

Ars Magica

Guardians of the Forests

The Rhine Tribunal



by Mark Shirley
& Andrew Smith

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Mark would like to thank the original players of *Waddensee's magi* for many hundreds of hours of enjoyable game time, even though they will probably never forgive him for his plot twists! Mark would also like to thank Phyllie and Georgie for the kind of support only ferrets can provide.

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Andrew would like to thank the players of *Triflumina* for testing out the Rhine Gorge saga and providing unwitting inspiration for some of the characters in this book, and the storyguide and players of *In Aestio Saxum* for inducting him into German roleplaying.

Ars Magica players participate in a thriving fan community by subscribing to email discussion lists (like the Berkeley list), compiling archives of game material (such as Project Redcap), maintaining fan-created web sites, and running demos through Atlas Games' Special Ops program. To learn more, visit www.atlas-games.com/ArM5.

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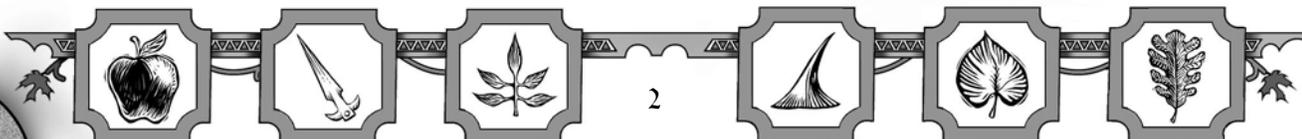


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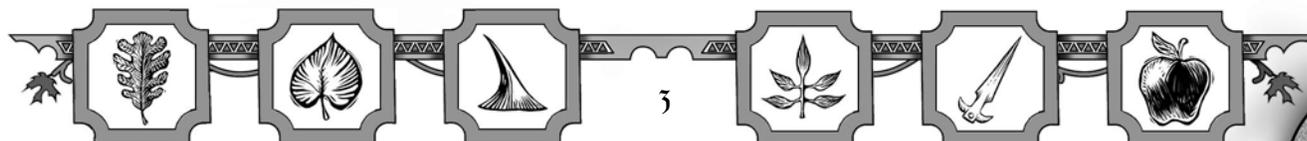
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Chapter One

Introduction

Herzlich Willkommen! You have come to the Rhine Tribunal, the oldest and greatest of them all. Here, at the center of the Order of Hermes, at covenants steeped in ancient wisdom and majesty, the power of Hermetic magic reigns supreme. Or at least, so its magi would have you believe... In reality this vision is naught but a wistful and distant memory of elderly magi hidden away in dusty Durenmar towers. The Rhine Tribunal of 1220 AD is a rather different place to that which the Founders and Charlemagne knew. Magic has now retreated, hidden away from the many cities of a burgeoning empire, where bishops vie with dukes and merchants for temporal power. Yet among these mundanes, more than a few magi also secretly cast their net, grasping for their share of the spoils. Others choose instead to spurn the mundanes and hide among the countless forests, where the old powers remain undimmed — such magi proclaim themselves the guardians of these wildernesses. But are they really the masters of these domains, or merely the servants of the ancient spirits that they house? Magi with divergent interests prosecute petty political squabbles; apathy reigns and the Tribunal stagnates. Perhaps you are the one who will restore the Rhine to its former glory?

Germany

Germany is a kingdom of more than five million souls in north-central Europe. Its king, elected from among powerful rival families by a council of bishops, dukes, and counts, rules over a vast patchwork of realms with a variety of customs, languages, and titles (margravates, duchies, and even a subject kingdom). The kingdom is loosely organized, with no capital city (although the king is

crowned at Aachen and maintains a treasury at Nuremberg) and no fixed court.

Germany is also part of an empire, although the German Empire is more commonly called the Holy Roman Empire, the greatest Christian realm on earth. Unless he makes a major political misstep, the German king is subsequently crowned by the Pope at Rome, whereupon he assumes the title of Holy Roman Emperor, which includes the titles of King of Italy and King of Burgundy. The newly-crowned emperor, Frederick II, is also the king of Sicily — he will not even return to Germany for more than a decade, occupied as he is by Italian politics, rivalry with the Pope, and crusading.

Germany, five hundred miles across in either direction, is a diverse landscape of towns and farms, forests, mountains, and lakes, as well as islands and swamps. It is home to many dozens of prosperous cities, the largest and grandest of which is Cologne, although none match up to the size of the great European metropolises such as Constantinople, Rome, or Paris, or the wealth of the northern Italian cities. More than half the land is covered by expansive forests, many of which are untamed wildernesses. The industrious lower classes occupy themselves with farming, hunting, fishing, woodcutting, the brewing of ales and wines, the weaving of cloth, and the mining of salt and silver. The cities thrive with merchants, Jews, and craftsmen of all types.

The Rhine Tribunal

The Rhine Tribunal consists not just of the valley of the River Rhine, but extends, broadly speaking, over all the

lands of the Holy Roman Empire north of the Alps. To the north it is bordered by the Jutland peninsula (Denmark), which is nominally territory of the Novgorod Tribunal, although the Order of Hermes has scant presence there. The eastern border, that with the Novgorod Tribunal proper, has been contentious, subject to fluctuation and dispute — the boundary is very roughly approximated by the River Oder, with Poland belonging firmly to Novgorod. To the south, the Rhine Tribunal extends as far as the River Danube (an old Roman border), beyond which lies the Tribunal of the Greater Alps. The notional western border consists of the mouth of the river Schelde, the Ardennes, and the Argonne — beyond lies Flanders and France, territory of the Normandy Tribunal.

The Rhine Tribunal is home to approximately 130 magi, almost a ninth of the 1200 members of the Order of Hermes, making it the largest as well as the oldest of all the thirteen Tribunals. Magi here descend from a mixture of

A Note on German Names

German-speaking readers should note that we have used the English versions of many German place names (for example "Black Forest" instead of "Schwarzwald" and "Brunswick" instead of "Braunschweig") and people (for example "Charlemagne" instead of "Karl der Grosse" and "Henry the Lion" instead of "Heinrich der Löwe"). We have adopted some German creature names, but have used English-style capitalization and plurals (for example "bockmen" instead of "Bockmänner"). Further information on German languages and names may be found in Appendix A.



Roman and Germanic traditions, with an addition of Slavic and Scandinavian influences. Here at the historical center of the Order of Hermes, home to the Grand Tribunal, are to be found within the forests some of the most ancient covenants, including the domus magna of Houses Bjornaer, Bonisagus, and Merinita. Other, newer, covenants are to be found within mundane lands or even cities. The landscape of the Rhine Tribunal is also littered with the ruins of failed covenants, those that have fallen prey to enemies Hermetic or otherwise.

places, with contemporary legends. For example, the Brocken is a real mountain where pagan gods were formerly worshipped, and the Walpurgis Night procession of "witches" continues to this day. A number of the mythic sites are invented; broadly speaking, these are the ones that are Hermetic in nature (such as covenants). A small number of other sites (for example the Drenthe megaliths and the Rhinefalls) are real places for which we have invented stories.

much of this book is safe for you to read, there are numerous plots and statistics scattered throughout that may be best kept secret. Chapters 11 and 12 consist mostly of saga plans.

Secondly, not all the covenants, and by no means all the magi of the Rhine Tribunal, are described in this book. Anywhere from one to six additional covenants are therefore left to the storyguide(s) to devise, one of which may be the covenant of the player characters. The number of extra covenants you create may depend in part on the number of Hermetic societies and Mystery Cults you wish to include, with a larger Tribunal allowing more of these to plausibly exist.

Lastly, nothing in this book is compulsory for your saga, and there is no single "correct" Rhine Tribunal. Rather, this should be regarded as a set of common tools or ingredients for *your* Rhine Tribunal, all of which are optional. This book is designed to increase, not restrict, ideas and possibilities. Want to change the number of magi in the Tribunal? Go ahead ... it still works, whether you have 80 magi or 180. Want to site the player covenant on the island of Rügen? No problem, simply move Crintera to the Pomeranian Forest instead. The modular nature of this book should allow you to simply pick and choose those elements that are to your liking. (Of course, you may decide to use everything without any problems, either.) Having said that, there are many historical and geographical facts (such as the fact that the city of Cologne exists and is located on the River Rhine, for example) that you will probably not want to change.

History and Myth

Whilst the majority of the history (apart from the Hermetic history) in this book is what really happened, the real history has been changed in certain places in order to place greater emphasis on myth. For example, the events of the *Nibelungenlied* did not really occur in anything like the way the epic poem tells them. Yet in Mythic Germany, the subject of this book, a place where magi and faeries exist and where many of the ancient legends are true, it is a true retelling. If magic exists, then it is likely that stories of magic are true stories. For this reason, this book should not be considered as a reliable history reference.

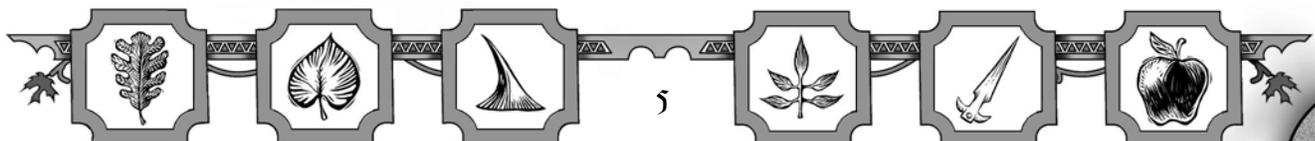
This book describes a number of mythic sites, most of which are real

How to Use this Book

This book is primarily designed to be of use to storyguides and players whose saga is based in the Rhine Tribunal. Nevertheless, it may also be useful to those whose saga is located elsewhere; perhaps your covenant is situated in nearby lands, you have magi who plan to attend House gatherings at Crintera, Irencillia, or Durenmar, or even the Grand Tribunal, or you wish to explore the forests near your covenant in more detail. Some of the covenants, mythic sites, and stories contained herein may also be adapted for your part of Mythic Europe.

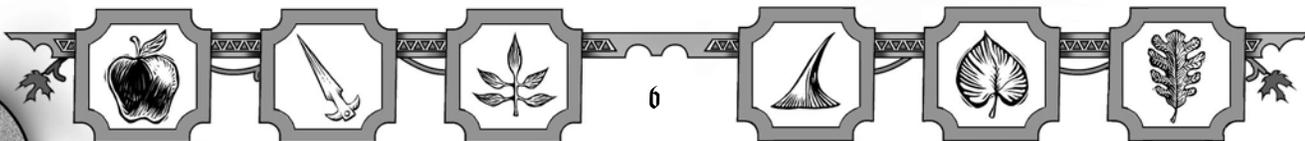
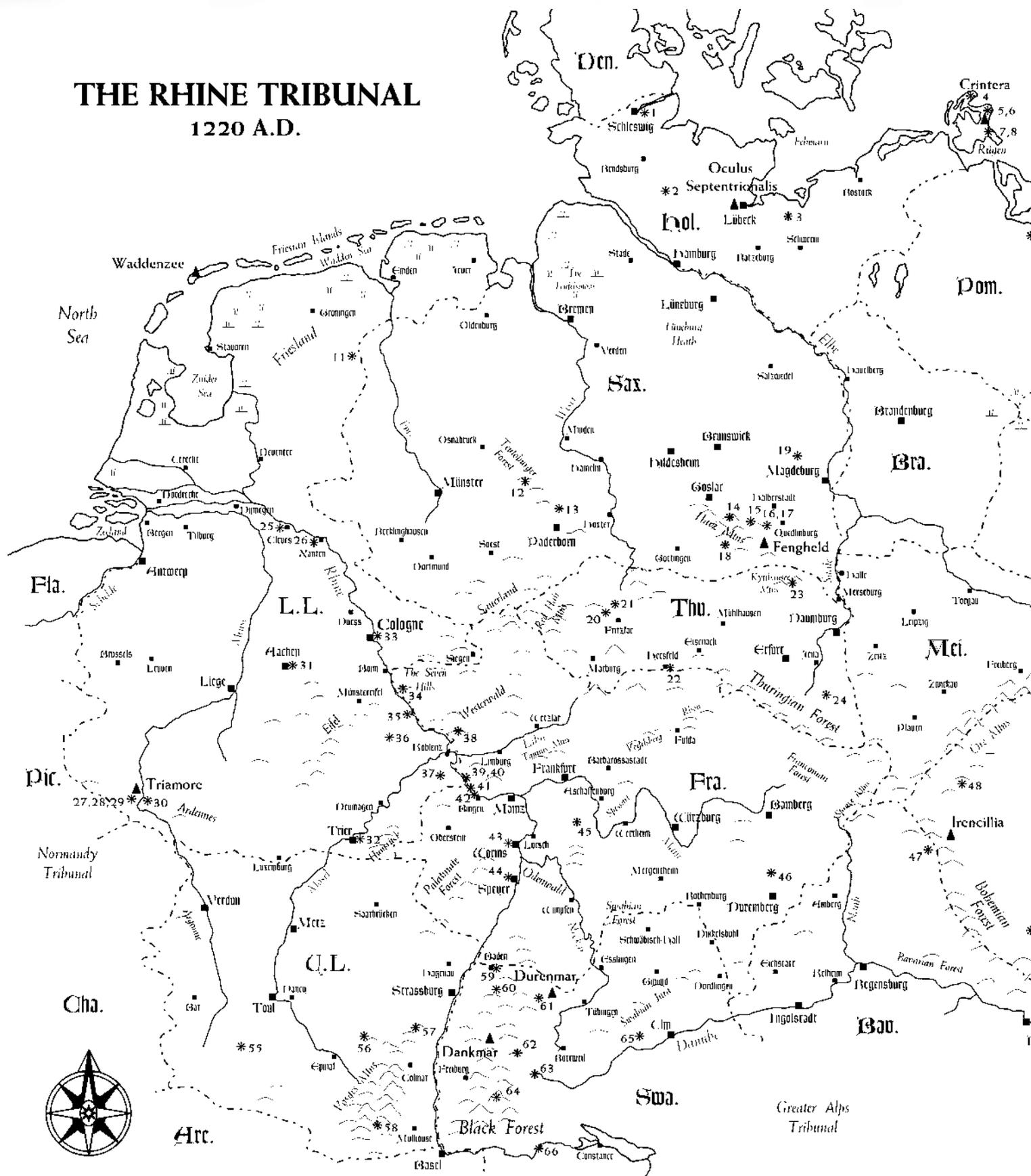
There are three important things that should be borne in mind as you read this book:

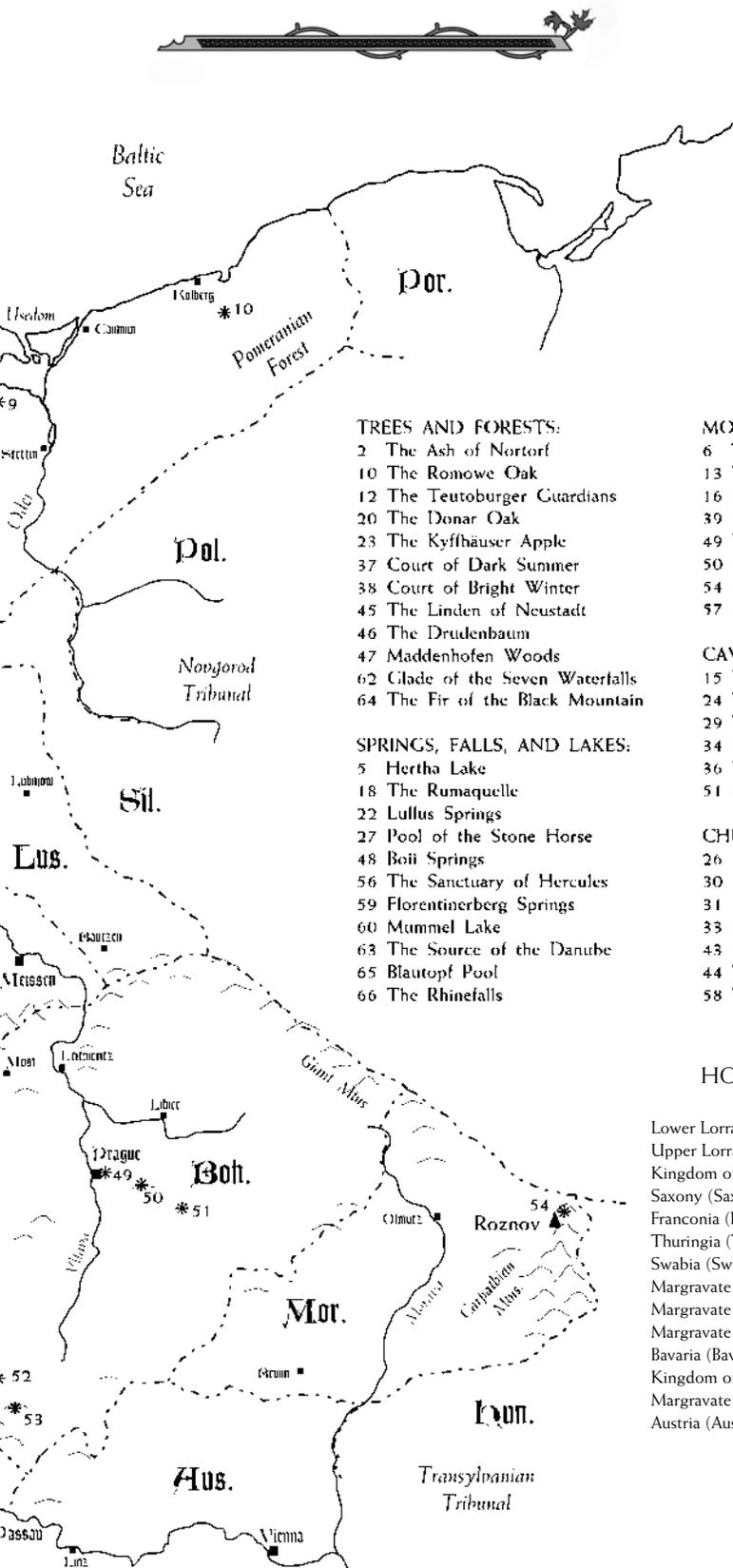
Firstly, if you are player in a saga set in the Rhine Tribunal, you should first consult with your storyguide — while



THE RHINE TRIBUNAL

1220 A.D.





MAP KEY

- Major River
- Provincial Boundary
- Principal Forest
- Major Town / City
- Uplands / Mountains
- Covenant
- Swamp
- Mythic Site

TREES AND FORESTS:

- 2 The Ash of Nortorf
- 10 The Romowe Oak
- 12 The Teutoburger Guardians
- 20 The Donar Oak
- 23 The Kyffhäuser Apple
- 37 Court of Dark Summer
- 38 Court of Bright Winter
- 45 The Linden of Neustadt
- 46 The Drudenbaum
- 47 Maddenhofen Woods
- 62 Glade of the Seven Waterfalls
- 64 The Fir of the Black Mountain

SPRINGS, FALLS, AND LAKES:

- 5 Hertha Lake
- 18 The Rumaquelle
- 22 Lullus Springs
- 27 Pool of the Stone Horse
- 48 Boii Springs
- 56 The Sanctuary of Hercules
- 59 Florentinerberg Springs
- 60 Mummel Lake
- 63 The Source of the Danube
- 65 Blautopf Pool
- 66 The Rhinefalls

MOUNTAINS AND CLIFFS:

- 6 The Königstuhl
- 13 The Externsteine
- 16 Hexentanzplatz
- 39 Loreley
- 49 Vysehrad Rock
- 50 Mount Blanik
- 54 Mount Radhost
- 57 Mount Saint Odile

CAVES AND HOLES:

- 15 The Bears' Cave
- 24 The Feengrotten
- 29 The Painted Cave
- 34 Drachenfels
- 36 The Teufelsloch
- 51 Kutna Mine

CHURCHES AND SHRINES:

- 26 Grave of the Theban Legion
- 30 Clapperless Bell Crossroads
- 31 Charlemagne's Throne
- 33 Relics of the Three Magi
- 43 Worms Cathedral
- 44 The Bells of Speyer
- 58 Thann Chapel

STONES AND STONE CIRCLES:

- 3 The Giant's Grave
- 7 The Ziegensteine
- 8 The Buskam
- 11 The Pirates' Graveyards
- 14 The Brocken (Witches' Altar)
- 17 The Rosstrappe
- 19 The Teufelsküche
- 21 The Riesenstein
- 28 The Three Sisters
- 40 The Seven Maidens
- 41 The Stone of Bacchus
- 61 The Fane of the Founders

RUINED CITIES AND MONUMENTS:

- 1 Haithabu
- 4 Arkona
- 9 Rethra
- 25 The Schwanenburg
- 32 The Amphitheater
- 35 Rolandseck Castle
- 42 The Mouse Tower
- 52 Fenistal
- 53 Giants' Castle
- 55 Andresina

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

- Frederick II
- Lower Lorraine (L.L.)
- Upper Lorraine (U.L.)
- Kingdom of Arelat (Arc.) *Normandy Tribunal*
- Saxony (Sax.)
- Franconia (Fra.)
- Thuringia (Thu.)
- Swabia (Swa.)
- Margravate of Brandenburg (Bra.)
- Margravate of Meissen (Mei.)
- Margravate of Lusatia (Lus.)
- Bavaria (Bav.) *Greater Alps Tribunal*
- Kingdom of Bohemia (Boh.)
- Margravate of Moravia (Mor.)
- Austria (Aus.) *Greater Alps Tribunal*

KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

- Andrew II
- Hungary (Hun.) *Transylvanian Tribunal*

KINGDOM OF DENMARK

- Valdemar II
- Denmark (Den.) *Novgorod Tribunal*
- Holstein (Hol.)
- Pomerania (Pom.)

KINGDOM OF FRANCE

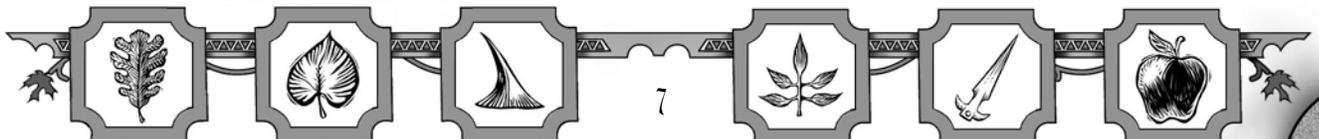
- Philip II Augustus
- Flanders (Fla.) *Normandy Tribunal*
- Picardy (Pic.) *Normandy Tribunal*
- Champagne (Cha.) *Normandy Tribunal*

KINGDOM OF POLAND

- Leszek the White
- Poland (Pol.) *Novgorod Tribunal*
- Pomerania (Por.) *Novgorod Tribunal*
- Silesia (Sil.) *Novgorod Tribunal*

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Chapter Two

History of Mythic Germany

Amongst such a mighty multitude of men, the same make and form is found in all, eyes stern and blue, yellow hair, huge bodies, but fit only for sudden exertion. They are less able to bear laborious work. Heat and thirst they cannot in the least endure, to cold and hunger their climate and their soil inure them.

Their country, though somewhat various in appearance, generally either bristles with forests or reeks with swamps; it is more rainy on the side of Gaul, bleaker on that of Noricum and Pannonia. It is productive of grain, but unfavorable to fruit-bearing trees; it is rich in flocks and herds, but these are for the most part undersized, and even the cattle have not their usual beauty or noble head.

— Tacitus, *Germania*

The God Tuisto was born of the soil. Tuisto's son, Mannus (from whence the word "man"), sired three sons, the fathers of the German tribes: the Ingaevones of the coast, the Herminones of the interior, and the Istaevones. These fierce and pure-blooded peoples worshiped their many gods amid the primeval forest of their homeland. Tacitus, writing at the end of the 1st century AD, described them as brave, honest, and hospitable, but also greedy, uncouth, and drunken.

Over the last thousand years, Germany has repelled Roman incursions, has seen Hunnish and Magyar horsemen come and go, has borne witness to the great deeds of legendary Germans such as Hermann, Siegfried, Merovech, Charlemagne, and Frederick Barbarossa, and has undergone a gradual transformation from barbarian forest wilderness to the ruling kingdom of a great Christian empire.

Germania Magna

At its height, the Roman Empire covered the whole of western Europe from the Great Western Sea to the River Rhine and the whole of southern Europe from the Mediterranean Sea to the River

Danube. To close the angle between the two great rivers, during the reign of Domitian in the second half of the 1st century AD, the Romans built a line of fortifications, the *limes*, from a point near Rigomagus (Remagen) on the Rhine, to Abusina, upstream of Regina Castra (Regensburg) on the Danube.

The Rhine was a great trade route as well as being a protective moat for the settled lands to the west — the two Roman provinces of Germania Superior and Germania Inferior. On this west bank of the river and in the valley of the Mosel were many Roman cities — Colonia Agrippensis (Cologne), Bonna (Bonn), Augusta Treverorum (Trier), Moguntiacum (Mainz). In these cities were found all the normal forms of Roman life — the forum, the baths, the temples. In the pagan days of the Empire, temples dedicated to Mercury were common in these frontier towns, and his priests worked their magic to strengthen the integrity of the Empire through a "barricade" of magically-linked temples along the boundary.

While the Mercurians tried to restrain the wilderness of Germania Magna (as the land on the east bank of the Rhine was called), other Roman priests, dedicated to Diana, penetrated the interior in secret. In the tangle of forests, moor, and fen they found the tribes whom Tacitus described as Germans. They were hunters, fishers, the keepers of small herds of cattle, and the cultivators of small fields near their tribal

settlements. They had no towns worthy of the name; they built huts of poles and thatch and mud, easy to build and readily abandoned when crop exhaustion or enemy pressure urged a tribal move. They worshiped the old Germanic gods, Vodans (Woden), Thunrs (Thunor), and Tius, and the goddess Fria; the priestesses of Diana discovered that the priests of these gods were magicians, as well. In enacting the myths surrounding the gods, these priests were able to take on characteristics from the tales they told, shifting shape, and, in extreme cases, taking on the powers of their deities. The priestesses of Diana set up temples to their goddess and adopted the ways of these wild sorcerers, absorbing the cult of the Mother Goddess into their own faith. There were also those called (by the Romans) the *tempestarii*, who had power over the weather, and thus the success of the crops. Unlike the shapechangers, who still exist in Pomerania (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Pomerania), the *tempestarii* are a dead tradition. However, Irmele filia Trianoma, whose mater was so influential in the founding of the Order of Hermes, was a *tempestaria*, and she founded a line of weather-mages that still exist today (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Upon Being a Rhine Magus).

The Great Migration

The Great Migration (*Völkerwanderung*) was no sudden wave, no dramatic bursting of the frontier walls. The German tribes had been moving westwards or southwards for many years. In about the 4th century, the Goths came

The Battle of the Teutoburger Forest

The Roman general Varus, marching into Germania Magna in 9 AD with three legions — the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth (and their supporting cavalry) — reached and fortified himself in camp at Minden. With auxiliary troops, the total force was thirty thousand. Hermann (known to the Romans as Arminius), the chief of the Cheruski (a local German clan), himself trained to war in Roman service, rallied the tribes around him. The Romans broke camp and marched to destruction. Hermann, like the rest of the Cheruski, was a devotee of Tius, the battle god of the Germans, and the magic of his priests, together with their mastery of the forest, gave the assembled tribesmen strength, speed, and stamina greater than that of their opponents.

and then west through Hungary and Italy, and eventually to Gaul (France) and Iberia. The Vandals from Prussia descended upon northern Italy, and the Burgundians entered into the territory that still bears their name. The Alemanni from southern Germany crossed the Rhine into eastern Gaul. The Saxons, Angles, and Jutes expanded from the coast of Jutland (Denmark) to the British Isles.

There was one dramatic irruption which was more violent and spectacular. In the middle of the 5th century, the Huns, a Mongolian folk, came on horseback as raiders under their dreaded chieftain Attila. They rode over the Hungarian plains and penetrated deep into Gaul before they were eventually checked at the battle of Chalons by an army lead by Merovech and the Roman general Aetius.

The Slavs moved into the river basins of the Vistula and Oder, which the German tribes had left vacant. By about 600 AD, the main westerly move of the German and Slav peoples had come to an end. East of the Rhine, between the old Roman frontiers and the Slavs, lived the Saxons, Swabians, Frisians, and Bavarians.

The Merovingians

The first dynasty of the Frankish kingdom, the Merovingians, are named after Merovech, a powerful 5th century chieftain and wizard. His mother was descended from the Jewish House of David, and was already pregnant by his father, Clodio, when she went swimming in the ocean and was seduced and impregnated a second time by a creature of Neptune called a Quinotaur. Thus Merovech had two

fathers, and his royal bloodline was mixed with magic. Merovech remains shrouded in mystery, but among his many feats, he helped to repel Attila the Hun at the Battle of Chalons.

At the beginning of the 6th century, Merovech's grandson Clovis was the first of his line to receive baptism, being converted to Christianity by his Burgundian wife St. Clotilda. He united the Franks into a great kingdom after a series of military victories over the Romans, Visigoths, and Burgundians. The Merovingian sorcerer kings, with the blood of David and of the old gods, were blessed with kingly grace. Provided that they did not cut their hair, they were invincible in battle; they could heal by laying on of hands; they could make crops grow by walking across fields; they had divinatory powers and could interpret the calls of beasts. It is told that Clovis revealed the Holy Grail, which had been brought to Gaul by Mary Magdalene in the 1st century, to the Frankish kingdom.

The Merovingian dynasty fell from grace when two grandsons of Clovis, Sigebert and Chilperic, battled each other and divided the kingdom. The kings became corrupted and lost their powers, the Grail was lost, and over the next decades the Merovingian dynasty gradually faded away as the Frankish mayoral dynasty, later to become the Carolingians, rose to prominence.

The Frankish Empire

Charlemagne (*Carolus Magnus* in Latin, *Karl der Grosse* in German) was, by any standard, one of the great figures of German and of west European history.

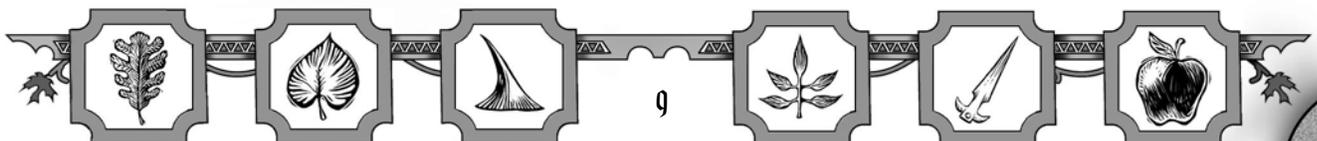
From his palace at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) his influence and his activities radiated in every direction: into France, into Italy, and into Germany. For with Charlemagne the eastern trek, the reversal of the great migrations, began. He was to carry his Frankish rule, Christian bishops, and his Celtic-Roman scholarship into the midst of a kindred German people, the Saxons of the north German plain.

In three decisive campaigns Charlemagne marched his armies to the Elbe and Danube. Wherever he went he took with him his Christian bishops and teachers, many of these trained in England. In a few short years, Charlemagne had changed the picture of northern Germany; where previously there had been rude settlements of heathens there were now Christian bishoprics at Hamburg, Münster, Osnabrück, Paderborn, Minden, Bremen, Verden, Hildesheim, and Halberstadt.

On Christmas Day 800 AD, while on a visit to Rome, Charlemagne was crowned with the Imperial Crown and thus proclaimed the successor to the Roman Emperor. Charlemagne was both surprised and displeased at this papal act, but he was clearly fitted for the role. By 814, the extent of the Christian Frankish Empire was everything south and west of the Elbe, including Bavaria.

The Treaty of Verdun

When Charlemagne died, two completely contradictory forces strove for mastery. The Church wished to maintain the power of the emperor and for that purpose apply the law of primogeniture, the inheritance of the title and estate by the eldest son. It was the Frankish tradition, however, that family property should be divided amongst all sons, and, from the point of view of Charlemagne's family, his kingdom was as divisible as if it had been a family estate. For a few short years after Charlemagne's death, his son Louis the Pious reigned alone, although his life was ceaselessly troubled by strife with his own sons. At his death the Frankish tradition triumphed, and in 843, at the town of Verdun, the three sons of Louis signed a treaty, dividing the great empire into three pieces. The territory of the west Franks went to Charles the Bald. The territory of the east Franks went to Louis the German. The eldest son Lothar gained the imperial title and with it a narrow strip of country between the two leading down as far as Italy.



The Nibelungenlied

The Nibelungenlied (Song of the Nibelungs) is the great story of the Burgundian people, who had settled in the city of Worms in the 5th century, and of their tragic fate. By the start of the 13th century, this tale has been immortalized as an epic poem, popular throughout the courts of Germany.

THE MARRIAGES OF SIEGFRIED AND GUNTHER

Siegfried, a knight from the city of Xanten on the lower Rhine, hears of the great beauty of Kriemhild, sister of the Burgundian king, Gunther, and decides to woo her. Upon his arrival in Worms, only Hagen, Gunther's most powerful vassal, recognizes him, and relates his heroic deeds: Siegfried firstly won a great treasure from the Nibelungs (two princes and brothers named Schilbung and Nibelung), by slaying them. After taking the Tarnkappe (a cloak of darkness) from Alberich, the dwarven treasurer of the Nibelungs, he rose to become ruler of Nibelungland. Hagen also tells of how Siegfried had killed the dragon Fafnir and bathed in its blood, after which his body became invulnerable. (In fact he had only one vulnerable spot, between his shoulder blades, where a large leaf had rested on his skin as he was soaked in the dragon's blood.)

King Gunther allows Siegfried to marry Kriemhild, on the condition that he helps him to gain the hand of Brünhild, the legendarily strong queen of Iceland. Siegfried agrees, and upon their arrival in Iceland, Brünhild is most disappointed that it is Gunther, instead of Siegfried, who has come to woo her. Nevertheless, she agrees to marry Gunther if he can best her in three contests of strength. With the use of the Tarnkappe, Siegfried manages to substitute himself for Gunther in the contest, and deceive Brünhild into thinking that Gunther has bested her. Returning to Worms, a double marriage is arranged: Gunther with Brünhild and Siegfried with Kriemhild. Of these four, only Brünhild is unhappy, since she is in love with Siegfried instead. Gunther's marriage immediately hits difficulties, as his new wife overpowers him on their wedding night and hangs him up on the wall. Siegfried again helps Gunther, and takes his place in the bedchamber, overpowering and restraining Brünhild, so that Gunther can deflower her. Brünhild loses

her great strength, which relied on her maidenhood. However Siegfried also takes Brünhild's ring and girdle, and gifts them to Kriemhild. He returns home with his new wife, where he becomes king of the Nether Lands, and they live happily for ten years.

THE DEATH OF SIEGFRIED

In Worms, Brünhild remains unhappy in her marriage to Gunther, still unaware of how he cheated to gain her hand. Siegfried and Kriemhild return for a festival, at which Gunther treats him as an equal. Brünhild, however, thinks that Siegfried is a vassal of Gunther, and treats Kriemhild as her inferior, leading to a quarrel between the two queens. Kriemhild claims that Siegfried is braver and stronger than her brother Gunther, which she proves by revealing that it was Siegfried who had overpowered her in her bedchamber. She claims (wrongly) that it was Siegfried who had claimed her virginity, and reveals the belt and girdle. Brünhild is mortally embarrassed and Gunther has no choice but to confront Siegfried. Siegfried swears that he never claimed to be Brünhild's first man, which Gunther accepts.

Brünhild's humiliation lingers, and she conspires with Hagen (who is jealous of Siegfried's wealth and prowess) to kill Siegfried. Hagen persuades Gunther, with reluctance, to agree. He then deceives Kriemhild and manages to learn of Siegfried's sole weakness. Hagen goes on a hunt with Siegfried in the Odenwald, and challenges him to a race. As Siegfried quenches his thirst at a spring, Hagen seizes his javelin and thrusts it between Siegfried's shoulder blades, his only weak spot, and slays him. Kriemhild is inconsolable at the death of her husband. At his funeral, as Hagen and Gunther move around the bier, Siegfried's wounds run anew, revealing the traitors.

THE TREASURE OF THE NIBELUNGS

Kriemhild stays at Worms, and after three years she is eventually reconciled with her brother Gunther. He persuades her to bring the Nibelung treasure to Burgundy, to which she has a right, as Siegfried's widow. Thus Kriemhild becomes fabulously wealthy, but her acts of generosity do not sit well with Hagen.

Hagen also fears that she will use this money to raise an army to attack him. He therefore steals the treasure, and prevents Kriemhild from regaining it by sinking it in the Rhine. Gunther does not punish Hagen for this; apart from Hagen, he and his brothers are the only ones who know of where the hoard is sunk.

KRIEMHILD'S REVENGE

Some years later, Etzel (Attila), king of the Huns, decides to seek the hand of Kriemhild, who is still the most beautiful woman in the world. She is initially reluctant to marry a heathen, and she still mourns for Siegfried, yet she sees that the marriage will finally allow her to take revenge on Hagen. Etzel and Kriemhild marry in Vienna and travel to Etzelburg, Etzel's capital in Hungary. After winning the trust of her new husband's vassals, she invites her brothers to a midsummer festival in Hungary, knowing that Hagen will also attend. Hagen however persuades Gunther to take an escort of a thousand armed men. In crossing the River Danube, Hagen encounters water sprites who warn him to turn back, foretelling that they are all doomed to die, bar one (a priest). Hagen tries to disprove the prophecy by murdering this priest, but he fails and the churchman escapes. Gunther and Hagen arrive at Etzel's court but are given a cold reception by Kriemhild. After a day, fighting breaks out, and many Huns are killed. Gunther allows Kriemhild and Etzel, with his vassal Dietrich of Bern, to leave the hall.

Hagen foolishly taunts Etzel, and the battle is renewed. Dietrich manages to overpower and capture Gunther and Hagen, but honorably offers to return them safely to their home. Kriemhild, however, confronts the imprisoned Hagen, demanding the return of Siegfried's treasure, in return for freedom to return to Burgundy. Hagen responds with mockery, so Kriemhild has Gunther beheaded, and brings his head to Hagen. Kriemhild again demands that he tell her the location of the treasure; when he refuses, she takes up Balmung (Siegfried's sword) and decapitates him. Upon discovering the bodies of Gunther and Hagen, Hildebrand (Dietrich's man-at-arms) retaliates by killing the queen. Thus the tale ends in tragedy with the death of all the leading participants, and the treasure of the Nibelungs remains lost.



The Rise of the New Empire

Although united under the heirs of Louis the German, the great tribal groups of Saxons, Swabians, Bavarians, Burgundians, and east Franks (Franconians) were only prepared to acknowledge a nominal king provided that he did not interfere with their own internal affairs. Meanwhile, western Christendom was being harried by enemies from all directions. Moslem power

was firmly entrenched in Spain, and Moslems were raiding the southern shores of Italy. The northern coasts were ravaged by Northmen and Danes. Then, across the plains of Europe appeared a new threat in the onward move of the Magyars. It was this last danger that caused the German clans to rally for a time under one leader, Henry the Fowler, duke of the Saxons, when the German crown passed to him in 919. In a battle at Riade on the River Unstrut in 933, he defeated the Magyar hordes. Such was the prestige gained by this victory that Henry was able to secure from the other tribes their consent to the succession of his son

Invasions of the Horsemen

The Magyars were horsemen who moved into the Hungarian plain in the last years of the 9th century, and almost immediately began to plunder the neighboring areas, first northern Italy, then Germany, and, on their longest raids, deep into France. Their advantages of speed and surprise made opposition difficult, and in open country their horsemanship was markedly superior to that of their German or Italian opponents. But in mountainous country and at river crossings, especially when returning home laden with booty, they were more vulnerable and German rulers thus had some successes against them. The threat was finally ended by the victory of Otto I at Lechfeld near Augsburg in 955, after which the Magyar leaders were executed and the assimilation of the Magyars into western Christendom began.

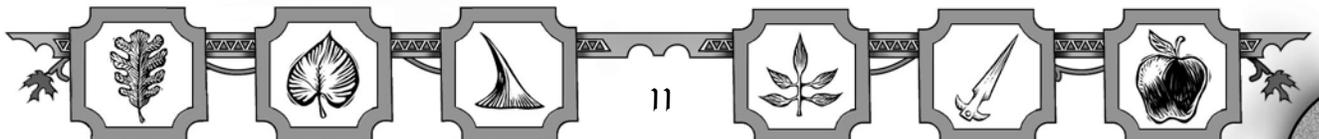
During this assimilation period, House Bjornaer adopted three Magyar shapechangers into the Order. The lineage of these brave and independent-spirited Bjornaer with the heartbeat of a horse still exists within the House.

WIEDERICH OF HOUSE FLAMBEAU

Wiederich was the only survivor when the Magyars attacked the covenant of Sirmium in 930. Wiederich immediately joined Henry's army, determined to avenge himself upon the horseman invaders. It is known that the Magyars brought wizards with them, but whether Wiederich was responsible for killing them is not clear; nevertheless, they were not present when Henry defeated the Magyars at Riade. Wiederich was also part of Otto's army, and present at the Battle of the Lech.

STORY SEED: BLOOD ENEMIES

Wiederich's descendants, who still burn with historic resentment drilled into them by their masters, dog the steps of the Magyar-descended members of House Bjornaer. They have been known to scheme with all the forethought of a Tytalus when their "blood enemies" are located. A player character could play either part in the feud, or be caught in the crossfire.



Otto, upon his death. The kingship was by no means hereditary, but the instinct of self-preservation made the other German tribes realize the wisdom of this strategy. Otto was crowned at Aachen in 936, and justified his election by a second victory over the Magyars at the Battle of the Lech in Bavaria in 955. The imperial coronation of Otto I in Rome (962) served to legitimize this vast acquisition, and the German kings, henceforth surnamed Emperor, became inextricably entangled in the politics of Italy.

The House of the Welfs

The Ottonian Empire, lead by four emperors of the house of Welf in Saxony, emerged as the leading power west of the

The Invigilors

House Guernicus investigated Drogo Invigilor of Tremere, a member of Fengheld covenant who was closely associated with the Welfs; however, their suspicions that he was responsible for arranging accidents for the other heirs could not be proved. His filius, Friderich Invigilor, was similarly investigated for his association with the Salians, and Adelheid Invigilix filia Friderich now watches the Hohenstaufens. They are either very subtle with their manipulation, or guiltless; but the best Quaesitors of the Order cannot determine which.

Adriatic, claiming equal status with Byzantium in the east. In 1033, the empire was expanded by the addition of Burgundy, and after 1037 the Italian magnates acquiesced to the lordship of the German king over northern Italy. Dynastic changes, from Saxon to Salian (1024) and then to Hohenstaufen (1138)

made little difference to the empire's political structure. Although the Salian dynasty tried to establish primogeniture, it was never fully accepted, and partible inheritance of land is still the norm in Germany. Fortunately for the survival of the empire, inheritance was never an issue: each of the four Welf emperors had

German Nobility

The German nobility is divided into two groups, the princely nobility and the lesser nobility. The princely nobility have the right to attend a Diet (formal council) called by the emperor, and elect the King of the Germans.

