crown of Lucifer, fallen to earth during the War of Heaven, and hidden by Solomon beneath the Temple so that the devil could never regain it.

This possibility could be used whether the Templars were corrupt from the outset, or slowly became debased. If Hugh was an infernal patsy, then he was of course using a pious guise to finally gain access to the Holy Temple in order to restore the emerald to Lucifer's crown. Should Hugh and his fellows have truly been pious, then finding one of the most potent unholy relics in existence could not but have

## Homosexuality in the Knights Templar

There is little doubt that in the middle ages many of the senior church officials and secular authorities found homosexuality abhorrent. As today, the ugly spectre of homophobia was an everyday part of medieval life. Despite this, until their dissolution in 1307, there was not a single public sex scandal involving the Order, despite several for other religious orders, including the Cistercians and the Hospitallers.

The early Temple held fast to the morality of strict monastic communities, where the 'company of women is a dangerous thing, for by it the old devil has led many from the straight path to Paradise'. Following a modified Benedictine Rule, the knights slept in dormitories 'lit till morning', dressed in 'shirt and breeches and shoes and belt'. Married men were allowed to join the Order, and their wives accompanied them, but they lived in separate houses.

Nevertheless, homosexuality was known and practiced by lay folk and clerics alike. Brotherly love was a big feature between close friends, following in the Classical tradition of Platonic love. The medieval church

unequivocally condemned homosexuality however, denouncing it as a sin against nature and God. Literate monks would have known this condemnation. Amongst less literate knights and barons, according to Anselm Benedictine Archbishop of Canterbury, 'It must be recognised that this sin has become so common that hardly anyone blushes for it, and many, being ignorant of its enormity, have abandoned themselves to it.'

Bernard of Clairvaux was well aware of the human capacity to sin, as the Templar Rule demonstrates. The lit dormitories and the prohibition on sleeping naked was enforced 'lest the hostile enemy give them occasion to sin'. That homosexuality was present in the Order is clear from the detailed lists of penance established around 1167, where as a sin it was ranked in the same order of magnitude as killing a Christian. It is thus clear that although homosexuality was existent within the Order, it was not endemic, and furthermore, most Templars held the common Christian view of abhorrence towards it.

For more information on homosexuality in the Middle Ages, see: [www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gaymidages.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/gaymidages.html)

slowly perverted them, even should they resist. Close proximity to a gem that was once born on the brow of Satan himself, indestructible even by Heaven's Host, would have allowed the devil to slowly (or quickly) influenced the leaders of the Knights Templar.





knights should guard themselves against the Devil's attempts to undermine their resolve and pervert their motives.

## International Bankers

The early Order was indeed a pious institution, guarding pilgrims and protecting the Holy Land from the perceived Muslim threat. No Templar held wealth in his own name; new members donated their estate to the Order of Poor Knights, meaning that everything was held in common. This piety was slowly under-mined as corrupt knights began to bequeath their lands to the Templars to be managed while on a pilgrimage. The seduction of wealth was great, and would periodically overcome weaker knights when unwitting lords would ask for loans to assist in otherwise noble causes.

Temptation was made irresistible in 1148 when king Louis VII ordered the repayment of borrowed money from the Temple, a sum of some 2,000 silver marks and 30,000 *livres*

### The Devil's Gifts: Endowments and Donations

the respected monk, Guigo, fifth Prior of Le Grande Chartreuse, among others, both impressed the urgency by which the

The seeds were sewn early in the life of the Order. As Hugh of Payns travelled Europe in 1127, seeking assistance in the struggle against Damascus and for papal sanction for his fraternity, the agents of the Devil immediately realised that the Order would one day be a threat. Infiltration of the nascent order was out of the question: the piety of the knights, and the holy ground on which they lived proved an impossible obstacle. Instead, the Devil and his minions resolved to enlarge the pre-existent flaws in human nature: greed, avarice, pride and anger.

The early ecclesiastical patrons of the Poor Knights recognised the peril: the Rule the Order was placed under repeatedly brought the threat of diabolical corruption to the attention of the Poor Knights. Bernard of Clairvaux and





*parisis*. The incredible profitability of lending money became apparent to the Grand Master, who was under pressure to find additional funds to finance the expenses of maintaining outposts. Their reputation for honesty and trustworthiness meant that they were placed in command of Royal Treasuries, where their duties saw them need to increase the size of the king's chest. Soon, they were responsible in some areas for tax collection for both ecclesiastic and secular powers. By the thirteenth century, dishonest Templars use their power to seize property and money, and charge enormous interest rates to creditors.

Through altering the manner in which loans were paid back — 'rent' on services rather than 'interest' paid when the loan was granted — the Templars skirted the Church's prohibition on usury. They became the only wise option when considering who to entrust money too, or who to borrow money from. They were a stable order, Christendom's greatest soldiery guarded their treasuries and their temples and preceptories were in every kingdom of Europe.

### Diabolical Support of the

### Crusades and Reconquista

At first glance, the Poor Knight's support for the Crusades may seem at odds with the goals of Hell. Nothing could be further from the truth. As the primary military order of Europe, the Templars are well placed to influence the decisions of Crusade leaders. The hawkishness of the Grand Masters underscores their constant attempt to incite within their fellows the sins of anger, pride and greed for booty. In this manner, the dark forces of Hell undermine the holy purpose of the Crusades.



## Muslim-Christian Relations

There is another aspect to the method of the Poor Knight's conduct. Apart from inciting hatred towards the other peoples of the Book — pogroms against the Jews and Crusades against the Muslims — the Templars are avowed enemies of the People of Muhammad. Their constant attacks on Islam brings only pain and torment to the innocent Muslims who live and lived in the marches between Muslim and Latin territories. In more circumspect manners, the Templars breed distrust and suspicion between Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula and the Holy Land. This is particularly noticeable in 1173, when the Templars prevented a cessation of hostilities by killing the ambassador of the Ismaili sect who wished to convert to Christianity.

Relations between Christians and Muslims in the disputed territories continued to degrade. Templars seemed at times to openly protect Muslims, allowing them to continue to pray at Mosques. Seemingly benign, this placed those Muslims in the Poor Knight's debt. The Muslims wise enough to be suspicious of the Templar's temperance were left undefended against xenophobic Euro-peans.

### Sabotage

This marked the point when the Order of the Temple came under the command of a diabolical Grand Master. Fourteen years later at the Battle of Hattin in 1187, Grand Master Gérard of Ridefort purged the Order of many of its remaining pious Knights. The loss of the True Cross was an added boon. Further sabotage in the Holy Land occurred in 1219 during the Fifth Crusade, when the Templars persuaded the Crusade leaders to refuse the Sultan's offer of Jerusalem in exchange for the



recently conquered Damietta. In Europe, despite askance from Simon of Montefort and the Pope, the Templars have refused to give aid to the Cathar Crusade. Their neutrality belies their supposed opposition to the enemies of Christendom.

### Shadow Flambeau and Diabolical Templars

The discovery of a Covenant of diabolists in the Iberian Tribunal in 1207 underscores the infernal taint of the Reconquista. Parallel to the fallen covenant of Jaferiya is the increased support by the Poor Knights to the re-conquest effort. Since King Alfonso of

Aragorn in 1134 bequeathed his realm to the military orders, the Templars had been at the forefront of the Reconquista, gaining one fifth of all conquered lands. With their vital role in garrisoning captured Muslim castles, the Poor Knights and other military orders became essential to the efforts of the Iberian kings.

Collaboration with the Shadow Flambeau during important battles, such as that of Las Navas de Tolosa, saw the diabolical Templars increase their influence over Iberia, as they gained more lands and fortresses. While this aid ultimately helps the Templars, the Shadow Flambeau achieve little except uniting the Iberian magi against them.