PRINCELY NOBILITY

Beneath the Holy Roman Emperor himself and the important ranks of duke (Herzog) and archbishop (Erzbischof), lie a multitude of other noble titles. Fiefs are only inherited in the direct male line, but are often broken up, since primogeniture (sole inheritance) is not widely practiced in Germany. For this reason, many of the German provinces have fractured into a myriad of smaller estates. New estates are steadily provided by colonization in the eastern lands, and by the clearing of forests and the draining of swamps.

PRINCE-BISHOP (FÜRSTBISCHOF)

Many German bishops also serve a secular function as landed vassals of the king. The German kings endowed them with large holdings in previous centuries, before the Investiture Contest, in order to secure their support against ducal rivals. Bishops often delegate the administration of their fiefs to a lay advocate (Vogt) who, unlike them, has the power to impose capital punishment, and some

of whom have grown to inherit estates in their own right.

LANDGRAVE (LANDGRAF)

The title of landgrave is used to denote a count whose jurisdiction spreads over a relatively large territory, greater than a typical county but smaller than a duchy, who enjoys significant regional administrative rights.

MARGRAVE (MARKGRAF)

The title of margrave, meaning "count of the March", was bestowed upon the military governor of an outlying or border province of the empire, a so-called March or Margravate. The estates of these rulers were large, and they held considerable powers relative to other, lesser counts. Rulership of the Marches is now usually inherited, since the establishment of the feudal system therein.

COUNT PALATINE (PFALZGRAF)

The title of count palatine title arose from the appointment of a judicial governor to a royal estate (Palatinate), which were often created to counterbalance the power of provincial dukes. Such estates and titles have become hereditary.

OTHER COUNTS

Other slightly lesser titles include burgrave (Burggraf), the military governor of a castle and its town and surrounding countryside, rhinegrave (Rheingraf), the governor of a Rhine castle with the right to collect tolls, altgrave (Altgraf), the count of a mountainous (Alpine) region with the right to collect tolls in a pass, and wildgrave (Waldgraf), the count with jurisdiction over an uncultivated or forest district.

LESSER NOBILITY

Members of the lesser nobility do not have the right to participate in the Diet that elects the German king.

BARON (FREIHERR)

A baron is a minor landed noble, usually a vassal of a duke, archbishop, or count.

MINISTERIALIS (DIENSTMANN)

The lowest noble rank is that of ministerialis, or unfree knight, originally a freeman who chose to enter bondage in exchange for the status and trappings of a knight. Although they are nobles, they are subject to the arbitrary authority of their lord, and can be bought and sold in the same way as serfs.



Luctatio

The covenant of Luctatio in the Roman Tribunal, between Milan and Verona, was founded in 1172. From the beginning it was heavily involved in the politics of the Lombard communes, and four members of House Tytalus assisted the Milanese in defeating Barbarossa at Legnano, and at their behest, a necromancer from the covenant of Vardian's Tomb created the plague that halted the emperor's army at the gates of Rome. Eule of Fengheld presented evidence of the hand of the Roman magi in this affair at the Tribunal of 1179, and at the Grand Tribunal of 1195, five magi of the Roman Tribunal were Marched.

Within 5 years of his succession, Frederick I had led his army across the Oder, not for territorial conquest, but to place his own candidate, Duke Vladislav, on the throne of Poland. His struggles were firstly to expand and secure the imperial power in Italy, and secondly to win in Germany the age-long battle between the Hohenstaufens and the Welfs. In Italy he had to endure many disappointments. In 1176 at the battle of Legnano his army was thoroughly defeated by the militia of Milan. He failed to subdue the Helvetians and his army was smitten by pestilence before the gates of Rome. By no means all of his campaigns failed, however. His victory over the Welfs, and in particular, their great leader Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, was long in coming, but the end was decisive. The great duchy was broken up: Bavaria, the stronghold of the Welfs, was given to Otto of Wittelsbach as a principality, and the former lands of Saxony were given to supporters of the Hohenstaufens.

After Barbarossa's son died after only six years on the throne, emperors followed from outside the Hohenstaufen house, until, in 1212, Frederick II took the throne.

Tannhäuser

Tannhäuser is a young man, born early in the 13th century, who grows to become a great knight and poet of legend. He travels widely and discovers the Venusberg, the splendid subterranean home of Venus beneath a mountain in an unknown spot in Germany. Entranced, the knight spends a year here worshipping the beautiful goddess. Her spell is finally broken as Tannhäuser declares that his salvation rests with the Virgin Mary, and he makes good his escape. Remorseful, he then travels to Rome and pleads with the Pope to be absolved of his sins. Pope Urban replies that it is just as impossible for his papal staff to spread into bloom. Tannhäuser returns unfulfilled to Vienna, yet, three days later, the Pope's staff blossoms with flowers.

only one successor. Had it been otherwise, the empire would have either been divided between them, or fallen into infighting over inheritance. In fact, owing to an extraordinary series of coincidences, it was not until 1190 that an emperor (Frederick I) was survived by more than one son, by which time division of the empire was unthinkable.

THE INVESTITURE CONTEST

The Investiture Contest (1075-1122) was a crisis that threatened to divide the Church and the state. Since the days of the Carolingians, the Church had been subordinate to kings. Charlemagne had seen himself as "priest and king," and acted as head of both state and Church. Emperor Otto II and his successors had used the bishops as instruments of government and claimed the right to invest them with their spiritual as well as their secular offices. This was contested in 1075, when a Papal Bull forbade lay investiture of prelates, and sparked off five decades of conflict. Deeper issues concerned the leadership of the Church, such as the right of the clergy to elect their own prelates, and fears about the increasing secularization of the Church. The conflict came to a head under Pope Gregory VII who excommunicated Henry IV in 1085 and allied with his political enemies, forcing a humiliating penance from the emperor at Canossa. The affirmation of the leadership of Christendom by Pope Urban II at the preaching of the First Crusade showed how rapidly papal authority was advancing; and the offer of Pope Paschal II to renounce all feudal fiefs of the Church in return for freedom to elect and invest its own bishops and abbots in 1111 proved a deeply disturbing and unacceptable solution to the bishops.

Free Imperial Cities

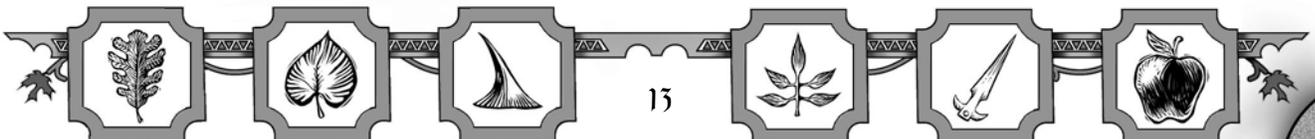
The majority of the cities in the German empire fall under the dominion of local counts, dukes, or bishops. Nevertheless some, the so-called *Freie Reichsstädte* (Free Imperial Cities), have secured their independence from local lords, and instead owe their allegiance directly to the emperor. These cities, some governed by councils, enjoy the benefits of trade without interference, and prosperity follows. By a similar token, it is usually in the emperor's interest to grant freedom to wealthy cities, thereby denying their wealth to local ducal rivals.

The Free Cities of Germany in 1220 are Dortmund, Esslingen, Goslar, Hamburg, Metz, Nördlingen, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Schwäbisch-Hall, Speyer, Ulm, Wetzlar, Wimpfen, and Worms.

At the city of Worms in 1122, Henry V reached an agreement (called the Concordat of Worms) with Pope Calixtus II, which technically brought the Investiture Contest to an end. The emperor conceded that the Church had the right to elect persons to ecclesiastical office, and he promised to support canonical election to bishoprics and abbacies. In return, the Pope conceded that the emperor had the right to be present at elections and to perform a lay investiture of German prelates *before* their consecration to spiritual office. This ensured imperial control of the dues and duties owed to him by bishops and abbots, who were also powerful feudal magnates. In practice, while a victory for the Church, the emperor still retained great influence over the appointment of prelates.

Frederick Barbarossa

From around 1140 internal colonization was reinforced by the *Drang nach Osten*, a focus on eastwards settlement, and several forest areas were cleared. This concerned the eastern frontier princes far more than the German kings. The latter were much more interested in the west, especially the Rhineland and Italy. Only in these





economically advanced regions were the profits of lordship sufficient to sustain an emperor and his following. Above all, there was the magnetic pull of urban wealth in Lombardy and Tuscany. Frederick I Barbarossa (1152-1190) had one ambition — to restore the empire to its former glory. Consequently, he spent one third of his reign in Italy, where the growing independence of the Italian towns made it more difficult for the king to collect royal dues. The Hohenstaufens were twice involved in hostilities with the League of Lombard Cities (founded in 1167 and 1226) and were forced to compromise. However, the income from Italy was important to the empire's wealth, which perhaps prompted the conquest of Sicily by Henry VI (1194), making him and his son Frederick II the richest rulers in Europe.

Emperor Frederick II

The son of a German father and a Sicilian mother, Frederick was made king

of Germany in 1212, and crowned emperor in 1220. He spends most of his time in Sicily, and despite making promises to set out on crusade to the Holy Land, he has not yet made any preparations to do so — a fact that greatly irritates the Pope.

Frederick loves his southern Italian home. Around his court are gathered some of the most brilliant men of intellect. He himself is a scholar and philosopher, embracing all aspects of his empire, not just the cold dull German subjects, but also his more sparkling Sicilians, his Milanese, and his Romance-speaking Burgundians. He has been described as *stupor mundi* (the amazement of the world), and writes poetry (in the Sicilian vernacular) and a book on falconry, *The Art of Hunting with Birds*. Many in the Church fear his tolerance towards both Moslems and magic — he has added a wizard by the name of Michael Scot to his court.

The Future of the Hohenstaufens

Frederick II finally heads out on crusade in 1227, after being excommunicated for his delays by Gregory IX. He secures Jerusalem (becoming its king in 1229) and negotiates the return of other important places with the sultan. He returns in triumph, and his ban is lifted. His involvement in the affairs of the northern Italian communes in the 1230s brings about another breakdown in imperial-papal relations. Gregory IX wages a war of propaganda against him, and the Pope's successor Innocent IV excommunicates him again in 1245.

After Frederick's death in 1250, his son Conrad and grandson Conradin continue to fight to maintain the position in Italy, but at the Battle of Tagliacozzo (1268) Conradin falls into the hands of Charles of Anjou and is beheaded, ending the male line of the Hohenstaufens.



Chapter Three

Tribunal History & Customs

This chapter describes the most notable features of the Order of Hermes in the Rhine Tribunal: its venerable history and traditions, the ranks that are assigned to magi, the Tribunal gatherings that take place at the covenant of Durenmar, and the political guilds into which its magi have organized themselves.

History

The four-hundred-and-fifty-year history of the Rhine Tribunal is far longer and more detailed than we have room for here. The records of Tribunal gatherings alone, which sit gathering dust in the Great Library at Durenmar, occupy many dozens of tomes. What follows below is but a sample of the most important events.

Having recently joined the Rhine covenant of Triamore, I have commenced a study of the many and curious practices and traditions of this, the so-called First Tribunal, from amongst the many tomes of the covenant's library. Although Triamore has existed for nearly seven decades, it is still among the youngest of the Rhine's covenants. The founding of new covenants here is restricted and thus rare, which has resulted in a tradition of traveling magi and guest hospitality, as well as a small number of chapter houses. This at least explains the puzzling ejection of the Quaesitor Tabanus who previously occupied my sanctum — it seems he was never a full member of Triamore, but instead merely a peregrinator, one of the many wandering magi of Germany. I shall see if I can take advantage of the rules of hospitality in order to make an extended visit at some of the more famous Rhine covenants.

It is immediately clear that the magi here afford a great and fitting respect for their predecessors and also the most senior among them, who style themselves with the title of magister, a kind of lesser archmagus, it seems to me. As a tyro, a junior magus, I am expected to acknowledge the superiority of these magi. I must therefore strive to earn this title myself, although I do not yet know how this may be achieved. I have however unfortunately learned that it is not possible through certamen. It seems that these masters and archmagi are even permitted to vote with the sigils of a number of ancient magi — retired magi, as they dub them — a most unusual practice. I am told that the Founder Bonisagus himself still casts his vote at Tribunal today — but how can this possibly be?

In order to participate in the convoluted politics of this Tribunal it seems to be necessary to belong to a guild, some sort of formal association or faction. While the magi of Triamore encourage me to support the so-called Apple Guild, merely a dubious front for mundane meddling, as best I can tell, I have nevertheless decided to seek membership of the venerable Oak Guild at the next Tribunal gathering, when I will be formally greeted by the Tribunal's elders and may take my seat at the hallowed Forum of Hermes.

— from the journal of Sicero filius Goliard of House Tremere

The Founding of the Order

In the middle of the 8th century the wizard Trianoma first met up with Bonisagus. At the time, Bonisagus lived in seclusion in the Alps, working on his magnum opus, now known as the Hermetic Theory of Magic. He took Trianoma as an apprentice and taught her his theories. She then traveled far and wide, using the protection afforded by the Parma Magica as persuasive evidence that magi could meet in peace and share this new magic. Bonisagus, in the meantime, moved to the Black Forest in 754 AD, and started to teach his theories to the wizards that Trianoma sent to him. After years of negotiations, threats, and recriminations, Trianoma managed to get twelve wizards to agree on a set of nine precepts, which she called the Oath of Hermes. At

Durenmar in 767, the twelve Founders swore to uphold the oath, and the Order of Hermes was born.

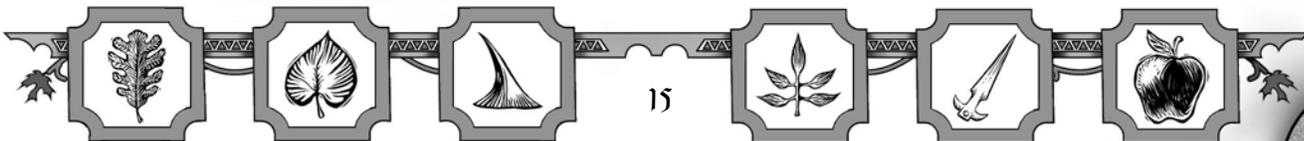
Through recruitment the Order grew quickly, and in 773 Trianoma, supported by Guernicus, suggested that the members divide themselves into separate Tribunals. The magi of the nascent Order had scattered outward from the central location of Durenmar, with Tyalus and his followers found mainly in the northwest of Europe, Tremere removing himself to the far eastern reaches of the Frankish Empire, Flambeau to the Pyrenees overlooking his home in Spain, Jerbiton and Criamon into the Alps, and so on. In the beginning, therefore, Tribunals tended to be loose affiliations based mainly on House, with the Rhine dominated by magi of Houses Bonisagus, Bjornaer, and Merinita — the three Founders who stayed here. These were the golden years of the Order in Germania, and the Bonisagus-dominated covenants of the southern Rhine region consistently produced advances in magical theory.

The First Tribunal

The Order of Hermes was founded at Durenmar, and in the early years there was only one Tribunal — no matter how far away magi set up their covenants, they would have to return to Durenmar every seven years. Magi of the Rhine are very proud of their ancient pre-eminence, and often refer to the Rhine Tribunal as the "First Tribunal," particularly when speaking to magi from other Tribunals.

The Partitioning of the Order

With the fragmentation of Charlemagne's empire, the Order of Hermes was



On the Retirement of Magi

1017th year of Aries, Rhine Tribunal: As the First Tribunal has famously witnessed, the spirits of the Founders and our most venerable and wisest magi are still with us. The study of magic may truly grant us a kind of immortality, although to what higher place we transcend we cannot know. It is therefore acknowledged that the voting sigil of each magus remains valid in perpetuity, until such time as evidence of his death is presented. Nevertheless, we cannot permit the First Tribunal to become dominated by the voices of those who are no longer active in its leadership. To this end, a magus whom no other has witnessed for a period of two Tribunals or more shall be deemed to be retired. The sigil of a retired magus may only be held by proxy by a magister or archmagus; a magister may hold only one such sigil, an archmagus at most two. We entrust the duty of the witnessing of magi and the reporting of the deaths of magi to our loyal servants, the Redcaps.

In support of this ruling, the Rhine Tribunal has developed an informal tradition of never fully recognizing the passing of magi into Twilight. There are various euphemisms for Final Twilight and retired magi (most of whom are lost to it) are spoken of in the present tense, especially when their votes are cast. Several other stories of the famous return of long-retired Twilight magi have been told in the centuries since.

similarly affected. Finding themselves in different realms, the Order began to become severely nationalistic, and territorial disputes became more common. In 865 the Grand Tribunal decided upon political boundaries of the Tribunals, rather than relying upon loose affiliations of covenants. The kingdom of the Germans was called the Rhine Tribunal and the kingdom of the West Franks was named the Normandy Tribunal because of its "North-men" settlers. The kingdom of Lotharingia was called the Provencal Tribunal, as its center of culture was in the

southern region called Provence. The Britannian (later divided into Loch Leglean, Stonehenge, and Hibernia), Roman, Iberian, and Theban Tribunals were founded at the same time, and a coalition of eight covenants managed to win for themselves a geographically small Tribunal called the Greater Alps, the territory of the former Roman provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum. Finally, the four covenants in the Holy Land constituted the Tribunal of the East (renamed the Tribunal of the Levant in 1129). With House Tremere at the height of their power a few decades later, the Transylvanian and Theban Tribunals were soon given separate recognition. In 1008 the New Slavonic Tribunal (later the Novgorod Tribunal) won recognition, making the total thirteen. Over time, the boundaries of these Tribunals shifted and changed as covenants fell and new ones were founded. The most significant change was the boundaries of the Provencal Tribunal, which in the 13th

century covers Aquitaine and Gascony rather than Provence, while the Normandy and Rhine Tribunals have absorbed the Low Countries that formerly belonged to Provencal.

The Return of the Elder Magi

By the middle of the 9th century, the membership of the Tribunal had matured such that its elder magi became increasingly dominant in its politics. Indeed the Tribunal had already formally recognized the superiority of these magi by the adoption of a rank hierarchy (described later in this chapter). By this time many of the so-called founding magi of the Tribunal (those who were present at the inaugural Rhine Tribunal gathering of 780) had either died or entered Final Twilight. At a

On the Founding of Covenants

1024th year of Aries, Rhine Tribunal: We cannot prosper and overcome our enemies if our covenants war amongst themselves. So that we may enjoy peace forthwith, the First Tribunal will no longer recognize any covenant that has not gained the approval of its peers. Any prospective covenant is therefore required to obtain a sponsor from each and every existing covenant, who shall publicly proclaim their petition worthy. Should even one such sponsor not be forthcoming, the Tribunal will refuse recognition.

Ever since then, prospective covenants have been required to obtain the explicit permission of all the Tribunal's other covenants, in order to obtain recognition. If a covenant is not successful in getting approval from the Tribunal, they may try again in seven years time. Until they receive approval, they have no legal recourse against the depredations of other covenants against their resources — they do not exist, in the eyes of the Tribunal. The magi of an unapproved covenant thus have no communal rights, although they retain their rights as individuals.

Needless to say, a prospective covenant may find itself bound into all sorts of obligations, duties, and pacts in return for support, but some covenants make low demands in return for future favors. Many covenants will do their best to get whatever concessions they can from such a group of young magi. However there is a social stigma attached to being the only covenant to refuse to allow a covenant to form, and so the new magi need not agree to every demand — if they are feeling brave.

In compensation for all these onerous favors and promises (which are usually negotiated at Tribunal itself), there is a tradition of gift-giving, harkening back to the ancient German tradition. Once the decision has been made that a new covenant can be established, every other covenant presents a gift (or announces a boon). These gifts usually take the form of resources to help the new covenant — books, vis tithes or sources, silver, even a covenant site. This public display of generosity tends to encourage existing covenants to show off their opulence, and thus they often grant gifts that are ostentatious or excessively generous. For those that are reluctant to give their support to the new covenant, however, these gifts are often flashy and impressive-looking, without any real substance to them. Moon duration illusions are not unheard-of, for the more underhand covenants.



The Schism War

famous incident at the Tribunal gathering of 857, the spirits of three of these founding magi, believed lost to Twilight, suddenly made themselves known and demanded the right to vote on an important and contentious issue. The gathering of magi was shocked, but the Praeco ruled that the spirits may cast their votes, out of the great respect held for these elder magi. The three extra votes were enough to tip the balance and the motion was wisely defeated, saving the Tribunal from strife. Before departing, each of the three designated one of their filii to cast their vote by proxy at future Tribunal gatherings.

Following this precedent, a handful of elder magi arrived at the subsequent Tribunal bearing the voting sigils of their ancient parentes, in or at the verge of Final Twilight, claiming that they were merely "ill-disposed to attend." A small number of other elder magi formally designated a follower to bear their sigil by proxy in the event of their being "unable to attend future meetings." By the Tribunal of 871, the sigils of many former magi had returned to (or stayed in) usage, in a chaotic and controversial manner. Some of these sigils were permitted, others not, depending largely on favor and patronage.

The Tribunal of 878 was therefore forced to make a firm and final ruling on the issue. It could not go against its own precedent and outlaw these proxy sigils, yet at the same time there was a clear need (and much urging from the Quaesitores) to reign in their number and the associated abuses. A compromise motion was adopted, permitting such proxy sigils but strictly regulating their number according to the rank of the wielder.

Early Conflicts

The early peace in the Rhine Tribunal was broken when two neighboring covenants, Schwarzburg and Arae Flaviae, battled each other in a devastating war in the 9th century, bringing both to the brink of destruction and incurring the wrath of the mundanes of Swabia. The Tribunal of 885 was forced to abolish both covenants. Recognizing the cause of the conflict as the right of covenants to establish themselves at will, without regard for their neighbors, the Tribunal introduced stringent new rules governing the founding of covenants.

During the Schism War, which took place throughout the Order at the beginning of the 11th century, the Rhine Tribunal became fractured amidst a political breakdown, resulting in the destruction of a number of covenants (including Oakdell, Waldherz, and Grand Silesia) and the slaying of many of its magi. This was the most turbulent period in the Rhine's history, rife with distrust, chaos, and flagrant law-breaking.

Waldherz, deep in the Black Forest, was originally founded as a chapter house of Durenmar by a handful of Bonisagus magi who constituted the lineage of Hercynius. He was the penultimate apprentice of Bonisagus, and his followers claimed to continue what they believed to be Bonisagus' final work, which was to overcome the limits on Hermetic magic using primal magic from the forest's heart. They were joined in this endeavor by magi of House Diedne, and Waldherz declared its independence from Durenmar, although the issue of their sponsorship to form a separate covenant was mired in controversy. (Durenmar argued that they could veto them by providing no sponsor; Waldherz claimed that one of their magi sufficed as a sponsor, since they had not yet seceded. The Tribunal ruled in favor of Durenmar, clarifying that a sponsor cannot be one of the founders of a new covenant.)

About fifty years previously, all of the Diedne magi in the Tribunal split from the Hawthorn Gild to form the Rowan Gild. They were later joined by the Bonisagus magi of Waldherz and some Bjornaer magi from Grand Silesia. This new faction was already perceived to be excessively secretive and soon attracted many enemies in the Tribunal. At the onset of the Schism War, the Rowan Gild shared in the fate of House Diedne — a disputed ruling from the Tribunal of 1004 exiled all of its members. Flambeau and Tremere magi of the Ash Gild, in collaboration with some of the Oak Gild, declared Wizard War against the Diedne magi of Waldherz and Oakdell. Meanwhile, the remaining magi of the Oak Gild (including most of the Bonisagus at Durenmar) strove in vain for peace. This was the first outbreak of the Schism War in the Rhine Tribunal, and anarchy and violence soon spread throughout the land.

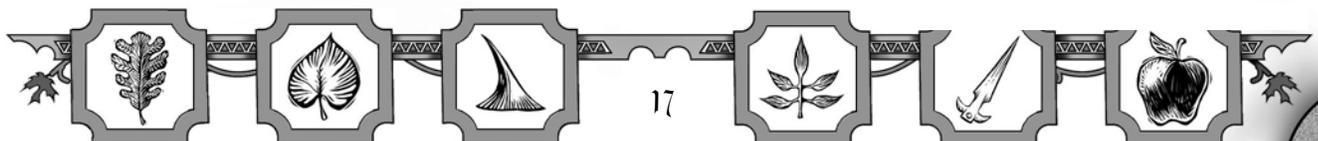
By the Tribunal of 1018 — the first in 14 years — House Diedne and almost all members of the Rowan Gild (and the

associated covenants) were destroyed. Two remaining magi of the lineage of Hercynius renounced their membership in House Bonisagus and were accepted into House Ex Miscellanea. Due to their failed diplomacy and reduced numbers, House Bonisagus has never quite enjoyed the same level of influence in the Rhine Tribunal as it had before the Schism War.

The final footnote to this story occurred in 1048. The maga Aschlaranda, formerly of Waldherz, suddenly reappeared at Durenmar with her apprentice Schadrit. She was accepted back into House Bonisagus, but her actions and opinions were contrary to the prevailing spirit of reconciliation, and she refused to tell of the fate of Waldherz or to renounce the Rowan Gild. After a major dispute, she was (with reluctance) declared orbus. Aschlaranda and Schadrit departed to found Dankmar elsewhere in the Black Forest, burning with resentment for Durenmar and House Bonisagus. They were pursued into the forest by a leading magus of the Ash Gild, Ganelon, who declared Wizard War on them both. He was never heard from again.

Protecting the Wildernesses

Germany was settled at an early date, in the Roman towns on the western banks of the Rhine, then the Carolingian towns in southern Saxony and Franconia. However it was not until the 10th century that population pressures caused the nobles to order the clearance of the ancient forests that covered much of the lands of central Germany, to make room for settlements. The Swabian dukes of Zähringen, and the monasteries under their control, were particularly prominent in promoting settlement in the Black Forest. For many years, magi had been complaining about the encroachment of civilization into the wild areas near their covenants, threatening both vis sources and auras with the power of the Dominion. However it was not until Durenmar's resources were threatened that the political might of the Oak Gild came behind the motion. They feared that the Rhine would eventually go the way of the Roman Tribunal, losing most of its magical and faerie sites to the Dominion. Therefore, at the Rhine Tribunal meeting of 1053, the Praeco made a statement, the text of which was then endorsed by the Tribunal as part of the Peripheral Code.



The Guardians of the Forests

1192nd year of Aries, Rhine Tribunal: The lifeblood of this Tribunal lies within its forests. Here, more than anywhere else, raw power lurks in the hidden glens, the dark hollows, and the majestic trees. The ancient forests are the well-springs of our magic, perhaps all magic, and we magi have a duty to preserve them, not just for ourselves, but for the future members of the Order. We have witnessed the decline of both Magic and Faerie in our neighbors the Roman Tribunal, and we must resolve that the same shall not happen to us. The encroachment of the Dominion proceeds further into our resources with every coming year, and it is time that we safeguard our magic, defend our vis, and slow mundane intrusion. All that is required for the Devil to win is for good men to do nothing, and we have remained idle for too long. We must become Guardians of the Forests, for none will halt this decline if we do not.

Under pressure from House Guernicus, the following clause was later added: *We must take care to only act in such a fashion so as not to incur the wrath of the mundanes, else the Oath of Hermes will be broken, and due punishment meted forthwith.*

This is perhaps the most contested and controversial part of Rhine's Peripheral Code. It has no inherent method of enforcement, and may be interpreted in many different ways. It has been used both to prosecute magi who have failed to protect magical sites, and to defend those who would be deemed as Code-breakers by other Tribunals, depending on the political support of those attempting to use the ruling to their advantage. Dankmar was not punished for aiding the destruction of a new monastery in the Black Forest, yet Crintera was refused permission to use this ruling to halt the Danish invasion of Rügen. Decisions regarding the "Guardians of the Forests" ruling seem to depend entirely upon political maneuvering and the opinions of the presiding Quaesitor, and as a result, a host of contradictory rulings have sprung up in the years following the Tribunal of 1053.

Eastern Interests

In the late 10th century, the Order was seeking to expand eastwards into the hitherto unexplored expanse east of the Rhine Tribunal. Complex negotiations led by Archmage Ambrus of Bonisagus between delegations of the Rhine, Transylvanian, and Theban Tribunals resulted in the founding of three covenants in these Slavic lands, one sponsored by each of the three Tribunals. Magi from Crintera and Rethra founded the covenant of Grand Silesia between the Oder and Warta rivers in Poland.

By 1008 these three covenants had formally shed their ties to their sponsors and constituted themselves as the New Slavonic Tribunal. This move was ill-timed, occurring as it did in the midst of the Schism War, and vengeful magi from the Rhine attacked Grand Silesia, partially ruining it. The refugees fled to other covenants.

The fall of Grand Silesia left the New Slavonic Tribunal without representation in Poland. At the Grand Tribunal of 1030, the Rhine Tribunal made its first attempt to negotiate a change in the border between itself and the New Slavonic Tribunal, a motion that was narrowly defeated. The Slavonic Tribunal's response was to push through a ruling giving their Tribunal council formal authority over the settlement of all new covenants in the Slavic lands. In 1052, refugees from Grand Silesia were able to return to Poland and establish Leczyca covenant, to reinforce this ruling of the Order's highest authority.

In 1067, the covenant of Roznov was founded on the edge of the Carpathian Mountains by three Ex Miscellanea magi. Given this location, the covenant could arguably have chosen to attend any of three different Tribunals, but seeing an opportunity, the Rhine Tribunal offered them generous support, persuading them to join with them rather than the Transylvanian or the New Slavonic (now called the Novgorod) Tribunals.

The Grand Tribunal of 1163 saw further arguments regarding the border with Poland. Frederick Barbarossa's march into Poland to place his candidate on the Polish throne had been the perfect cover for magi of Fengheld to accompany him and lay claim to Polish supplies of vis. At the Grand Tribunal, Fengheld argued for a changing of the border to reflect their interests in Poland. Despite the support of the Rhine's three Primi, the Grand Tribunal conceded only 10 miles of Polish

land to the Rhine, barely sufficient to accommodate Fengheld's newest chapter house.

Mundane Meddling

In the 12th century, a handful of covenants in the west of the Tribunal founded the Apple Gild, seeking to push the limits of the Peripheral Code with the extent of their mundane dealings. In almost all cases, while leading to temporary enrichment or significant influence among the nobility, these efforts have resulted in disaster. Treverorum, in the city of Trier, were repeatedly censured by the Tribunal after the death of a Redcap and riots in the city. After a full Quaesitorial investigation and the unexplained death of the majority of its magi, it was abandoned. The archbishop of Trier subsequently raised an army that sacked the nearby covenant of Rheinstein. The covenant of Triamore, perhaps due to its greater political savvy, has managed thus far to endure, although even it has suffered a mundane siege, a fire, and the murder of magi.

The demises of Treverorum and Rheinstein are also believed by some to be linked to a curse on the region of the Rhine Gorge, an area that is rich in magical sites, but where no covenant has endured (see Chapter 12: The Curse of the Rhine Gorge).

Baltic Expansion

Stymied by attempts to expand the interests of the Rhine Tribunal eastwards into the vis-rich wildernesses of the Slavic lands, eyes turned northwards instead. With the additional aim of investigating the Order of Odin, long regarded as a bugbear of the Order, the Rhine Tribunal in 1144 formed the charter for a new covenant called Oculus Septentrionalis ("Eye of the North"). Three magi volunteered for membership of this covenant, were given a grant of resources, and were instructed to find a suitable site in the north of the Tribunal. Despite initial difficulties in forming the covenant, by 1160 it had found a home in the relatively unknown Baltic town of Lübeck. However, Oculus Septentrionalis has since then shown little inclination in penetrating the Scandinavian lands, instead concentrating on mercantile ventures that skirt the boundaries of Hermetic law.



Oculus Septentrionalis is by no means alone in the northern lands, however. Apart from Crintera, there is a second covenant of Bjornaer magi named Sinus Wodinis on the southeast coast of Norway. Presumably part of the Novgorod Tribunal, the existence of this covenant is known only to Crintera, and even they only became aware of its presence recently.

Of more immediate interest to Oculus Septentrionalis is the covenant of Heorot on Zealand in Denmark. This covenant was founded in 1215 by three

magi from the Rhine Tribunal, but because this territory technically belongs to the Novgorod Tribunal, there was no need to seek recognition of their covenant from the Rhine. However the magi plan to attend the next Rhine Tribunal gathering in 1221.

The Crisis at Crintera

Crintera, the domus magna of House Bjornaer isolated on the isle of Rügen,

existed for centuries in broad harmony with the relatively few mundanes there. This all changed in 1168 when the Danish king Valdemar I invaded the island. This invasion came as a complete surprise to Crintera, who had not been keeping a close enough eye on mundane events. Hotheads in the House proposed immediate retaliation, but cooler minds prevailed, wary of falling foul of the Code of Hermes. The covenant reluctantly retreated into its regio and proposed to weather out the storm. This policy has not been successful, and, stung by the refusal of the Tribunal as a whole to assist Crintera, the current situation on Rügen is a powder-keg, just waiting for the right spark to ignite the fury of the House (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Crintera).

Past and Present Covenants of the Rhine Tribunal

This is a non-exhaustive list of covenants of the Rhine Tribunal with the dates of their founding and dissolution (if applicable). Covenants of your own devising, either past or present, may be added to this list.

DURENMAR (767-present)

FENISTAL (773-802): The temple of Diana that was Merinita's home, this covenant was abandoned on the death of Myanar.

CRINTERA (773-present)

ARAE FLAVIAE (780-885): in Swabia. The magi of this covenant objected to nearby Schwarzburg, and their resulting warfare caused the Tribunal to abolish both covenants and rule that any covenant could veto the establishment of a new covenant.

RETHRA (780-1202): in Pomerania.

This covenant fell out of favor by allying itself with the New Slavonic Tribunal in the 11th century. It entered a deep Winter for many decades, with no contact with other magi, until finally destroyed by the Knights of the Sword.

IRENCILLIA (792-present)

SIRMIUM (822-930): located in the March of Meissen, this covenant was destroyed during the Magyar invasion of Germany. Only Wiederich of House Flambeau survived.

SCHWARZBURG (857-885): founded in the Swabian Jura, this covenant was abolished by the Tribunal after 30 years because of their wars with Arae Flaviae.

RUDIARIA (892-969): affiliated to House Flambeau and located in the Rhine Gorge, this covenant suffered from malefic attention, and demonic involvement was suspected in the magical accident that destroyed the covenant.

OAKDELL (931-1008): a Diedne-dominated covenant in the Westerwald, near the Rhine Gorge. On numerous occasions in the 10th century they accused Durenmar of scrying, but these charges were never proven, and the covenant was destroyed in the Schism War.

WALDHERZ (990-1010?): located in the Black Forest and dedicated to the teaching of Hercynius, this covenant was never officially sanctioned by the Rhine Tribunal due to the veto of Durenmar.

GRAND SILESIA (993-1009): founded between the Oder and Warta rivers in Poland by magi from Rethra and Crintera, this covenant split from the Rhine Tribunal in 1008 to form the New Slavonic Tribunal. Rhine magi, feeling betrayed, destroyed the covenant a year later under the guise of the Schism War.

FENGHELD (1039-present)

DANKMAR (1052-present)

ROZNOV (1067-present)

TREVERORUM (1095-1172): located in the city of Trier. They were consistently in trouble for meddling with the affairs of mundanes, and were eventually destroyed, it is believed, at the order of the Church.

RHEINSTEIN (1123-1200): founded on an island in the Rhine Gorge. They were destroyed by an irate mob of mundanes led by the archbishop of Trier.

OCULUS SEPTENTRIONALIS (1144-present)

TRIAMORE (1151-present)

WADDENZEE, formerly known as **TERSCHELLING** (1165-present)

HEOROT (1215-present): this covenant, on Zealand in Denmark, is not yet officially part of the Rhine Tribunal, but they intend to be.

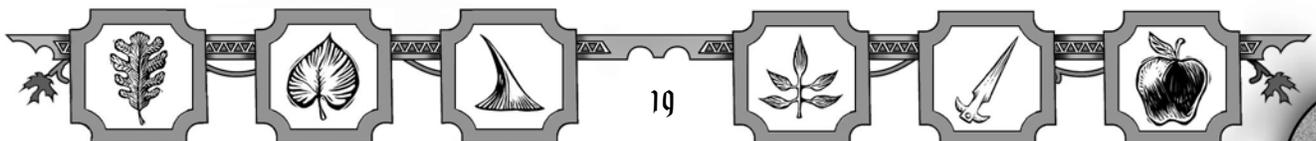
Upon Being a Rhine Magus

The Rhine Tribunal has four recognized ranks by which it classes its members. In the early years of the Order, these ranks were based on those of the Roman priesthood, and this tradition can still be seen in the older covenants. While most of the Tribunals abandoned this archaic practice, in the Rhine it has mutated into the craftsman ranks of apprentice (Latin *discipulus*), journeyman (*tyro*), master (*magister*), and archmage (*archimagus*).

New Virtues and Flaws for Rhine Magi

FREE SOCIAL STATUS VIRTUES

Apprentice: This Virtue, applicable to any Tribunal, may be taken by a child character who has the Gift and who has been accepted by an experienced Hermetic magus (in the Rhine Tribunal, a master or archmage), with the storyguide's approval. You are a *discipulus* and will receive extensive magical training, having the potential to become a Hermetic magus in your own right. However you must obey the dictates and fulfill the errands of your master and



endure his or her rigorous training, and may be treated no better than a slave.

Journeyman: This is equivalent to the Free Status Hermetic Magus (see ArM5, page 43), renamed here because of the Rhine Tribunal's special social system. You are a *tyro*, a junior magus, and must defer to magi of senior rank in a legitimate dispute. If you belong to a gild, however, you may enjoy the support of its senior members.

There are two further Free Social Status Virtues; while these have no cost, they must be earned. If your storyguide permits the creation of magi who are older than standard, then you should discuss with him or her whether these Virtues can be taken:

Master: You have acquired the status of *magister*, and may train apprentices without social stigma. You have a Hermetic Reputation of level 2, which pertains to your acceptance as a master. The voting sigil of a retired magus is placed in your care; you may use this at any meeting of the Rhine Tribunal, although it is expected that you will cast it according to the interests of its original owner. This Status Virtue is specifically a feature of the Rhine Tribunal.

Archmage: You have earned the exalted title of *archmagus*. You have a Hermetic Reputation of level 4, pertaining to the great deeds you have done to earn this status, and a Hermetic Reputation as an Archmage, also at level 4. This is applicable to any Tribunal. If you are a member of the Rhine Tribunal, you receive an additional proxy vote of a retired magus, giving you a total of three votes to use.

MINOR HERMETIC VIRTUE

(Gild) Trained: You have been trained for a number of seasons at the covenant of Durenmar during the end of your apprenticeship in the Rhine Tribunal. In addition to a season of training by a magus of House Bonisagus, you have also been inducted into one of the Rhine's political gilds, receiving two or more seasons of training by one of its masters. You gain an additional 30 experience points, which may be spent on Order of Hermes Lore, Intrigue, and Durenmar Lore (or, rarely, the Lore of another covenant where you were trained by your gild). You gain a further 60 experience points that may be spent on any General or Arcane Abilities, Arts, and spells (one point per level) that are appropriate to your gild. For example, the Ash Gild

Laws of Hospitality and the Peregrinatores

The Rhine Tribunal has included into its Peripheral Code the traditional German guest-laws, which encouraged homeowners to be generous to travelers in terms of food and shelter, and exhorted travelers to be mindful of their host's ability to support another mouth in the household. The laws of hospitality became a very early part of the Tribunal's lifestyle, and has given the Rhine a unique feature of travelling magi — typically around a sixth of its magi are peregrinatores. It has become commonplace for journeymen magi to spend some of their time after apprenticeship visiting covenants for extended sabbaticals. It is highly unusual for masters or archmagi to become long-term guests at other covenants; except at Durenmar, where it is considered to be a privilege. The Peripheral Code clearly indicates the duties and obligations of both guest and host:

961st year of Aries, Rhine Tribunal: A magus may request hospitality from any covenant established legally in the Rhine Tribunal. The covenant must formally publish the conditions of hospitality, which, if agreed to by the magus, guarantee him at least three, but no more than seven years at the covenant. The conditions of hospitality must be the same for all guests currently in residence, but may be otherwise changed by the covenant at any time that they have no guests. The guest is entitled only to that which is granted in the conditions of hospitality, and must agree to its

strictures, which must include — but is not restricted to — a fee of three pawns of vis per year paid to the host.

A later ruling allowed that the fee of vis paid by the guest could be exchanged for equivalent service, and a season's work was deemed to be adequate recompense.

A covenant can always prevent receiving (or honoring) a request for hospitality by making the conditions of hospitality so severe that no magus would ever accept them, although this would reflect poorly on the covenant. Most conditions of hospitality allow access to part or all of the library, and ask a basic oath of fellowship from the guest, requiring him to help in times of adversity. Once accepted, the host cannot ask the guest to leave (as long as he obeys the conditions) until three whole years have passed. Most covenants have a spare laboratory in which to house guests, but are not obliged to provide one; and if none exist, the magus is expected to pay for and establish his own. Large covenants such as Fengheld and Durenmar are able to accommodate a half-dozen guests simultaneously.

The peregrinatores are nearly always of journeyman rank, and usually belong to a covenant. However, members of covenants may also make use of the Laws of Hospitality, and take sabbaticals at other covenants in order to work collaboratively with other magi, research a particular topic, or to fulfil an obligation that they owe their host.

Trained Virtue can confer Hunt, Penetration, and battle magics, whereas Elder Gild Trained might grant Etiquette, Faerie Lore, and faerie spells. This extra training may negate the effect of the Weak Parens Flaw, in which case the Virtue and Flaw cancel out and both can be dropped. With the approval of the storyguide, it may be combined with the Skilled Parens Virtue.

This Virtue is not compulsory for Rhine magi — not all magi apprenticed here opt to receive this training and join a gild immediately, although many do. A magus who joins a gild post-apprenticeship usually still receives gild training, but in this case the Virtue should not be taken — instead the magus must spend seasons

of time to be trained, for which experience points are gained as usual according to the Long Term Events chapter of *Ars Magica* 5th Edition.

MINOR HERMETIC FLAW

(Gild) Enmity: Either you or your master has done something notable to anger one of the Rhine Tribunal's political gilds, or a prominent member thereof, and that gild now actively seeks to thwart you, through political means, or possibly otherwise. Magi from this gild will be unlikely to sponsor any prospective covenant you are involved in, or to sponsor you as a master, and this gild will be inclined to



Tabanus filius Jart, follower of Guernicus

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

Size: 0

Age: 38 (38) (Gauntlet at 23; Journeyman)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 2 (15)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Journeyman; Affinity with Folk Ken, Clear Thinker, Hermetic Prestige*, Intuition, Premonitions, Puissant Intellego, Skilled Parens; Meddler; Hawthorn Gild Enmity, Incompatible Arts (Perdo Imaginem), Infamous

Personality Traits: Law Abiding +3, Tenacious +3, Honorable +2

Reputations: Meddlesome Upstart 4 (Hermetic), Quaesitor 3 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Staff: Init 0, Attack +4, Defense +6, Damage +2

Soak: +2

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (logic), Athletics 1 (stamina), Awareness 2 (things out of place), Concentration 1 (Intellego spells), Code of Hermes 4 (regarding scrying), Folk Ken 6 (unusual behavior), German Lore 3 (safe roads), Great Weapon 2 (staff), High German 2 (Swiss), Italian 5 (Appulian), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Magic Theory 4 (identifying spells), Order of Hermes Lore 3 (Rhine covenants), Parma Magica 3 (Mentem), Penetration 2 (Intellego spells), Premonitions 2 (crime), Romansch 1 (southern Alps), Survival 2 (bad weather)

Arts: Cr 4, In 10+3, Mu 2, Pe 2, Re 3; An 1, Aq 4, Au 3, Co 4, He 1, Ig 3, Im 8, Me 8, Te 6, Vi 8

Twilight Scars: None

Equipment: Stout staff of blackthorn.

Encumbrance: 2 (2)

Spells Known:

Image of the Beast (InAn 5) +16

Comfort of the Drenched Traveler (PeAq 5) +8

Whispers Through the Black Gate (InCoMe 15) +19

Spasms of the Uncontrolled Hand (ReCo 5) +9

Discern the Images of Truth and Falsehood (InIm 25) +23

Taste of the Spices and Herbs (Mulm 5) +12

Sight of the Transparent Motive (InMe 10) +24, Mastery 1 (Quiet Casting)

Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie (InMe 20) +24, Mastery 1 (Penetration)

Perceive the Eyes of Knives (InMe 20) +23

Trust of Childlike Faith (ReMe 10) +13

Eye of the Eons (InTe 5) +21

Tracks of the Faerie Glow (InTe 25) +21

The Invisible Eye Revealed (InVi 20) +23

Reveal the Magical Deception (InVi 25) +23

Sense of the Lingering Magic (InVi 30) +23

New Spells:

Perceive the Eyes of Knives; InMe 20; R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Room: This spell will indicate to the caster whether there is anyone in the target area that has hostile thoughts towards

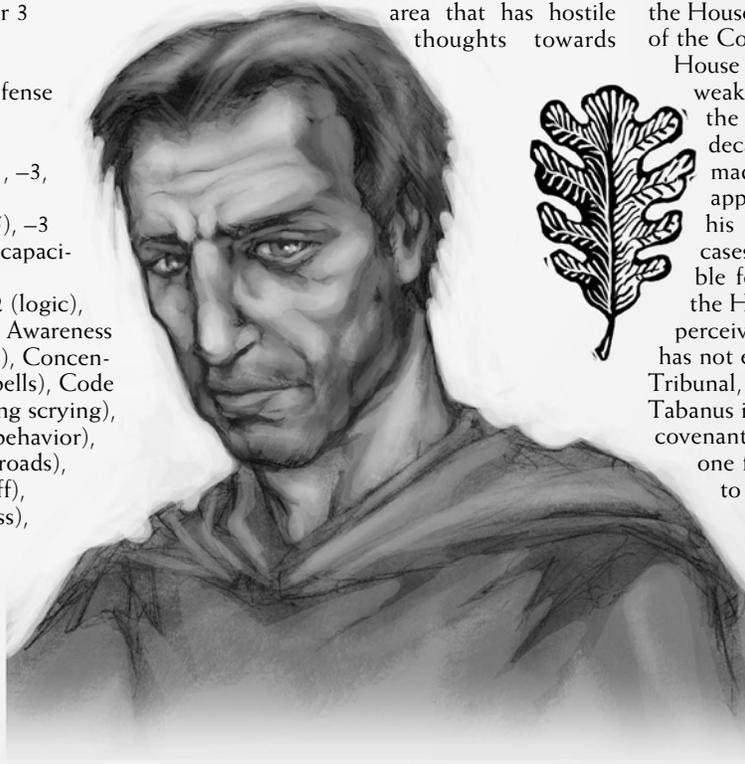
Conc, +1 Touch, +2 to determine Technique and Form, +1 complexity)

Appearance: A tall man with broad shoulders, Tabanus is fit from all the travelling he does. He dresses so as not to arouse suspicion, usually wearing shabby clothing and a travel-stained cloak. He is rarely without his walking staff. He has straight black hair, a broken nose, and usually keeps himself clean shaven (except when he is traveling).

Known as the 'Gadfly of the Rhine,' Tabanus hails from the Roman Tribunal, and was trained at Magvillus, the domus magna of House Guernicus. His master Jart is the leading Traditionalist within the House, favoring a strict interpretation of the Code, and his filius is no different.

House Guernicus, concerned about the weak presence of the Quaesitores in the Rhine, sent Tabanus here a decade ago, and he has already made himself unpopular. Even as an apprentice his perceptions helped his master solve several important cases, and his evidence was responsible for the Marching of a magus of the Hawthorn Gild on what was later perceived to be a technicality, which has not endeared him to the magi of the Tribunal, especially those of that gild. Tabanus is a peregrinator, travelling from covenant to covenant, staying at each one for a few years, then moving on to the next. He particularly favors covenants of young magi, as they feel less inclined to attempt to brow-beat him with the superiority of age (and are less likely to know his reputation). He will request to join any newly established covenant, at least as a guest, but hopefully as a permanent member. Once

ensconced in a covenant, he will insist on a rigid adherence to the Code. He is determined to uncover even the most minor of infractions against it, and is both a stickler for details and scrupulously honest. He is currently looking for a new covenant to join, as he has spent the minimum 3 years at Triamore, and they are not inclined to keep him on. Since being attacked on the road recently, he has acquired some skill with the blackthorn knout he carries as a walking stick, and is considering enchanting it. Tabanus is fifteen years out of apprenticeship, and thus slightly more powerful than a freshly Gauntleted magus, but he is suitable for a player character.



him. Multiple castings are needed to work out precisely who it is that has the hostile thoughts. Tabanus casts this spell with considerable caution and minimal Penetration, so as to avoid inadvertently scrying on a magus. (Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Room)

Reveal the Magical Deception; InVi 25; R: Per, D: Conc, T: Touch: This spell is specifically designed to overcome spells used to hide the traces of magic, such as *Masking the Odor of Magic*. Such magics of concealment are detected if the Penetration total matches the level of the deceptive spell divided by two. (Base 4, +1

The Lineage of Irmele

The maga Trianoma was the driving force that resulted in the foundation of the Order of Hermes — without her determination, the discoveries of Bonisagus would likely have never been shared. She spent many years traveling to the furthest reaches of Europe in search of wizards who were magically powerful enough for them to be offered a place in the nascent Order. When the Order was founded, this self-effacing woman declined the honor of being one of the twelve Founders (perhaps fearing to be the unlucky thirteenth), instead becoming the first follower of Bonisagus.

In the early days of the Order, a number of apprentices took instruction from Trianoma, thus establishing a distinct lineage of politically-inclined magi within House Bonisagus. Some of her early followers traveled widely, contacting and recruiting many hedge wizards. Prominent among these was Trianoma's third filia, Irmele, who traveled and recruited in German lands. Now there are fewer potential new recruits in the Rhine Tribunal, and more suspicion of hedge wizardry, but this tradition of wandering still persists within the lineage founded by Irmele in the Tribunal. These few magi are prominent members of the peregrinatores, sometimes accompanied by Redcaps, but often travelling alone. They tend to spend only short periods of time as guests, and since many are members of the Linden Gild, their self-appointed function is to strengthen diplomatic ties between covenants and promote fellowship. These magi are likely to express magics similar to Irmele herself — she was a *tempestarius*, a native German spellcaster skilled in the manipulation of weather; such spells prove very useful when out on the road at all times of the year. Her descendants tend to be strong in Arts and rich in *vis*, but often have to rely on spontaneous magic, because of their restricted ability to invent spells or create magical devices due to the absence of a Hermetic laboratory, as they rarely remain with a host long enough to make one worthwhile. Once they achieve the status of master, they will, unlike others, typically remain a peregrinator for a couple of decades, enough time to train at least one apprentice in the traveling tradition on the road. Only once old age has started to creep into their bones and travel becomes difficult will they settle at a covenant.

vote against you at Tribunal on any issues that concern you directly. Naturally, you may not join this gild.

Apprentice

The apprenticeship of magi in the Rhine Tribunal is similar to elsewhere in the Order. Legally, a *discipulus* is little more than a slave, and many masters treat them as such, especially in the early years, when the apprentice can be more of a hindrance than a help in the laboratory.

An ancient ruling of the Peripheral Code, from the time of the Rhine's founding, requires that all apprentices trained in the Tribunal must spend a minimum of one season learning at Durenmar, to complement their normal studies. This is a continuation of the early tradition whereby new recruits traveled to Durenmar to learn the Hermetic magic from Bonisagus himself (or his followers). One season at Durenmar is always taken up by direct training from a magus of House Bonisagus; this in part fulfills their requirement to disseminate knowledge, and the poor apprentice may find himself being lectured on obscure points of Hermetic Theory, or esoteric applications of specific Arts. For this reason, magi trained in the Rhine Tribunal are somewhat less likely to suffer from Hermetic Flaws such as Deficient Technique/Form or Flawed Parma Magica, and they are likely to have at least a basic grounding in the politics within the Tribunal. Even those magi who are apprenticed at Durenmar receive this extra training. Some of the remaining time at Durenmar may be taken up by studying from the Great Library, for which credit may be earned by volunteering for seasons of scribing duty. Apprentices may find books on virtually every subject here, but are restricted as to which tomes are made available to them. Some few masters refuse to allow their apprentices to travel to Durenmar; perhaps they are either hostile to that covenant or simply secretive.

While at Durenmar, an apprentice may choose to be inducted into one of the political gilds; indeed, many are. This extra training confers the Minor Hermetic Virtue, (Gild) Trained (see insert). Although one often joins the same gild as one's master, this training is always undertaken by another magus, in order to provide a second perspective. Alternatively, an apprentice may defer a choice of gild until later; this course is usually followed by those without strong political leanings

and who are keen to take the Gauntlet as soon as possible. Nevertheless it is customary, but not compulsory, for a magus to join a gild within seven years of passing the Gauntlet and becoming a journeyman.

Journeyman

A magus is considered to be a *tyro* upon the successful completion of an apprentice's Gauntlet. At a special rite conducted at Durenmar, the apprentice is manumitted from slavery by his master, confirmed in his competence, granted a Hermetic name, swears the Oath of Hermes, and is then granted a sigil with which to vote. The magus is now legally a journeyman, and he may declare membership of a gild, if he wishes.

Life is not easy in the first years of being a journeyman. Many magi desire to form a covenant of their own, but because of the unusual requirements for this process in the Rhine Tribunal, this may be difficult. More usually, the magus may join another covenant, perhaps having to serve out a probationary period before receiving tenure. Alternatively, the magus might join the ranks of the *peregrinatores*, the wandering magi who roam from covenant to covenant, relying on the laws of hospitality among the Rhine covenants to study from their libraries. This carefree life might suit some, whereas others might settle down in a covenant for an extended period, before packing up and heading once again for the open road.

Master

A *magister* is a rank earned by a magus roughly halfway between Gauntlet and archmagehood. No magus has a right to be a master, and some never achieve this rank, particularly those that are unconcerned about the opinions of their peers.

The rank can only be conferred at the discretion of three magi who are masters themselves. These magi cannot be of the same covenant or House as the applicant, and they should also be from three different gilds. These restrictions prevent this system from being hijacked by nepotism. Conferment of a mark of approval is a matter personal to each master, and some have easier restrictions than others; nevertheless, this is considered as a mark of respect, and is never given lightly — bear in mind that all masters have had to go through a similar process themselves.

A magus might be asked to perform some noteworthy service to the Tribunal, to create a specific magical item, to make a substantial contribution to the Great Library, and so on. An applicant may ask as many masters as he wishes for their mark of approval, which is given as a physical token identifying the grantor. Once three of these tokens are collected, the new master may immediately style himself magister, and enjoy the privileges of that rank.

The only other requirement to become a master is to acquire a Reputation in the Rhine Tribunal for magical prowess. No master will consider conferring a mark of approval on a magus who is not famed for his magical ability. This reputation can be earned in a number of different ways; and some suggestions are given below. Note that it is not sufficient to merely meet these requirements; the magus must also be known for it.

- Mastery of a single Hermetic Art, which can either be demonstrated by composing a weighty summa or several tractatus on the subject, or by frequently performing impressive spellcasting feats. For example, Henri de Tours (of Oculus Septentrionalis) is known as a master of Mentem.
- A spell of their own invention of at least 5th magnitude that is unusual or innovative in some fashion. For example, Handri, the Primus of Merinita (at Irencillia), is known for his spell called Breaking the Shackles of Vulgar Perception, which allows the target to perceive the world as the faeries do — a disturbing yet revealing experience.
- A number of minor but closely-related spells of their own invention. For example, Ricardus Caespūs (of Durenmar) is known for his numerous minor spells to enhance the growth and productivity of plants.
- An invested item with at least one effect of at least 5th magnitude, which is unusual or innovative. For example, Gudrun Tigurina of Verditius (at Durenmar) is known as the inventor of the Crystal Custodian.
- A widely circulated summa of substantial level and remarkable Quality; or a number of similarly-circulated tractatus. For example, Horst (of Fengheld) has a reputation as a Worthy Author, and has written tracts on a large number of subjects.

Felicia, follower of Bonisagus

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

Size: 0

Age: 24 (24) (Journeyman)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Journeyman; Major Magical Focus (weather); Cyclic Magic (Positive) — Winter months, Free Study, Linden Gild Trained, Personal Vis Source, Puissant Intrigue, Skilled Parens; Favors (to Fengheld), Study Requirement; Busybody, Cyclic Magic (Negative) — Summer months

Personality Traits: Loner +2, Self-Reliant +1, Suspicious -2

Reputations: None

Combat:

Dodging: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense 0, Damage n/a

Soak: +1

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (Latin script), Athletics 1 (sprinting), Awareness 1 (ambushes), Bargain 2 (food), Bavaria Lore 1 (woods), Chirurgy 1 (sprains), Civil and Canon Law 1 (vagabond laws), Concentration 2 (Auram), Disguise 2 (as a man), Dominion Lore 1 (roadside shrines), Faerie Lore 1 (weather spirits), Finesse 1 (Auram), Folk Ken 3 (travelers), Harz Mountains Lore 2 (sites to study), High German 5 (disguising accent), Hunt 1 (small game), Intrigue 2+2 (Hermetic), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Magic Theory 4 (weather spells), Music 1 (flute), Order of Hermes Lore 2 (covenants), Parma Magica 2 (Corpus), Penetration 1 (Auram), Rhine Lore 1 (towns), Saxony Lore 1 (safe roads), Survival 2 (summer), Swim 1 (rivers)

Arts: Cr 9, In 2, Mu 2, Pe 2, Re 7, An 1, Aq 7, Au 9, Co 1, He 0, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 0, Te 0, Vi 2

Twilight Scars: None

Equipment: Good quality clothes.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Ward Against Faeries of the Water (ReAq 15) +15

Chaos of the Angry Wave (ReAq 20) +15
Jupiter's Resounding Blow (CrAu 10) +28



Stench of the Twenty Corpses (CrAu 10) +19

Broom of the Winds (CrAu 15) +28

Clouds of Rain and Thunder (CrAu 25) +28

Ward Against Rain (ReAu 10) +24

Ward Against Faeries of the Air (ReAu 15) +17

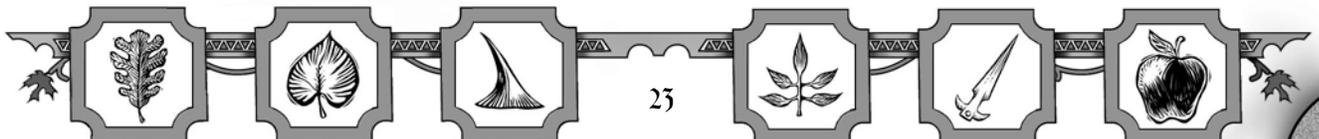
Clouds of Thunderous Might (ReAu 30) +24

Appearance: Felicia is a sturdily-built woman, whose weather-beaten features are easily mistaken for those of a young man, which allows her to travel alone without complications. Her straggly blond hair is usually mostly hidden under a hat, although wisps invariably escape its confines.

Felicia is the filia of Dorana of Fengheld, the most prominent member of the lineage of Irmele, and a Hermetic descendent of Trianoma. As expected, Felicia has taken directly to the open road to familiarize herself with the Tribunal's covenants. Her magic waxes and wanes with the seasons; during the winter she will find a covenant in which to overwinter, when her magic is strongest. During summer, when her magic is weakest, she will take to the road, seeking out natural phenomena which are necessary for her study. Fengheld has promised that she can use a spare laboratory in the winter if they have one, in return for favors as yet unspecified. Felicia is freshly Gauntleted and may be suitable for a player character, although she will only loosely associate herself with a covenant, due to her frequent travel.

STORY SEED: A PEACE EMISSARY

Felicia arrives at the player covenant to stay over winter, with the aim of negotiating peace between them and an enemy covenant of the magi. Since she visited the enemy covenant first — indeed she may well have just arrived from there the previous spring — the magi might suspect an ulterior motive, although she has none.



One's petition for masterhood is helped by a number of other factors, however these will not qualify a magus for the rank in themselves. These include having a familiar, having a reputation for politics or famous deeds, having won a Wizard War, or (if a Tremere) having acquired control over one's own sigil — although this latter one is by no means a requirement for masterhood. It is very rare that magi achieve the status of master in less than twenty years since their Gauntlet, with thirty or forty years being the norm.

One must achieve the status of master before being allowed to take an apprentice. (Although the training of apprentices by journeymen is not unknown, the apprentice, should he pass his Gauntlet, is treated as if he were a newly recruited hedge wizard, and is never formally acknowledged as the filius of the journeyman.) The rank of master permits the magus to hold the voting sigil of one retired magus by proxy, and in any dispute that could otherwise be decided by certamen, a higher-ranked magus automatically has priority, as granted by the Rhine's Peripheral Code. Thus, if a master and a journeyman quarrel over ownership of some vis in the woods, the master automatically has the right. This ruling is hotly contested by House Tremere as a curb on the power of a magus, whereas it was specifically designed to restrict that very House in the 9th century. However, Tremere magi now strive to be masters more strongly than most others, in an effort to overcome this restriction.

The procedure for Redcaps to achieve the rank of master is slightly different. Instead of acquiring a reputation for magical prowess, they must be known for their loyal service to the Order. This might be as simple as a reputation for reliable and honest message delivery, or alternatively as a protector of magi, for some notable deed, or even for authorship (as above). A Redcap who serves diligently will usually have no problem in finding sponsors from among the grateful magi of the covenants he serves, although a lazy Redcap may find it harder. Partially because of these somewhat easier requirements, and also due to the need to take apprentices earlier, Redcaps usually achieve the rank of master at an earlier age, typically 15 or 20 years after their Gauntlet. This grants significant authority to the Rhine's senior Redcaps, and the status of master is a matter of some prestige within House Mercere, just as it is for others.

Archmage

The status of archmage is not unique to the Rhine Tribunal, but is found throughout the Order. The rank of *archmagus* is considered to be the pinnacle of a magus' career, and usually takes a lot longer to achieve than the Rhine rank of Master. A prospective archmage not only has to win the respect of the other archmages by defeating one at his own challenge, he also needs to complete a major task that benefits the Order as a whole, and display his exemplary mastery of the magical Arts by inventing a 7th-magnitude spell. The majority of magi never achieve archmage status, and many do not even bother to seek it. However, it is noticeable that of all the archmages in the whole Order, about a dozen of them reside in the Rhine Tribunal, a significantly higher proportion than the average. The Rhine Tribunal holds the opinions of the archmagi in high regard, and they are permitted to hold the voting sigils of two retired magi. They also outrank masters in the way that masters outrank journeymen; archmages invariably win any Hermetic dispute, unless they face another archmage.

The Rank of Archmage

To qualify for archmagehood, a magus must have invented a spell of at least 7th magnitude, be famed for some great deed that is significant enough for it to be known throughout the Order, and (if a Rhine magus) have achieved the status of master. Each archmage has a certain challenge at which a magus must defeat him in order to gain archmage status. The first time an archmage is challenged, he determines the nature of the contest, which then remains the same throughout his life. These challenges can take any form, and usually reflect the interests of the archmage. Vinaria of Merinita (at Irencillia) has yet to be challenged; her contest will be to win the favor of four elemental kings, powerful spirits of the Magic realm. Urgan's challenge (Crintera) is to assume animal form, find him wherever he is hiding (which could be anywhere in Europe), and then defeat him in physical combat. Stentorius of Tremere's challenge (Fengheld) is as simple as to defeat him in certamen, whereas Philippus Niger (Durenmar) requires the capture and public execution of a powerful hedge wizard. The contest

must involve magical powers to be valid, and candidates will often study an archmagus for years in preparation for such a challenge, analyzing his weaknesses and investigating ways in which to outsmart him. If a magus' parens is an archmage, it is customary to challenge him before challenging another. No magus may challenge a single archmage twice, and no archmage may grant the title to more than seven magi. An archmage who has lost seven challenges may no longer be challenged, and as this is considered to be a disgrace to the archmage, it is considered bad etiquette to challenge an archmage who has lost six contests, since the seventh loss turns his archmage status into an honorary title.

Of the 1200 or so magi in the Order of Hermes, fewer than 80 have achieved this lofty status. There are a disproportionate number from Houses Tremere, Flambeau, and Tytalus, and there are many rumors about what role they fulfill in the Order. Some believe that the archmagi meet regularly, forming a secret cabal that runs the Order behind the scenes, privy to ancient rites and magical secrets. Others laugh at such a notion, considering the title to be merely a recognition of magical puissance, nothing more. The only way of finding out for sure is to become one yourself!

Tribunal Gatherings

Meetings of the Rhine Tribunal are held every seven years and by tradition always take place at Durenmar. The formal proceedings begin on the eve of the 1st of May (Walpurgis Night), and typically last for well over a week, with a great deal of politicking taking place before, during, and afterwards. In addition, each gild (and some of the Houses) hold separate meetings during the three days immediately before the Tribunal opening.

The Tribunal Field

The large flat grassy expanse at the lower end of the valley of Durenmar is empty except during Tribunal gatherings. At these times the covenant has well over a hundred visitors (counting magi and



their companions, grogs, and servants). Although the guest quarters at Durenmar are quite extensive and capable of comfortably accommodating a dozen magi, they cannot nearly handle the Tribunal numbers, and so the field is reserved for magi to erect their own temporary accommodation at these times. Both the relative position and magnificence (or otherwise) of these temporary constructs is a matter of some considerable prestige. The oldest and most powerful covenants have by tradition marked out their territory in close proximity to the Forum (see below). Magi from some covenants arrive at short notice and leave their retainers to hastily erect tents, whereas others will send advance parties of grogs several weeks beforehand to prepare more lavish accommodation for the arrival of their magi. In the past (especially at the Grand Tribunal) some ostentatious magi have been known to cast Moon Duration *Creo Terram* spells to create miniature castles or palaces for themselves. During Tribunals, the peaceful quiet of the field is transformed into a something resembling a bustling and crowded market fair.

Crintera have traditionally occupied a spot in a prime position in front of the Forum, which they claimed long ago. However, since they leave nothing

behind when they depart (except the remains of a campfire) and they are often the last to arrive (with only the most basic of preparations), it would be easy for another covenant to claim that spot first — though none has dared to do so yet.

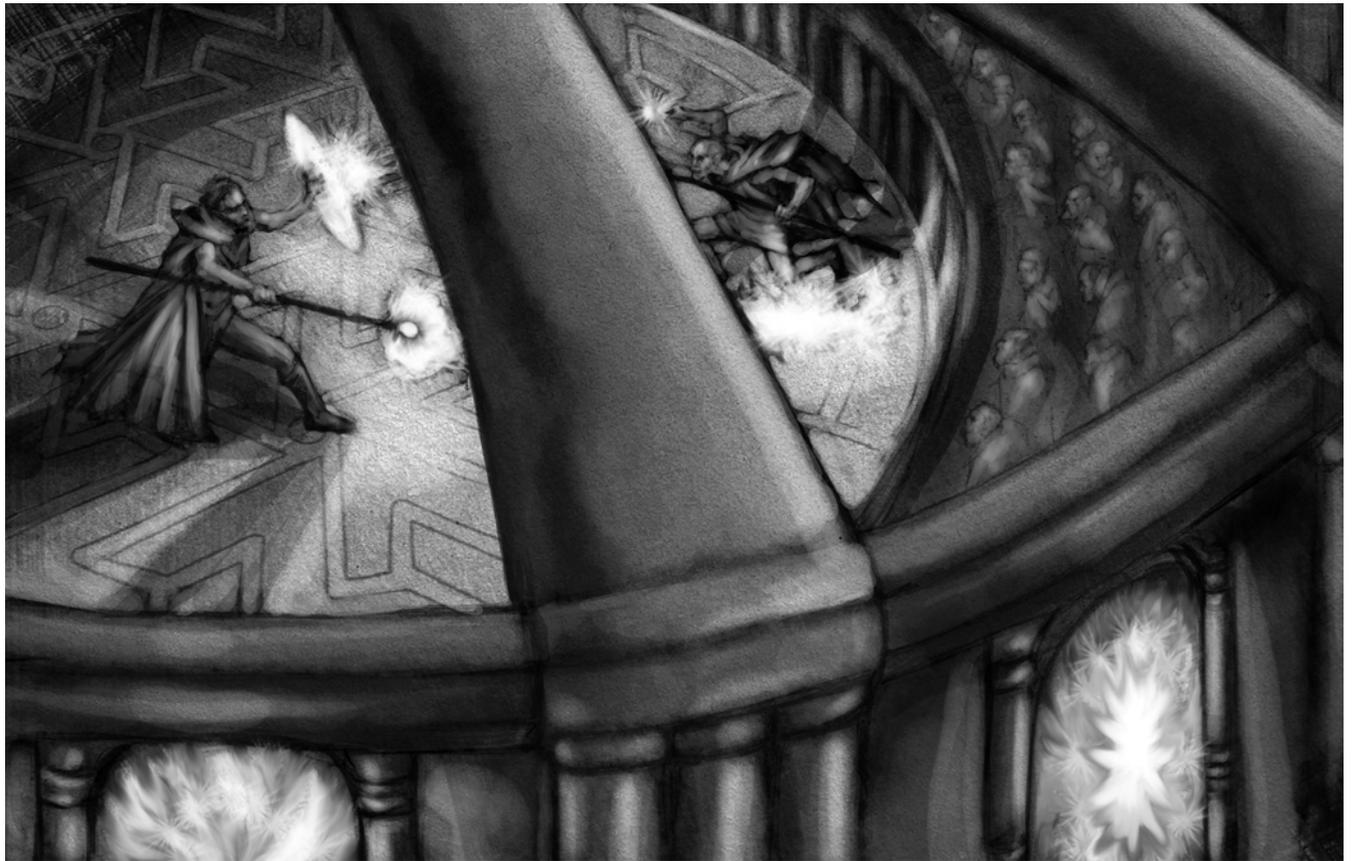
The magi of Irencillia centuries ago planted an acorn to mark their “territory,” also in a prominent position, where now there stands a huge oak tree. They have a habit of arriving at Tribunal in a most mysterious fashion: a doorway appears in the tree, which they simply step through. Their camp is then established under the leaves of the oak.

Fengheld have for the last two Tribunals been busy constructing a large three-story stone building as a permanent residence for their magi, which is now half-complete. They send a large team of workers over a month in advance, who spend the entire Tribunal in a tremendous effort to make progress with their ongoing construction project, much to the bemusement of the residents of Durenmar. Fengheld had for a long time lobbied for a *Mercere Portal* (see insert) to their covenant to be installed, next to the others in the Forum. Durenmar refused, rightfully fearful that this would further Fengheld’s aim of becoming the most important covenant in the region,

leaving Durenmar sidelined. Fengheld responded with their unannounced plan to set up a semi-official chapter house of sorts at Durenmar. They intend to furnish the top floor as a laboratory and maintain a permanent presence of one of their magi, and install their own Portal. They also intend to convey a certain message by making their house taller and more opulent than the guest quarters at Durenmar.

The Forum of Hermes

The centerpiece building of Durenmar, the Forum is an enclosed miniature amphitheater, with enough seating space for a hundred and twenty magi. It is the site of Durenmar’s council meetings, as well as gatherings of the Rhine Tribunal and Grand Tribunal. The path leading up to it forms the straight central avenue of the covenant. At the end, a set of marble steps leads up to the entrance, flanked by statues of the Twelve Founders. (In place of the destroyed statue of Diedne, an empty plinth now represents House Ex Miscellanea.) The Forum was built on top of the original ruined Roman temple, with the mosaic floor and



The Mercere Portals

The Roman Cult of Mercury enchanted and used a number of powerful magical portals to enable them to travel rapidly all over the Roman Empire, and the secret of crafting these artifacts is retained by magi of House Mercere (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*). Each pair of Mercere Portals is enchanted with an effect identical to the Ritual spell *Hermes Portal*, except that it is permanent. Each single Portal may only connect to one other, its matching pair. A small number of the most powerful covenants throughout Europe maintain a permanent link with the use of Mercere Portals; the two hubs of this network are Harco and Durenmar. Magi of master or archmage rank, as well as Redcaps, are permitted to use Durenmar's Portals freely; all others are obliged to pay a fee of two pawns of vis each. (A magus may, however, be accompanied by a small number of retainers at no extra cost.)

The exact number of Mercere Portals possessed by Durenmar, and the extent of any network of Portals in the Order of Hermes, is something that should be carefully decided for your saga. One should be aware of the consequences of allowing frequent instantaneous long-range travel; on the other hand, their use will allow player magi to more easily travel to far-flung realms of Europe, if that is something you wish to encourage. A permanent or temporary gateway presents a number of story possibilities. A Portal to a covenant now destroyed might have since been integrated into a castle wall or church, or maybe just leads to a ruin, as with the former covenant of Rethra, to which the Portal might still be active. The wooden arch may somehow be linked to the former lineage of Hercynius, the lost covenant of Waldherz in the heart of the Black Forest, or the forest itself.

some of the original pillars remaining. According to popular legend, this was the site of the original swearing of the Oath of Hermes by the Founders. While that is not actually true (see Chapter 6: The Black Forest, The Fane of the Founders), the Forum has certainly held witness to some of the most momentous debates and

decisions in the Order's history, as well as some epic certamen duels.

In the interior of the Forum, around the upper tier, are arrayed a number of ancient pillared Roman-style gateways. These are Mercere Portals (see insert) to a number of other covenants throughout the Order of Hermes, including Harco (the domus magna of House Mercere, in the Roman Tribunal), and Verdi (the domus magna of House Verditius, also in the Roman Tribunal). One also used to link to the Rhine covenant of Rethra, until that covenant's long decline into Winter and ultimate demise in 1202. Instead of re-enchanting the Portal to link to Fengheld, the magi of Durenmar instead preferred to leave it standing defunct, as a poignant reminder of the possibility of failure. Two other, lesser, stone arches are occasionally used to create a temporary gateway with the use of the *Hermes Portal* ritual spell. One final enigmatic arch is composed of living wood. It has not been used within the memory of any of the current magi of Durenmar, its original purpose apparently forgotten, although it is believed to be faerie in nature. Some have thought to remove it, but, worried about a possible faerie curse, perhaps, it was considered safest to leave it be.

Voting in the Rhine Tribunal

As in other Tribunals, each Rhine magus owns a single voting sigil, as guaranteed by the Oath of Hermes. Nevertheless, an ancient ruling of the Tribunal (see above) permits magi of senior rank to wield the voting sigils of those magi deemed to have retired. This tradition has since mutated such that these sigils are now formally bestowed by the Tribunal. Upon achieving promotion to the rank of master, a magus is formally entrusted with the sigil of a retired (Twilight) Rhine magus, to wield by proxy. This is typically the sigil of his master (if retired), or otherwise the sigil of a well-respected retired magus of similar House, gild, or outlook is chosen. Archmages are granted a further sigil in the same fashion. For example, Murion, the Prima of Bonisagus, holds the voting sigil of Bonisagus by proxy, in addition to that of Notatus and her own. Archmage Urgan (and his lineage) are entrusted with the sigil of Bjornaer. It is notable, however, that Archmage Vinaria, not Primus Handri, votes with the sigil of Merinita.

Story Seed: The Fall of Fengheld's House

During the night before the start of the Tribunal an almighty crash is heard and magi rush from their beds to discover that the nearly-complete house of Fengheld lies in ruins. The magi of Fengheld are outraged and accuse Durenmar of sabotage, but the members of Durenmar strongly protest their innocence. Heated words are exchanged and the Tribunal threatens to descend into anarchy. Meanwhile, one of the player characters witnesses a shadowy figure hurrying away from the wreckage ... Who could benefit by sowing the seeds of enmity between the Tribunal's two most powerful covenants? If the player magi can solve this mystery, they may gain considerable respect for restoring peace to the Tribunal. Alternatively, if the player covenant is an enemy of Fengheld, the blame may fall on their shoulders.

Many Quaesitors and liberal-minded journeymen frown on this practice, arguing that it subverts the original intent of the Oath for each magus to possess only one vote. Legally speaking, however, the retired magi in question are interpreted to be casting their own votes, albeit through a proxy. To demonstrate adherence to the spirit of the Oath, masters and archmagi are expected to cast these proxy votes with wisdom, according to the (believed) wishes of the retired magus. Altruistic masters and archmagi have therefore been known on occasion to cast their additional votes against their own. These votes are always cast in the name of the retired magus, who is spoken of in the present tense. Thus, the most famous and well-respected Rhine magi of the past have achieved a kind of immortality, voting at each Tribunal in perpetuity. Senior magi strive to be entrusted with the most famous voting sigils, to which the greatest prestige is attached. Especially well-regarded masters and archmagi may even grow to be regarded as the rightful inheritor or even the living embodiment of the retired magus whose sigil they wield.

As a result of this tradition, the ancient covenants, who have a greater preponderance of masters, have a much greater political presence in the Tribunal. When a journeyman achieves the rank of master, he will likely receive several offers to join covenants at which he has stayed,



The secret agenda of Oculus Septentrionalis

The founding of Oculus Septentrionalis (see Chapter 7: The Lowlands) was engineered by the Ash Gild, with support from the Oak Gild. In the event of the Order moving in force against the Order of Odin, the covenant would be expected to act as the staging point for the main attack. It would be expected to have magic ships on hand, mundane supplies readily available, and be able to recruit (either directly or through more subtle means) a sizeable mundane force, if called for. Although the choice of site in Lübeck was seriously questioned, it was reasoned that it does have one major advantage — it would be very hard for the Scandinavian wizards to attack, unless they sack the entire city.

However, Oculus Septentrionalis soon became subverted by the Apple Gild, much to the anger of leading Ash magi. Nevertheless, more moderate Oak magi secretly concede that Oculus Septentrionalis still performs a useful function, by indirectly hindering the pagan power base of the wizards. Normally, the Order would be rather fearful of mundane and Christian expansion. However, in the sparsely populated Baltic region, such expansion serves it rather well — there is enough space that this should not hamper potential covenants; indeed, covenants require a certain level of mundane trade and civilization in order to prosper. Ideally, the growth of Christianity and trade in the region, as seemingly supported by Oculus Septentrionalis, would hurt the Norse wizards enough so that a direct war would be unnecessary. However, the Hawthorn Gild vigorously opposes this unspoken agenda.

because of the increased voting power that he now possesses. This system also prevents young magi from having a large effect on the decisions of the Tribunal, and encourages them to move elsewhere, rather than founding new Rhine covenants.

At each meeting of the Rhine Tribunal, the first order of business is the introduction of all magi who have passed their Gauntlets since the last Tribunal. Immediately following this is a rite which ceremoniously confers the additional voting sigils by proxy to all new masters and archmagi. These three processes seem quaint and overly formal to outsiders, with speeches filled with hyperbole and ancient ceremonial dress, but the Rhine magi treat it with deadly seriousness.

The Praeco of the Rhine Tribunal

In the Order's early days, when there was only one Tribunal, Bonisagus himself acted as the Praeco. He was simultaneously the oldest magus present, and also the *primus inter pares* of the Order. However, he was but one person, and when the Order became of sufficient size and geographic spread to warrant multiple Tribunal meetings, the other Tribunals followed the pattern of the First Tribunal, reasoning that the oldest magus in the region will have the most wisdom, and be best suited to be Praeco.

However, upon the passing (retirement) of Bonisagus, the Rhine Tribunal took a different tack. They saw Bonisagus' successor as the most worthy leader of the Tribunal, and so when Notatus (the first Hermetic apprentice of Bonisagus) was chosen as the Primus of House Bonisagus, he also became the Praeco of the Rhine Tribunal. Due to the preponderance of followers of Bonisagus in the Rhine Tribunal in the early decades of the Order, this tradition has continued. The Praeco of the Rhine Tribunal is therefore not its oldest magus, as with the other twelve Tribunals, but instead is always the Primus of House Bonisagus, who wields Bonisagus's voting sigil by proxy.

The Guilds of the Rhine Tribunal

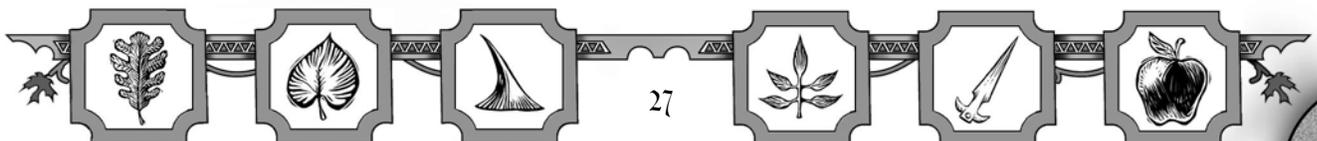
The magi of the First Tribunal are formally divided into factions, called guilds, describing political points of view that transcend House or covenant boundaries. The importance of these guilds to the political life of the Order in the Rhine Tribunal is such that individual covenants rarely have a single political agenda, and if they do, this is because of the dominance

A Change of Praeco?

Not everyone is satisfied that the Praeco is always the Primus of Bonisagus, since it is felt by some members of the Rhine that Durenmar has too great an influence over the Tribunal's decisions. In the past, the traditionalist faction dominated by House Bonisagus has been too strong to permit a change to this tradition, but recently the hold of the Oak Gild has been slipping. In particular, the covenant of Fengheld, over the last few Tribunal meetings, has been sounding out opinions regarding the fairness of this convention, suggesting that the Rhine Tribunal should reform to match the system used by the rest of the Order. The more cynical magi suggest the reason for this is that Eule of Fengheld is an excellent candidate for the Praeco, as she is likely to be the oldest maga in the Rhine. However, there are two other candidates — Caecilius of Durenmar and Shadrith of Dankmar — who may well be older, although the records are in doubt. Fengheld is likely to propose, at the next Tribunal, an investigation into the Rhine's oldest magus, as a first move to break Durenmar's stranglehold.

of a single gild among its members. When they occur, covenant issues at Tribunal are short-term tactical issues, whereas the guilds monopolize the long-term strategy. Unfortunately, six guilds with differing or opposing agendas explains why little gets changed at Tribunals, and why a general air of apathy and resignation infects many of the younger magi of the Rhine.

Each gild broadly corresponds to a single, long-standing agenda. They are organizations to further a political cause, and have no magical function. However, some guilds (the older ones particularly) might have unique ceremonies that relate to that gild only; but these have a symbolic rather than ritual purpose. Belonging to a gild involves a commitment to the agenda that the gild stands for, and a magus is expected to place his vote with his faction when requested to do so. Nevertheless, the Oath of Hermes forbids any mechanism to coerce a magus to vote in a particular way, so dissension cannot be punished; but the rebel should expect to be victimized — even ostracized — by the members of his gild. In an extreme case, a gild may expel one of its members, who



will acquire the (Gild) Enmity Flaw, although this is rare. Leaving a gild is a risky business, as this is seen as displaying a radical shift in political stance, and many magi will not trust a magus who has turned his back on his gild. Membership in a gild is open — there is no approval process to join, as most factions are only too willing to recruit new members. Membership is also public, although one's political affiliation may not be widely known, it cannot be kept a secret. Gild membership is not compulsory, although the great majority of Rhine magi choose to join a gild. Those that do not do so within seven years of their Gauntlet or their arrival in the Tribunal generally acquire a reputation as a loner. These few magi either believe strongly in the principle of their political independence, have no interest in politics, or simply do not care.

There are benefits to membership in a gild. All inexperienced recruits to a gild will receive tuition under one of its senior members, usually at the covenant of Durenmar. Characters who opt to take this training before their Gauntlet get the benefit of the (Gild) Trained Virtue. While a magus remains an upstanding member of his gild, he may make reasonable requests for assistance from his colleagues, and expect that they will be honored, on the understanding that a similar request may be levied on him in the future. Members of a gild expect to have reasonable access to the leader of their faction, and the leader is expected to support his members politically. Finally, gilds serve a limited function as pacts of mutual protection. All gilds forbid Wizard War among their members, and if a magus of another gild declares a Wizard War on one of their members, he may typically expect that a champion of the gild will retaliate in kind. For this reason, Wizard Wars are relatively rare in the Rhine Tribunal, except on magi who do not belong to a gild and therefore lack Hermetic allies.

There are currently six gilds, although there is no mechanism that regulates the number, other than the fact that a magus may only belong to a single gild. According to tradition, all the gilds are named after trees, and in the German language rather than in Latin (though in this book we will use English translations for simplicity). The reasons behind the names of these gilds can be seen in the mythical qualities attributed to the trees in question (see Chapter 4: The Forest, The Trees of Germany).

A quarter of the Tribunal's magi are members of the Oak Gild, and nearly a

fifth are members of the Linden Gild. Less than a tenth belong to no gild at all. The remaining magi are divided between the other four gilds, with the Hawthorn Gild being the smallest and the Apple Gild the third largest. However, the exact proportion of magi who belong to the gilds may be chosen as best suits your saga. You may also decide to adjust the relative strengths of the gilds as described below, in order to adjust the political balance of the Tribunal. A Tribunal dominated by the Ash Gild, or the Elder Gild, rather than the Oak Gild, will have dramatically different politics. You may even want to add to or replace some of these gilds with others of your own devising.

The Eichengilde (Oak Gild)



This is the largest, broadest, and oldest faction in the Tribunal. The stated agenda of the gild is to restore the Rhine Tribunal (and thereby the Order of Hermes) to its former glory, to respect the traditions and wisdom of the Founders, to encourage magi to respect their elders and work to leave a lasting legacy, and to shun the so-called wisdom from outside the Order of Hermes. However, because of its broad agenda, the gild is somewhat ineffective, as they have no real or co-ordinated strategy to achieve their goals. In practice, its main function is to ensure that the status quo of the Tribunal is maintained by tying up a large proportion of the votes that might promote change. The Eichengilde is lead by Murion, Prima of Bonisagus, and is made up of magi who are mostly older or more reserved; while all Houses are represented, this gild particularly attracts followers of Bonisagus, Guernicus, and Tremere.