# Beasts of the Realm III

Fantastic creatures are an aspect of Ars Magica that most certainly help put the 'mythic' in Mythic Europe. Story guides have limited resources for providing examples of many of the legendary opponents that might act as nemesis, predator, potential vis source, or story hook. With only a handful of samples to draw from in

the core book and other supplements, finding the appropriate foe for a crucial point in a saga can be difficult. To help fill that need, the following beasts are presented.

Ben McFarland



harpy

Springing from antiquity as the children of the god of wind and the mother of all

## harpy

**Might:** 15 (Auram, Imaginem, Mentum)

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +4, Pre -3, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +2

**Size:** +0

**Age:** NA

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Ferocity (attacking), Great Perception, Improved Characteristics, Clumsy (on the ground), Greedy (minor), Reclusive

**Personality Traits:** Cruel +3, Deceptive +2, Ravenous +3

**Reputations:** Ravenous (local) 2

**Combat:**

*Fangs:* Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +3

*Talons:* Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +6, Damage +5

**Soak:** +3

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 3 (prey), Brawl 3 (talons), Hunt 2 (small game), Survival 3 (nest building)

**Natural Weapons:** Fangs: Init +0, Atk +3, Def +0, Dam +2; Talons: Init +0, Atk +3, Def +1, Dam +4. The harpy's hide provides a minimal Protection of +2.

**Powers:**

*Torturer's Caress*, 2 points, +0 Init, Mentum: Wounds inflicted by a harpy feel as if they burn, itch, and throb to the very bone—causing an additional penalty of -1 per wound that lasts until the harpy dies, the sun sets, or an appropriate Mentem spell effects the injured person.

*Veil of Love Long Lost*, 5 points, +0 Init, Imaginem, Mentem: This power changes a harpy's species to something far more attractive to the viewer. Characters with the 'Lost Love' flaw always see the bearing of their missing loved one.

*Raptor's Hunting Dive*, 5 points, +10 Init, Auram: The harpy dives with great speed at its chosen target. When it activates this power, the harpy's strength becomes +5 for a period of diameter.

**Equipment:** None. Though it is probable that there are bits of previous meals littered in and about its nest.

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

**Vis:** 1 pawn of Aurum in the wings, 1 pawn of Imaginem in the heart, 1 pawn of Mentem in the head.

**Appearance:** Ugly, pox-ridden faces contorted with fury and sporting bulging yellow eyes of a raptor, these creatures stand about five feet tall (~1.6m) with the head and bare chest of a woman. Their skin and feathers are often blood-spattered and filthy, and they reek of rotten meat and malice. Their wingspan is close to 12 feet across (~4m) and they bare needle-sharp fangs and wicked talons often stained black with dried gore.





monsters, harpies epitomized viciousness, cruelty and violence. Traditionally, harpies abducted and tortured travelers as they carried them to the Underworld. Mentioned in Dante's *Inferno* as punishers of those who suicide, they often have a chthonic or infernal taint. Harpies are quite adept at luring the unsuspecting close with their Veil power, and then dining on the poor souls after tearing them apart with their talons.

### Story Seed:

Harpies entered the area and started harassing a farmer near the covenant. The farmer was recently gifted the territory after rescuing a noble on Crusade, and some investigation reveals the beasts seem to follow and plague him no matter where he lives. Further digging reveals that his family may have the Mythic Blood of Phineas, Seer and King of Thrace or perhaps Boreas, the North Wind, and the harpies' attention fulfills a forgotten curse. Should the covenant fulfill the terms of the ancient curse or find another means to eliminate the issue, the farmer might be convinced to let the magi foster his child, who has been exhibiting some very strange behavior.