The Weissdornkilde (Hawthorn Gild)



This is one of the oldest gilds, along with the Ash Gild and the Oak Gild. Its agenda is to protect the wild places and creatures from the mundanes, to

avoid all unnecessary contact with mundanes, to punish those who intrude into the wildernesses, and to promote understanding between magi and beasts. They are nowadays the smallest gild, with a waning influence that is often opposed by the Elder Gild, which has a similar interest but with a different focus, thus diluting their combined power. Urgen of Crintera is the leader of this gild, and it is populated primarily by followers of Bjornaer, especially those with a Wilderist philosophy.

The Eschengilde (Ash Gild)

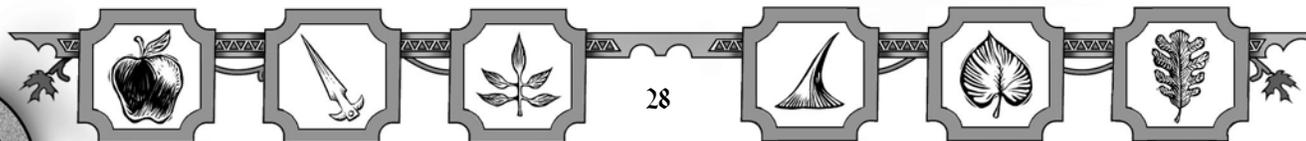


This gild, lead by Philippus Niger of Durenmar, believes that magi should seek dominion over their lands, that the Order of Hermes should be more forthright in its dealings with mundanes, that magi should not need to hide in the wildernesses, and that the Order of Odin should be combated and destroyed. This last item is not publicly admitted to, but is the prime focus of most of the gild's older members. The Eschengilde attracts aggressive magi, especially from Houses Flambeau, Tremere, and Tytalus, and while being magically powerful, is not large enough to force their agenda, which skirts on the very edge of the Code of Hermes.

The Holunderkilde (Elder Gild)



This gild was once part of the Hawthorn Gild, but split from them soon after the early division in House Merinita and pursued its fae-focused agenda. While they still believe in the sanctity of the wilderness, they concentrate solely on the preservation of the fae and promoting friendly contact between magi and faeries. Unsurprisingly, this faction is primarily made up of the followers of Merinita, and virtually all the members of the covenants of Irencillia and Dankmar are members. A few followers of Bjornaer with extremely



strong Harmonist views are members of this gild, to the derision of their Housemates. Iacob of Irencillia is the leader of this gild, and under his leadership it has been secretly promoting a religion conceived to return power back to the fae, under the guidance of members of the Order (see Chapter 10: Bohemia, Irencillia).

The Lindengilde (Linden Gild)



Arising from the aftermath of the Schism War and founded mostly by former magi of Fengheld, the purpose of this gild is to increase co-operation and trust between magi and covenants to the benefit of all, to resolve both internal and external conflicts peacefully, and to end the apathy and divisions in the Tribunal. This is an altruistic and well-regarded gild, although weak; thus it is the typical go-between faction. They are often overlooked, but without their quiet diplomacy, the Tribunal would likely have fractured long ago. The gild is currently lead by Occultes of Durenmar, and consists of a mixed assortment of followers of Mercere, Jerbiton, Verditius, Tremere, and Bonisagus (particularly those of Trianoma's lineage).

The Apfelgilde (Apple Gild)



This gild believes that magi should seek peaceful and friendly relations with mundanes, and that mages should work towards acceptance in the mundane world, so that they no longer need to hide. It also believes that magi should work to improve the lot of mundanes through teaching and trade as well as magic, and that magi should be humble before the Lord. This is the most recent faction and the weakest, although with substantial support from the covenants of Oculus Septentrionalis, Triamore, and Fengheld, it is beginning to make its presence known in the Tribunal. It is lead by a triumvirate of Henri de

Tours of Oculus Septentrionalis, Wilhelm Weiss of Fengheld, and Daria la Gris of Triamore.

Tribunal Politics

The clearest division among magi here is between those close to the wilderness, and those who prefer the company of the mundanes. The Apple Gild is the embodiment of the latter camp — they are heavily involved in mundane affairs, and have little to no interest in semi-mystical mumblings about “primeval power.” At the other end of the spectrum are the Hawthorn and Elder Gilds. These two factions are most keen on absolute isolation from the mundane world, but they cannot decide upon the best way to do this, and have fought constantly over the issue. The traditionalist Oak Gild and the peace-striving Linden Gild straddle the two. The Lindens, as the self-appointed preservers of harmony, strike a balance between the mundanity and the wilderness, whilst ensuring that the others neutralize each other, to prevent domination of the Tribunal. The Oak Gild is desperately trying to prevent the eroding of the Tribunal's ancient traditions, but they only seem to achieve stagnation by preventing change. Finally, the Ash Gild will ingratiate itself with any faction that will support their agenda of the aggrandizing of magi and the destroying of the Order's enemies.

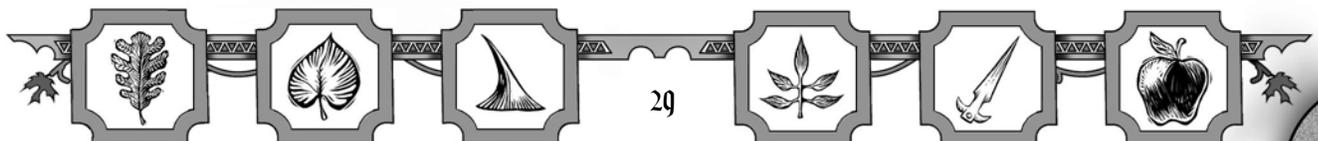
The conservative Oak Gild can often expect support from the Ash or Hawthorn Gilds, but rarely both at once, except over issues promoting the Apple agenda, when these three will unite to oppose them. This is the only common interest between the Hawthorn Gild and the Ash Gild; the latter being neutral to all other gilds. The Hawthorn Gild, on the other hand, is diametrically opposed to the agenda of the Elder Gild, which is the cause of much bad blood between the followers of Bjornaer and Merinita (who dominate these two factions respectively). With regards to the agenda of the Elder Gild, none of the other factions really concern themselves with them. The Linden Gild often supports the peaceful agenda of the Apple Gild, especially against the combined might of the latter's three enemies, but the Linden Gild manages to remain neutral to all other factions at the same time; a testament to their powers of diplomacy.

The Lotharingian Tribunal

Many members of the Apple Gild are currently pushing a controversial issue in secret: together with covenants in Normandy they wish to form a separate Tribunal, tentatively called the Lotharingian Tribunal, which would cover the Low Countries in the north and west of the Rhine Tribunal. Oculus Septentrionalis, Triamore, and about half the magi of Fengheld are currently committed to the notion, along with two covenants of the Normandy Tribunal. The magi of Waddenzee, despite being opposed to most of the plans of the Apple Gild, are also keen to escape the stifling yoke of the Rhine Tribunal. This complement of covenants more than meets the Order's requirement for a legal Tribunal, and the gild plans to propose the motion at the Grand Tribunal of 1228. This new Tribunal would allow more freedom in dealing with mundanes, seeking friendly relations with Scandinavian wizards, and discarding many of the ancient Rhine traditions.

BEYOND THE RHINE TRIBUNAL

The Rhine Tribunal is no longer a dominant, or even a leading force in the Order of Hermes, but is well-respected due to its ancient pedigree. Also, the sheer size of the Tribunal, plus the fact that it is host to the Grand Tribunal, means that it can not be ignored. The historical tension with the Novgorod Tribunal still continues, except among Bjornaer magi. Relations with the covenants of the Greater Alps, on the other hand, are broadly favorable, with a significant amount of mutual trade and contact. Alpine magi, however, consider their grand Roman traditions and covenants to be superior to those of the Rhine. For their part, Rhine magi may either regard the archaic majesty of the Alps either with wistful admiration or with amused derision, for a traditional Bonisagus or a down-to-earth Bjornaer, respectively. The nearby Tremere-dominated Transylvanian Tribunal has long striven to exert its influence over the Rhine covenants, with limited success thus far. The Rhine Tribunal (except for its Tremere magi) have little interest or influence in Transylvania.



Chapter Four

The Forest

The breadth of this Hercynian forest ... is to a quick traveler, a journey of nine days ... nor is there any person belonging to this part of Germany who says that he either has gone to the extremity of that forest, though he had advanced a journey of sixty days, or has heard in what place it begins. It is certain that many kinds of wild beast are produced in it which have not been seen in other parts ...

— Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*

In the northern region is the vast expanse of the Hercynian oak forest, untouched by the ages and coeval with the world, which surpasses all marvels by its almost immortal destiny.

— Pliny, *Natural History*

The Forest

When the Romans first came across the Alps, they discovered a huge swath of forest, named the Hercynian Forest, only occasionally broken by moors and bogs.

A Walk Through a Magical Forest

A magical forest, like most in Germany, is a reflection of the Ideal Forest residing in the Magic realm. The trees and other plants are perfect reflections of their kind, and the animals, while remaining unable to speak, are often more intelligent than their mundane counterparts. Both the plants and animals of a magical forest may have minor magical properties, and more substantial magical denizens may be present. Such creatures often set the atmosphere of the forest; one inhabited by a griffin is wild and untamed, whereas a forest full of ghosts might fill mortals with a sense of loss.

This was like nothing they had ever seen before, and, as fear breeds hatred, they set about trying to civilize it. They encountered tribes of men who dwelt within the Forest, yet even they were not masters of it; instead they lived at the grudging consent of the untamed wilderness, making no permanent mark. The Cult of Mercury became aware of the great supernatural power of this forest, and established a temple at the later site of Durenmar, where they endeavored to control it. However, their attempts to penetrate this forest were met with insurmountable resistance, and they worried about the consequences should such power ever be turned upon them. Under the guidance of the Mercurians, the Roman legions built the *limes* (see Chapter 2: History, Germania Magna), a line of defensive forts reinforced by magic, delineating the northern extent of their empire. Roads, built with Roman engineering, transmitted the defensive magics from fort to fort, redoubling their ability to resist the German hordes.

Over the centuries since, and thanks to the foundation given them by the Romans, man has been able to penetrate its depths. Using the bridgeheads forged by the Cult of Mercury, and the roads built with their assistance, towns have sprung up, enlarged into cities, been linked by further roads. However, it was not until the missionary St. Boniface miraculously felled the Donar Oak (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Thuringia) at the Forest's heart in the 8th century that the primeval forest was subdued and fragmented into smaller, less-powerful pieces. Yet the Forest has still resisted, seemingly with a will. Charlemagne's reign saw the establishment of many of the cities of Germany and its network of roads, but since then, fewer settlements have been established. Despite the efforts of Germany's rulers, the major forests are not substantially smaller now than they were centuries ago. Mankind has managed to

nibble away at the edges of these forests, no more.

The reason for this resistance is due to the forces which the Roman magicians discovered, and feared; a vastly powerful spirit that infused the primeval forest. This spirit was a force for growth and expansion that equaled that of the Romans, and the efforts begun by the Cult of Mercury were to lead to the fragmentation of that one spirit into many (called *genii loci*), each embodying one of the remaining forests. Each of these spirits has retained a substantial portion of power, but each has become more limited in scope. Each guided and protected by its *genius loci*, the forests have remained forces to be reckoned with in Germany.

The Forest Spirits

The spirit of the Hercynian Forest drew its power from the Magic realm. It was a reflection of the ideal forest, perfect in every respect; some magi have even suggested that it was the Garden of Eden, the first emanation from the Divine Forest in Heaven. However, under the efforts firstly of the magical rituals of the Cult of Mercury and then, centuries later, the miracle of Saint Boniface, this primal spirit became fragmented into many magical spirits, each resident in a portion of the now-divided Hercynian Forest. Four possible fates awaited each of these spirits:

SURVIVAL

The *genius loci* of the forest is strong enough to hold its own against the encroachment of the mundanes and the Dominion. These spirits give rise to magical forests, such as the Teutoburger Forest (Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Saxony), the Drudenbaum (Chapter 8: Central Germany, Franconia), and the

Romowe Oak (Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Pomerania).

DISSOLUTION

The genius locus is too small to maintain its control over the forest, or else it neighbors on more powerful auras that sap its strength until nothing remains. These spirits leave behind a mundane forest. This explains why, for example, the Hertogenwald south of Aachen has no

resident spirit or aura. Lower Lorraine is a populated farming area, and the strong Divine aura radiating from the cathedral at Aachen has sapped the strength of the spirit that once lived here.

REPLACEMENT

The genius locus has dwindled as above, and has been replaced by another supernatural being. This most commonly gives rise to faerie forests, but can also

A Walk Through a Faerie Forest

A faerie forest may be a place of whimsy, but equally may be a place to be dreaded. Infused with the imaginations and fears of humankind, faerie forests are perhaps best described as having Personality Traits which infuse every aspect of the forest. The plants and animals of a faerie forest may be faeries themselves, giving them the power of speech. Most major faerie forests will have a ruler, who embodies the dominant emotions of the place.

result in divine or infernal forests. This process gave rise to the Black Forest (Chapter 6: The Black Forest), the Ash of Nortorf (Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Holstein), and the Donar Oak (Chapter 8: Central Germany, Thuringia). Alliance

The genius locus enters a pact with another supernatural being — most commonly a faerie — or else it possesses such a being. The combined might of the two supernatural entities is then enough to hold back the threat of dissolution. This generally leads to a forest that is predominantly from one realm, but occasionally has patches of auras from another realm. The Four Seasonal Courts presented in this chapter are an example of this.

General Powers

Each forest has a Might score, which reflects its size and measure of primeval power. The Might score varies with the size and age of the woodland, but all forests have a Might of at least 30 — any

A Walk Through a Divine Forest

A forest under the Dominion of God is a safe haven from the troubles of the world, although this is not necessarily immediately obvious. Poisonous plants do not thrive in such forests, and many plants bear nutritious fruit, even out of season. The animal life is often allegorical in nature, representing key virtues to those who travel through, and there is an absence of aggressive animals — unless this sanctuary of peace is threatened.



A Walk Through an Infernal Forest

Those rare infernal forests are horrible places. The trees are often twisted into hideous shapes, and the flora is universally poisonous. Vermin and venomous creatures such as toads and snakes lurk under every log and stone, and there is an abundance of predators. Plants and animals may exist that are not found anywhere else, cruel mockeries of God's Creation. Infernal forests often radiate a feeling of brooding menace, more hateful than even the darkest of faerie forests.

lower and the power of the Dominion at its edges starts to sap the Might of the spirit until it is all gone. The Might of a forest spirit is used to resist any magical effects that are used to harm the forest or its denizens. This power is not always in operation; it does not mean that every animal and plant in the forest has a magic resistance equal to the spirit's Might. However, any magic that is used to do whole-scale or repeated damage to any aspect of the forest is likely to draw the attention (and thus the protection) of the spirit.

All forest spirits have the following powers.

Presence (0 points): The spirit is aware of everything that happens within its bounds. In essence, the spirit is the forest, so it is present simultaneously everywhere within the forest's boundaries. The presence of the spirit is stronger in some areas than others; at these locations an aura will spring up, of a strength appropriate to the Might of the spirit. The larger the Might of the spirit, the stronger the aura, or the larger its area of effect.

Manifestation (5 points minimum, Init +1, Animal or Herbam, as appropriate): The spirit can manifest its consciousness amongst animals of the forest, temporarily granting them a Might score and thus controlling their actions. For a cost of 5 points of Might, a single Size 0 creature (or an equivalent mass of smaller creatures) can be controlled. For each 5 additional Might points, ten more creatures of that size may be controlled. By manifesting its consciousness in plants of the forest, the spirit can make them grow with unnatural speed: a patch of weeds can spring up overnight; dense undergrowth will form in a week; a tree can grow from a seeding in a month. A base plant that is

a pace in diameter (or its equivalent mass) costs 5 Might, and each ten-fold increase in mass costs another 5 points. If the spirit divides up all of its Might in this fashion, without leaving any points that are not manifested, then the spirit's Presence power is temporarily withdrawn (although any auras remain unless the spirit's power is withdrawn for more than a season). Humans and other sentient beings cannot be controlled by this power; instead, use the Possession power (see below).

Produce Vis (1 point per pawn): All forests inhabited by a spirit produce a yearly harvest of vis, of a number of pawns up to the Might score. This vis usually comes in a variety of different sources; vegetative (such as bark, fruit, seeds, mushrooms, or leaves), animal (such as hides, bone, teeth, or feces), or is found in the forest's earth or water. Most magi are usually only able to discover or harvest a small fraction of the available vis, if any at all.

Specific Powers

Each forest has a number of other powers, some examples of which are listed below. The storyguide is encouraged to come up with unique powers for any forests he or she creates. In the case of forests with a Faerie Might, these powers are often similar or identical to the powers of the faerie inhabitants of the forest. Typical initiative scores have been given for each power, but some spirits may be faster or slower. A Hermetic Form has been included where there is a possibility of resisting the effect. These powers typically cause Warping (as per the rules in ArM5, page 167) when they are applied directly to a character.

Control Weather (10 points, Init 0, Auram): The forest spirit may alter the weather over its domain to a significant extent, but it must remain somewhat appropriate to the current season, as all forests remain beholden to the passing of the seasons.

Grant Flaw (5 points for Minor Flaw, 10 points for Major Flaw, Init 0, Vim): The spirit may lay a specific Flaw upon those who have angered it. Each spirit may possess more than one power of this type, each bestowing a different Flaw. In most cases, the effects of the Flaws remain even if the victim escapes the spirit's power, but they gradually fade over a matter of years, as long as the victim stays away from the center of the spirit's power.

Grant Victory (variable cost, Init +3, Corpus): Similar to the Manifestation power, the spirit can place a portion of its power into humans, thus granting them prowess in combat. For each Might point invested, ten men can be given a +1 to all combat rolls; or one man can be given a +3 to Soak. Variations of this power grant +1 to all rolls in a specific situation, or +3 to a specific roll. Thus ten men could be given +1 to all woodcraft rolls, or one man could gain +3 to his Hunt Ability. Might points spent on this power are recovered when its effects are withdrawn.

Grant Virtue (5 points for Minor Virtue, 10 points for Major Virtue, Init 0, Vim): The spirit may bestow a specific Virtue upon those who it favors. Each spirit can possess more than one power of this type, each bestowing a different Virtue. In most cases, the effects of the Virtue fade if the possessor spends too long away from the source of the spirit's power.

Guide (2 points, Init 0, Mentem): The forest spirit is able to subtly guide visitors in a desired direction, or to a desired location. The visitors may be able to follow certain mystical signs, or instead simply find a new track leading the way, or follow one of the forest creatures, although they are not compelled to follow these hints.

Healing (4 points, Init -1, Corpus): The spirit can heal a human or animal: the worst of their wounds improves by one level. Animals that are indigenous to the forest can be healed completely. The healing can be accomplished when the recipient performs a specific action, such as drinking from a forest spring, using harvested forest herbs, or simply spending a night in the forest.

Possession (5 points, Init +2, Mentem): To possess a human (or other sentient being such as a faerie), the spirit detaches a portion of its Might. If the target's resistance is overcome by this power, the victim is possessed by a fragment of the spirit's consciousness and falls under its direct control. Any number of points from the spirit's remaining Might Pool may be placed into the possessed creature; these points will not be regenerated until the possession is ended. The spirit may spend points from the Might Pool it has placed in its victim to fuel any of its usual powers while it remains within its domain; but should it leave its own forest, it must rely solely upon whatever abilities the possessed victim has at his or her disposal. Any attempt to force the possessed person to act wholly contrary to his nature, or to use any of his or her own



The Trees of Germany

Each of the types of trees that can be found in Germany were held by the ancient tribes to have a special significance, often associated with a specific God. "By Oak, Ash, and Thorn" is a common oath which has endured — these three were the most important trees. Each type of wood has one or more Shape and Material Bonuses (see **Ars Magica** 5th Edition, page 110), corresponding to the properties listed below. If an entire living tree is enchanted, any such bonuses are tripled. (It is very rare, but not unheard of, for a Hermetic magus to enchant a living tree as a magic item.)

The Alder is an ancient royal tree. Used to make foundations because of its water-resistant wood, its bark provides a Royal red dye. +2 *royalty*, +1 *resist decay*

The Apple is famed for its long life, and the restorative properties of apples. It is also the tree of mankind. +1 *longevity*, +1 *Corpus*

The Ash is traditionally used to make spears and arrow shafts. It was sacred to the war-god Woden, and associated with death and evil. +2 *harm people*

The Aspen is a tree of healing, particularly for ague, but rods of aspen are also used for measuring a corpse in preparation for making its coffin. +5 *cure fever*, +2 *cure disease*

The Beech is a tree of learning, as beech tablets were used in antiquity as writing tablets. +3 *knowledge*

The Birch is the first tree to recolonize open spaces in the forest, and thus is a symbol of rebirth. +3 *childbirth*, +1 *Creo*

The Elder has long been associated with magic and witchcraft. +4 *malicious magic*, +1 *Vim*

The Elm is also a tree of death, long used for the manufacture of coffins. +2 *death and decay*

The Fir is associated with darkness and evil spirits. +3 *darkness*, +1 *malicious faeries*

The Hawthorn, with its thorns, is a tree of protection and warding. +3 *wards*

The Hazel is associated with divination, wisdom, and judgement. +3 *divination*, +1 *good judgement*

The Holly is the winter king, ruler of the dark half of the year. Its prickly leaves are a sign of bad luck, particularly with regards to the causing of wounds. +2 *inflict wounds*, +2 *inflict pain*

The Linden (or Lime) was held by the Slavs to be an exalted tree, associated with Lada, their goddess of love. Germans believe the linden, which is never struck by lightning, to be a lucky tree, and place wayside shrines beneath them. They are also often planted in towns to give their protection, and its wood is used to make shields. +2 *protection against weapons*, +1 *good fortune*

The Oak is the summer king, in opposition to the Holly. It is also associated with the pagan gods of thunder such as Thunor and Jupiter. +7 *protection from storms*

The Pine is the opposite of its brother, the Fir, and is associated with light and illumination, due to the whitish color of its bark. +3 *light*, +1 *friendly faeries*

The Rowan, like the Ash, is a magical tree, but the rowan is associated with the benign side of the craft, particularly protection from malicious spells. +4 *protection against malicious magic*, +1 *Vim*

The Willow, with its ability to regrow from the smallest twig, is a powerful symbol of healing and rejuvenation. +4 *restore limb*, +1 *cure wounds*

The Yew, with its association with graveyards, is the tree of the dead. Its berries were eaten by the ancients to receive mystical visions. +2 *corpses*, +2 *visions*

Conventional statistics are not relevant for forest spirits; instead they are given a Might Score, Personality Traits, and a list of Special Powers only. It is usually impossible to fight these spirits in a conventional way, as they are manifested in the entire forest — in its plants, its animals, even in the rocks and soil, and the water that flows through it. Presented in this chapter are four example spirits that are linked closely with one another; and the following chapters contain many examples of forest spirits that are tied to specific locations. There may be many more of these *genii loci*, both powerful and weak, in the other forests of the Rhine Tribunal, and further afield.

magical powers, requires that the spirit spends points from the Might Pool it has placed within the receptacle. A supernatural power requires 1 Might point per magnitude to produce, in addition to the Might cost (if any) to the possessed. A questionable action requires the spirit to exceed the possessed being's Personality Trait roll on a stress die + Might points spent. The storyguide may give a modifier to the Personality Trait roll based on the nature of the command. Note that use of a supernatural power might also be contrary to the victim's nature; in which case both costs must be met. Once the Might Pool placed into the victim reaches zero, the possession ends. Note that a being can be possessed with as little as 1 Might point, as long as the spirit does not wish to do too much as a host.

Oath-Swearing (5 or 10 points, Init +0, Vim): The spirit can enforce the power of a solemnly-sworn oath between two or more parties. All parties must agree to the oath of their own free will. If one of the participants in the oath tries to act in direct contravention of it, they will immediately become aware of this. If they carry on regardless, they are then struck with a Flaw (either Minor or Major, depending on the Might cost paid by the spirit). This Flaw can be removed by re-swearing the oath in front of the original participants. This power persists until there is no further record of the oath, either in the memories of the participants or in written form. New participants may be added to the oath by swearing to it in the presence of the spirit, and if it pays the original Might cost again.

Regio (10 points per level, Init 0): A regio may exist at a part of the forest where an aura is present. The spirit controls access to the different levels of the regio, and at higher levels may be contacted more directly, or more obviously present. In some cases, the regio is only accessible in certain seasons. The Might point expenditure is permanent, for so long as the regio is maintained. For example, a regio with levels having auras of 5 and 7 would require the commitment of 20 Might points.

Shroud (6 points, Init 0, Mentem): The forest spirit is able to obstruct intruders, to prevent them reaching a certain area of the forest. They may find their way blocked by impenetrable undergrowth, difficult terrain, or a wild animal, and instead choose a more favorable route that leads them the wrong way. This pro-



The Passage of the Seasons

December: King Holly (Might Pool 50) slays King Oak (Might Pool 20); the latter is reborn in the Oak Forest. The Alder Prince and Willow Maiden are equally matched in power (Might Pool 35), and his attempts to woo her are failing. Faerie auras: Holly Forest 3, Alder Forest 1, Oak Forest 0, Willow Forest 1.

January: the Willow Maiden (Might Pool 30) is starting to fall for the quiet charms of the Alder Prince (Might Pool 40).

March: the Alder Prince (Might Pool 50) heals the malice of the Willow Maiden's heart with his love, she vanishes back to the Willow Forest. The Kings of Summer and Winter are locked in an impasse; neither can defeat the other (Might Pool 35). Faerie auras: Holly Forest 1, Alder Forest 3, Oak Forest 1, Willow Forest 0.

April: King Oak (Might Pool 40) is beginning to win more battles than King Holly (Might Pool 30).

June: King Oak (Might Pool 50), having captured King Holly (Might Pool 20), imprisons him in the heart of his domain in the Holly Forest. The machinations of the Willow Maiden have no effect on the stoic Alder Prince (both have 35 Might Pool). Faerie auras: Holly Forest 0, Alder Forest 1, Oak Forest 3, Willow Forest 1.

July: The web of enchantment spun by the Willow Maiden (Might Pool 40) is beginning to tighten around the Alder Prince (Might Pool 30); he cannot resist her advances for long.

September: the Willow Maiden (Might Pool 50) entraps the Alder Prince (Might Pool 20) in marriage, then drowns him in her forest river. His spirit is reborn in the Alder Forest. The battles between King Holly and King Oak are inconclusive (both have 35 Might Pool). Faerie auras: Holly Forest 1, Alder Forest 0, Oak Forest 1, Willow Forest 3.

October: King Oak (Might Pool 30) is having to dangerously overstretch his resources to prevent his defeat by his opponent (Might Pool 40).

vides an effect similar to the spell *The Shrouded Glen*.

Stasis (15 points, Init 0, Vim): A certain inner part of the forest may become so remote and closed off from the outside world that the passage of time itself is altered. Any mortals resident here do not age (no Aging points are gained) for so long as they remain. However, their perception of the passing years and memories of their prior life gradually become hazy, and they will become Warped after decades or more in the forest. This might allow for magi or others of legend in centuries past to still endure, hidden deeply in a powerful forest. A prerequisite for this rare power is the presence of a regio with a high-level aura. A slightly more common, lesser variant is the Grant Virtue (Unaging) power.

The Courts of the Seasons

Faerie Might: 20-50, depending on the time of year

Personality Traits: (Alder Prince) Compassionate +3, Secretive +2; (King Oak) Regal +3, Generous +2; (Willow Maiden) Manipulative +3, Uncaring +2; (King Holly) Tyrannical +3, Cold-hearted +2

Special Powers: (Alder Prince): Shroud, Grant Virtue (Rapid Convalescence); (King Oak): Guide, Grant Virtue (Inspirational); (Willow Maiden): Guide, Grant Flaw (Weak-Willed); (King Holly): Shroud, Grant Flaw (Depressed); (All) Control Weather, Regio. All the faerie rulers should also be given appropriate faerie powers.

There are four faerie woodlands that are intrinsically linked to the passage of the seasons. They should be located by the storyguide to suit the needs of the saga, but it is suggested that they be placed near (or even surrounding) the player covenant. The forests should be equally spaced from one another in a ring, and for convenience, it is assumed that they are at the cardinal points of the compass. Likewise, the names used for these forests are just names of convenience, and are unlikely to be the real names of these forests.

Magi who know of these four forests hypothesize that there may have once been one forest spirit, perhaps as powerful as that of the Black Forest, which somehow became splintered into four personalities. None of these spirit-fragments were

strong enough to survive on their own, so each entered into an alliance with a faerie lord. Because the four forests were once one, they are bound together in a yearly drama, where each spirit tries to become dominant over the others.

In the north, King Holly holds sway over his forest from a grove of holly trees. Some have linked him to the leader of the Wild Hunt (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains), but if they are the same individual, he has two very different forms. The northern forest spirit was forced to possess a faerie of winter, who has constantly rebelled against his control ever since. King Holly, therefore, rules his forest with an iron will; those within the bounds of his forest must obey the very letter of his detailed and complex law, or suffer the severe consequences. His court consists of faeries of ice, frost, and snow.

The Alder Prince rules a forest to the west. He and his subjects are secretive, preferring to manipulate others without them realizing even that there are faeries in the forest. Strongest in the spring, the hidden court of this red-hued prince is to be found in a deep-shrouded vale, where one may be lulled by its peace and serenity. The western forest spirit tried to enter an alliance with the faerie who was to become the Alder Prince, but his prevarication nearly resulted in the dissolution of the spirit, so it possessed him instead. This has led to the Alder Prince becoming even more passive; but despite his

Story Seeds: The Courts of the Seasons

There are any number of stories that can develop from the interplay between these four courts. Vis is the most obvious benefit for getting involved with the *genii loci*, and the battles between Summer and Winter are perhaps the simplest; the open aggression between these courts is easy to understand, and it is easy to assist one side over the other. The Spring and Autumn courts are more subtle; the Alder Prince is passive to the extreme, defeating the Willow Maiden by the sheer power of his love, although it is this that dooms him in the end. It is recommended that the rewards from the latter pair of courts should be higher than these from the Summer-Winter battles, to encourage the political over the military.



shyness, he is a benign and kindly faerie, who rules over many *holzfrauen* (see below).

King Oak holds court beneath the boughs of a mighty Oak in the center of a forest to the south. The spirit left in the southern forest made an alliance with King Oak, and it is still possible to find patches of a Magic aura where the spirit's presence still lingers in this predominantly faerie woodland. King Oak is a generous monarch, willing to meet visitors and treat them well, yet he has a touchy honor, is easily offended, and takes peoples' words very literally. A misplaced turn of phrase can easily leave someone bound up in a supernaturally enforced contract. His court is made up of joyful faeries whose whimsical natures frustrates their military-minded king no end.

The Willow Maiden casts her plots from her eastern forest. Her power waxes in Autumn, and while she seems as generous as the Summer King with the bounty of her forest, every gift she gives has a price; one should be wary about accepting anything from her without discovering this price first. Of course, many find this out too late. The eastern fragment of the forest spirit sought an alliance with the Willow Maiden, but came off very much the worse in their pact; she now has almost total control of her woodland. The Willow Maiden is manipulative and politically minded, and obsessed with her rival, the Alder Prince. Her court consists of handsome male courtiers and beautiful enchantresses.

As the seasons change, the Might Pool of the four spirits changes. As the months progress, the various plots and raids by the next season's court gradually steal raw power from the current ruler. Throughout the year they retain a Might Score of 40, used for Magic Resistance and Penetration, but the size of the Might Pool changes along with the aura of their forests. In the month of the equinox or solstice at the height of the court's power, there is an aura of 3 throughout the woodland, and the forest spirit has a Might Pool of 50. Every month following the height of their power, they lose 5 Might points to their opposing court and the aura shrinks in both strength and area. At the opposing time of the year, the aura has all but vanished and the ruler has a Might Pool of only 20. From then on, they gain 5 Might per month until they reach the height of their power again.

Woodland Spirits

German wood-faeries are known as *Waldgeister* (wood-spirits; singular *Waldgeist*) and *Holzfrauen* (wood-wives; singular *Holzfrau*). The *Waldgeister* reside in huge numbers in forests; some are benevolent, others the opposite. The proportions of each often depends upon the general temperament of the spirit of the forest in which they live. The *Waldgeister* have specific names in different parts of Germany, often sharing a name between them — it is not clear whether there is one *Gübich* or many who all share the same name and personality. Thus, *Katzenveit* haunts the forests of the *Fichtelgebirge* (Spruce Mountains). *Gübich* roams the woods of the Harz, and *Rübezahl* haunts the forests of the *Riesengebirge* (Giant Mountains).

Wood-wives are particularly a phenomenon of south Germany, and are less common in the northern half of the kingdom. They are the quarry of the Wild Huntsmen (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains). *Dirne-Weibl* dresses in a red frock carrying a basket of apples. She gives away the apples, which later change into gold if she is treated with courtesy. *Finz-Weibl* wears a wide-brimmed hat, but is very hairy. *Salgfräulein* dresses in white and sits under old larch trees, singing. *Frau Wacholder*, genius of the juniper tree, is invoked to make thieves give up their booty.

The Paths Through the Forest

There is a reason why the Cult of Mercury was so interested in taming the Hercynian Forest. It was the same reason that caused St. Boniface to cut down the Donar Oak; and the same reason that Bonisagus moved to the site of Durenmar to complete his work of Hermetic magic. There is a primal power inherent in the fragments of the Hercynian Forest, a direct link to the Magic realm. To St. Boniface, this was a threat to the Dominion of God on earth. To Bonisagus, it was a wellspring of energy, waiting to

Story Seeds: Waldgeister and Holzfrauen

According to the people of Thuringia, *Pulch* is a *Waldgeist* who haunts the *Kammerforst* and chastises those who steal wood and injure trees. However, *Pulch* is not a faerie, but instead a magus of House Merinita, who skirts pretty close to the edge of Hermetic Law with his actions. Characters may encounter him by accident, or be asked by the *Quaesitores* to find him and answer for his crimes.

Gübich claims to be the king of the dwarves, and he may well be right, but there are many such faeries who make these claims. He is very protective over his pine cones, which often possess magical properties to reward those who please him, and torment those who annoy him.

If the characters have set up their covenant in a wilderness area (particularly in a faerie aura), they may discover that their covenant is the traditional place in which the local *Holzfrau* hides from the Wild Hunt. Every autumn, she will try to enter the covenant to hide, and on stormy nights throughout winter, the Wild Hunt will assault the covenant.

The apples of the *Dirne-Weibl* are *Creo vis*, and highly sought after by magi. However, she is able to withdraw their power if she disapproves of the uses to which they are put. *Woe betide* any magus who uses them to create magical items with offensive powers!

be tapped. There are some members of House Bonisagus who believe that Bonisagus' theory of magic was never finished before he died, which resulted in the Lesser Limits of Hermetic magic. Some still seek to finish the work of the Founder, and they seek it within the forests.

Once a magus realizes the power inherent in the forests, he may decide to pursue that power. This can be extremely dangerous, as Hermetic training does not cover handling such power; it can leave the magus physically and mentally scarred. Furthermore, nothing in the experience of the magus will help him locate the path to this power. With the notable exception of House Bjornaer, and



Holzfrau

Faerie Might: 20

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

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Ways of the Forest

Personality Traits: Kindly +3, Shy +3

Combat:

Dodging: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense 0,
Damage n/a

Soak: 0

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

Abilities: Athletics 2 (escaping pursuers),
Awareness 2 (travelers), Charm 3
(men), Chirurgy 5 (infected
wounds), Faerie Lore 5 (faerie
plants), Magic Lore 4 (magical
herbs), Second Sight 4 (animals),
Stealth 3 (hiding from pursuers)

Powers:

Faerie Nature: As a faerie, the holzfrau does not suffer from Fatigue, nor is she affected by diseases or old age. She can understand any languages, and can be understood by anyone. All faeries also have the Second Sight Virtue, and gain the benefits or penalties of any supernatural aura when using their faerie powers, according to the Realm Interaction table (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 183).

Vulnerability to Iron: Cold-forged iron is painful to a holzfrau, and they will do anything to avoid its touch. It will not actually harm them, however.

Control Plants, 1 point per magnitude, Init +1, Herbam: Wood-wives may cre-



ate any Creo or Rego Herbam effects up to 20th level, at a cost of 1 point per magnitude of the effect. This cost is doubled in the winter.

Fertility, 4 points, Init +1, Herbam: All holzfrauen can create an effect identical to *The Bountiful Feast*, granting fertility and protection to crops. They can also withdraw any protection that they have bestowed, should their generosity be abused.

Healing, 4 points, Init -1, Corpus: With a kiss, a wood-wife can remove pain, cleanse a wound of infection, or grant swift healing. This either cures a light wound caused by disease or gives a +9 to recovery rolls.

Vis: 4 Herbam, in hair

Appearance: The holzfrau always appears as a woman, often (but not always) young and beautiful. She is usually bare-foot, and dressed in peasant clothing. They always have a distinguishing manner of dress, which may be used to identify the type of wood-wife (see main text).

The Holzfrau is a spirit of vegetation, and is usually beneficial to mankind. She will simply flee from those who threaten her, but those who treat her kindly may receive kindness in return. Different wood-wives are associated with different plants — somewhat like dryads — and may have powers that relate to the mythical properties of the plant that they tend. Walpurga (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains) is the queen of the holzfrauen.

Some spirits are more malicious. Stories of the Baumesel (Ass of the Trees) and Bockman (man-goat; see Chapter 6: The Black Forest) are used to frighten children, and with good reason, for these spirits attack lone travelers in the woods. The Eschenfrau (Wife of the Ash) is a very evil spirit to those unfortunate enough to have one living near them, and she must be appeased with a sacrifice on Ash Wednesday.

During my journeys through the various forests of this Tribunal, I have increasingly become awakened to the subtle yet ancient power that they seem to hide. On occasion, when I have neglected to raise my Parma Magica, I can feel it, at the edges of my senses, tugging at my Gift. What is this strange force? At times, this seems a seductive call, whispering a promise of power beyond imagining, yet other times I sense an alien presence, threatening to consume me utterly.

Though I do not yet understand this mysterious power, I have grown to recognize it, something that I believe is common to all the woodlands I have encountered here. It is told that Bonisagus, too, felt it, and that this is why he came to the site of Durenmar. In his latter years, they say he became convinced that Hermetic Magic was just the beginning, just the first step to unlocking the power of the primeval magic. It is assumed that his work was never finished, but I have heard rumors that those remaining few who follow the lineage of Hercynius are working to channel this power and to complete his opus maximum.

Yet magi of Bjornaer and Merinita claim to already have mastery of the wildernesses, even though their methods seem as alien to me, and I daresay to each other, as the forest itself. We cannot all be right, yet the wisdom which each faction accepts seems to contain some fragment of the truth. But I am sure that none of us has the complete picture! Each of the three domus magna seems to have uncovered but a part of this mystery. What if we were to share our secrets — might we not be able to truly access the vast store of raw magic that the forests seem to offer?

— from the journal of Causabon of House Bonisagus

perhaps some in House Merinita, there are none who can show him the way, for each path must be walked alone, and it is easy to become lost. Many give up after taking but a few steps; those who travel further are often never seen again.

It is possible for non-magi to pursue these mysteries, but this is very rare. Some hedge wizards have knowledge of the paths, and are willing to teach magi in return for suitable recompense. Mundanes who thirst for magic can gain the ability to perform minor spells by surrendering to the force of the forest. Often such mundanes become possessed by the forest spirit, and become its agents beyond the limits of its trees.



The First Step

Every journey starts with a single step, and for those travelling the paths through the Forest, this step is to achieve some deeper understanding of the nature of the forest. They must seek out a forest with a supernatural aura, and spend time within it. How this time is spent varies considerably. A follower of Criamon might meditate, trying to commune with the spirit. A follower of Bonisagus might study the magical plants and animals in the forest. A follower of Tyalus might pit himself against the magical denizens of the forest, learning from each challenge. A mundane might merely dwell there, hunting the animals, drinking the water, and studying the weather. Whatever the method of learning, this time is spent gaining experience in an Ability called Forest Lore; the Source Quality is the strength of the aura in which the student spends most of his time. Once this Ability reaches a score of at least 1, the character has reached the level of understanding which will allow him to find the path that he wishes to travel. Note that a character need not know that he is embarking on a path to power! For example, magi with either the Study Bonus Virtue or the Study Requirement Flaw might simply happen to be studying (either Herbam, or another Art) in the forest. Mundanes, in particular, may well unknowingly gain scores in Forest Lore, and unconsciously travel the paths.

Walking the Path

Once a score in Forest Lore has been achieved, the character may begin to walk a path of power. The next step is to discover which path is to be walked. There are countless different paths and the character needs to have some idea as to what he wishes to achieve (for some examples, see below). While some of these paths might be specific to a particular forest, others may be walked in many places (such as the path followed by Bjornaer magi, which is not restricted to Germany nor to forest wildernesses). Then he must achieve communion with the genius locus, which can generally only occur at the place of its greatest power. If the character is actively seeking a path, then he may use his Forest Lore to work out how to achieve communion (Intelligence + Forest Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 9, one attempt per season); if he has stum-

bled upon the path by accident, it may occur without being sought. How this communion is achieved varies according to the spirit's personality. The Romowe Oak (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Pomerania) is likely to possess the seeker; whereas the Drudenbaum (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Franconia) might instead speak to him in the form of a dragon. The outcome of the communion is the same — the formation of a pact between the spirit and the human. Each partner agrees to surrender a portion of his power to the other; although naturally

the human usually gets the better end of this deal. To make up the shortfall, the character usually has to agree to perform some service to the spirit before he acquires his gift.

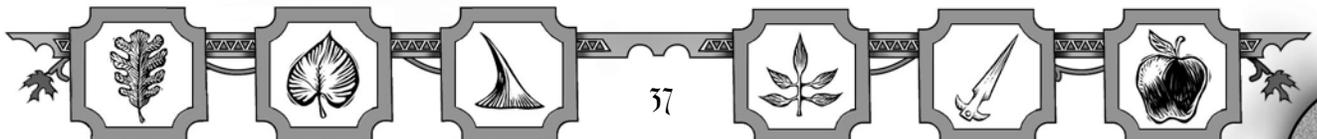
In game terms, at the conclusion of the communion, the character will acquire a Flaw (termed the Sacrifice). After he has served out the terms of the bargain (the Quest), he will acquire a Virtue (the Fruit) to balance the Flaw. The Flaws acquired are usually General or Hermetic Flaws. The first communion that a character undergoes is usually to acquire a Minor

New Arcane Ability: Forest Lore*

This Ability covers knowledge of the Forest in all its manifestations. At its most mundane, it counts as an Area Lore for the forest in which it was learned; yet it is much more than this. It includes knowledge of the supernatural beings and places of a forest, as well as a sense of the spirit that rules it; what pleases it, what angers it, and whether it is currently Manifested in proximity to the character. Unless otherwise stated (see below), this understanding only applies to the home forest. As understanding deepens, however, this Ability becomes more general, applying to all supernatural forests rather than just the one where the character dwells, although the corresponding Ease Factor or required score level is raised by three points for a foreign forest. For example, a score of 4 (instead of 1) is required to enter communion with a foreign genius locus. Forest Lore can only be increased through practice, and the Source Quality is always equal to the strength of the forest's aura.

The character typically (but not always) develops a deep spiritual attachment to the forest that he studies and lives in.

Score (Home Forest)	Score (Foreign Forest)	Understanding
0	3	An elementary understanding of the forest with a resident spirit; the character merely has to spend a few hours in such a forest and he will be able to locate the most important sites, and know the major dangers.
1	4	A basic understanding of the forest, its denizens, and important locations. You can enter communion with a genius locus and make the appropriate sacrifices.
2	5	An awareness of the supernatural elements of the forest; you can detect when a spirit has Manifested in a nearby animal or plant, or whether a person is a recipient of a Virtue or Flaw from a forest spirit.
3	6	You can locate vis in the forest by spending a few days searching.
4	7	An understanding with the forest's supernatural residents; they will tend to act neutrally or friendly towards the character. The spirit will occasionally communicate with the character, to warn him of interlopers, for example.
5	8	You can communicate directly with the genius locus of the forest. The character is respected by most of the forest's denizens.
6	9	Respected and acknowledged as an ally by the forest spirit.



Sacrifices

The Sacrifice made to acquire a Fruit usually takes the form of a Flaw, and most commonly, a General Flaw. This Flaw should represent a hardship to the character, and would be something that he is reluctant to take — else there is no real sacrifice involved. However, storyguides should be careful about imposing Sacrifices upon characters. There should always be a conscious choice on the part of the player involved, and it is often wise to discuss these issues with the player beforehand. Typical Sacrifices involve physical mutilation (for example, resulting in Missing Hand, Disfigured, or Blind), a horrible ordeal (resulting in Poor Characteristic, Fragile Constitution, Fear, or Warping Points), a mystical limitation of power (resulting in a Hermetic Flaw or a Supernatural Flaw such as Malediction or Lycanthrope), or a social contract (resulting in a Vow or Oath of Fealty). Sacrifices rarely affect Story or Personality Flaws. Sacrifices are not a manifestation of a forest spirit's Grant Flaw power, but instead permanent changes to those who take them on.

Virtue, but subsequent communions may result in either Minor or Major Virtues (and their attending Minor or Major Flaws). The services demanded by a spirit in return for a Major Virtue are always much more rigorous than those for a Minor Virtue.

The paths below describe the Sacrifice, Quest, and Fruit for a number of different paths that have been walked before. Characters may discover the stories of these magi, and attempt to walk the same paths, or instead they may use these for inspiration and, in collaboration with the storyguide, develop their own paths. Each of the paths described below are designed for Hermetic magi to walk, as each one leads to overcoming one of the Lesser Limits of Magic. However, other paths for magi may exist, as well as paths for characters without the Gift.

A magus may take it upon himself to defend the forest against any threats, or to otherwise act in its service. Occasionally, a magus of the Rhine Tribunal (usually a follower of Bjornaer, but rarely, of another House) will publicly announce himself to be the "Guardian" of a particular forest (or other wilderness), which he claims as

his personal Hermetic territory. Such a claim has little basis in Hermetic law, except that the Rhine Peripheral Code explicitly encourages magi to defend such wildernesses. In any case, these magi are seldom seen at Tribunal thereafter. Ever since the time of the departure of the Founders, there have always been rumors of the unexplained disappearances or retirements of Rhine magi, and the Forest paths may be one of the reasons for this.

The Path of Aging

Alexander of Jerbiton sought a path that would reverse the effect that time had had on his beloved mater, who had been cursed to age at double the normal rate. He was required to pluck out his own eye to prove his conviction to this path, and was able to convince the forest spirit to grant her the Unaging Virtue temporarily. He then embarked on an epic quest in search of the Fountain of Youth, guided by his mystical link to the genius locus. This magical fountain infused his blood with the power of youth, allowing him to create more potent longevity rituals. Tragically, his Quest took longer than he bargained for — time seems to move at different speeds deep in the forest — and death had claimed his mistress by the time he returned to her. Stricken with grief, Alexander returned to the forest and was never heard of again.

STORY SEED: THE RELUCTANT JERBITON

Rumors of a magus whose longevity rituals can actually remove the effects of aging reach the ears of Günther Lupus (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Fengheld), who secretly has a great need for such a ritual (or rather, his mater Eule does). He therefore dispatches the player character to track down Alexander of Jerbiton on some pretext to disguise his true motives. Naturally, Alexander does not wish to be found.

Quests

Quests are the key to acquiring a Fruit. A Quest is always to the benefit of the genius locus who sets it, but the motives for the Quest are not always immediately apparent. From a game perspective, the Quest often allows other characters to participate in the character's personal development, although it should always be the walker on the Path who performs most of the action. Additionally, the character suffers from the Sacrifice for some time before gaining the benefit from his toil. A character undertaking a Quest will not gain any experience points for doing so, although those who assist him will, in the usual fashion. Despite the name, a Quest is not always an adventure, although many are. A Quest might involve the creation of a spell or an enchantment, or achieving a specific personal goal, or merely spending time in isolation. Quests are never ongoing — they must have a clear end point, at which point the Fruit is gained. Becoming a Guardian of the Forest, for example, is not a Quest, it is a Sacrifice (in the form of the Oath of Fealty Flaw).

Quests to achieve Major Virtues are always more rigorous than those to acquire Minor Virtues, and may take many seasons to complete. Quests for a Minor Virtue typically take no more than two seasons.

NEW MAJOR GENERAL VIRTUE: IMMORTALITY OF THE FOREST

Your life force has become inextricably linked with that of the forest where you live. For each year in which you remain completely within its supernatural aura, you do not make an Aging roll, but instead gain one Warping Point for being under a constant mystical effect (as per *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 167).

Path of Aging

1st Sacrifice: Missing Eye

1st Quest: Complete a Longevity Ritual with the use of rare forest ingredients and a blood sacrifice.

1st Fruit: Minor Magical Focus in Aging

2nd Sacrifice: Difficult Longevity Ritual

2nd Quest: Drink from the Fountain of Youth.

2nd Fruit: Immortality of the Forest

Fruits

Fruits are always supernatural effects. The process of the Sacrifice and Quest, with the intervention of the genius locus, makes it possible for even unGifted characters to acquire Supernatural Virtues, despite the usual restrictions on this process, and Gifted characters do not suffer penalties due to the magical powers they already possess. Other Supernatural Virtues, which are not governed by Supernatural Abilities (such as Unaging, Skinchanger, and the like) are also possible Fruits; Hermetic magi may also gain Hermetic Virtues. Knowing a Fruit might also provide side benefits not covered by the Virtue, such as the ability to create spells that are not normally possible with Hermetic magic. These always have a requirement that the creator and caster have the Forest Lore Ability. The Virtues available through any given path should have a linked theme; they should not be merely a source of disparate desired powers, and a character may find it necessary to first acquire other Fruits before finally getting the one he actually wants. The storyguide should not be afraid of creating new Virtues — especially for Major Virtues — to complete a path, and give it a unique feel. These can be based around a pre-existing Virtue, or they may be entirely new. Fruits are not a manifestation of the Grant Virtue power, they are permanent effects which do not fade when exiting the forest.

The Path of Energy

By harnessing the reservoir of magical energy possessed by the forest, Terious of Flambeau discovered how to replenish the energy he spent in spellcasting from the energy of the forest. He eventually became infused with the power of the spirit, a living embodiment of the genius locus. Terious also contributed a spell — *Replenishing the Fount of the Magus* — to the Great Library of Durenmar. Terious was only able to make this breakthrough by overwhelming his senses through grueling ordeals in a place closely linked to primal magic, seeking to return himself to a more primitive form. He was drastically Warped by the experience and lost much control over his magic.

Path of Energy

1st Sacrifice: Unpredictable Magic
1st Quest: Live in the forest for a year like an animal, wearing no clothes, cooking no food, using no tools or magic.
1st Fruit: Life Boost
2nd Sacrifice: Chaotic Magic
2nd Quest: Conquer the Dragon of the Sauerland, and eat its heart.
2nd Fruit: Mythic Blood

New Spell

REPLENISHING THE FOUNT OF THE MAGUS

CrCo 30

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Individual

Requisites: Mu, He, Vi

With the use of this spell, the magus who has discovered the Path of Energy may restore lost Fatigue levels from the forest; one per each casting. This requires the caster to be in physical contact with the forest, and to have a Forest Lore score of at least 4. The caster must ceremonially receive this energy in some manifest form, such as drinking from a forest spring or the eating of forest herbs. While this spell is recorded in the Great Library, no-one has managed to successfully cast it, and many believe it to be a hoax.

The Path of Warping

Kleon of Criamon spent many years in the most isolated and magical part of the Thuringian Forest that he could find. He surrounded himself in powerful magical effects, performed dangerous experiments with raw vis, and then studied the effect that this had in warping his Gift. By doing so, he found himself able to influence the effect that Wizard's Twilight had on his Gift. However, by the time he reached this discovery, he was so riddled with Warping that he was suffering more and more severe Twilights. It is probable that he perished in one such episode.

NEW MAJOR HERMETIC VIRTUE: TWILIGHT MASTERY

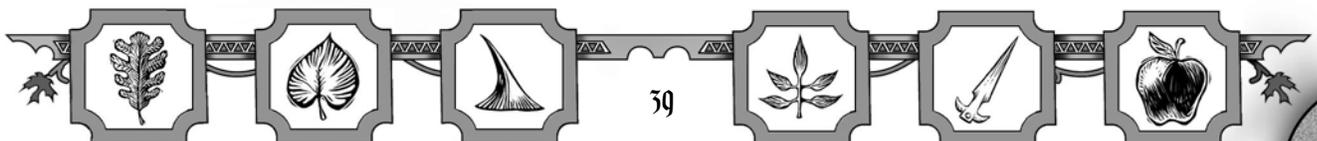
Whenever you suffer a Wizard's Twilight, you may choose the effects of Twilight, rather than have it imposed upon you by the storyguide. If you fail to control the Twilight, you still gain a bad effect, but you may choose from the options in ArM5, page 89. Additionally, you may induce Warping in any being you touch; once per day you may grant somebody 2 Warping Points. This effect has a Penetration of +5, and, if used on a Hermetic magus, necessitates a roll for Twilight in the usual fashion.

Path of Warping

1st Sacrifice: Fragile Constitution
1st Quest: Acquire a Warping Score of 4.
1st Fruit: Puissant Enigmatic Wisdom
2nd Sacrifice: Twilight Prone
2nd Quest: Trap a magus opposed to the forest in Twilight
2nd Fruit: Twilight Mastery

The Path of the Heartbeast

Uniquely among the paths presented here, this path has been walked many hundreds of times, by every Bjornaer magus who has undertaken an apprenticeship in the Order of Hermes. The goal of the path is contacting one's heartbeast (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 91). This is also one of the more powerful paths, as it pushes at the Limit of Essential Nature. The true mystery is not the ability to change shape — even many hedge wizards can do this — but the ability to be totally indistinguishable from a natural animal of that type; that is, the magus acquires (or awakens) a whole new aspect to his Essential Nature. The sacrifice for this power is the inability to ever bind a



Arcadian Path

1st Sacrifice: Dispassionate

1st Quest: Cause an important faerie to display an unaccustomed emotion.

1st Fruit: Minor Magical Focus in Emotions

2nd Sacrifice: Weak Magic Resistance (When feeling emotion)

2nd Quest: Enchant four magical jewels to store the emotions of one's heart, liver, spleen, and brain.

2nd Fruit: Thief of Emotions

familiar. The reason for this is unknown, but may be because a familial bond is normally formed between the creature and that part of a magus' soul that House Bjornaer has awakened. More information on the Mystery of the Heartbeast will be detailed in a forthcoming supplement for *Ars Magica* 5th edition.

The Arcadian Path

Many in House Merinita mention this path, but it almost always refers simply to one of the many diverse routes into the faerie realm of Arcadia, rather than an initiation into forest mysteries per se; and it results in the acquisition of the Mystery of Faerie Magic (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 92), with a Quest and Sacrifice involving exposure to the fae. Further information on the Mystery of Faerie Magic will be detailed in a forthcoming supplement for *Ars Magica* 5th edition. However, Serrifuloria of Merinita is believed to have discovered a path within the primeval Arcadian forest itself, through contact and exposure to a powerful genius locus of a remote wintry forest on

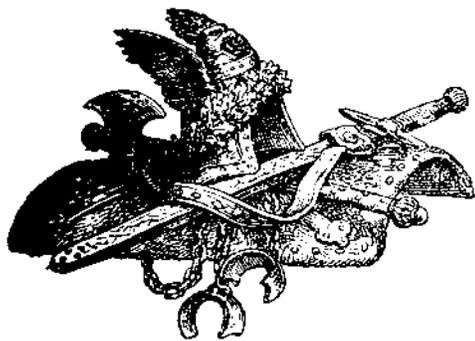
the slopes of the Alps. She was required to strip herself of all emotions by removing each one from her body as a magical jewel; through the medium of these jewels she was able to partially overcome the Limit of True Feeling. Whether Serrifuloria remains distinguishable from a faerie, however, is another question. Note that she had already acquired the Mystery of Faerie Magic; this was her second step on her path. The Mystery acquired by Serrifuloria is highly esoteric, and likely to remain unique to her.

NEW MINOR PERSONALITY FLAW:
DISPASSIONATE

You are unable to express any strong emotions. This leaves you hard-hearted and lonely, and prevents you from forming strong or lasting bonds with other people. You cannot have a Personality Trait greater than +1 or less than -1.

NEW MAJOR SUPERNATURAL VIRTUE:
THIEF OF EMOTIONS

You are able to manipulate the emotions of others. You gain a Supernatural Ability called Emotion Theft, at a score of 1. To use this ability, you must first find a person expressing the emotion you wish to instill in another. You may then make a Presence + Emotion Theft roll against an Ease Factor of 6 + the target's Personality Trait for that emotion. If successful, the emotion is removed from the target, leaving them devoid of it (although it may naturally reoccur, over time). You can then transfer the emotion to another by touching him; and he will feel the emotion as strongly as the original "donor." You can even transfer feelings of true love and true friendship (although the Ease Factor to steal such emotions is raised by 3), but not true faith.



Story Seed: Schwall, follower of Bjornaer

An eccentric and elderly magus, Schwall (formerly of Rheinstein covenant; see Chapter 12: The Curse of the Rhine Gorge), lives out a solitary existence at the Rhinefalls (see Chapter 5: The Rhine, The Upper Rhine), with his sanctum hidden inside one of the lower regio levels on the rock. He has completed a number of Quests in the service of the Spirit of the Rhine, and is also magically powerful. His heartbeast is believed to be a fish, but he is also able to take the form of a seething mass of water by virtue of one of the Mysteries he has acquired. Fearing the onset of his Final Twilight (he has already accumulated numerous Twilight Scars; for example, he is always wet), he is researching and preparing for his final Quest. This plan is for him to release the powerful Rhine elemental, and the Mystery he will acquire is to simultaneously merge his consciousness with that of the spirit. The primary goal, as he sees it, is to achieve a kind of immortality for himself — otherwise he fears that his Final Twilight will see himself simply washed away. Since he is also a fervent Wilderist of the Hawthorn Guild, however, any side effects of the spirit's release, such as the devastation of shipping and towns and cities in torrents and floods, dealing a blow to the mundanes of the Rhine Tribunal, would be merely a bonus.

The player magi may begin to notice disturbances of the Rhine as the early stages of Schwall's plan begin to take effect. Should they discover his sanctum, they may (depending on their outlook, and whether they themselves have any interests on the Rhine) choose to either hinder or help him. Since the release of the elemental would likely cause devastation on a biblical scale — a monumental breach of the Code — the Rhine Tribunal would surely March anyone found to be involved in such a reckless scheme, should it come to fruition. By this time, however, Schwall reckons that he will be well beyond any possible retribution that magi could deliver.



Chapter Five

The Rhine

The Rhine, greatest of the German rivers, rises in the northern Alps and feeds into Lake Constance in the Tribunal of the Greater Alps. From there, it winds its way more than seven hundred miles, past a succession of mountain ranges, forests, tributaries, rapids, cliffs, islands, venerable cities, fields, vineyards, and bustling riverside towns, before diverging into three distributaries and emptying over a wide delta into the North Sea.

The river forms a dividing line, both culturally and historically; it is no accident that it is the western (left) bank that houses all the cities along its length. This region was first settled by Gauls, and then the Romans, who established several cities — here are by far the oldest of all German settlements. The Rhenish cities are now home to powerful and wealthy archbishops, princes in their own right, who are partly responsible for electing the German king. Moving westwards from the Rhine, past the Mosel and then the Meuse, one approaches the western extremity of the Holy Roman Empire, with French and German influence in equal measure. The eastern (right) bank has a different character. Although part (Swabia and the Odenwald) was Roman for a time — long enough to establish a handful of cities, roads, and a line of forts, at least — it was mainly occupied by pagan Germanic tribes until the time of the 8th century missionaries and Charlemagne. Opposite the cities only forested uplands rise up on the right bank.

For much of its length, the Rhine is several hundred yards wide — too far to be bridged or forded — and it is navigable all the way up to Basel (although passage through the Rhine Gorge can be hazardous). A great many ships and boats are to be found plying their trade up and down this principal artery — the great Rhine cities are built on trade.

The Middle Rhine (including the Rhine Gorge), the valley of the lower Mosel (including Trier), and the valley of the Lahn are covered in more detail in Chapter 12: The Curse of the Rhine Gorge.

The Upper Rhine

From Constance, the Rhine winds its way westwards for nearly a hundred miles, tumbling over the Rhinefalls and skirting the south of the Black Forest. At Basel, Redcaps traveling between the Alps, Rhine, and Normandy Tribunals make frequent use of the Copper Rooster Inn, maintained by House Mercere. From there, the river turns north and sedately opens out into a wide fertile valley east of the Vosges Mountains. Over a further course of two hundred miles, four historic cities are passed. A sizeable portion of the Rhineland around the Palatinate Forest and the Odenwald consists of the County Palatine of the Rhine, a recent acquisition of the Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria.

The Rhinefalls

Not far from the southeastern edge of the Black Forest are the greatest waterfalls in Europe. At a width of five hundred feet, the Rhine gradually accelerates before plunging eighty feet down over a set of cataracts. In the center of the falls is located a rocky island, taller than the falls and large enough to accommodate a small copse of trees and bushes. An attempt to navigate the falls from upstream would be utter folly, however the lower end of the island rock may be approached by boat from downstream with considerable caution (Profession: Boating roll against an Ease Factor of 9) With difficulty, one may dismount onto it. The way to the top is perilous, both slippery and steep (Athletics roll against an Ease Factor of 12), but if one reaches the summit, one finds oneself standing in the very maw of the falls, practically deafened by its roar, a place of great

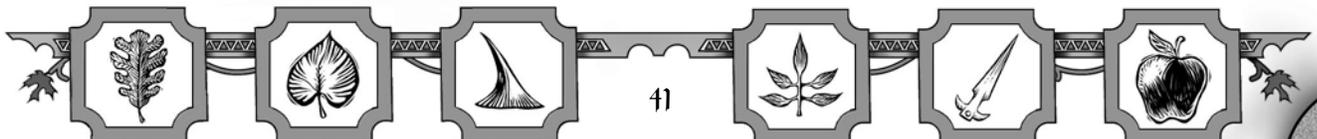
elemental power. (The island has a Magic aura of 2, with 4 at the summit.)

A great many centuries ago, the River Rhine was wild and tempestuous. It is told that a race of men from the Lower Rhine, the Nibelungs, collaborated with dwarves and giants to conquer the river. The giants hurled a great rock into it, pinioning the watery spirit at this point. Ever since, the river was tamed and (mostly) safe for passage. Some believe that the Rhinefalls could be the location of the Rhinegold, the lost treasure of the Nibelungs (see Chapter 2: History, The Nibelungenlied), jealously guarded by a powerful elemental, in revenge for his entrapment.

Vis may be harvested here, in the following fashion: First, one must surmount the rock, as described above. Objects and goods of value may be sacrificed to the river spirit by hurling them into the waters, whereupon they are immediately consumed by the maelstrom. Some time later, smashed fragments of these wares may be discovered washed up on the riverbanks downstream. Each is worth one pawn of Aquam vis. It is unlikely that magi would discover this procedure by accident, but the finding of such a fragment may prompt some experiments. The island also houses a regio, as one ascends the rock, one may also ascend the regio. At the top level is a turbulent elemental realm of water that houses the Rhine spirit (and which may conceivably hide the Rhinegold, and other sacrificed treasures). One would not stumble into this regio by accident, however. An ascent of the falls always leads simply to the top of the rock, unless powerful magic is used to penetrate it.

Strassburg

The Romans established a legionary camp at the site of a Celtic fishing village,



where the river Ill meets the Rhine. Due to its strategic location at a confluence of roads, it soon grew into a sizeable city, Argentoratum. Although later destroyed by invading tribes on several occasions, it prospers today as a trade city where roads still meet — indeed, its name means “castle of roads.” Strassburg is built around a small series of river canals, and the powerful boater’s guild controls much of the trade on the Upper Rhine.

Speyer

Speyer, with its origins also as a Roman military camp, rose to prominence in the first half of the 11th century, as the favorite seat of the Salian dynasty. The emperor Conrad II ordered the construction of a great cathedral in 1030, which now dominates the city and houses the tombs of several kings and emperors in its mighty crypt. To the southwest of the cathedral is a wealthy Jewish quarter, home to a grand synagogue and elegant bath-houses. Young Jews come to Mainz or Speyer from all over Germany to be trained as rabbis. Hundreds of Speyer’s

The Bells of Speyer

Ever since the completion of Speyer’s cathedral, its bells have tolled, without any mortal hand setting them in motion, on the occasion of an imperial death. A notable exception was the emperor Henry IV, who died in Liege after excommunication, forced abdication, and escaping imprisonment by his treacherous son, Henry V, who had deposed him with the agreement of the Pope. His body was buried in unconsecrated ground, but was constantly tended to by his faithful servant Kurt. Five years later, Henry V asked the Pope to posthumously revoke the excommunication, whereupon the body was returned to Speyer and interred in the cathedral’s crypt. The old servant Kurt, his mission finally fulfilled, died within days. Only then did the bells toll for Henry IV. Years later, as Henry V was on his deathbed, the apparition of his betrayed father, dying alone in misery, came to him. This vision tormented the dying emperor, wracked by his guilty conscience. When he then passed away, the bells tolled once more, but this time after the pattern signifying a sinner being lead to execution.

Jews were slaughtered during the First Crusade, as a riot of violence and theft erupted in the city. A group of knights dragged a dozen of them into the cathedral, where they were murdered after refusing to accept baptism. Due to the protection of Speyer’s bishop, however, many in the city were spared.

Burg Trifels

Twenty miles west of Speyer, at the edge of the Palatinate Forest, an imperial fortress-palace sits impregnable atop the craggy pinnacle of the steep Sonnenberg. Built in the 11th century, Burg Trifels is one of the largest castles belonging to the Hohenstaufens, and was especially favored by Frederick Barbarossa. The castle is now famous — or infamous — as the site where Richard the Lionheart, the English king, was imprisoned by Henry VI in 1193. (He was only released upon the payment of a massive ransom of 150,000 marks.) As well as its extensive dungeon, the castle protects one of the largest treasuries in the empire.

Worms

Here is one of the most memorable places in the West. Here was the Holy Temple of the Romans, the Royal Fortress of the Nibelung, the Palace of Charlemagne.

— inscription on the north face of the cathedral of Worms

The famed city of Worms has seen many rulers come and go — Celts, Romans, Burgundians, Franks — and is now ruled by its own prince-bishop. It has borne witness to many famous events, including the Concordat of 1122 (settling the Investiture Contest), the weddings of Charlemagne and Frederick Barbarossa, as well as of Siegfried and Gunther (as told in the epic poem, the Nibelungenlied), with which the city is inextricably linked. The great cathedral of Worms occupies the site of the former Burgundian castle — its northern doorway, the Kaiserportal, is located on the very spot of the infamous quarrel between the two queens, Kriemhild and Brünhild, which ultimately lead to the downfall of the Burgundian kingdom.

The northern third of Worms is dubbed “Little Jerusalem,” being the largest Jewish settlement in Germany, although it was ransacked during the first two

The Imperial Cathedrals

The triumvirate of the cathedrals of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz are unquestionably the three greatest churches in Germany. Visitors and pilgrims to these cities are overwhelmed by the majesty and size of these Romanesque masterpieces. The cathedral of Speyer is arguably the most graceful of the three, built of pale sandstone, with a high vault, topped by identical square towers at its eastern end. Its magnificent crypt, marbled and pillared, is perhaps the finest in all Christendom. The cathedral of Worms is the most dramatic and unusual-looking, a squat yet soaring structure with two domed choirs, topped with strange and exotic statues. The highest points are the four seven-tiered circular corner towers, lending the whole a castle-like appearance. Indeed, part of the building derives from the former Burgundian castle on the same site, which Charlemagne made into a palace. The cathedral of Mainz is a sprawling edifice built of red sandstone. Copying St. Peter’s in Rome, the seat of the other Holy See, it is oriented in reverse, from east to west. At each end is a separate choir, each surrounded by three towers of varying heights, one reserved for the clergy and the other for the emperor.

The cathedral of Mainz, as the seat of a Holy See, has a Divine aura of 7; the cathedrals of Speyer, Worms, Trier, Aachen, Cologne, and Hildesheim have Divine auras of 6. Most other cathedrals in Germany have Divine auras of 5, and most cities have a Divine aura of 3 (see also ArM5, page 188). The strongest Divine auras are generally to be found in the Rhineland, Lorraine, and south-central Germany, with the most venerable churches, saints, and holy sites. Around the Baltic and in the Eastern Marches, where the Church’s presence is more recent, most Divine auras are slightly weaker.

Crusades. Worms’ great synagogue, built in a similar style to the cathedral, was completed in 1175. A venerable and extensive Jewish cemetery, the Heiliger Sand, is located to the west of the city, immediately outside its walls. Since the Jews hold that the dead should be left in peace, the



vast graveyard, filled with ancient and elaborate tombs, is deserted and overgrown, apart from the newest plots.

Mainz

Mainz, formerly the Roman city of Moguntiacum, was raised by St. Boniface to the status of an archbishopric in the 8th century, becoming the center of the Church for the whole of Germany. Boniface himself was the first archbishop of Mainz. From Willigis in the tenth century onwards, the archbishop has enjoyed the status of Archchancellor of the Empire, principal among the electors, with the responsibility of crowning the German king at Aachen. Indeed, the archbishop also holds the title of *primas germaniae*, acting in place of the Pope north of the Alps. By the same token the episcopal see of Mainz is titled a Holy See, of which only two exist — the other being, of course, Rome. The massive six-towered cathedral is crammed at the center of the city, with other buildings being built right up against its walls. Amongst these is the church of St. Gothard, the archbishop's private chapel. River traffic coming up the Rhine past Mainz will either turn east up the River Main towards Frankfurt, or south up the Rhine to Worms, Speyer, and Strassburg. A large quantity of goods are therefore unloaded and reloaded at the riverside docks, and the archbishop accumulates considerable wealth from the charging of customs duties.

Upper Lorraine

Lorraine came into existence in 843 upon the division of the Carolingian empire among the three sons of Louis the Pious. The middle kingdom belonged to Lothar, and was thus named Lotharingia. Later reabsorbed into Germany as a duchy, minus Burgundy and Italy, it was divided into two in the 10th century by Otto the Great. In the 11th century, Gerard, duke of Upper Lorraine, chose to establish his seat in the geographic center of his duchy, erecting a fortress between two marshes, where since the town of Nancy has grown up. The dukes have found themselves in a somewhat delicate position, feeling the influence of the French kings to the west, as well as of the rival counts of Bar and Luxemburg. In

Jews in the Holy Roman Empire

Of the two major branches of Judaism, it is the Latin-influenced Ashkenzim that is predominant in the Franco-German lands of northern Europe (the other branch, the Sephardim, is Arabic-influenced, and prominent in Spanish lands). The Jews of Germany are integrated with urban Christian culture as primarily a merchant class — almost all the sizeable towns of Germany, except for those to the north of Brunswick (central Saxony) and in the Eastern Marches, have Jewish quarters of varying sizes. The bishops of Germany have forbidden most forms of social intercourse between Jews and Christians, and while forced to obey the civil and ecclesiastic laws of the empire in return for "protection," they also respect and obey their own laws and institutions.

Despite suffering active persecution at the time of the First Crusade, those who survived developed their own cultural and religious renaissance, centered around mysticism. Known as the Chasidim (pietists), the German mystics placed heavy influence on the merits of asceticism, martyrdom, and lifelong penitence. Advances in the law resulting from this renaissance have led to increased freedom and rights for Jewish women, and the lifting of strict prohibitions against usury, allowing pious Jews to take up the mercantile life.

Many of these advances in both religious thought and law came from the Jewish academy in Mainz, which has been a center of scholarship since the 10th century, and is known across Europe, attracting students from as far away as Spain and Italy. Other significant Jewish communities can be found in Worms, Speyer, and Augsburg.

All Jewish men, from the age of seven, are required by Christian law to identify themselves by wearing a cloth badge bearing the image of a wheel or a circle. Towns with large Jewish populations are prone to blame them for their woes, and particularly when Crusades are announced, new pogroms against the Jews follow. Invariably, the bishops of Germany protest against such slaughter, and often have to resort to extreme measures to stop it. One such massacre shook Cologne, Würzburg, Speyer, and Mainz at the start of the Second Crusade, and it was necessary for the archbishops and bishops to hang the ringleaders to stop the wide-scale violence and robbery. It is not a good time to be a Jew anywhere in Europe; but with the protection of the German bishops, their lot is slightly better in the Holy Roman Empire than elsewhere.

1220 the current duke, Dietrich III, dies and is succeeded by Matthew II.

Upper Lorraine consists of a moderately populated rolling plain, dotted by woodlands, bounded to the east by the Vosges Mountains and the Rhine, to the north by the Ardennes, and to the west by the Argonne.

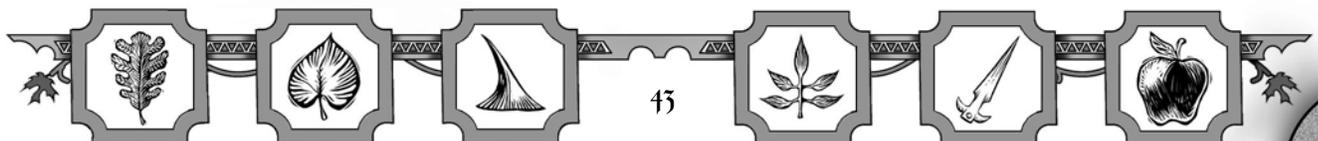
on the western flanks of the Vosges and feed into the tributaries of the Mosel. In spring, the arrival of the storks, who come here to roost, is eagerly awaited, since they are believed to bring good luck.

Mount Saint Odile

In the 7th century, Odile, the daughter of a local duke, Adalric, was born blind. Her father, angered with her disability and that she was not born a son, disowned her, but her mother Bereswinde spirited her away to an abbey, where she was raised by the abbess. Upon her baptism by her uncle, St. Erhard, Odile miraculously recovered her sight. She grew up with the nuns and became an educated and pious young woman. Adalric, hearing of her recovery, set about trying to marry her off, but Odile had decided to devote her life to God instead. Fleeing through the Vosges forest from her father the duke, a rock opened up to enfold and protect her. Witnessing this miracle, he had a change

The Vosges Mountains

Although not nearly as mighty as the Alps, the Vosges are nevertheless loftier than most of the other German upland, being of a similar height to the Black Forest, the matching massif on the opposite bank of the Rhine. Like the Black Forest, fir trees dominate the upper slopes. However, unlike that impenetrable wilderness, the mountains here are not completely blanketed by forest — there are some villages. The southern granite mountains have distinctive rounded tops, whereas the lower northern hills are of red sandstone. Numerous springs, some of them hot, rise



of heart and remorsefully offered Odile the Hohenburg castle, which she established as a convent. Many pilgrims came to visit the holy woman. Encountering a sick man dying of thirst, she struck the ground with her cane and brought forth a spring; he drank and was cured. Since then, many — especially those with diseases of the eye — have come to the spring to pray and wash their eyes with the curative water. St. Odile died and was buried at her abbey in 720.

The mountain that houses the convent of St. Odile at the Hohenburg is at a height of 2500 feet in the northern Vosges. At this idyllic site are a number of small chapels, one of which houses Odile's crypt, and an ancient Merovingian cemetery. Not far down the hillside from the convent is the holy spring itself, with a Divine aura of 4.

Thann Chapel

The chapel of Thann, dating from 1161, around which has sprung up a village, is to be found a dozen or so miles west of the town of Mulhouse, in the southern Vosges. Theobald, bishop of Gubbio (in Umbria, central Italy), had died in the previous year, and bequeathed his episcopal ring to his most loyal servant. The servant took the ring (as well as the bishop's thumb), which he hid inside his staff, and traveled far and wide for a year. In the fir forest of the Vosges one night, he thrust his staff into the ground. After waking the next morning, he found that he could not dislodge it, while three bright lights appeared over the forest. A nearby lord of the Engelburg (Angel Castle) witnessed this miracle, and resolved to erect a chapel on the very site, over the staff. Since then, the peasants of Engelburg have gathered every summer to ceremoniously burn three fir trees in front of the new chapel, which has a Divine aura of 3, and has become a place of pilgrimage.

Many centuries ago, the Vosges was dominated by a secretive fir spirit, much like that of the Black Forest opposite the Rhine. The founding of villages and monasteries and the felling of many fir trees since had greatly weakened its power, until the magical spirit was finally extinguished by the planting of the holy staff. Thus is the ancient power of the great Vosges forest broken; indeed there is no such continuous forest any longer. If this staff could somehow be removed, it might be the only artifact able to counter the might of the Black Forest spirit.

The Sanctuary of Hercules

Hidden in an isolated cave on the slopes of the western Vosges are a set of magical springs. The Gauls worshiped the god Ogmios here; he was a god of strength, and also of eloquence and poetry. The Romans, when they adopted the site, identified Ogmios as Hercules, a hero of legendary strength, armed with a club and a bow, and wearing the cloak of a lion's hide. The springs form a set of three pools, around which was built a shrine, replete with Greek columns. Many came to pray to Hercules, the protector of the springs, and those whose wishes were fulfilled repaid him by placing *stelae* (altars) around the pools. Anyone who discovers the Sanctuary, which has a Magic aura of 3, would find these ancient altars arrayed round the pools in a circle.

Metz

Metz, situated where the River Seille joins the Mosel and at the crossing of ancient roads, has always been the largest and most important city of Upper Lorraine, with its early origins as firstly a Gaulish and then a major Roman city, Divodurum. In the 5th century, the Huns sacked the city despite the efforts of a local lord, St. Livier. He was beheaded by Attila, but later picked up his head and walked to his own burial place on a nearby hilltop. Upon the division of the great Merovingian realm in the 6th century, Metz became the capital city of the kingdom of Austrasia under Theoderic, and then in the 9th century it became the capital of the kingdom of Lotharingia. Metz has been a Free Imperial City since 1143, when the burghers of the city successfully rebelled against the duke. It has since risen to become the center of a small and independent republic covering the nearby lands, and is extremely wealthy, which is why it continues to thwart the desires of the dukes of Upper Lorraine to bring the city back under their heel. Indeed, Metz is so prosperous that it has on occasion lent money to the French king and even the Holy Roman Emperor, as well as the local dukes, when they prove to be agreeable. This wealth is evident from the stern fortifications of the city, inside which rise the cathedral of St. Stephen and several other grand churches.

Toul

Forty miles up the River Mosel from Metz lies Toul, formerly Roman Tullum, an equally venerable city, but one which lacks such great history or wealth. In contrast to Metz, however, the citizens of Toul remain loyal to their duke. The city is surrounded by impressive tall white stone walls, partially of Roman origin.

Andresina

Two dozen miles to the southwest of Toul lies the ruined and abandoned Roman city of Andresina. Here was a great temple to the god Apollo, centered around a sacred pool fed by miles of piping, which was the catalyst for the city's growth and attracted the visits of at least two emperors, Caracalla and Constantine in the 3rd and 4th centuries, respectively. As well as the ruins of the temple, there is a large half-oval amphitheater, a crumbling basilica replete with mosaics, and a number of subterranean chambers. A small village has grown up adjacent to the ancient rampart that surrounds the ruins. Andresina has a Magic aura of 2 and might make a suitable site for a covenant. If the temple were to be restored, the aura strength would likely increase.

Verdun

Verdun, on the River Meuse upstream of the Ardennes, is most famous for the eponymous treaty of 843, whereupon Charlemagne's empire was divided (see Chapter 2: History, The Treaty of Verdun). Verdun initially belonged to Lotharingia, the middle of the three kingdoms, but was reassigned to the western kingdom in the Treaty of Mersen in 870. Shortly thereafter it joined the Holy Roman Empire, and ever since Verdun has remained a border city where intrigue and uncertainty is rife, subject to changing borders and fortunes, and the waxing and waning of French or German influence. Verdun grew rapidly in size and prosperity in the 11th century, but is now in decline, overshadowed by Liege and Metz. The city's unsavory side flourishes though; spies and assassins can be recruited here to undertake tasks either in German or French lands, and Verdun (as well as the covenant of Triamore) is a frequent meeting point for Redcaps travelling between the Rhine and Normandy Tribunals.

stretch of the riverside occupied by the city, the quayside extends for more than a mile, thronged with hundreds of ships, warehouses, and trade counters, behind which is the city's principal market. The burghers of Cologne are naturally among the most wealthy and cosmopolitan in all Germany. Among the many craftsmen of the city, the weavers, dyers, goldsmiths, weaponsmiths, and armorers are the most renowned. Wares from all corners of the empire, and further afield, may be procured here.

Cologne is ruled by its powerful archbishop, who holds the status of Archchancellor of Italy. The current archbishop is Engelbert I, a tall, fair, and just man, whose virtues have been publicly extolled by the famous minstrel Walther von der Vogelweide (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Thuringia). If your saga follows real history, he is martyred in 1225. The covenant of Fengheld maintains a chapter house at the Rheingasse, a narrow alley not far from the main market.

Xanten

Colonia Ulpia Traiana, a Roman colony on the west bank of the Rhine, witnessed the deaths of many early Christians, including St. Victor and the Theban Legion, according to legend. These victims were buried in a graveyard to the south of the settlement, where after the departure of the Romans and the abandonment of the old colony, a new town rose up. It was called *Ad Santos Martyres* (To the Holy Martyrs), but has since contracted to Xanten. As recalled in the Nibelungenlied, Xanten was also the birthplace of the hero Siegfried and former capital of Nibelungland, the original home of the Rhinegold treasure.

The Schwanenburg

On a steep hill overlooking the town of Cleves by the Rhine is the old Schwanenburg (Swan Castle), which is so named on account of the Knight of the Swan. Long ago, the duke of Brabant passed away, leaving his fair young widow Elsa in grief, and it was not long before one of his rebellious vassals, Telramund, sought to claim both the dukedom and the hand of Elsa for himself. Elsa implored the knights of the dukedom to take up arms against this villain, and Telramund

The Brethren of the Free Spirit

It is manifest that there is only one substance, not only of all bodies, but also of all souls, and that this substance is nothing else but God himself. It is clear, then, that God and Matter and Mind are one substance.

— David of Dinant, *The Quaternuli*

The Brethren of the Free Spirit is a heretical cult that has emerged at the start of the 13th century, originating from theologians in Paris, and which has since spread to and become popular in Cologne. The Brethren preach a pantheistic version of Christianity, equating God to the essence of primary matter, and holding that the human spirit, as part of God, is supreme. They believe themselves heralds of a new age of the Holy Spirit. The Brethren is secretly popular in Cologne and nearby lands, both among ordinary folk, and those of the nobility who reckon that secular lordship should not be beholden to the Church. If everything is God, then everything is also good, they reckon, thus it follows that there can be no such thing as sin. At least this is the cited reason for the rampant indulgence of sexual pleasures and crimes of all kinds perpetrated by some of the Brethren, who enact naked masses, in which the participants celebrate their return to the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall. Some of the more fervent members even claim that, since they are God, they cannot be harmed by fire or torture. The Holy Vehm (see Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Saxony), however, who are active in the persecution of heretics, especially members of the Brethren, and who are therefore regarded as their mortal enemies, are keen to prove them wrong.

Should you so decide for your saga, the magi of the chapter house of Fengheld in Cologne, all of whom belong to the Apple Guild, may belong to the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and be active in its leadership. A small subset of the organization might even be a Mystery Cult of magi from the Rhine and Normandy Tribunals. It is easy to see how the teachings of the Brethren might appeal to the Apple Guild, with their aim of achieving acceptance of magic among the mundanes.

declared that he would face any challenger in single combat. On account of his great prowess, however, none came forth, despite his issuing the challenge three times. In despair, Elsa offered up a prayer and rang a silver bell on her rosary, whereupon a barge came into view up the river, drawn by a swan and bearing a golden-haired knight in shining armor. Sure enough, this hero went on to defeat Telramund in an epic duel, and he and Elsa were happily wedded. There was, however, one condition to their marriage — Elsa must never inquire after the knight's name or origin. This promise was kept for many years until finally, thinking of the pride of her grown sons, she could resist asking no longer. At this, the knight was overcome with grief, and after bidding his wife farewell, he went down to the Rhine and blew his silver horn, whereupon the swan-drawn barge reappeared to carry him away. Elsa was so distraught that she died of grief soon thereafter.

The legend of this knight, Lohengrin, forms part of Wolfram von Eschenbach's (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Thuringia) poem *Parzival*. The lords of Cleves (who no longer rule Brabant) now feature a swan in their coat of arms.

Deventer

Deventer, along with Utrecht, is one of the earliest of the missionary-bishoprics on the right bank of the Rhine. Its present church is named after St. Lebuinus, who was the first to erect a chapel on the site (later destroyed by Saxon heathens) in 768. In 776, it was rebuilt by St. Liudger. This modest-sized city, surrounded by marshland and with river connections to both the Zuider Sea and the mouths of the Rhine, is at the center of a struggle against the pirates who roam the inland sea, being prosecuted by the counts of Holland and the bishop of Utrecht. Although the militia of Deventer have begun to hunt them down, many sailors of ill repute can still be found within the city, if you know who to ask.