33



### Centaur

Hailing from the old lands of Thessaly and said to be the offspring of either a king and a goddess, or the king's deformed brother and a great herd of powerful horses, these creatures embodied the battle between civilization and a untamed nature. Many centaurs had powers such as poisonous blood, divination, and rage-fueled strength. One story tells how the centaurs attempted to steal Hippodamia on the day of her marriage to the king of the Lapith people in Thessaly. They

### Centaur

**Might:** 20 (Animal)

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

**Size:** +3

**Age:** NA

**Decrepitude:** NA

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Berserk, Tough, Improved Characteristics, Proud (minor), Weakness (wine), Visions

**Personality Traits:** Aggressive +2, Angry +2, Intimidating +3, Lecherous +3

**Reputations:** Bloodthirsty (local) 3, Savage (local) 3

**Combat:**

*Fists:* Init +2, Attack +9 (+11), Defense +9 (+7), Damage +9

*Hooves:* Init +1, Attack +7 (+9), Defense +7 (+5), Damage +7

*Longbow:* Init -3, Attack +9 (+11), Defense +6 (+4), Damage +14

*Club:* Init +0, Attack +9 (+11), Defense +8 (+6), Damage +9

\*Values in parenthesis indicate statistics when Berserk

**Soak:** +8 (+10 when Berserk)

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

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

**Abilities:** Artes Liberales 3 (Astrology), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 3 (prey), Bow 4, Brawl 4 (fist), Chirurgy 4, Divination 3 (Astrology), Hunt 4 (deer), Single Weapon 5 (Club), Stealth 2 (forest), Survival 5 (foraging)

**Natural Weapons:** Fists: Init +3, Atk +3, Def +3, Dam +3; Hooves: Init +2, Atk +2, Def +2, Dam +1. The centaur's hide gives it a Protection of +3.

**Powers:**

*Sight of Stars and Portents*, 15 points, +0 Init, Intellego: The centaur can attempt to learn the answer to a question using Divination, as per TMRE, pages 58-62. He cannot answer questions about himself.

*Lifeblood's Revenge*, 0 points, +0 Init, Perdo: Those who come in prolonged contact with an item coated in a centaur's blood must make a +10 stamina roll or die.

*Lessons at the foot of the Titan-blooded*, 10 points, +0 Init, Mentem: Those who stay under the tutelage of the centaur for a full cycle of the moon may gain 5xp in a skill possessed by the creature. Each additional 5 Might spent can increase this experience by 5, but also requires another moon period—to a maximum of 1 season spent for 15xp gained. The centaur spends these Might Points each day for the duration of the power.

**Equipment:** Some centaurs carry bows and arrows, while most prefer simpler weapons of rocks and tree limbs.

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

**Vis:** 2 pawns of Intellego in the eyes, 1 pawn of Perdo in the heart, 1 pawn of Mentem in the hooves.

**Appearance:** Centaurs possess a very muscular man's torso attached to the neck of a powerful stallion. Their equine coloration may be of any naturally found sort, and their human features are usually quite rugged, with hints of nobility. Some female centaurs exist, usually from white, chestnut, or black mares—though the latter are quite rare.





intended to take her, all the women and the young men at the ceremony, but were driven off by Theseus and other attending heroes—but not before they killed the hero Caeneus, who was invulnerable to weapons, with sticks and rocks. This battle, called the Centauro-machy, was prominently depicted in the Parthenon.

Born of a union of Chronos and a nymph, the centaur Chiron was hailed as a great teacher, healer, and oracle. Among his students were Asclepius, Ajax, Aeneas, Caeneus, Theseus, Achilles, Jason, Heracles, and in some stories, Dionysus.