Lower Lorraine

The lower half of the ancient kingdom of Lotharingia has fractured into a handful of counties and duchies, principal

of which are the rival duchies of Brabant and Limburg. The southern end of this region is sparsely populated, consisting of the forested uplands of the Ardennes and the Eifel, whereas the rest — the valleys of the lower Schelde, Meuse, and Rhine — consists mostly of farmland dotted with towns and cities of varying sizes. The prosperity of Lower Lorraine pales in comparison to the wealth and grandeur of Flanders, immediately to its west across the Schelde, in the Normandy Tribunal.

Aachen

In the year 768 Charlemagne rode forth from his castle into the forest, and after a short while his mount suddenly reared up in pain. The horse had stepped in a spring, whose sulphurous waters were hot, and Charlemagne discovered nearby a set of ancient Roman thermal baths. Recognizing the curative powers of the springs, the emperor-to-be resolved to erect a great church over them, in a round shape so as to remind him of his horse's hoof. Thus was the city of Aachen born, which became the main seat of Charlemagne's court. Charlemagne himself, an outstanding swimmer, was keen on the hot baths, and thousands came to the springs and were cured of their ailments. In 814, the emperor was buried in his church, since completed as Aachen's cathedral, but which at that time was merely a grand chapel adjoining his palace.

Lying on the overland trade route between Cologne, Liege, and Flanders, Aachen is no longer a politically important city. Nevertheless, its opulent cathedral has accumulated a peerless collection of relics, including the garb of St. John the Baptist, the gown of the Virgin Mary, and the swaddling clothes of Christ. A richly decorated shrine has recently been completed around the tomb of Charlemagne himself. Lastly and most importantly is the throne of Charlemagne, an ancient high-backed chair of marble, wood, and gold atop six steps, where the German king is crowned.

Liege

St. Lambert, bishop of Tongeren in the 7th century, became involved in a feud between rival Merovingian clans and was martyred at the site of a small settlement on a hill where the small River Legia joins the Meuse. His successor, St.

Hubert, raised a grand tomb over the spot. Due to the regularity of miraculous occurrences there, pilgrims (and thus traders) were attracted to the site, and Liege grew rapidly, since becoming the seat of the bishopric and a sizeable market city. Its most famous bishop was Notger, who was granted the diocese as a fiefdom by Otto II, ever since it has been ruled by his successors as a prince-bishopric. He was responsible for many of Liege's grandest buildings, including the cathedral of St. Lambert, erected over the martyr's tomb, and a palace for the prince-bishops, as well as the city walls.

Triamore



The covenant of Triamore holds a castle and a manorial estate by the river Meuse on the edge of the Ardennes, at the western fringe of the Rhine Tribunal. It has throughout its rather troubled history been embroiled in mundane politics, for which the local Quaesitores have long sought censure against the covenant. It is only through the shrewd dealings of Triamore's princeps, Daria la Gris of House Tremere, that this has been avoided. Due to the recent loss of several of their number to death and Twilight, Triamore finds itself politically and magically weakened, and thus somewhat sidelined in the Tribunal. Daria is therefore actively seeking new members; to this end she is encouraging the visits of peregrinators and other magi. On the one hand, Triamore is a comfortable covenant with reasonable magi and a famed library (to which guests are typically required to contribute to), yet on the other hand, stories of recent troubles and the deaths of magi tend to keep the number of guests low. Triamore has a Magic aura of 2.

DARIA LA GRIS,
FOLLOWER OF TREMERE

Age: 67 (Master)

Personality Traits:

Sophisticated +2,
Studious +1,
Frivolous -3



Daria, as the co-leader of the Apple Guild, favors the formation of the putative Lotharingian Tribunal (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, The Guilds of the Rhine Tribunal). Not only would this give the covenant a freer hand in their mundane dealings, but more importantly it would mean a dramatic shift in which Triamore moves from being a minor player at the border of two Tribunals to a central covenant, the hub even, of this new Tribunal. As a part of this strategic plan, Daria fosters friendly links with several covenants of the Normandy Tribunal. She is a stern and uncompromising woman and has trained two apprentices already.

REMI OF MUSEAU,
FOLLOWER OF JERBITON

Age: 48 (Master)

Personality Traits:

Unpretentious +3,
Worldly +3,
Cheerful +2



Remi is a friendly and effusive magus, a complete contrast to Daria. He is accomplished in all manner of mundane tasks; a veritable polymath who can debate with scholars, hold his own in a fight, track and kill wild game, craft music and poetry, and display any number of other skills. Many of these tasks he achieves without the use of magic; nevertheless, he has many useful and utilitarian spells as well.

SICERO, FOLLOWER OF TREMERE

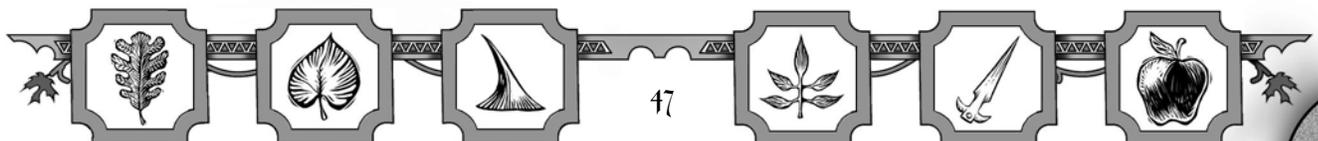
Age: 23 (Journeyman)

Personality Traits:

Keen to Impress +2,
Confident +1,
Quiet +1



Sicero is the recently Gauntleted filius of Goliard, a famed member of the Stonehenge Tribunal. He secured membership at Triamore based on his mater's recommendations, and it remains to see whether he lives up to them.



Chapter Six

The Black Forest

The largest forest in western Europe, the Black Forest lies in the south-west of the Rhine Tribunal, and is an impenetrable and sinister faerie wilderness almost completely untouched by human civilization. From north to south, it is over 100 miles long and up to 40 miles across. The tree-covered heights loom ominously above the broad and cultivated valley of the Rhine to the west, punctuated by a handful of small rivers that lead tortuously up into hidden and steep-sided valleys and canyons. The contrast in altitude on the eastern fringe is less marked where the forest is interrupted by the River Neckar and gradually gives way to the rolling hills of the Swabian upland.

The whole of the forest is hilly, with the highest peaks in the southern stretches, although the treeline is unbroken. The densely packed trees, steep slopes, and

sudden precipitous drops make entering into and attempting to navigate through it a formidable prospect. There are no clearings and few stretches of level ground. Oak and beech trees are prevalent among the lower slopes and outer edges of the forest, but in the center and the higher reaches the fir is dominant. These trees cluster together oppressively, allowing little light through the forest canopy — no sunlight reaches the gloomy forest floor. This is the refuge of bears, boars, and deer, and many types of stranger beasts. Dark and malevolent creatures, including bockmen, goblins, oversized bats, and worse lurk amongst the trees and hunt at night. Legends speak of the King of the Black Mountain, who lives in a great fortress on the highest peak. None who have seen him have ever returned to tell the tale. Villagers who stray too far into

the woods have a habit of vanishing without trace, never to be seen again. Those strange few who manage to sustain an existence within the forest are also somewhat dark and sinister — some say these folk are half-fay themselves.

There are only a few villages that have penetrated the outer edges of the Black Forest, as well as about a dozen monasteries. With the two alternative monastic principles of eremitism (living a solitary life in the wilderness) and coenobitism (living in a community), the seclusion of the forest is attractive to religious orders, despite its dangers. Apart from the auras of these monasteries and a couple of other notable sites (see below) — islands of divine or magic power in a sea of faerie wilderness — the entire forest has a Faerie aura of 3.

The Origins of the Black Forest Spirits

The Black Forest was originally just the southwestern portion of the great Hercynian Forest, until the construction of the limes by the Romans — the first fracturing of the Forest — separated it from the rest. The vastly powerful magical spirit of the forest therefore also fractured into two, with a lesser genius locus of the Black Forest arising at its geographic center at the Glade of the Seven Waterfalls. From their base of operations at a temple at the later site of Durenmar, the Roman Cult of Mercury, in their attempts to harness the primeval power of the forest, succeeded in binding this spirit to a pact of their devising, trapping it by its own powers to enforce the swearing of oaths. In agreeing to surrender much of its power to them, it secured a binding promise that the Black Forest would remain unviolated. Reduced in potency, the spirit withdrew its presence to the Glade of the Seven Waterfalls.

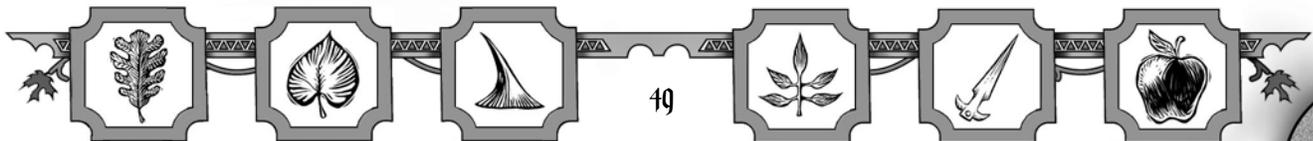
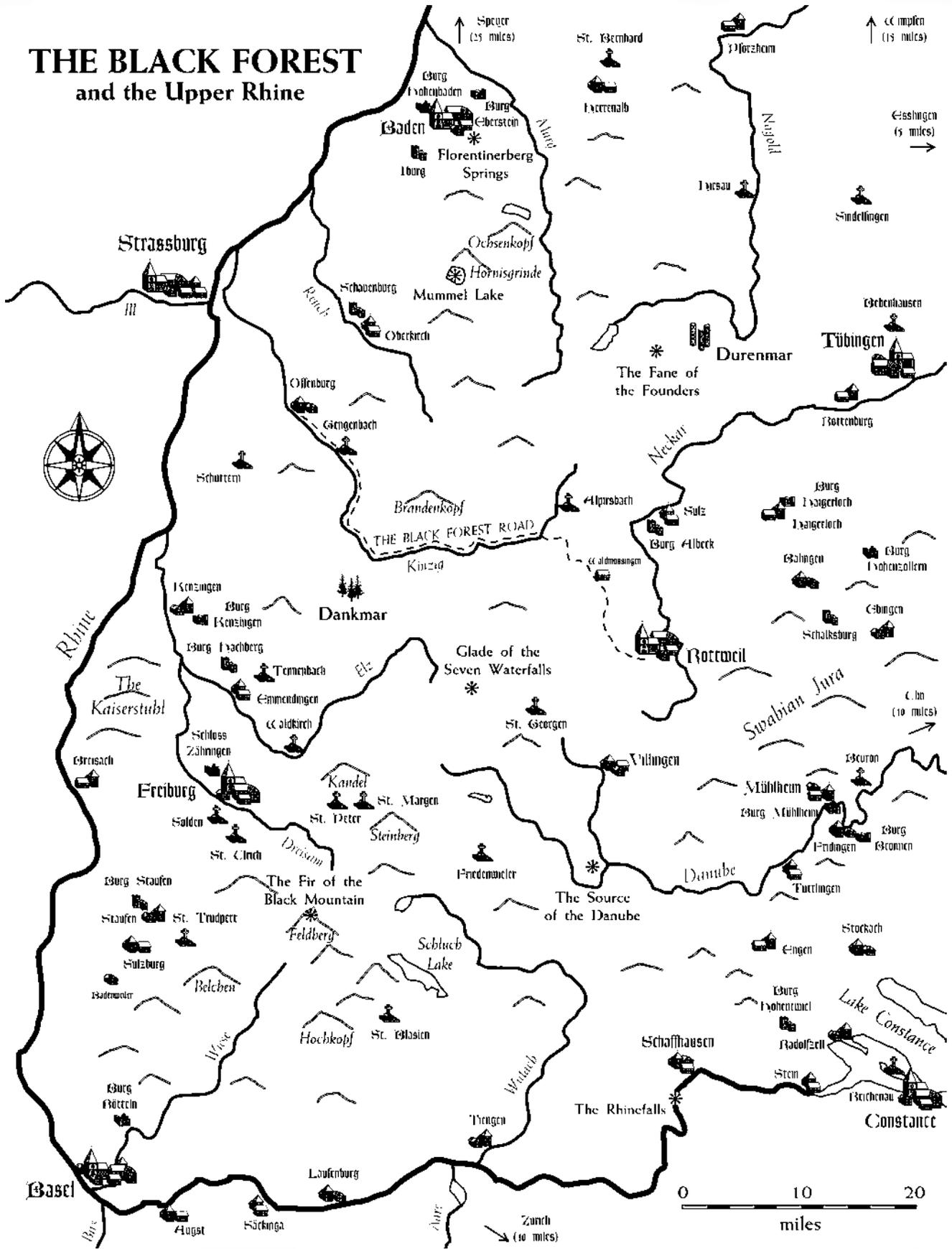
This attempt to impose order and control onto a primeval spirit of the wild was not completely successful. Part of the genius locus — that aspect representing the fundamentally alien and uncontrollable nature of the forest — rebelled and splintered from the whole. It retreated away to the southern and most inaccessible stretches of the Black Forest, and dwindled there. However, as human settlement sprung up around the edges of the forest, and people intruded in, stories inevitably grew about the dark, secret reaches of the forest. Thus, the fragmentary spirit did not fade entirely, but instead began to grow anew, feeding on the fears of mortals, warping and acquiring a dark faerie nature. Thus was the King of the Black Mountain born, growing to extend his control over all those areas left empty by the withdrawal of the parent spirit to the Glade of the Seven Waterfalls.

The Black Forest Road

The only road across the Black Forest starts in the town of Offenburg, at the western edge, follows the valley of the River Kinzig along most of its route, and connects to Rottweil on the eastern side. In the first century AD, during the rule of the Roman emperor Vespasian, the 8th legion, under the command of Cornelius Clemens, built this road to shorten the distance between Argentoratum (Strasbourg) and Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg) in Raetia. The construction of the road was difficult in such an unforgiving environment, but the legion was aided by Mercurian priests, who erected magical milestones along the route, with the power to ward away the supernatural denizens of the forest.

Nowadays, the road is in a poor state of repair, with the crumbling remains of Roman paving weathered and overgrown, but it remains the only feasible way to get a wagon or cart through the forest. The central stretch of the road, nearly 30 miles

THE BLACK FOREST and the Upper Rhine



The King Fir of the Black Forest

Faerie Might: 90

Personality Traits: Malicious +5, Secretive +3, Vengeful +3

Special Powers: Control Weather, Grant Flaw (many, including Depressed, Fear, Lamé, and No Sense of Direction), Grant Victory (very seldom used), Grant Virtue (unknown, very seldom used), Possession, Regio, Shroud

The ruling spirit of the largest forest in western Europe is to be found in its southern stretches, atop its highest peak, the Feldberg, although his malign influence is felt throughout the whole of the Black Forest. Surrounded by impenetrable swathes of fir and impossible slopes, the only route to the mountain is via a tortuous and haunted valley named *Höllental* (Hell Valley) which winds upwards from the center of the forest. The peak of the Feldberg is bare, apart from a great, dark fir tree — no mortal who sets sight on it may ever leave the forest. The spirit, known as the King of the Black Mountain, is reputed to be a great black-cloaked man with a terrible countenance. He maintains a huge dungeon beneath his mountain, where hundreds of human slaves toil endlessly — those poor souls unfortunate enough to have strayed too deeply into his domain. There are multiple levels to the regio at the Feldberg, which have a Faerie aura from between 3 and 8.

Several other dark faerie courts exist within the Black Forest, but the King of the Black Mountain is the undisputed dread ruler of them all. However, his dominion does not extend over the Glade of the Seven Waterfalls or the Fane of the Founders. Since he lacks the qualities and powers of the original genius locus of the Black Forest, these sites are fundamentally unknowable to him and beyond his grasp. Nevertheless, he is twisted with his desire for revenge against those who bound the original spirit and longs to become whole again. He thus seeks the destruction of Durenmar, knowing it to be the home of those responsible for his fate; were it to be destroyed, the ritual at the Fane would go unrenewed, thereby releasing the magical spirit from its oath, which he might then be able to dominate and subsume.

Bockman

Faerie Might: 20 (Animal)

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

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Ways of the Forest

Personality Traits: Malicious +3, Brave -1

Combat:

Claws: Init +9, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +3 (includes bonus for *Ways of the Forest*)

Soak: +5

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

Abilities: Athletics 3 (leaping), Awareness 3 (forests), Black Forest Lore 6 (roads), Brawl 3 (claws), Second Sight 4 (glamors), Stealth 3 (forests), Survival 6 (forests)

Powers:

Faerie Nature: As a faerie, the bockman does not suffer from Fatigue, nor is it affected by diseases or old age. All faeries also have the Second Sight Virtue, and gain the benefits or penalties of any supernatural aura when using their faerie powers, according to the Realm Interaction table (see ArM5, page 183).

Vulnerability to Iron: Weapons made from iron do an extra 2 points of damage to the bockman.

The Patient Stance, 0 points, Init n/a, Imaginem: Whilst remaining motionless, the bockman cannot be distinguished from the surrounding vegetation; it is effectively invisible. This power only works in forests.

Unease of the Still Forest, 2 point per hour, Init n/a, Mentem: The bockman can radiate an aura of unease for up to 100 paces from its current location. The aura causes birds to stop singing, and an unnatural silence strikes the area of effect. This aura causes a growing feeling of dread to all within it; tempers become frayed, and people become para-

noid and jumpy. For every hour subjected to this aura, a person suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to Personality Traits involving bravery or positive action, and it similarly enhances those such as Short-Tempered and Suspicious. No sleep can be gained while under the effects of the aura, and no Fatigue can be regained.

Fear, 4 points, Init +2, Mentem: The victims of this power suffer an overwhelming dread, and if they fail a stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 6 (modified by a Brave Personality Trait), they will run in fear until exhausted, or (if unable to run), will collapse in a quivering heap until the sun rises. If the bockman uses this power when it may be seen, then anyone who sees it can be affected (up to ten people); otherwise it can affect only one target.

Vis: 1 pawn of Animal vis, in the right horn; 1 pawn of Mentem vis, in the left horn

Appearance: Although human in shape, the only thing remotely human in appearance is its chest and arms. It has the head and legs of a goat. The horns are usually backwards-curving and sharp. Its feral eyes and slaving jaws (filled with sharp teeth) strike fear in the bravest hearts.

These horrible faeries lurk near the paths through the Black Forest, waiting to ambush travelers. They usually use their *Unease of the Still Forest* to spook their victims and their mounts, before leaping out from concealment and unleashing their *Fear* power. They are physically weak in combat, and notoriously cowardly themselves; their main purpose (which is successful) is to discourage travelers through the forest. They nearly always work alone, and can be found in many of the oldest forests in Germany.

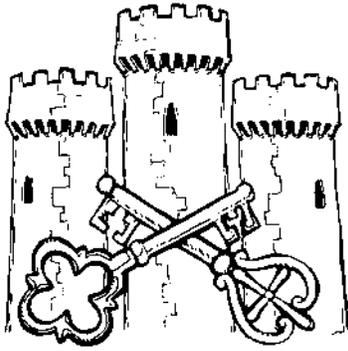
long, between the monastery of Gengenbach in the west to Waldmössingen (an isolated village at the site of ruined Roman fort) in the east, is uninterrupted by any signs of human civilization. With good weather, this can typically be traversed in two days, but the necessity of spending at least one night in the middle of the forest is unavoidable. For this rea-

son, and for fear of the sinister fae therein, the road is seldom used. Wise travelers make camp by the Roman milestones, and do not stray from their protection.

Crossing the forest elsewhere is all but impossible, except perhaps for a hardy and well-protected group on foot, with experienced woodsmen. Even then, it is a journey of weeks through perilous terrain.



Durenmar



I arrived for the first time at the Oldest Covenant, the supposed heart of the Order of Hermes itself. Durenmar! I must have heard the name over a thousand times. The stories told of a mighty fortress filled with riches, a thriving congress of magi dedicated to the unity of the Order, and of magics of immense power. So it was with heady excitement that I emerged from the hidden forest path to the covenant in its secluded valley. In

the first instant my breath was indeed taken away, as this place is undoubtedly beautiful as told. But in the next moment I found myself thinking: Is this all there is? There is no great fortress here, and the towers of the magi hardly reach to the sky! I was expecting overt displays of the Art — there were none — although even an unGifted soul such as myself could feel the residual magic in the air.

Nonplussed, I was shown to the guest quarters, which are comfortable, but hardly palatial. There appeared to be no obvious defenses to speak of, although being so well hidden, I daresay mundane fortifications are hardly needed. The covenant folk seem mostly old and very eccentric, and have very little to do with the magi. Some claim to have never even seen certain of them, despite having lived there for decades, if you can believe that. On the other side of the valley, where all but a chosen few of the covenant folk are forbidden to tread, stand the Three Towers. Clearly the power and secrets of this place are stored away there...

When I was eventually taken, past the Forum, to the Great Library, the mystery of the seeming emptiness of this place was uncovered. Here is where the magi are! As I ascended through the tower, past countless rows of neatly-stacked books, a dozen pairs of eyes looked up surreptitiously from

their weighty tomes. It was then that it occurred to me: It is not some empty ideal of unity, nor some rose-tinted historical pilgrimage which draws magi to this place... It is knowledge itself.

— Horst of House Mercere,
Fengheld Covenant

Durenmar, the domus magna of House Bonisagus and the oldest covenant in the Order of Hermes, is the meeting place for gatherings of the Rhine Tribunal and the Grand Tribunal, and is home to the Great Library, the repository of collected knowledge of House Bonisagus and the largest collection of Hermetic books that exists. Durenmar likes to consider itself as the center of the Order of Hermes, both traditionally and politically. While it remains greatly respected, largely due to its inseparable association with House Bonisagus, in truth its power and influence are waning somewhat, both within the Rhine Tribunal and further afield. Its Bonisagus magi look inwards, and most of the covenant members are preoccupied with their own research, leaving the neglected infrastructure to slowly crumble. The majority of Durenmar's magi belong to House Bonisagus, and most other members of that House visit at least once during their lifetime.

The Glade of the Seven Waterfalls

Magic Might: 80

Personality Traits: Enigmatic +4, Wise +3

Special Powers: Grant Virtue (Clear Thinker), Guide, Oath-Swearing, Regio, Shroud

Deep in the center of the Black Forest a stream tumbles down through a precipitous valley over a series of seven waterfalls. The only route to the glade at the top is up a narrow path alongside the stream, through stands of hazel and beech. Unlike King Fir, which dominates elsewhere, the spirit of the glade — the remnant of the forest's original genius locus — is peaceful. However, she will only allow those who have completed a Quest to make the ascent of each waterfall — each of which corresponds to a level of the regio — with a different task required for each level. As the visitor ascends past each waterfall and into the next regio level, he is granted a new level of understanding into the Forest. Should any reach the top level, they achieve a complete and harmonious understanding of the Forest.

Since the site has never been found, or at least no-one has ever told of its finding, its exact nature is a matter of speculation. Bonisagus magi of the lineage of Hercynius believed in the existence of a site that the Mercurian priests, and later Bonisagus, were seeking. Some magi prophesize that one will be destined to discover the glade and will be granted godlike powers. Alternatively, the original spirit might have dwindled entirely and have been replaced by that of a powerful Hermetic maga passed into Final Twilight, perhaps even the Founder Merinita, who waits patiently to reveal her secrets to one who is deemed worthy.

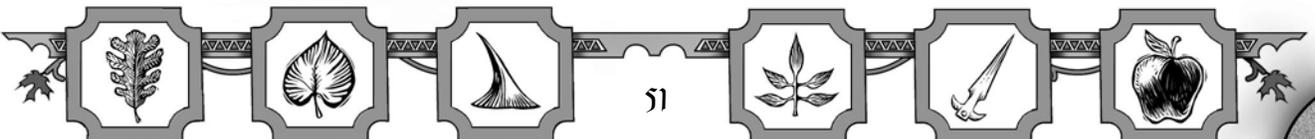
STORY SEED: THE GLADE'S SECRETS

Once the site is discovered, ascent of the waterfalls may become a long-term goal for a magus who wishes to explore the Forest Paths. In order to complete the ascent, the spirit should assign the magus a series of Sacrifices and Quests of increasing difficulty. For example, the Sacrifices might involve successively losing parts of their Hermetic magic (acquisition of Hermetic Flaws), and each Quest might be to gather an artifact from another forest.

History

Around 754 AD, the Founder Bonisagus moved from his Alpine cave to the site of a small Roman temple deep within the Black Forest. His intent, not fully revealed even to his closest followers, was to try to harmonize the new Hermetic system with the most ancient and primeval of magics, the secret of which he believed lay hidden in the forests of northern Europe. In 767, the founding of the Order of Hermes was declared and the first Tribunal was held. In the following years, all of Bonisagus' followers and some of the Founders stayed and buildings were erected on the site. Durenmar formed the model for subsequent early covenants that were founded throughout Europe.

Much of its history since the Founding relates closely to the history of the Tribunal itself. A perennial Autumn covenant (though it appears to be on the verge of slipping into Winter), Durenmar has stayed much the same, immune to many of the changes in the wider world in its forest isolation. It has never needed to defend itself against mundane attacks; the only threats



have been enemies from within the Order (most notably, during the Schism War) and the fay of the Black Forest.

Durenmar's fall from its greatness of the early years of the Order can be traced from the events of the Schism War: the failed diplomacy of House Bonisagus and the exiling of Hercynius (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, History). The Hercynian magi of the Waldherz chapter ensured a largely harmonious relationship with the Black Forest (and many of its fay denizens). Since their eradication, however, the magi of Durenmar have been largely ignorant of the faerie woodlands that surround their covenant. Relations with these fay began to deteriorate into animosity, and in 1081 magi of Durenmar accused Dankmar at Tribunal of secretly being in league with them and of stirring up trouble, although no charges were proven. Their worst fears were realized in 1085, when a major raid against Durenmar by forces of the King of the Black Mountain, the powerful faerie lord of the Black Forest (see above), resulted in the death or capture of a number of Bonisagus magi and many covenfolk. None of those captured were ever returned and their fate remains unknown to this day. Recovering from this attack in the following years, several brilliant magi invented the most powerful version of the spell *Aegis of the Hearth* yet, thwarting further direct faerie attacks against their covenant.

In the first half of the 12th century, Durenmar lost access to a number of magical sites, due in part to the increased settlement activity of the Zähringen dukes of Swabia. Experiencing a shortage of vis, and bolstered in confidence by the increased strength of their magical defense, the magi began searching the surrounding forest anew for vis, soon turned to relentless and greedy raiding. In 1151, Dankmar accused Durenmar at Tribunal of faerie molestation and of plundering faerie sites of the Black Forest, thereby making the forest a hazard for magi. Despite Dankmar's lack of influence and the great prestige of Durenmar, this claim was successfully prosecuted, with the rare support of both the Hawthorn and Elder Gilds. They were fined a rook of vis to every other covenant in the Tribunal and restricted from further harvesting from faerie sites for fourteen years, unless a peace was made with the fay (which it never was). To this day, Durenmar has still not fully recovered from this landmark defeat and the tarnish to its reputation.

Recent decades have seen a gradual decline in the fortunes of the covenant; the lack of research breakthroughs has caused disillusionment; some promising magi have left, whilst others have been lost to old age or Final Twilight. At the same time, the Tribunal has become fractured, with Durenmar's leadership increasingly ineffective. Meanwhile, Fengheld has quietly grown to become the largest and arguably most powerful covenant of the Tribunal.

Setting and Physical Description

Durenmar is nestled at the floor of a steep-sided valley some 15 miles within the northern Black Forest, surrounded by a great expanse of undulating woodland. The natural geography of the place affords a good measure of protection by itself — the only sensible means of access is from lower down the valley. Here, the covenant maintains a guard post, which is enchanted with protective magics to hide the track of three miles leading to the covenant. It is very seldom that unwanted mundane eyes catch sight of the towers of the magi, which lie below the treeline of the forest outside the valley, although exaggerated rumors persist in the monastery of Hirsau (see below), about 15 miles to the north, of the "hidden city of sorcerers."

The covenant consists of a number of buildings spread over a large clearing, divided in two by a small river — little more than a stream. There are no physical fortifications to speak of (the covenant relies instead on seclusion and magical defense). The principal buildings are the Forum of Hermes and the three towers. Viewed from the north side of the valley, and set against the dramatic backdrop of the steep rocky and forested slopes, the ancient vine-covered towers form a scenic picture that is famous throughout the Order, conveying an impression of peaceful idyll. The quarters for the covenfolk and guests are a jumble of buildings of various ages and states of repair.

A Magic aura of 7 is present over the clearing, and it is protected by a very high magnitude *Aegis of the Hearth*.

THE TOWER OF BONISAGUS

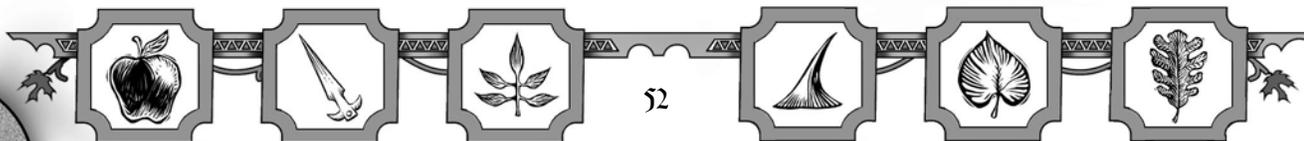
More commonly known as The Great Library, this 450-year-old tower

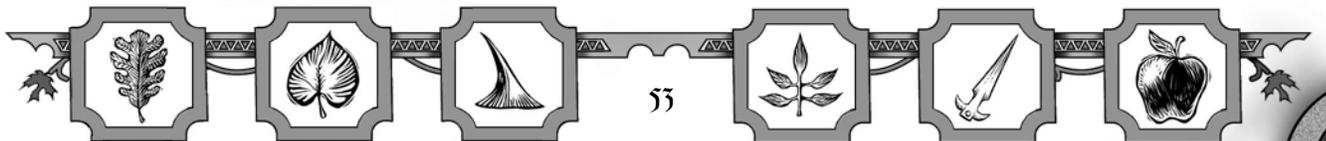
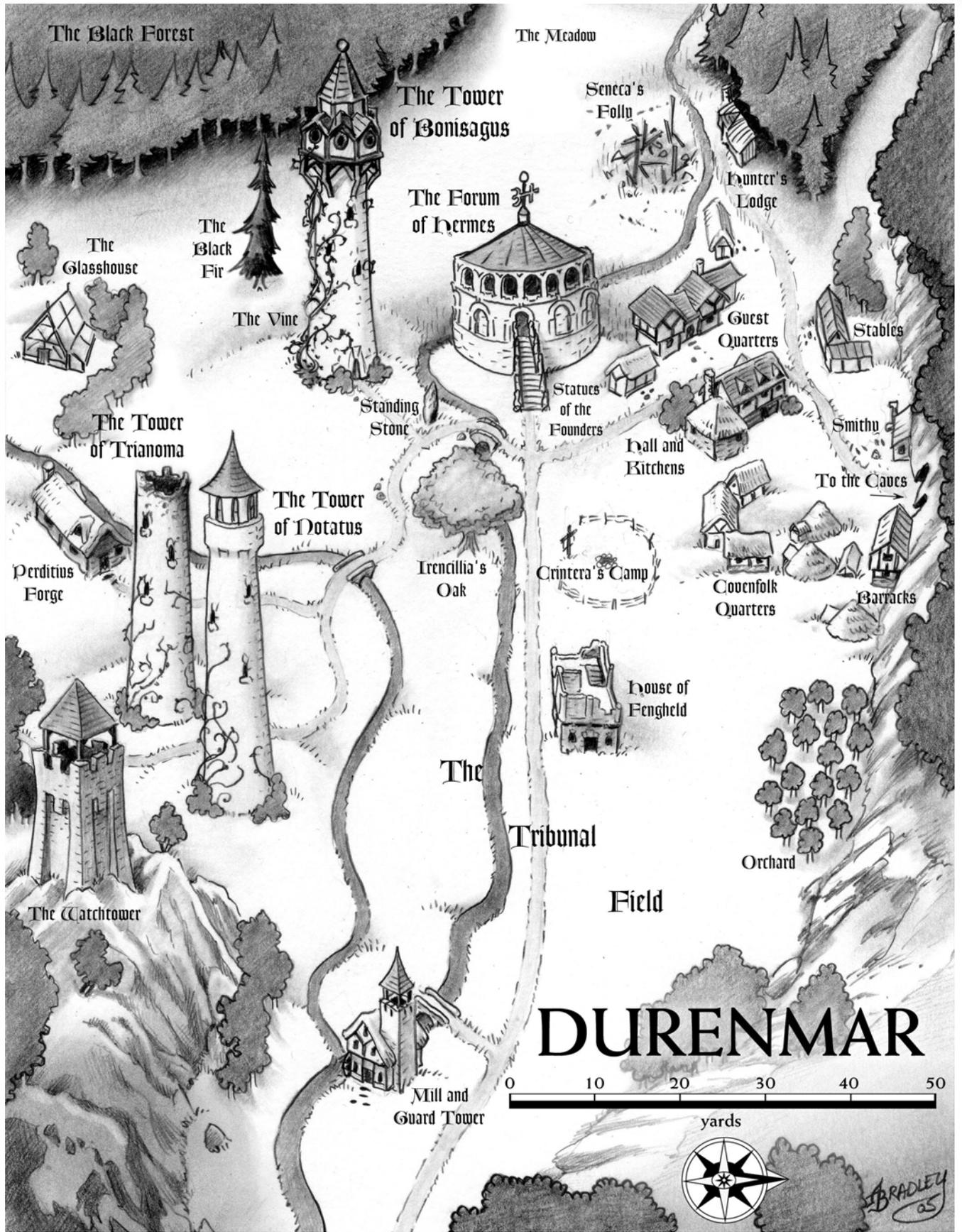
houses what is undoubtedly the greatest collection of Hermetic books ever assembled. It was created by the first ever casting of the ritual spell *Conjuring the Mystic Tower* by the Founder Bonisagus himself. The success of this spell set the template for the other two towers at Durenmar, created decades later by his successors, and numerous others in covenants throughout Europe. The tower is perfectly round, 80 feet high, and 30 feet across, with seven floors above ground and two basement levels. Each of the floors is of ideal proportions for a Hermetic laboratory and living quarters — the purpose for which the building was originally used before the library grew to occupy it entirely. It remains perfectly proportioned and structurally sound — if somewhat weathered by the centuries — a testament to Bonisagus' skill. It is rumored that if his tower should ever fall, so will the Order of Hermes also fall. The entire tower is enchanted with protective magics to prevent all forms of natural decay to the books inside.

At the base of the tower grows a huge and ancient magical vine, rumored to have originally been planted as by the Founder Merinita, as a gift to Bonisagus. It spreads up and around the entire height of the tower, branching often, and in sections actually winding inside the building — here the interior design is adjusted to accommodate it. The vine does not damage or degrade the stonework of the tower — it almost seems respectful of the structure. The magi of Durenmar, in turn, revere the vine (although the smell of the blossom in the spring can be cloying) and carefully harvest its sap (which is a golden-green color) as precious Intellego vis. Merinita magi like to think of the vine as being symbolic of their faerie magic — a flavor distinct from the Hermetic, a living, natural power with the potential to suffocate and conquer Hermetic magic, yet which chooses instead to twine within and coexist harmoniously. The plant is however magical, not fae in nature, since Merinita herself did not practice faerie magic.

THE BLACK FIR

The Black Fir is a slightly ominous-looking tree that stands alone a short distance from the Great Library. Despite being ignored by most of the magi (although they happily tolerate its presence, on account of the pine cones worth Perdo vis that are greedily collected every year), the fir is key to a sinister faerie plot





of revenge. More than a century ago, relations between Durenmar and the fay of the Black Forest had reached an all-time low (see above). Attempts at direct retribution by the King of the Black Mountain against Durenmar for their plundering were thwarted, due to their new and mighty *Aegis of the Hearth*, and so he was left to ponder alternative plans.

Around this time, the fir began to grow at the edge of the forest adjacent to the covenant, which marks the maximum extent of the Aegis. When the magi discovered that it was a valuable source of vis, they later adjusted their Aegis boundary so that the tree was just inside, under its protection. Thus were the defenses of Durenmar breached, and the rest was and is merely a question of time. Through the intervening decades, the Black Fir has both grown and slowly inched its way across the meadow, at the rate of about six inches a year, in the direction of the Tower of Bonisagus. The movement of the tree is so slow that it has passed unnoticed; indeed, its original discovery has passed out of living memory — in the minds of the current magi of Durenmar, the fir seems an immemorial constant. What exactly will happen when the fir finally reaches the tower — or the vine — is unknown. However, given that the revenge of the King of the Black Mountain has taken centuries to enact, the consequences for Durenmar are likely to be severe, perhaps even epic in scale.

THE TOWER OF NOTATUS

The Tower of Notatus was conjured by and named after the first Primus of House Bonisagus. It was also created by *Conjuring the Mystic Tower*, yielding a building of identical proportions to the Tower of Bonisagus. It houses most of the Bonisagus magi at Durenmar, who have some of the most well-equipped and highly specialized labs in the Order. The top two floors are the sanctum of Murion; the lower is her laboratory and the top floor is reserved for her living quarters and an opulent meeting chamber, where important matters are discussed with some of her closest advisors and allies. In the basement of the tower are two excellent laboratories that are often used when two or more magi wish to work together outside their sancta, for covenant projects, or for the communal teaching of apprentices. If not already in use by magi of Durenmar or resident peregrinators (which is commonly the case), a visiting magus with the status of master or archmage may be per-

mitted to use the laboratory for a season, albeit with a charge of at least five pawns of vis. (There are also two small standard laboratories among the guest quarters across the river that can be used for the lesser fee of two pawns of vis per season each, when not occupied by resident peregrinators.)

THE TOWER OF TRIANOMA

This tower, again conjured using the same ritual spell, is the youngest of the three (although still centuries old) and was named not after the magus who originally cast the spell, but in honor of Trianoma (the maga who worked to bring the Founders together with Bonisagus). It is now shorter than the other two towers, with a crooked and ruined top, the top two floors having been destroyed by a long-forgotten magical accident and never reconstructed. This tower houses the sancta of Bonisagus magi of Trianoma's lineage and some of the covenant members not of House Bonisagus. It has several basement levels, most of which are occupied by House Mercere and comprise one of the Rhine's two official Mercer Houses (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*), a center of Redcap activity for the southern stretches of the Tribunal, as well as two additional sancta that house peregrinator magi.

OTHER BUILDINGS

The first building that visitors reach when they arrive at the covenant proper is a mill, topped with a small guard tower. Newcomers are greeted here by the turb of Durenmar, and a bell is rung to signify the arrival of a magus.

Not far from the Tower of Bonisagus is a large standing stone that was erected by Notatus at the site where the first ever casting of the *Aegis of the Hearth* ritual, which he invented, took place. Visitors to the covenant need to be officially welcomed to the covenant and granted a token so that they will not suffer the usual spellcasting penalty caused by the Aegis, and this occurs at this stone.

When he first came to Durenmar to study with Bonisagus, the Founder Verditius built himself a laboratory not far from the Tower of Bonisagus. Verditius' Forge still stands and traditionally houses the Artificer (see below) of Durenmar. It is an unobtrusive structure, partially underground, covered by a grassy bank on one side leading up to its roof.

Durenmar's Protector (see below) occupies the Watchtower — a square two-story fortified stone building in a commanding position atop the cliffs overlooking the valley. Philippus Niger, the current occupant (see below), built this dwelling set apart from the main valley in order to prevent his familiar from inadvertently withering Durenmar's vegetation. Nevertheless, the Watchtower stands in a small patch of blasted ground, surrounded by dead trees.

Seneca's Folly is a jumble of ancient and overgrown timber beams that has been untouched for many decades. Seneca was a crazed magus who was obsessed with the idea of building the tallest tower in the world. During the construction of the huge wooden edifice he suffered a massive magical botch that sent him into Final Twilight, and which caused his half-built tower to collapse in ruins, killing numerous covenfolk and his apprentice. Nowadays, Seneca is a semi-legendary figure and the story of his tower is used as a cautionary tale to urge prudence on apprentices.

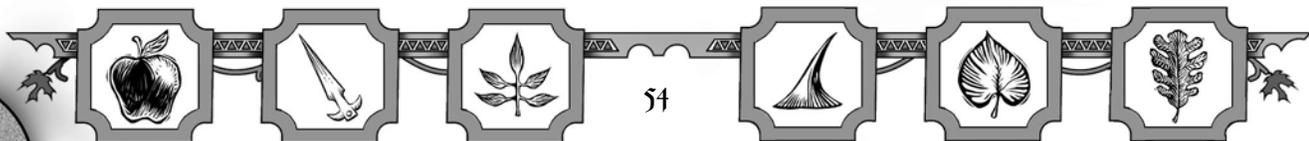
At the upper end of the clearing is a small hunter's lodge by the side of a narrow path leading deeper into the Black Forest. The covenant maintains a small band of expert huntsmen who make forays into the nearby woodlands to hunt for both vis and game.

Underneath the cliffs on the north side of the clearing is a series of caves of indeterminate extent, which few have explored in detail. According to some of the more far-fetched stories, it is believed the magi of Durenmar have enslaved a band of gnomes deep within who toil away endlessly to mine precious stones for wealth and vis.

The Forum of Hermes and the Tribunal Field, relating to Tribunal gatherings, are discussed in Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Tribunal Gatherings.

Culture and Traditions

The Prima of House Bonisagus, currently Murion, leads the covenant and also has influence over the political and research priorities of her House as a whole, in which she is assisted by other prominent magi. The current leadership of Durenmar is dominated by Bonisagus magi with a distaste for exotic magics — the prevailing wisdom is that the House should enhance and purify the existing Hermetic theory, rather than pollute it by



incorporating other, inferior, styles of magic. Consequently there is an intolerance of hedge wizardry and those outside the Order. Those texts in the Great Library dealing with such subjects are hidden from public view, and only the House elders are permitted access. Critics claim that this inward-looking philosophy will only cause the House and covenant to stagnate further. Some also say that Murion has stepped beyond her bounds by directing research rather than guiding it. At covenant meetings, the proxy sigils of retired magi held by many of Durenmar's members are deemed valid, provided that the retired magus was a former member of Durenmar. The covenant is not dominated by politics, however; for most of the magi, Durenmar remains a place of quiet refuge and research, rather than a hotbed of intrigue. Further information on the organization of House Bonisagus is revealed in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*.

The entire south side of the valley, where the sancta of the magi are to be found, is reserved for magi. Only the most trusted covenfolk are permitted to set foot here — those few that personally serve the magi. Being selected for such duty is considered a high honor, as the other covenfolk with more menial duties typically have no regular contact with them. Many functions (such as heating, lighting, cleanliness) are performed with the aid of (or directly by) magic items. Meals and other daily necessities are magically transported from the kitchens directly to the towers.

Durenmar does not currently have any chapter houses, although it has in the past.

STUDYING IN THE GREAT LIBRARY

The Great Library is the repository of the collected knowledge of House Bonisagus, which they have sworn to share with the Order, meaning that in principle, all magi are allowed access. However the magi of Durenmar long ago decided on an additional principle that also applies, namely "those who study from the Great Library must also contribute to the Great Library." This has the dual effect of ensuring that the library is continually growing (indeed, this is the main reason why it has grown to be the Order's greatest) and of keeping the number of visitors down to a manageable level. Even so, in any given season there may be around a dozen magi deep in study in the tower: some members of

Durenmar, others from the Rhine Tribunal, and a couple of magi from further afield. The library is undoubtedly the greatest draw of the covenant, and some magi are willing to travel great distances to Durenmar so that they may be able to read some of the most valuable or unique tomes. A request for a copy of a lab text or spell may also be sent by Redcap, although the request must be accompanied by a payment of vis to cover the cost of scribing. However, the covenant is notoriously slow at fulfilling such requests.

For each new contribution to the Great Library, a magus is permitted to study freely there for two seasons. At the discretion of the librarian, additional seasons of credit may be granted for exceptional contributions, such as weighty summae. He also decides which contributions are accepted — there is little need for low-level or mediocre-Quality summae, or common spells, since the library already has a glut of such texts. Tractatus and new spells (even if they are only subtle variants of existing spells) are usually welcomed. The contributor need not be the original author of the text — copies are accepted. Such copies can be scribed in the library, for which materials are provided.

Instead of contributing a tome or spell, a magus may instead gain a single season of credit by volunteering for a season of copying. (There is always a backlog of such work that needs to be done.) This is, however, considered demeaning duty suitable only for apprentices, who typically earn credit in this way during their seasons of stay at Durenmar.

In practice, there is a way for magi to evade the necessity of contributing to the library: a suitable quantity of vis offered as a "donation" will usually be accepted by the librarian as a substitute. These bribes are never officially acknowledged by Durenmar, but they form a useful supplement to their dwindling vis income.

The contribution requirement is exempted for those who only wish to consult lab notes or the Tribunal records. House Bonisagus and members of the covenant are also exempt from all these requirements and may study for as many seasons as they wish. However, there remains an incentive for members of House Bonisagus to scribe up their discoveries (aside from altruism, personal glory, and the expectation of their peers): contribution to the Great Library is generally considered sufficient fulfillment of their Hermetic Oath to share their knowledge. If they do not, they can legitimate-

Story Seeds: The Great Library

There are a number of ways in which the Great Library can be used as the starting point for adventures. Magi are often in search for a scrap of forgotten knowledge or rare tomes as part of a story, and the library is an obvious place to look. If the material being searched for is sufficiently exotic or non-Hermetic, the librarian is likely to be somewhat less than helpful ... How will the magi be able to persuade him to allow them access to those texts within his sanctum? In reading through an old book, or perhaps the lab notes of an ancient magus, characters may discover an obscure reference to forgotten artifacts, lore, or legends. The Great Library is also an ideal location for a chance meeting with a magus from a distant Tribunal.

ly be pestered by other magi for details of their research, but if their work is already in the library, interested parties can instead be referred there and need not trouble them further.

It is not surprising that some of Durenmar's greatest books are in high demand, and so it often happens that two magi desire access to the same tome in the same season. The usual privilege of rank applies. For magi of the same rank, Bonisagus and members of Durenmar are always given priority. Otherwise, if neither gracefully accedes, certamen is an accepted means of resolving the dispute. However, a handful of the most popular tomes of all have had a second copy made.

Visitors to the Great Library are not permitted to take its books outside its walls, nor to copy them, without the explicit permission of the librarian. Permanent members of Durenmar may take the Lab Texts to their own laboratories, but even they are expected to study other books within the Great Library. At his discretion, Durenmar may occasionally trade tomes on a like-for-like basis. Needless to say, the greatest summae are only ever traded with highly trusted magi or covenants, if at all.

THE CONTENTS OF THE GREAT LIBRARY

This is an outline of the contents of the Great Library. The storyguide should



feel free to adjust these numbers and determine levels and Qualities as best fits the saga. Bear in mind that it is the greatest library known to the Order of Hermes, and will contain many near-legendary texts. A magus' familiarity with its contents is reflected by his Durenmar Lore Ability.

Around the walls of the visitable floors of the tower are arrayed a series of sturdy oak tables, stacked high with books and scrolls, as well as large desks at which magi study. Many of the tomes are copies of originals penned by magi of renown centuries ago.

The First Floor: Upon entering the tower, one reaches the scriptorium, where books are scribed, bound, and copied. At one end is also an eclectic and disparate collection of mostly ancient mundane books, assembled from a variety of far-away places.

Endless stacks of lab notes (describing the obscure, forgotten, and incomplete research projects of long-dead magi — Lab Texts for completed projects are found on the second floor) sit here gathering dust, along with the voluminous complete records of gatherings of the Rhine Tribunal and Grand Tribunals since the Order's founding. A magus may spend a season in an effort to discover a set of lab notes relevant to a particular project or research interest. The success should be determined by an Intelligence + Magic Theory roll against an appropriate Ease Factor. If a magus wishes to consult the lab notes of a specified author, then no such roll is required; the relevant notes will likely be found after at most a few days of searching, unless access is restricted (see below).

A season spent painstakingly perusing the Tribunal records will allow a magus to catalog and extract all the entries pertaining to a specific narrow subject, covenant, or magus. (No roll is required.) To extract just one single relevant entry, or to consult a specific small section of the records, one Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore roll against an appropriate Ease Factor may be made per day of study, with a cumulative penalty of 1 point for each day after the first. Folios produced by House Bonisagus (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*) stretching back to the first discourses can also be found on this level.

A well-worn spiral staircase leads up, and most magi head straight for it.

The Second Floor: This floor contains many hundreds of Lab Texts, with copies for almost all standard spells (those listed in the Spells chapter of ArM5) and

many unique and unusual spells as well as many enchanted devices. (Many spells that have become "standard" throughout the Order did so precisely because they were written up in the Great Library, and became widely disseminated.) Here are also numerous tractatus on Spell Mastery Abilities.

To determine if a desired spell is available in the library, roll a stress die. The Ease Factor for standard spells is 3, or 6 for a specific version of a general-level standard spell up to level 40. The storyguide should assign an Ease Factor of

between 6 and 21 for non-standard spells. For standard spells, a failure indicates that a magus of higher rank or privilege is using the Lab Text in that season; a botch indicates that the spell does not exist in the library. If the roll matches the Ease Factor exactly, there is a magus of equal rank who also wishes to use that Lab Text in the same season: a certamen must be fought to gain the right. For non-standard spells, or specific versions of general-level standard spells, a failure indicates that the spell does not exist in the library; a botch indicates that a spell exists, but is discov-



ered to have a significant flaw or deviation from the desired effect. For all spells, for every full six points by which the roll exceeds the Ease Factor, there is also one tractatus dedicated to Mastery of the spell, with a Quality of a simple die plus 2.

For enchanted devices, roll a stress die. The Ease Factor is between 6 and 21, as for non-standard spells, but beating the Ease Factor means only that there is a Lab Text for an enchantment very similar to the one wanted. Only if the roll beats the Ease Factor by at least 6 is there a Lab Text for exactly the enchantment required.

The Third Floor: This level is dedicated to tractatus and summae on Abilities, principally Magic Theory, although books on other Arcane Abilities and the Arts can be found among the several hundred tomes.

A magus would need to read dozens of tractatus before he exhausted the supply of any particular Art. They vary widely; a typical Quality is between 3 and 9, with a maximum of about 12.

To determine the Quality of a studied tractatus, roll a simple die and add 2. Durenmar Lore may be added to this roll, if desired, but with a cumulative penalty of 1 point for each such previous use of Durenmar Lore in the same Art. It is suggested that the Quality should not exceed 12 (with 14 as the absolute limit).

The library's summae on the Arts and Arcane Abilities (including three copies of *Principia Magica*, the authority on Magic Theory written by Bonisagus) amount to well over a hundred books, many consisting of multiple volumes. They include at least one outstanding summa (of very high level and Quality) in each Art, and numerous others of varying level and Quality. For low-level summae, a typical Quality is between 6 and 15, with a maximum of about 24. For high-level summae, a typical Quality is between 6 and 9, with a maximum of about 12. There are only a couple of dozen Art summae with levels of 15 or more; levels of greater than 20 are virtually unheard of in the Order.

To determine whether a summa of a specified Art is available to a magus, roll a simple die and add 10. (Masters, Bonisagus magi, and members of Durenmar may add a further 3 to this roll. Archmagi may add a further 6. However, the total cannot exceed 20.) The Ease Factor is the desired level of the summa. A failure indicates that either such a high-level summa does not exist in the library (although there exist summae of at least level 17 for all fifteen Arts) or — more likely — that a magus of higher rank or

privilege is using the tome in that season. To find a summa on an Arcane Ability, roll a simple die only (do not add 10, or any further bonus) against the desired level; with failure indicating that the desired book does not exist. For either type, if the roll matches the Ease Factor exactly, there is a magus of equal rank who also wishes to read that tome in the same season: a certamen must be fought to gain the right. To determine the Quality of a summa in the library, roll a simple die and add 5. Durenmar Lore may be added to this roll, but with a cumulative penalty of 1 point for each such previous use of Durenmar Lore in the same Art or Ability. It is suggested that the Quality should not exceed 30 — the summa's level, or 24, whichever is lower (with 28 as the absolute limit).

The Fourth and Fifth Floors: Each of these floors is divided into two laboratories, for the use of magi who want to work from the many Lab Texts gathered in the library. The laboratories are somewhat cramped, but specially created equipment means that they can be used without penalty, and they are generally in high demand.

The Sixth and Seventh Floors: The top two floors of the tower consist of the sanctum of the librarian, and are thus off-limits, except at his invitation. His chambers house numerous miscellaneous magic books and those lab notes that are known to concern exotic theories and hedge magic traditions, to which access is heavily restricted.

The Basement: The basement levels of the tower are protected by a great iron trapdoor, which is magically enchanted. Here are safely kept many of the originals of the library's most precious tomes, of which only the copies upstairs may be consulted. Here are also Durenmar's vis stores, as well as countless magic items and "relics" (including some of the original possessions of the Founders).

Magi

There are currently ten Bonisagus magi at Durenmar, and five magi from other Houses, most of whom are described below. Storyguides should, however, feel free to change these magi or add to their numbers, should it suit the needs of your saga. Amongst those from other Houses, there is one who holds the honorary title of "Protector" (responsible for the martial defense of the covenant) and another who is designated "Artificer"

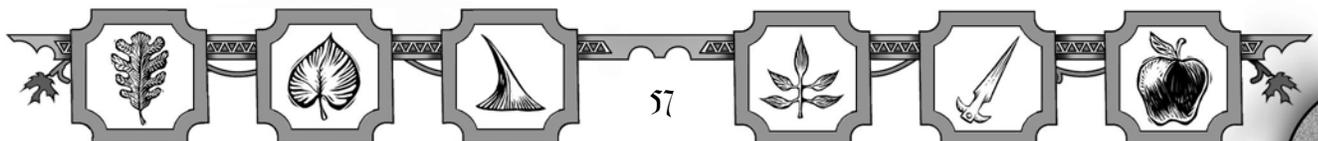
(whose duty is to craft items to contribute to the covenant's greatness). Traditionally, notable magi of Flambeau and Verditiis, respectively, either masters or archmagi, are chosen by the Primus and invited to join. There is also always at least one magus of House Guernicus present — Durenmar is usually home to the senior Quaesitor of the Tribunal. By tradition, a Gifted member of House Mercere is resident, and oversees the Mercer House. One or more Redcaps may also be found here at any given time — a well-traveled route is south to the Tribunal of the Greater Alps and to Harco in the Roman Tribunal, either via the Rorschach chapter on Lake Constance, the Copper Rooster inn in Basel, the covenant of Sinews of Knowledge, which has close and friendly relations with Durenmar, or directly by use of the Mercere Portal to Harco.

MURION, PRIMA OF HOUSE BONISAGUS

Age: 98 (Archmage)
Personality Traits: Loyal to Personal Agenda +3, Judgmental +2, Loyal to House Bonisagus +2



A haughty and overbearing woman, Murion wants to see Durenmar (and the Rhine Tribunal) restored to their rightful place of dominance in the Order. Although not her greatest priority, the plans of the Ash Gild to invade the Norse lands complement this ambition nicely: such a war would draw powerful magi and resources to the Tribunal, looted vis and artifacts would enrich it, and, ultimately, Hermetic colonization of the northlands would shift the geopolitical center of the



Order back towards the Rhine. Murion is well-versed in all of the Hermetic Arts, but is especially brilliant with Rego and Imaginem. She wears a great cloak of white feathers enchanted with illusionary powers, and conspiracy theories abound about the notable magi she may have impersonated, or the various schemes in which she may be involved. Her raven familiar, Kolkrabus, is occasionally dispatched to spy on the magi of Dankmar, and other perceived enemies (in disregard of the Code of Hermes). As both the Praeco of the Tribunal, holding the sigil of Bonisagus (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Tribunal Gatherings), and the leader of the largest gild, the Oak, Murion is unquestionably the most politically powerful maga in the Tribunal.

ANDRUS, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 61 (Master)
Personality Traits: Busy +3, Modest +1, Strong-Willed -1



Andrus, a thin and balding man with a perceptive and commanding stare, some forty years from his Gauntlet, is the first filius of Murion. He is a Colens Arcanorum (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*), jointly responsible for dissemination of the House's knowledge and research, and his onerous duties as librarian take up a lot of his time, distracting him from his research, meaning that he is always at the covenant. Since Andrus controls access to the Great Library, it is most unwise to annoy him. Politically, he is regarded as Murion's puppet, and is rumored to be preparing to challenge her for Archmagehood in the coming decade.

TANDALINE, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 78 (Master)
Personality Traits: Opaque +3, Blasé +1, Sympathetic +1



Tandaline, a pale and slender woman whose eyes appear to constantly shift color in a hypnotic fashion, has been acknowledged as a master of both Muto and Auram for several decades; she seeks further insight into her favored Form by the remarkable process of temporarily transforming herself into vapor. She is however of the politically-oriented lineage of Trianoma. She is the closest

confidante of Murion, who appointed her as a Tenens Occultorum (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*), and with whom her political inclinations coincide for the most part, although she is a free-thinking and well-respected maga in her own right. As part of her duties, Tandaline takes it upon herself to keep in written contact with many magi in her House, and she will exercise her considerable political connections to cause great trouble for anyone who is reported to be abusing a Bonisagus magus.

CAECILIUS, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: approximately 160 (Archmage)
Personality Traits: Diligent +3, Touchy +2, Indolent +1



Caecilius is the most venerable of Durenmar's magi, and he is acknowledged as the greatest living exponent of Intellego magics. Since being appointed a Quaesitor many years ago, his research has tended towards pushing the limits of the investigative rituals employed by House Guernicus. It is rumored that he initially rejected the title, but was eventually persuaded out of a sense of duty, since the Quaesitorial presence in the Tribunal was otherwise very weak. He remains a somewhat reluctant Quaesitor who is not exactly proactive in politics or enforcing the Code — although this may be in part due to his increasingly frequent Twilight episodes. However, when called upon to take action he reveals himself as a brilliant investigator and his genius has solved and thwarted numerous Hermetic crimes down the years. Caecilius has a spotless Hermetic record, which is notable given his great age, and at Tribunal adjudicates as the senior Quaesitor. His familiar is a silver-coated wolf.

OCCULTES, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 72 (Master)
Personality Traits: Friendly +3, Inquisitive +2, Showy +1



Occultes is a colorful man whose magical research concerns manuscripts and items of all kinds. He has succeeded in creating a small golem, which serves in his laboratory to limited effect, and has enchanted numerous magical texts and

quills. He gathers information from far and wide about noteworthy artifacts or strange magical practices. A significant minority of Bonisagus magi would prefer to see Occultes as Primus of their House instead of Murion, since he is the figure-head of a group of outward-looking magi who favor a more gentle and inclusive approach, allowing for the expansion of Hermetic magic by incorporating exotic techniques and hedge wizardry. He formerly served as librarian, but was relieved of that post by Avarret, the former Primus. However, he has since risen to become the leader of the Linden Gild instead. Although he no longer has access to the restricted texts in the library, he is well aware of the contents of these tomes. In fact, he quietly copied or relocated the most interesting ones to his own sanctum, which he secretly distributes to close allies with a relevant research interest. Murion tolerates the presence of Occultes at the covenant, but keeps a watchful eye over him. As he is an amiable fellow with modest political ambitions, she perceives that he does not pose much of a threat. Besides, acting against such a well-respected magus could cause the factional differences in the House to widen into a damaging schism, something she wishes to avoid.

RICARDUS CAESPIUS, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 56 (Master)
Personality Traits: Reclusive +3, Artistic +2, Intense +1



Ricardus lives somewhat apart from the other magi of Durenmar — his sanctum on the southern edge of the covenant is a large building whose walls are built mostly of glass. Given the expense and small size of 13th-century windows, it is a remarkable and unique construction, consisting of thousands of delicate lead-framed panes supported by wooden beams. This is a laboratory highly specialized in Herbam, and contains all manner of peculiar and exotic plants, from which Ricardus has managed to cultivate several different types of vis in a method akin to vis extraction. Although his work would seem to be of import, his efforts at communicating his discoveries are perceived to be lacking — or at least no-one can understand a word he says, despite his earnest and friendly manner. Regarded as little better than a hedge wizard by Murion and her followers, his continued

presence at Durenmar is only tolerated on account of his extreme usefulness in harvesting vis and regular contributions to the covenant's stores.

PETRUS VIRILIS,
FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 32 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits: Shy
+3, Rebellious +1,
Trusting -2



An otherwise mediocre magus, the most noteworthy thing about Petrus (much to his chagrin) is that he has a rather unique personal supply of vis — his semen is Vim vis. Quite how he came to acquire this remarkable property is not exactly clear, but is the subject of much speculation. Some reckon he has a faerie gift. Others recall his very liberal-minded mater Susanna (who has since entered Final Twilight) and her obsessive research interest into fertility and the Gift. Tandaline eventually cajoled him into an experiment, which resulted with him fathering a Gifted son on a serving maid (the child is now Tandaline's apprentice). Since then, on the orders of Prima Murion, he has fathered a further four children, all of them Gifted (those of them born at Durenmar sons, due to a Twilight Scar of Archmage Philippus, see below). For reasons he is reluctant to discuss (but which are thought to relate to

Story Seeds: Petrus Virilis

One of the female player characters desperately wants a Gifted child, and she comes to hear of Petrus. What will she have to offer him in exchange for his services? (As he is so averse to female companionship, something more than conventional seduction will be needed.)

Petrus inexplicably falls in love with a peasant girl, and despite the adverse effects of his Gift, the feelings seem mutual. In an act of rebellion, he plans his wedding in a nearby town. If he gets married, will Durenmar place his soul in peril by trying to force him to break his vows of chastity? If he is allowed to continue a normal, married life without interference, any children of the union will be of great interest to the covenant.

Philippus Niger of House Flambeau

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

Size: 0

Age: 125 (90) (Gauntlet at
21; Archmage)

Decrepitude: 2 (2)

Warping Score: 8 (5)

Confidence Score: 3 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Archmage;
Mythic Blood; Affinity with Penetration, Affinity with Perdo, Great Intelligence (x2), Minor Magical Focus (Dispelling, with Mythic Blood), Puissant Perdo*, Driven, Enemies, Ambitious (with Mythic Blood), Deficient Form (Imaginem)

Personality Traits: Alarmist +3, Condescending +3, Obsessive +2, Cool-Tempered -1, Cheerful -3

Reputations: Master of Perdo 5 (Hermetic), Archmage 4 (Hermetic), Don't Mess with this Magus 4 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Dagger: Init -4, Attack +4, Defense +3,
Damage +2

Long Sword: Init -2, Attack +6, Defense
+4, Damage +5

Soak: +2

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

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

Abilities: Awareness 2 (when alone), Artes Liberales 3 (scribing), Brawl 3 (dagger), Chirurgy 2 (magical wounds), Code of Hermes 4 (hedge wizards), Concentration 4 (maintaining spells), Dominion Lore 2 (divine creatures), Durenmar Lore 3 (tractatus), Faerie Lore 2 (Norse fae), Finesse 6 (Perdo), Folk Ken 3 (body language), High German 5 (orders), Guile 2 (peasants), Infernal Lore 4 (earthly demons), Intrigue 3 (Hermetic), Latin 5 (speeches), Leadership 2 (grogs), Magic Lore 5 (Norse wizards), Magic Theory 8 (inventing spells), Order of Hermes Lore 4 (Flambeau), Parma Magica 7 (Corpus), Penetration 8 (Perdo), Philosophiae 4 (metaphysics), Profession: Scribe 3 (about Vim), Ride 2 (speed), Single Weapon 3 (long sword), Teaching 4 (Arts), Theology 3 (souls), West Norse 2 (threats)

Arts: Cr 10, In 15, Mu 10, Pe 35+3, Re 12; An 7, Aq 7, Au 7, Co 15, He 7, lg 8, Im 5, Me 15, Te 7, Vi 20



Twilight Scars: Philippus has suffered many Twilights over his ten-decade career. The most notable of these caused the following Scars: when angry he appears to grow in size, his shadow occasionally moves without a corresponding movement from Philippus, he can always tell true gold from false, only male children are born at a place he has lived for more than a year, his presence sours wine, he winces at noises greater than a normal speaking voice, he seems to attract black animals who gather whenever he is outside, and flames dim and extinguish when he enters a room

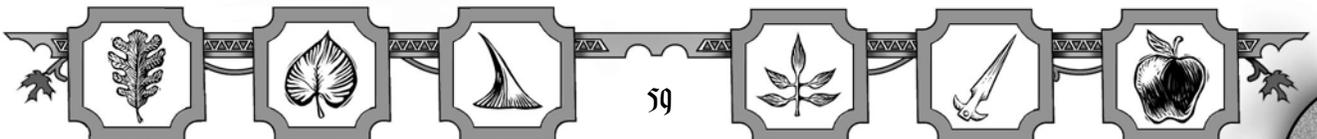
Equipment: Clothes, dagger, long sword
Encumbrance: 3 (3)

Powers:

Sniff Out the Witch, 0 points, Init +0, Vim: Philippus can smell the residue of magic, such as that found on those with magical powers. This effect has a Penetration of 5, and requires both words and gestures, much like a Hermetic spell. (*Sense the Lingering Magic*, T: Smell)

Spells Known:

Agony of the Beast (PeAn 15) +47
Cripple the Howling Wolf (PeAn 25) +48,
Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)
Curse of the Desert (PeAq 25) +47
Chaos of the Angry Waves (ReAq 20) +21,
gained from Twilight
Sight of the True Form (InCo 15) +32
The Wound That Weeps (PeCo 15) +55
Bane of the Decrepit Body (PeCo 25) +55
Curse of the Leprous Flesh (PeCo 25) +55
Evisceration of a Thousand Knives (PeCo 30) +55
Clenching Grasp of the Crushed Heart (PeCo 40) +57, Mastery 2 (Fast Casting, Penetration)
The Leap of Homecoming (ReCo 35) +29
The Great Rot (PeHe 25) +47
Winter's Icy Grip (Pelg 30) +49, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)
Ward Against Heat and Flames (Relg 25) +22
Blessing of Childlike Bliss (PeMe 25) +55
Passion's Lost Feeling (PeMe 25) +56, Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)
Lay to Rest the Haunting Spirit (PeMe 30) +70
Aura of Rightful Authority (ReMe 20) +31, Mastery 2 (Quiet Casting, Still Casting)
Scent of Peaceful Slumber (ReMe 20) +29
Pit of the Gaping Earth (PeTe 15) +47
End of the Mighty Castle (PeTe 25) +47
Flaws of the Weaponsmith (PeTe 25) +48, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)



Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 25 & 50) +82, Mastery 2 (Penetration, Fast Casting)
The Heathen Witch Reborn (PeVi 25) +80
Wind of Mundane Silence (PeVi 25 & 50) +83, Mastery 3 (Penetration, Fast Casting, Still Casting)
Dreadful Bane of the Fae (PeVi 30 & 50) +81, Mastery 1 (Penetration)
Sap the Griffin's Strength (PeVi 30 & 50) +81, Mastery 1 (Penetration)
Shattering the Malicious Rune (PeVi 30 & 50) +81, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

New Spells:

Dreadful Bane of the Fae, PeVi Gen; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Ind: Like *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, but works on creatures with Faerie Might. (Base effect, +2 Voice)
Evisceration of a Thousand Knives, PeCo 30; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Ind: Inflicts an Incapacitating wound to one target. (Base 20, +2 Voice)
Flaws of the Weaponsmith, PeTe 25; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Group: Affects up to 100 base metal objects (or equivalent), causing them to rust away to nothingness. This is the arms and armor of up to 30 men. (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Group, +1 number)
The Heathen Witch Reborn, PeVi Gen; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Ind: Reverses any shapechanging spell or supernatural Ability, if the spell level +10 beats the level of the shapechange spell (or the shapechange Ability x 5). (Base effect, +2 Voice)
Sap the Griffin's Strength, PeVi Gen; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Ind: Like *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, but works on creatures with Magic Might. (Base effect, +2 Voice)
Shattering the Malicious Rune, PeVi Gen; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Ind: Like *Unraveling the Fabric of (Form)*, but targeted specifically at rune-magic. (Base effect, +2 Voice)

Magical Items:

Knife of Human Bone (Talisman): A wickedly curved dagger with a serrated blade, enchanted to always be razor-sharp. Attunements: +2 Precise Destruction, +4 Destroy Body, +3 Destroying Minds
Unraveling the Fabric of (Form), PeVi 20; R:Voice, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base effect, +2 Voice): Ten related effects, one for each Hermetic Form. Each one has 24 uses per day (+5 levels). *Final Level 25 each*
Evisceration of Ten Thousand Knives, PeCo 35; R:Voice D:Mom, T:Group (Base 20, +2 Voice, +1 Group): As the spell of his own invention, but with Target Group. Penetration 20 (+10 levels), usable 24 times a day (+5 levels). *Final Level 50*

The Wizard's Bridle: A wicked-looking frame which sits over the head of the victim, forcing his mouth open and trapping his tongue with a spiked metal plate. Chains and rods attach to a set of shackles and manacles, thus preventing both words and gestures. It was created with the assistance of two of Philippus' filii.

Bind The Gift, ReVi 30; R:Touch, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base effect, +1 Touch, +2 Sun): Prevents the casting of any spells of level 25 or below. With 2 uses per day (+1 level) and an environmental tripper (+3), this is a constant effect. *Final Level 34*

Hinder the Gift, PeVi 55; R:Touch, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base effect, +1 Touch, +2 Sun): Reduces the Casting Total of any spells by 25 points. With 2 uses per day (+1 level), a Penetration of 20 (+10), and an environmental tripper (+3), this is a constant effect. *Final Level 69*

The Subtle Chain: A fine silver chain, 30 feet long and connected into a continuous loop, when laid on the ground, forms a circle 3 paces in diameter. Creates a variety of warding effects, each once per day:

Circular Ward Against Demons, ReVi 30; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect)

Ring of Warding Against Spirits, ReMe 25; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect)

Ward Against Beasts of Legend, ReAn 25; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect)

Ward Against Faeries of the Air, ReAu 25; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect)

Ward Against Faeries of the Wood, ReHe 25; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect)

Ward Against Monsters Which Walk As Man, ReCo 25; R:Touch, D:Ring, T:Circle (Base effect). Protects against creatures with a Might who are affected by Corpus.

Appearance: Philippus is a smallish but well-built man with a cool and reserved demeanor. His advanced age has left him a little deaf, bowed of back, and creaky-limbed. His cognomen ("the Black") might equally well refer to the color of his hair or his clothing, his pessimistic outlook, or to the fact that he is an undisputed master of Perdo magics. He wears a hooded cloak of deep black, over robes (or clothes) of darkest gray. His bone dagger is always on display, either unsheathed at his belt, or in his hand. His famil-

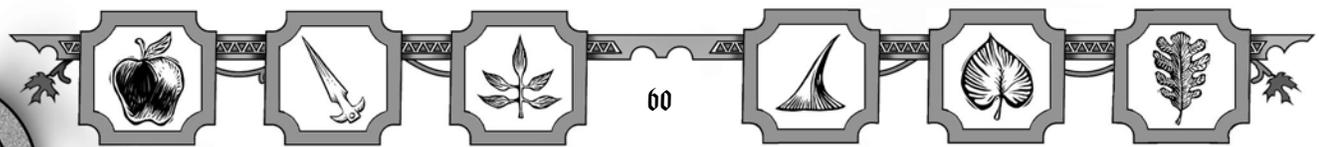
iar is usually close by, but rarely in the same room.

Philippus Niger is an example of a magus who has devoted his whole life to one goal — the defense of the Order against non-Hermetic wizards. In addition to being an archmagus, he holds the position of Protector of Durenmar, a role for which he was personally chosen by Muri- on, to whom he is a political ally. Now that the threat of Final Twilight looms large in his life, he concentrates mostly on politics, and is the leading figure in the Ash Guild, dominated by Flambeau magi who wish to see the Order strike aggressively against the Norse wizards beyond the Baltic. He is pressuring the magi of Oculus Septentrionalis to install a Mercere Portal (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Tribunal Gatherings) to Durenmar — this would also be a blow to Fengheld — and to be more proactive in their investigation. A magus of his age, aggression, and political nature cannot avoid having enemies; most of Fengheld (and their allies) actively oppose him at every turn due to many previous slights (real or imagined), and several hedge magicians want him dead — fortunately, his Parma Magica keeps their malicious curses from affecting him.

His extreme age is fuelled by longevity rituals created for him by members of Durenmar, and in his long career he has trained 4 apprentices. The Wizard's Bridle, his feared magical item, has only been used once, to restrain a particularly dangerous member of House Tylalus who had been Marched.

Philippus is the eldest surviving member of the direct lineage from Apromar filius Flambeau, the undisputed master of destructive magics. As such, he has a Magical Focus for all destructive spells used against supernatural beings, and can "sniff out" the presence of magic. He is envied by the lineage of Apromar throughout the Order because of his familiar, Sordus. It took him three years to track down a female basilisk, and another year to convince it to give him one of its eggs to become his familiar. Sordus usually remains out of sight, because of his dreadful destructive power, but will sometimes slowly enter a room, casting his gaze left and right, as if to punctuate Philippus' threats.

It should be noted that, from 40 years after Gauntlet onwards, Philippus' spells were learned as lab projects (see the rule in ArM5, page 32). In the 66 seasons he spent in his laboratory, he has created all his magical items, enchanted his familiar, and gained 720 levels of spells.



Sordus, a Basilisk

Magic Might: 30 (Animal)
Characteristics: Int -3, Per 0, Pre n/a,
 Com n/a, Str 0, Sta +4, Dex -3,
 Qik -3

Size: -2

Personality Traits: Disdainful +3,
 Lazy +3, Indifferent +1

Combat: Sordus is too lazy to enter
 combat

Soak: +10

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6),
 -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12)

Abilities: Folk Ken 2 (intimidate),
 German 5 (insults), Hunt 4 (lying
 in wait), Latin 5 (whispers), Magic
 Lore 2 (beasts), West Norse 3
 (threats)

Bond Scores (PeVi Lab Total 81):
 Bronze +2, Silver +2, Gold +4

Powers:

Gaze of Death, 8 points, Init -3, Corpus:
 Sordus can choose to inflict an
 incapacitating wound on anyone
 on whom his gaze rests.

Horrid Wilting, 0 points, Init n/a,
 Herbam: Every living plant within
 5 paces of Sordus dies. Vegetable
 matter will start to rot, and worms
 will appear in food. Wood will
 begin to decay within a day of his
 presence. Sordus cannot control
 this power.

Pollute Water, 0 points, Init n/a, Aquam:
 All standing water within 5 paces
 of Sordus becomes stagnant.
 Other liquids will putrify, and
 running water will turn black until
 he moves on. Sordus cannot control
 this power.

Familiar Powers:

Mental Communication: Sordus and
 Philippus are in constant mental
 contact, and can exchange words,
 images, and emotions, although
 either one can deny contact to the
 other. (Level 15)

Vis: 10 pawns of Perdo, in each eye

Appearance: Sordus is a huge lizard,
 standing about knee-height, and
 about 6 feet long from nose to tail.
 He is covered with tiny, diamond-
 shaped scales that are various
 shades of gray, dark green, and
 black. On his head is a series of
 fleshy ridges, like a cock's comb,
 that resembles a crown. Every
 movement he makes is laborious
 but deliberate.

his mater), he is somewhat averse to sex,
 and is totally ill at ease with women gen-
 erally. He has no interest in fathering
 children and prefers to keep his vis for his
 own use, but Durenmar consider his
 unique "talents" to be too important to
 waste. It is not known whether his
 remarkable success rate so far is merely
 luck, or due to his special magical prop-
 erties, but this hasn't stopped the several let-
 ters of approach from interested young
 female magi. Petrus is secretly planning to
 invent a longevity ritual, which would
 (probably) render him infertile. Were
 Murion to hear of this, she would be fur-
 ious, since she has declared that his ability
 is too important to House Bonisagus to be
 lost.

WINFRIDA, FOLLOWER OF GUERNICUS

Age: 27 (Journeyman)

Personality Traits:

Yearning for a Better
 Life +2, Self-
 Confident -1,
 Forceful -2



Although a Quaesitor, Winfrida is
 young, inexperienced, and a little timid —
 secretly she would prefer the peaceful life
 of research enjoyed by members of House
 Bonisagus. Since there is always at least
 one magus of Guernicus at Durenmar, her
 application for membership was accepted
 several years ago, shortly after passing her
 Gauntlet in the Greater Alps Tribunal.
 Winfrida and Tabanus are among the very
 few (perhaps even the only two)
 Guernicus magi in the Rhine Tribunal.
 Murion seems to be grooming and indoctrin-
 ating her, so that her loyalties are confu-
 sed. Tabanus regards her as weak and
 ineffectual.

OTHER MAGI

There are three other Bonisagus magi
 resident at Durenmar, along with three
 magi of master rank from other Houses.
 One of these magi is Gudrun Tigurina,
 follower of Verditius, who is the holder of
 the title of Artificer. Another is Xavier of
 House Mercere, the Tribunal's only
 Gifted member of his House, and its
 archivist, who dwells at Durenmar since it
 is one of the two official Mercer Houses in
 the Rhine Tribunal. Horst of Fengheld
 (see Chapter 8: Central Germany,
 Fengheld) is, however, the leader of the
 Tribunal's Redcaps, at the other Mercere
 House, which suits Xavier fine. Durenmar

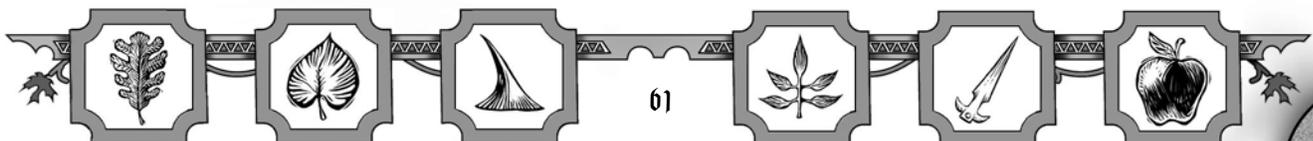
can also accommodate up to six peregrin-
 atores, and always ensures there is at
 least one representative from each gild in
 residence. There is a long waiting list to
 be a guest at Durenmar, and magi are
 often willing to accept ludicrous deals
 with the covenant to gain unrestricted
 access to the Great Library. Such guest
 magi are usually required to provide the
 gild training to at least one Rhine appren-
 tice during their stay, taking two seasons.
 The Bonisagus magi, members and guests
 alike, share the workload of providing a
 season of additional training to all Rhine
 apprentices.

Covenfolk

The grogs and servants of Durenmar
 are a mixture of peculiar characters — a
 quiet bunch who largely keep to them-
 selves. Although there appears to be no
 obvious chain of command, or interaction
 with the magi, they are orderly and go
 about their duties without complaint. Due
 to living in (and in most cases, being born
 in) such a strong Magic aura, many of
 them have weird deformities or strange
 supernatural talents. All covenfolk have at
 least one Minor Flaw due to Warping, and
 those over 30 years old have two. Those
 that reach their seventh decade gain a
 Minor Supernatural Ability Virtue in addi-
 tion. There is no church at Durenmar and
 among the assorted odd beliefs of the
 covenfolk are the relics of an old pagan
 cult of nature worship. Visitors are often
 surprised at the great age and longevity of
 many of Durenmar's servants — whether
 this is due to the prevalence of faerie
 blood in the population, the beneficial
 surroundings of the valley environment or
 aura, or to some powerful artifact is a sub-
 ject of speculation. The covenant's auto-
 crat is a wrinkled and gentle woman called
 Sula. Despite being over ninety, she
 remains hale and will smoothly arrange
 the accommodation for visitors to the
 covenant, whose exact identity she deter-
 mines with uncanny ease.

The Fane of the Founders

Not too far away from Durenmar in
 the Black Forest is a quiet glade with a
 Magic aura of 6. In its center is a slab of
 stone with twelve sides. It was here that
 the Oath of the Founders was composed



Story Seed: The Fane Falls

The characters witness the kidnapping of a magus who is travelling to represent his House at the rite to renew the Founders' vows. Who has committed this act, and what is their intent? What will happen if the rite is not performed?

and signed. Every seven years, at a point during the meeting of the Rhine Tribunal, twelve magi secretly enter the glade. Each is a member of a different House, and they gather to perform an age-old rite which is believed to preserve the Order by renewing the vows of the Founders. Only the Primi of the Houses and their designated representatives know about the existence of the Fane, and its precise location is protected by powerful magics.

The only times that this ritual has not been performed were the three Tribunals in 997, 1004, and 1011, due to the extreme level of distrust in the Order at this time. After the Schism War and the resultant destruction of House Diedne, the Primi needed no more convincing of the importance of the rite, and it was commenced again in 1018; a member of Ex Miscellanea (hitherto excluded from the rite) took the place of Diedne's representative. A lineage within House Ex Miscellanea continues to perform the rite to this day without instruction from the "leader" of that House.

The site of the Fane predates the Order; it was the site of many truces, including one between Germanic tribal chiefs and a Roman general, which resulted in the setting of the northern limit of the empire. As well as its concealing magics, the glade also radiates magic that encourages clear thoughts and calm minds. It is a source of vis to those who attend it — their reward for performing this service. The Fane is not a complete secret in the Order — certainly most magi at Durenmar know about it — but everyone who has tried to find it fails. The real secret lies in the nature and purpose of the rite conducted every seven years. Various rumors about the Fane exist — some say that those who have been there have met with Hermes himself. Others claim this is only a powerful faerie pretending to be Hermes, who exacted some terrible service from the Founders in return for his protection and knowledge. Some Merinita claim that the Order is therefore

born from a faerie pact, and should return to the study of the fae. The truth, however is that the Fane is a powerful artifact into which the Cult of Mercury, through the use of powerful ritual magic, bound much of the original magical essence of the Black Forest. Thus, the Fane may be treated as if it has a Magic Might of 60, and it retains the following forest powers in a limited fashion: Produce Vis, Shroud, Oath-Swearing, Grant Virtue (Clear Thinker; temporarily). The ritual must be regularly renewed in order keep the spirit bound into the stone.

Dankmar



This small covenant was established by Aschlaranda, a maga exiled from Durenmar and House Bonisagus. Her intent was to oppose that great covenant at every turn, and she founded Dankmar in 1052 with her apprentice Schadrit. Now ancient, Schadrit of Ex Miscellanea squats in the center of her Winter covenant with brooding malice, while her descendants act according to her will.

Setting and Physical Description

Dankmar is located in the Black Forest, about 40 miles southwest of Durenmar and a few miles to the south of the Black Forest Road, in the dampest and darkest region. Dense stands of fir shroud the area in semi-darkness even in daylight. Poisoned by the thick carpet of needles, only fungi grow on the forest floor and

the only bird song is the croaking of ravens.

The covenant itself consists of a circular palisade fence made of split logs, which encircles several wooden huts and four stone towers. Each of the towers is only two stories high: these are the sancta of the four magi of Dankmar, which extend underground into a series of interconnected caves, only accessible through the towers. The trees, mainly densely growing fir and yew, crowd over the covenant's walls, cutting out much of the light. All of the wooden structures in the covenant, particularly the tall palisade, are encrusted with fungi, particularly bracket fungi, which let off an eerie phosphorescent glow, that lights the covenant day and night.

The whole covenant and the area surrounding it, out to a radius of at least a mile, is cloaked in a version of *The Shrouded Glen* cast by Orphedra, which therefore carries her sigil of darkness, enhancing the gloomy atmosphere of the covenant. Not only does this spell guide people away from the covenant, it also fills them with a nameless dread all of the time they are within the affected area. Mundanes who have experienced this effect are severely dissuaded from ever returning. Those with Magical Resistance (including Parma Magica) are not affected by the brooding atmosphere of Dankmar if they resist this level 40 spell (with a Penetration Total of 20). Dankmar has a Faerie aura of 5.

Culture and Traditions

Dankmar has close, careful contacts with the dark fae of the Black Forest. These are some of the most malign of faerie kind, who haunt the deepest parts of the forest, furthest away from humanity. While such creatures could never be called allies of the covenant — they are far too fickle for that — nevertheless there has been a working relationship with them ever since Schadrit came here, fleeing her enemies at Durenmar. These fae are responsible for the overwhelming panic that mortals suffer when they enter such wild places. They represent darkness, fear, and malice. Many of them have no defined shape, and some have no shape at all; all are resentful of the intrusion of mankind into their realm. Through their contact with these evil beings, Dankmar has endured despite strong opposition from both Durenmar and the policy of deforestation of the German emperor.



Magi

SCHADRIT, MAGA EX MISCELLANEA

Age: approximately
160 (Master)

Personality Traits:
Malicious +5,
Vengeful +4,
Callous +3



Schadrit is a former apprentice of House Bonisagus and a former resident of Durenmar. When Aschlaranda of Bonisagus reappeared at Durenmar (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, The Schism War), she brought Schadrit with her, and she completed her apprenticeship at Durenmar. When Aschlaranda was cast out from House Bonisagus, Schadrit was only a year away from her Gauntlet, but she was forced to suffer the same fate as her mistress. Together they founded a covenant, naming it Dankmar in parody of the birthplace of the Order. Schadrit is truly ancient, only a few decades from completing her second century. Her longevity potion has not preserved her looks as well as it has her age, and she is a withered hag who keeps herself shrouded in a voluminous black robe with a deep hood. Her face is so seamed with wrinkles that her features are barely discernible, except for her long, mole-covered nose. Schadrit has developed an expertise in Faerie Magic, and is perhaps the only practitioner outside of House Merinita. She is malicious to the point of downright evil, and rules Dankmar with an iron hand.