## Story Seed

While looking for the ingredients for a Horse Bjornaer, a Titan-seeking Tytalus, or a Perdo or Intelligo specialist's longevity ritual, the magi learn they need to gather the freely given blood of a centaur. To gain the fluid, they must seek out a centaur seer and learn the death prophecy of the donor. What

## Manticore

**Might:** 30 (Aquam)

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

**Size:** +2

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Ferocity (self-defense), Improved Characteristics (x2), Puissant Brawl, Tough, Overconfident, Proud, Simpleminded, Weakness (submission)

**Personality Traits:** Fierce +5, Ravenous +5

**Reputations:** Dangerous (local) 5, Harbinger of Trouble (local) 3

**Combat:**

**Claws:** Init +1, Attack +15, Defense +11, Damage +10

**Bite:** Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +9

**Tail:** Init +4, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +10 plus +9 Stamina roll or suffer a heavy wound from poison.

**Soak:** +10 (+4 Hide)

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

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24)

**Abilities:** Athletics 4 (pouncing), Awareness 3 (smell), Brawl 5 (claw), Hunt 3 (men), Stealth 5 (stalking)

**Natural Weapons:** Large claws: Init 0, Attack +5, Defense +3, Damage +4; Large teeth: Init 0, Attack +4, Defense +1, Damage +3; Tail: Init +3, Attack +5, Defense +3, Damage +4 plus +9 Stamina roll or suffer a heavy wound from poison.

**Powers:**

*Call that Scatters Cowards*, 3 points, +10 Init, Mentem: The

manticore's roar forces those within voice range to make a +9 Brave Trait check or flee for three rounds.

*Hunter's Killing Pounce*, 5 points, +5 Init, Animal: The manticore can make leaps of up to fifty paces as part of an attack. This attack gains +5 to the roll.

*No Part left Behind*, 0 points, +0 Init, Perdo: A manticore left unmolested to feed on a carcass for two minutes per size value greater than zero consumes the entire body. It swallows gear and possessions as well, and later excretes them in the lair or wilderness.

*Stalk the Shadow of Man*, 5 points, +10 Init, Imaginem: This power provides a +5 bonus to Stealth checks made from the beginning of a hunt until the manticore attacks.

*Spines of Venom and Fear*, 10 points, +0 Init, Terram: The thick, sharp metallic spines of a manticore's tail may be flung up to 50 paces as if the creature had simply attacked with its tail. After three such attacks, it must use this power to re-grow its spines and regain the ability to attack with its tail.

**Vis:** 2 pawns of Terram in the tail, 1 pawn of Animal in the claws, 1 pawn of Imaginem in the head, 1 pawn of Mentem in heart.

**Appearance:** A manticore has the body of a red lion, an overlarge human head with three rows of jagged teeth, and a trumpeting voice. Other aspects of the creature vary from region to region. It may have curled or straight horns, and has the tail of either a dragon or a scorpion barbed with poisonous spines on the end; those spines may be hurled to paralyze or kill.





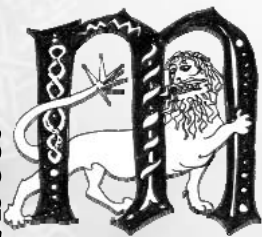
price will the oracle demand, and is it possible he may later be enticed to teach a maga the secrets of his precognitive ability?

threw the potent, fast-acting poisonous spines on the end of its tail and had three rows of razor teeth. Pliny claimed it leapt great distances and its voice roared like a trumpet. Ctesias described the beast in his broad history, where he claimed the Indians called it martichoras and the Greeks dubbed it “man-eater,” showing the breadth of its range. The manticore’s ferocious manner and terrifying appearance often associated it with evil, and it was seen as an omen of evil tidings and impending trouble.

### Story Seed

Unleashed by a recent landslide or the diggings of foolish peasants, the manticore is stalking the region and making a meal of whatever it finds—only this time it has consumed a Redcap and his satchel. An important item the magi wanted now lingers in the belly of this ravenous creature. How will they reacquire the contents of the satchel without damaging them?

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### Manticore

A creature known since early antiquity, the manticore killed instantly with a bite or a scratch and then ate the victim entirely, bones and all. An unmatched hunter, it often caught its preferred prey, man, unawares. It





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