ORPHEDRA, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Age: 139 (Master)
Personality Traits:
Cruel +3,
Frightening +3,
Optimistic -2



Orphedra is the covenant's link to the faeries of their forest home. She was apprenticed at Irencillia ten dozen years ago, but found that covenant stifling rather than invigorating, preferring as she does the darkness of primeval forest. Orphedra is as thin as a stick, and wears her hair in a tight bun, which accentuates her angular features and unnaturally smooth skin. Orphedra is the most despised of the magi among the coven-

folk; they rarely see Schadrit and worship Jiphella, but Orphedra has an air that makes the skin crawl. Naturally reveling in Faerie Magic (it was she who taught Schadrit), she is inclined towards the dark fae and specializes in illusions, cold, darkness, and fear. She has struck a deal with the local bockmen (see above), who patrol the area around the covenant.

JIPHELLA, MAGA EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 73 (Master)
Personality Traits: Crude
+3, Domineering +3,
Moody +2



Jiphella is an immense maga, bloated with fat. She has lank, greasy, gray hair belying her old age. She is the biological daughter of Schadrit, conceived under the influence of some dark faerie charm long after her mother had performed her ritual of longevity. She was later trained in magic by her mother and is wholly cowed by her dominating presence. Jiphella's left eye is a sickly orange with a blood-red iris, and she can bewitch others with a glance. Jiphella is a master of Mentem magics, and most of the covenfolk are under her spell, obeying her instantly and without question.

LARINDA, MAGA EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 20 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Passionate +2,
Cheerful +1,
Brave -2

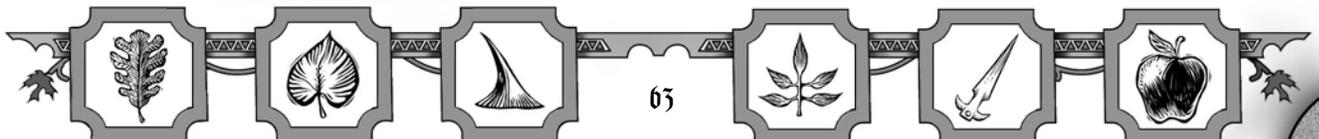


Larinda is a young maga just out of apprenticeship. She is lithe and blonde, and pretty, particularly compared to the rest of her covenant. She is the daughter of Jiphella, who is also her Hermetic parents, but has seemingly not picked up any other traits from her family, although she was conceived under the same charm that produced her mother. She has managed to maintain a sunny disposition despite her cruel mother and dominating grandmother, although she will do what they say out of a sense of familial duty. Her magical affinities lie in the natural world — Animal, Herbam, Aquam, and Auram in particular; she is becoming an expert at brewing potions.

The Destruction of St. Georgen

The Benedictine monastery of St. Georgen, founded in 1084 as a small daughter house of Hirsau, has had a greatly troubled history. Other monasteries in the Black Forest, impinging on the domain of the King of the Black Mountain, have found themselves the subjects of sinister attacks and unexplained accidents — the disappearances of monks, the blight of crops, even landslides and earthquakes — but none has been so under siege by the wilderness itself as St. Georgen. As the deepest incursion of the Dominion into the forest, it represents the greatest threat to its ancient power. St. Georgen is — or rather was — but a modest place inhabited only by humble monks, yet the toll of its church bell carried even to the spiritual heart of the forest at the Seven Waterfalls. As such, it seems the very forest itself has retaliated against the monastery in force. In the face of these supernatural attacks, it has been abandoned more than once, yet always the monks returned.

The most recent, and seemingly final, episode in the history of St. Georgen occurred in 1208. Travelers arrived to find the buildings and fields in ruin, massively overgrown by strange dark vines, the twisted and misshapen bodies of the dead monks hung and trapped in them, with expressions of horror on their faces. As news of this sinister event spread to the Order of Hermes, many suspected that the magi of Dankmar were involved. The issue was raised at the most recent Tribunal of 1214, but Jiphella, the sole representative of Dankmar in attendance, disavowed any involvement. Technically speaking, the destruction of the monastery would have been in accordance with the "Guardians of the Forests" ruling (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, History), although the Tribunal would never openly approve of such a drastic solution. With no mundane witnesses, the Code of Hermes had not been broken, and the Tribunal did not order an investigation into the issue, due to the results of a close vote.



Covenfolk

Dankmar's covenfolk are a lesson to the Order about magical domination of mundanes. Every member of the turb (and the few scant servants they maintain) has been thoroughly bewitched by Jiphella. As such, they are fanatically loyal to the covenant; their minds are concentrated solely on the safety and comfort of their mistresses, whom they worship as gods. Members of the turb will gladly die for their magi, if it was so ordered. However, the grogs have been left slack-witted due to this domination; they have no capacity for independent thought, and would starve to death if not ordered to eat once a day. Dankmar employs no consortes.

Hirsau

The Benedictine monastery of Hirsau, in the northeast of the forest, is probably the most powerful in Germany. It was founded in 1059 with the relocation of the relics of St. Aurelius, a fifth-century Armenian bishop, and since then has grown rapidly, to number more than a hundred monks, and has founded many daughter houses throughout Germany. In the 11th century it was the center of the Hirsauer Reform, a movement to free religious establishments from the control of secular lords and bishops. Built in red sandstone and situated by a bridge over the River Nagold, Hirsau is modeled after the great Burgundian monastery of Cluny, whose traditions and customs it has adopted and brought into Germany. The grand basilica of St. Aurelius is 100 yards long. Possibly due to its Divine aura of 5, its size, or its location near the edge of the forest, Hirsau has been relatively immune to the faerie attacks that have beset the other Black Forest monasteries.

Some magi have remarked on the similarity of Hirsau with Durenmar; they are both the center of a learned movement that has founded many "daughter" houses, and are a strong supernatural defense against the forest. A legend recounts that an archmagus of Bonisagus gave up his magic and took holy orders. He was allegedly among the monks who founded Hirsau, but no magus has braved this stronghold of Divine power to try to ascertain the truth of this matter; although some speculate that if it is true, then the monastery is doubtless the heir (knowing or unknowing) to his magical legacy.

Mummel Lake

Far under the mountains near Seebach is an enchanted and isolated lake, which is home to a Nixe (a water-nymph). She will occasionally make visits to nearby settlements, where she will bewitch a young man with her beauty. However, the elemental spirits of the lake are jealous of the attention given to her by mortals, and if they follow her back to it when she returns (which she must do every night), the lake will surely be the cause of their death.

The Source of the Danube

An enchanted spring in the eastern stretches of the Black Forest wells up from a crack in the rocks, forming a small but deceptively deep pool. This spring is the source of the mighty River Danube, life-blood of the empire north and east of the Alps and eastern Europe. Like the Rhine (see Chapter 5: The Rhine, The Upper Rhine), the Danube has a powerful elemental spirit, although this one is of faerie origin. Danu was previously worshiped as a goddess by innumerable peoples before the Romans came. Now her power fades, but nevertheless, at the source of the river here, her presence is strong. There is a Faerie aura of 3 in the region of the pool, which rises to 5 if one is within the water itself. The pool is apparently without a bottom because of the regio here. Anyone managing to reach the top level of the regio (Faerie aura of 10) will find the bottom of the pool, and a gateway into Arcadia, that is the source of the Danube's water. Vast amounts of Aquam vis can be harvested at this site, but doing so is likely to anger Danu.

Swabia

The duchy of Swabia surrounds the Black Forest and extends eastwards as far as Bavaria and southwards as far as the Alps. The recent history of the region has been dominated by two rival families: the Zähringens, whose estates consisted of the narrow strip of fertile land between the Rhine and the Black Forest, and the imperial Hohenstaufens, holding much of

the Swabian upland. Since the demise of the last Zähringen duke, Berthold V, in 1218 without a male heir, most of the Zähringen holdings have been divided between the Hapsburgs and the Hohenstaufens, leaving the vast majority of Swabia under the direct control of Frederick II. The part of Swabia south of the Rhine and Danube belongs to the Greater Alps Tribunal.

Baden

The town of Baden, lying between the Rhine valley and the northwestern slopes of the forest, was simply named Aquae (Waters) by the Romans, on account of the extensive hot springs that emerge from halfway up the hillside of the Florentinerberg. These magical waters have the power to cure certain ailments, such as rheumatism and arthritis, and the Romans built an extensive complex of baths over them. This upper part of the town, now mostly ruined, retains a Magic aura of 2 and falls under the Hermetic ownership of Durenmar, which harvests vis from the springs.

The lower half of the town is now the seat of a lesser branch of the remaining Zähringen family. Some have suspected Durenmar of acting as a patron to the Zähringens — if this is the case, the recent failure of the family would be indicative of Durenmar's waning influence outside its borders. An alternative theory is that Durenmar has withered the Zähringens in order to prevent the family from any further intrusion or colonization into the Black Forest. However, given Durenmar's usual lack of interest in mundane politics, it is rather unlikely that either of these scenarios are true.

This Baden should not be confused with another Swabian town of the same name, also blessed with medicinal springs, which is a hundred miles further south, just beyond the Rhine in the Greater Alps Tribunal.

Freiburg

The largest settlement around the Black Forest, Freiburg was founded in 1120 by Conrad Zähringen. In the 12th century the Zähringens were the most prominent castle builders in western Swabia, and they drew much of their power and tax base from a number of the Black Forest monasteries, that they found-



The Rottweiler

The Rottweiler is a characteristic breed of black and tan dog, large and fierce. It originates from the crossbreeding of the loyal dogs of the Romans with the wild and dark faerie species of the Black Forest. It is also called the Metzgerhund (butcher's dog), as the citizens of Rottweil, especially the butchers, have trained them to pull their carts. Rottweilers rarely bark; they make poor guard dogs, but excellent attack dogs.

At least one magus in the Rhine Tribunal uses these dogs instead of grogs. They are smart enough (given the correct training) to follow basic orders, and are staunchly loyal to their master. If a player wants to play a Rottweiler instead of a human grog, with the approval of the storyguide the hound may be created as a normal character, except that it has Cunning instead of Intelligence. All Rottweiler "grog" have the following Virtues and Flaws: Keen Sense of Smell (like Keen Vision), Long Winded, Tough, Ability Block (Martial Abilities), Feral Upbringing, Simple Minded. They also suffer from the Mute Major Flaw, and therefore storyguides might allow additional Minor Virtues to balance this disadvantage. Their bite has the same combat statistics as a dagger. Calculate their age (and experience) as for a human, and use this age for making aging rolls; divide by seven to get their true age (thus they make seven aging rolls each year).

Some Rottweilers have more than the usual dose of faerie blood, and these have greater longevity than a typical dog (only one aging roll per year). Most commonly, this manifests as the Second Sight Ability, but may also grant the Faerie Blood Virtue, or even more exotic Abilities.

ed and controlled. Freiburg lies in the valley of the River Dreisam, surrounded on three sides by the heights of the forest. Twenty years ago, an ambitious project was started to construct a lofty cathedral, to be paid for by the citizens of the town. It was to be built from the red sandstone of the nearby hills. The Zähringen castle, from which the family took their name,

lies a short distance to the north of Freiburg.

Rottweil

Rottweil, on the eastern edge of the forest, is another town of Roman origin, originally named Arae Flaviae (Altar of the Flavians). At the intersection of two roads, the Romans originally intended it to be a great provincial city, but their plans later changed as the border of their territory was extended beyond it. The remains of Roman temples, baths, and municipal buildings, while not as extensive as those of Baden, lie buried beneath the current town. Rottweil is hunched into a defensible position overlooking the upper stretch of the River Neckar.

Gmünd

Gmünd lies in the Staufferland, a tidy region of rolling hills and meadows between the Swabian Forest and the Swabian Jura. It is named after the Hohenstaufen dynasty of emperors, which includes Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II. The first of these rulers, Conrad III, founded the town in the 12th century. It specializes in the production of luxuries such as jewelry and glassware.

To the south of Gmünd lie the Kaiserberge, a set of three round wooded hills — the Hohenstaufen (westernmost and lowest), the Hohenrechberg, and the Stuißen (to the east and highest). Each is topped with a castle, although it is the Hohenstaufen, ancestral home of the current imperial dynasty, which is the grandest and most famous.

The Swabian Jura

The Swabian Jura is a series of harsh limestone hills separating the valleys of the Danube and the Neckar. Many of the peaks are defensively ideal, and some of the local lords, including the Hohenzollerns, have built forts atop them. The region is strung with mysterious stalactite grottos, such as the Nebelhöhle (Misty Cave). The Wimsener Höhle is on the south side of the Jura, near to the monastery of Zweifalten, where the River Ach (a tributary of the

The Limes

The town of Gmünd lies on the *limes*, a series of ancient Roman fortifications dating from the 1st century AD (see Chapter 2: History, Germania Magna). Remains of ramparts, ancient forts, and temples may be found all along its route, which passes through the Odenwald, the Swabian Forest, and the Swabian Jura.

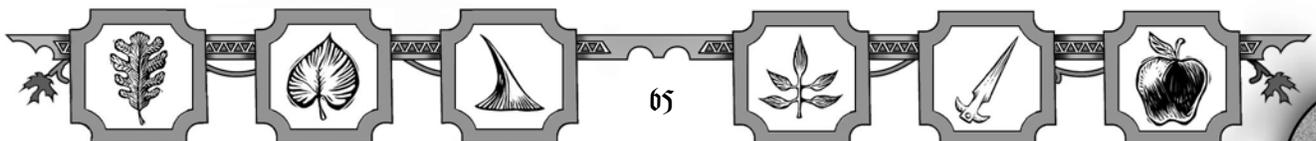
Danube) disappears underground in a partially navigable tunnel for a couple of miles.

Ulm

The site of the city of Ulm, on the northern bank of the upper Danube, was first settled in the 9th century by Jews, although only a small Jewish community now remains. In 1164, Frederick Barbarossa declared Ulm a Free Imperial City and a period of growth and prosperity followed. The city is surrounded by fields of flax and is home to numerous weavers, who produce linen that is widely traded in the empire.

Blautopf Pool

At the southern edge of the Swabian Jura is a large round pool whose waters are a startlingly deep blue colour. This is the source of the River Blau, a minor tributary of the Danube. Blautopf Pool, surrounded by a Faerie aura of 2, is home to a beautiful but reclusive water faerie named the *Schöne Lau*, a long-haired maiden with webbed feet. She was not able to laugh — the future holding no surprise for her — and therefore her husband, a faerie king of the Black Sea, banished her to this place. She is occasionally visited by those seeking wisdom, including the humble monks of the nearby Kloster Blaubeuren, on account of her powers of divination. In exchange for a modest gift, the *Schöne Lau* will foretell a visitor's future. Such predictions invariably come to pass, although they seldom bring the desired or expected happiness. Anyone who would be able to make the sad maiden laugh would break the curse of her husband and earn her eternal gratitude.



The Lowlands

The northern third of Germany contrasts greatly with the rest, both in terms of its landscape, which is low-lying and homogenous, and the age and character of its cities, in which trade, not politics, is the life-blood of the upper classes. Moving eastwards from the North Sea, past the Friesian islands, swamps and moors give way to a couple of hundred miles of orderly pastures and farmland dotted with prosperous cities, and interspersed with only a few forests and heaths.

In the south of the lowlands are a handful of cities founded by Charlemagne after his conquest of the Saxons in the 8th century, and others founded as missionary-bishoprics to convert the pagans in subsequent centuries. The northernmost coastal cities are newer — though they may lack great churches or scholars, they are nevertheless growing wealthy on trade with the far-flung cities of the Baltic. Far from Rome or the center of the empire, they are vying for independence, seeking the status of Free Imperial City, but currently find themselves under the rule of the Danish king, Valdemar II, who has recently swept to power in Holstein and Pomerania.

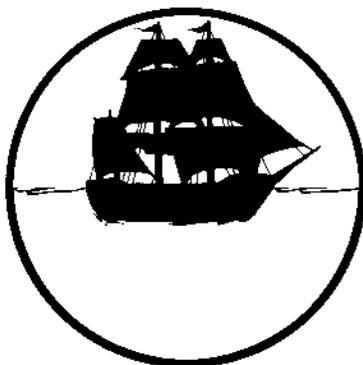
Unlike the rest of the Rhine Tribunal, who consider themselves secure at the center of the Order of Hermes, the magi here, while also firmly established in the Tribunal, are conscious of living on a Hermetic frontier. Most are aware of at least some of the Scandinavian wizards beyond their borders.

Friesland

Friesland is a broad and unrelentingly flat swathe of territory bordering the North Sea. It consists mostly of swampland, which is gradually being drained to

make way for pasture, although it is prone to flooding. Due to the limited suitability of the land, the region is sparsely populated, with few towns of any size. The Friesian people are considered odd and backward by most Germans; they have historically been independent and are only nominally part of the empire, as free subjects who administer their own system of tribal law. The Friesian Islands, a chain of mostly deserted and desolate sandy retreats, enclose the shallow Wadden Sea.

Waddenzee



A covenant of pirates who prowl the North Sea, Waddenzee is a Spring covenant that skirts Hermetic law and blatantly breaks mundane law on a daily basis. It is only the inability of the local nobility to work together that has saved Waddenzee from certain destruction.

History

Waddenzee is not the original name of the covenant on the island of Terschelling. It was originally founded by Axiur of House Flambeau, a member of

Oculus Septentrionalis who disagreed about the eventual site for that covenant. Instead, Axiur founded his own covenant here in 1165, named after the island, and it soon attracted new members. Axiur himself was killed in a magical accident less than two decades later. In 1200, two new members were admitted to the covenant, Eric Ribecus and Hygwald Veritas. At the Tribunal of 1207, these two magi announced that they were the only remaining magi of Terschelling, as the others had elected to leave. Furthermore, the covenant was to be renamed Waddenzee (indicative of a wider and more ambitious claim of notional Hermetic territory), and its charter and symbol had changed. This caused uproar in the Tribunal, with the two magi being accused of all sorts of malfeasance, but the Quaesitors who investigated could not uncover any evidence of wrongdoing. A vote was taken as to whether Waddenzee was a new covenant, and therefore required the permission of the Tribunal to form, but the support of the Oak and Ash Gilds prevented this eventuality.

Setting and Physical Description

Sited on a deserted stretch of coastline on the Friesian island of Terschelling, Waddenzee is very exposed to the weather. Its members have actively discouraged other human settlement on the island, and now share it only with many thousands of seabirds. Because of the noise of the birds in the spring and summer, the island is commonly thought to be haunted; this is a superstition that the magi of Waddenzee have done nothing to dispel.

The covenant takes the form of a low long-house built in the Danish style. This massive building, partially sunken into the



ground, is the living, eating, and sleeping quarters of Waddensee's covenfolk. The four magi each have separate buildings adjoining the long-house, attached to it by sunken covered walkways coming from the center of each of its walls. These buildings house the magus, their laboratories, one or two consorts and a handful of warriors. The covenant building, and the area for a few hundred paces around, has a Magic aura of 3. Their library is quite poor, consisting of a few scant books that follow the interests of the current magi. Waddensee is quite rich in vis, although most of its "sources" do not actually belong to it.

Culture and Traditions

Waddensee was effectively formed anew about twenty years ago when Hygwald and Eric fought and killed the leader of a pirate band, and found themselves in possession of three powerful ships and a willing crew. In the following decades the magi of the covenant have adopted the pirate lifestyle, and now have five ships, all magically enhanced. The pride of the fleet is the *Nebelkönigin*, stolen from the covenant of Oculus Septentrionalis. The ship was carrying a substantial amount of vis and magical books when it was attacked by the magi of Waddensee, but as no magus was present on the ship at the time. As it was involved with a substantial trading venture forbidden by the Quaesitores, Oculus Septentrionalis has not been successful in securing its return through legal means. The Lübeck covenant is determined to see an end to Waddensee, but is currently held back by Fengheld, with whom the pirate covenant has shrewdly developed a mutual understanding.

Waddensee goes to great pains to keep its activities legal under the Code of Hermes (primarily by ensuring there are no witnesses), and thus far has avoided serious censure at Tribunal. They have been warned by the Quaesitores on numerous occasions that they are treading a fine line, and should the mundane authorities ever see fit to try to get rid of the pirates, they will find no support from the Tribunal, and will probably each face charges of High Crimes. Oculus Septentrionalis is just waiting for them to put a foot over that line.

Magi

HYGWALD VERITAS,
FOLLOWER OF TREMERE

Age: 48 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Arrogant +3,
Honest
Quaesitors +3,
Respect for Authority -3



Hygwald Veritas is a devious magus of House Tremere, and co-founder of Waddensee. A native of England (and trained in the Stonehenge covenant of Blackthorn), Hygwald is scrupulously honest with the Quaesitores, and secretly aspires to become a member of this select group. When dealing with any other being (magus or not, human or not), Hygwald's arrogance shows through. He offers respect to members of his House, and elsewhere whenever prudent, but has no compunction about lying, cheating, and stealing to further his own aims. He appears to be a well-groomed man in his late thirties, and always dresses in a manner which displays his great personal wealth and sense of importance. He is a specialist in Mentem magics, particularly Rego Mentem, and makes heavy use of *Aura of Rightful Authority*.

ERIC RIBECUS, FOLLOWER
OF TYTALUS

Age: 52 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits: Reckless
+6, Wry Humor +4,
Passive -4



Eric Ribecus is the other founder of the covenant. This black-haired magus of House Tytalus hails from Ribe in Denmark, and is the most serious about the pirate lifestyle of all of Waddensee's magi. He is a dashing extrovert who is charming with the ladies, and he has an over-inflated view of his own abilities. He appears much younger than his true age due to illusions and a good longevity ritual. He is a generalist in his magics, although he favors Aquam and Auram. In combat he can most often be found fighting alongside his men with his magical sword. His familiar is a long-tailed skua called Aegir, a large seabird famed for its rapacious habits.

LUCAS VON BECK,
FOLLOWER OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 45 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Aggressive +3,
Morbid +2, Blunt +1



Lucas von Beck of House Flambeau is the son of a German altgraf, and seems unwilling to put aside his noble lifestyle, despite being considered dead by his mundane family. Lucas is a very tall, stocky man who is always dressed in black, although since experiencing a Twilight he has the embarrassing problem of having his clothes disintegrate after excessive spell-casting. He is an expert in Perdo magics, and known for his short temper, being likely to end arguments with mundanes who annoy him with swift and brutal applications of Perdo Corpus spells. He has recently started to study necromancy, finding that his pirate life provides him with ample bodies for research.

HACHIM AL'KHALEJJ,
FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

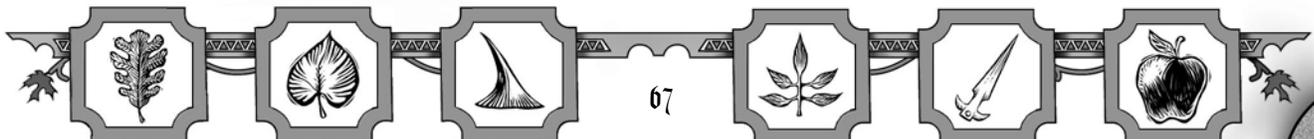
Age: 36 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Secretive +3,
Devout Muslim +2,
Introverted +2



Hachim al'Khalejj is a bit of an oddity — a quiet, naïve Muslim magus of House Criamon (the filius of Hassan of Fengheld) who seems to have fallen in with the other three aggressive magi purely by chance. Still, their raiding allows him to live in an opulent lifestyle, and his knowledge of astrology proves very useful to the other magi in planning their raids. Hachim dresses in purloined silks, favoring cream and blue, and walks with a limp.

Covenfolk

The majority of Waddensee's covenfolk are pirates or their followers, a rough group of nearly 200 men from all the nations of Europe. They spend most of their time enjoying the fine foods and wine that comes from their raiding, and generally only two ships leave the covenant's harbor at any time, taking 80 men with them. Waddensee probably has the largest turb of all of the Rhine's covenants, but at any one time nearly half



Story Seed: War Against the Pirates

If your saga follows real history, from the middle of the 13th century onwards, the Hanseatic League begins to take steps to counter and defeat the various pirates of the North Sea and Baltic. Larger ships are built, and captains adopt the habit of travelling in convoys for protection. This requires the pirates to attack with greater force and numbers. As the League grows in wealth and influence, it will later be able to recruit entire armies and petition powerful nobles to take the fight directly to the pirates. Given these developments, Waddenzee may face an uncertain future indeed. Moreover, with the likely involvement of the leadership of Oculus Septentrionalis in the League, it is entirely possible that a full-blown attack on Waddenzee itself could be launched. However, it will be more than twenty years before the League is formed, so the pirates of Waddenzee are fairly safe for a while yet ...

of them will be at sea, and most of the others will be drunk. Discipline is poor, although all the men accept the authority of the magi and their chosen deputies. Among these are Aethelbald, who claims to be the Saxon heir to the Crown of England; Bjorn Ironside, who is the ship's master of the *Nebelkönigin*; Calum, a lapsed priest who provides a heretical form of spiritual sustenance to the pirates; and Aelfhere, a Friesian shipwright whose ability is nothing short of magical.

The Pirates' Graveyards

A couple of dozen miles upstream from the estuary of the River Ems, in a region called Drenthe, scattered across a low ridge perhaps fifty feet above the surrounding swampland, are dozens of graves marked by large standing stones and boulders. These are the only stones to be found in Friesland. The pirates of Friesland, including those of Waddenzee covenant, come to this haunted place to bury their dead. Lucas von Beck of Waddenzee harvests both vis and bodies from this haunted place for his necroman-

tic research, and it has only fleetingly crossed his mind that the supernatural power he finds here may not be magical in origin.

Holstein

Holstein consists of territory between the North Sea and the Baltic, where a number of new port towns are springing up. Bordering Denmark proper, it is under the control of the Danish king, Valdemar II "the Victorious" who conquered it in 1201. In 1214, Frederick II formally acknowledged Valdemar's possession of Holstein and Pomerania, after he had supported his claim to the imperial throne. Erich, of the Danish house of Sven Estridson, administers the land as duke on behalf of Valdemar II.

If your saga follows real history, Valdemar II will be defeated by Adolf IV of Holstein in 1227, at which point Holstein and Pomerania will return to the Holy Roman Empire, Lübeck will be proclaimed a Free Imperial City, and Hamburg will have its Free status restored.

Schleswig

At the beginning of the 9th century, the Vikings established a major trading center here, by the fjord of the River Schlei, where the overland Baltic-North Sea crossing is at its shortest. Two hundred years later, a new fishing town grew up nearby on the north side of the Schlei, next to a Benedictine cloister dedicated to St. Johannis. Haithabu, the old Viking city, lies just a few miles away. All that remains are earthwork ramparts, burial mounds, and ghosts, if the locals are to be believed ...

Hamburg

Since its founding at the beginning of the 9th century, Hamburg has had a violent history. It was first destroyed in 845 when a huge Viking fleet invaded up the estuary of the River Elbe. The Polish burned the city to the ground in 1030. Later that same century, Hamburg was raided twice by the Wends, at which point the city's archbishop abandoned it,

The Ash of Nortorf

Infernal Might: 15 (with the potential to be 60)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +2

Special Powers: Grant Victory, Grant Virtue (Entrancement), Grant Virtue (Inspirational), Grant Virtue (Tough)

The small town of Nortorf in Holstein is unremarkable other than forming a meeting place for the roads to Schleswig, Lübeck, and Hamburg. Unremarkable, that is, except for a small ash seedling that sprouts in the churchyard of Nortorf. Every year, on New Year's Night, a white horseman on a white horse cuts it down. A black horseman on a black horse tries to prevent him, but is put to flight. It is prophesied that one day the black horseman will prevail, and the shoot will grow into a tree. When it is tall enough for a horse to be tied beneath it, a king will come with a mighty army and a terrible battle will be fought. The king will not be conquered if his horse remains under the tree during the fight, and fell powers will be granted him.

moving the see to Bremen instead. Fortunes improved in the 12th century, and in 1189 Frederick Barbarossa granted a tax and customs exemption for all goods brought by ship from sea and along the Elbe, proclaiming Hamburg a Free Imperial City. Since then the port has flourished, and Hamburg has grown into a sizeable city and trading center. However, it was occupied by Valdemar II in 1216, and currently owes its allegiance to the Danish crown.

Story Seed: The White Horseman

Forces working on behalf of the black horsemen ensure that the characters hear of the ash at Nortorf, but not its prophecy. It is revealed that it will be a great source of vis once grown. Hopefully they will guard it on New Year's Night, when the Divine white horseman comes to prevent the prophecy of doom taking place. If the characters fight him off, or even kill him, he never comes again, and evil has an inroad.

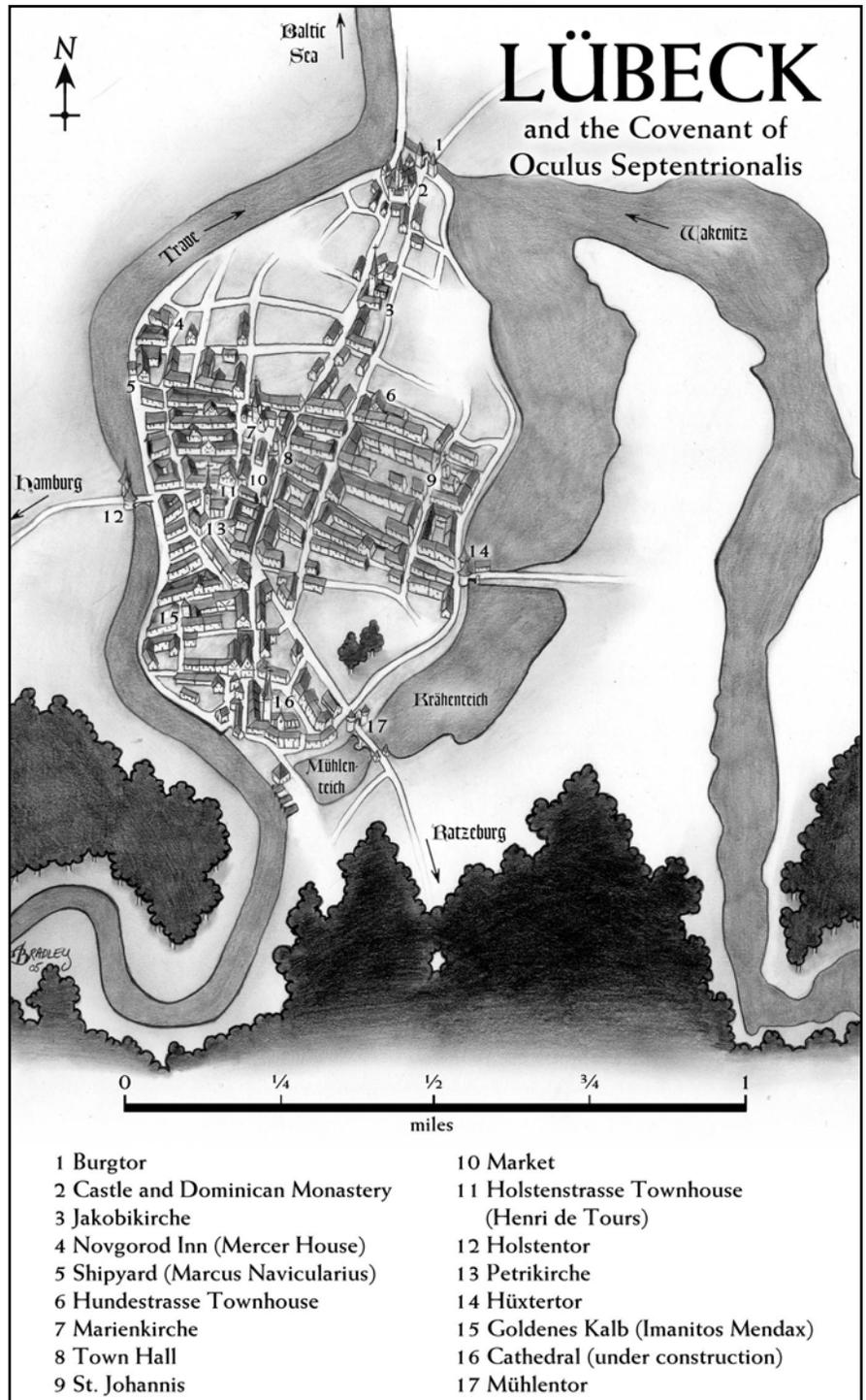


Hamburg's most famous archbishop (before the see moved to Bremen) was St. Ansgar, known as the Apostle of the North. In the middle of the 9th century, the holy man courageously and successfully undertook missionary activity in the northlands in the face of a Viking onslaught, founding many churches in northern Germany and Denmark, as well as the first ever church in Sweden. Ansgar died and was buried in Bremen in 865, after which the Vikings destroyed his Danish churches and Sweden reverted to paganism.

Lübeck

Lübeck is the most important coastal port in Germany, and one of its richest cities, acting as a hub of trade for the Baltic Sea. Although there had been older Wend settlements on the site, it was effectively founded in 1157 by the then duke of Saxony, Henry the Lion, who seized the site from the counts of Holstein after it was mostly destroyed in a fire. Henry developed Lübeck as a city with a harbor, established it as a bishopric, and did much to support trade. He also granted the city a number of special privileges, called the Statutes of Lübeck, meaning that it is run independently by a council of merchants, the leader of whom is named the Älderman. This council administers its own system of justice, and taxes are spent on great civic projects, of which Lübeck's prosperous citizens are very proud. One such project is a great brick cathedral under construction at the southern tip of the city, which is due to be completed within a decade.

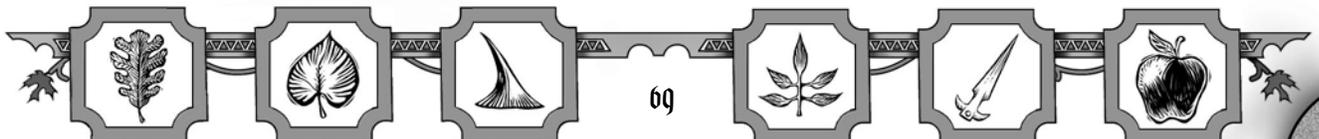
The city is located on an oval island at the mouth of the River Trave, surrounded by moat canals. The quayside is thronged with merchants' counters and warehouses, behind which rise tidy brick townhouses, guilds, and other civic buildings. Furs, leather, timber, amber, and iron ore are imported from around the Baltic, and the city exports salt, spices, grain, herring, cloth, and metalware. Due to various fast days and the Church's prohibition on the eating of meat on Fridays, fish is an important part of the German diet, and Lübeck has a profitable monopoly on the trade in herring. One of the driving factors for the close trade cooperation with Hamburg is that Lübeck requires salt for the preservation of its fish catch. The trade in salt, mined in Lüneburg, is controlled by Hamburg. Lübeck has a large fishing fleet, which operates in the fertile herring



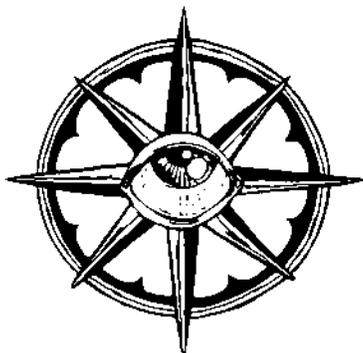
grounds off the Scanian coast (the southern tip of Sweden). As well having as many merchants and fishermen, Lübeck is home to skilled shipwrights and toolmakers.

Lübeck (and the covenant of Oculus Septentrionalis) is a common port of call for Redcaps on their way to the Novgorod Tribunal. The sea route is generally preferable: for example, the city of

Novgorod can be reached in a few weeks by ship in relative safety (excepting the risks of storms or piracy), whereas the same journey overland would take months through mostly wilderness terrain with poor roads. The merchants of Lübeck have, since 1205, established a trade counter in Novgorod, where Oculus Septentrionalis maintains a contact.



Oculus Septentrionalis



Oculus Septentrionalis ("Eye of the North") is a Summer covenant of mostly Jerbiton magi located in the city of Lübeck. Although they have relatively little Hermetic power, and mostly distance themselves from the rest of the Tribunal, they have amassed a great deal of mundane wealth and influence in the city home into which they have seamlessly integrated themselves.

History

In 1144 AD, the Rhine Tribunal, at the urging of the Ash Gild, ruled that more information should be gathered about the Norse wizards in lands to the north of the Tribunal — the purported Order of Odin. To this end, Oculus Septentrionalis was formed and dedicated to investigating this potential threat. Uniquely, at the time of its founding, this covenant had no magi and no site, and its charter was written by senior magi of the Tribunal. (The Tribunal ruled that an initial site was not mandatory, and that a covenant need only consist of a number of magi bound by a charter.) Three magi, lead by Axior of House Flambeau, volunteered for membership, were given a grant of resources, and were instructed to find a suitable site in the north of the Tribunal.

In its first two decades, however, Oculus Septentrionalis remained a covenant in name only. At the Tribunal of 1158 it was revealed that, despite generous grants of books and vis, its magi had failed to fulfil their obligations according to the covenant's charter, having neither established a site nor begun investigation of the Norse wizards, and still maintained

their previous sancta at their former covenants. They were ruled to have failed in their duties, were fined three pawns of vis each, and were ordered to vacate their current sancta within a year, and establish a permanent site for the covenant before the following Tribunal. Two more magi of House Jerbiton decided to join the enterprise at this point. However, the then four members (one having since died) could not completely agree over the choice of site for their covenant. After two years, three of them established sancta in the new port city of Lübeck, on the Baltic coast. Axior, the nominal leader of the group and most martial of the magi, whose blatant magics disagreed with mundanes, found this intolerable. He split from the others, departing in search of an alternative site, and founded the covenant of Terschelling (later to become Waddenzee). His covenant quickly developed a rivalry with Oculus Septentrionalis.

Since then, the covenant's magi have made little further progress with their original mission, showing scant interest in proactively investigating or combating the Norse wizards. Instead they have adopted an informal policy of peaceful contact and trade with any magically inclined folk of the northlands they encounter. Indeed, two such individuals have since married magi of the covenant. The only strong proponent of the original Ash philosophy was Axior, and he never even stayed in Lübeck. The remaining magi instead embraced the teaching of the new Apple Gild that arose in the middle of the 12th century, seeking a harmonious existence with the mundanes of their city. They were largely successful.

Crintera, their neighbor, to the east, has viewed Oculus Septentrionalis with considerable hostility from the start. Crintera's worst fears were realized when Rügen was invaded by the Danes — they suspected Oculus Septentrionalis of aiding this attack. At the Tribunal of 1179, the then Primus of Bjornaer, the pugnacious Urgen, presented charges but failed to offer proof. Thwarted by the Tribunal, he instead resorted to a declaration of Wizard's War against Oculus Septentrionalis' leader, Prudentum of Jerbiton. Prudentum was hopelessly out-matched by Urgen and was rent apart by the great bear. The other magi hurried back to Lübeck licking their wounds, fearing outright destruction at the hands or claws of avenging Crintera magi. These fears later receded somewhat with the rise of the more moderate Falke to the leadership of Crintera — since then, the two

The Magestones of Verditius

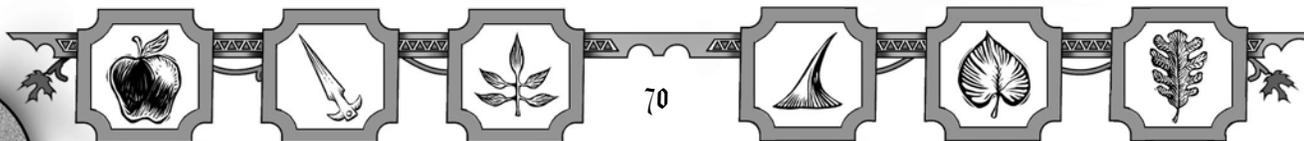
At the time of the Order's creation, the Founders Bonisagus and Verditius worked together to produce several breakthroughs. While he was learning the Hermetic magic, Verditius crafted a number of magestones with the appearance of fist-sized onyx pebbles. That they are imbued with a powerful Creo Vim effect is obvious, as they bear runes of these two Arts on either face. Each stone manifests a Magic aura of 3, large enough to cover a large room or laboratory. Verditius gifted his magestones to Bonisagus to help the growth of the nascent Order — at the time of their creation, he did not consider them to be extraordinary. Yet his technique was never incorporated into the Hermetic theory, and the instantiation of auras remains a fundamental limit — several magi since have tried to replicate the magestones, but none has succeeded, making them far more valuable than Verditius could ever have imagined. Their exact number is unknown, but those that remain are jealously guarded by Durenmar.

As an incentive to the newly-founded covenant in 1144, Oculus Septentrionalis was secretly gifted with three of the magestones, so as to enable them to adapt to establishing a covenant in a site without an aura. The magi of the covenant now share the stones equally among themselves, so that they are able to work in a Magic aura in their labs for up to two seasons every year. Along with their mundane dealings, the possession of these items is one of the covenant's cornerstones (and biggest secrets). Only the senior magi of Durenmar are also aware of their existence.

covenants have simply ignored each other.

Setting and Physical Description

There is no single structure that houses the covenant, its magi being mostly dispersed among their own individual abodes. Instead, there are numerous properties that belong either to the covenant



or its magi, including a number of opulent townhouses, warehouses, a shipyard, and a fleet of ships.

The townhouse of Henri de Tours (the covenant's disceptator) and his family, being the largest and most impressive, serves as a common meeting point of sorts and is usually the first port of call for visitors to the covenant. It is a rather grand brick building in the new Lübeck (Baltic) style on a main street, the Holstenstrasse. The ground floor consists of a merchant's shop and offices, where Henri conducts his business dealings, with a library and scriptorium above. The next floor up is a series of fabulously outfitted meeting rooms, a dining hall, and guest chambers, where visiting magi may be accommodated. Above that are the familial living quarters, with the three labs of Henri and his wife and daughter at the top.

The principal disadvantage of the covenant's site is the lack of a Magic aura or any magical resources in the city itself. Indeed Lübeck has a typical Divine aura. However, the magi have demonstrated that it is possible to survive, flourish even, in an environment that most would consider unwelcoming to magic.

Culture and Traditions

Ever since the covenant settled in Lübeck, only magi with the Gentle Gift are permitted membership. This provision was added to their charter at the insistence of the Quaesitores. Discreet and subtle use of magic is something the magi take very seriously — they are known by the burghers of the city as either merchants, scholars, or craftsmen, but not as wizards. Oculus Septentrionalis is thus akin to a secret society within the city, which is kept carefully hidden from view. Visiting magi who exercise good judgement and who are reserved in revealing their magical natures are welcomed; those that do not very rapidly find themselves asked to leave.

Oculus Septentrionalis mostly keeps itself aloof from the politics of the Rhine Tribunal, except for the Apple Gild, of which they are one of the principal proponents — aside from Boris, the Redcap, all of them are members. Although the interests and activities of the magi are diverse, they all have other professions that are at least as important to them as their status as magi. Magic thus plays a rather limited role in the covenant; for example, most of the magi do not even bother with their Parma Magica on a

daily basis. It is rare that they are seen casting spells, although this may in part be due to the fact that most have developed at least some ability with discreet spellcasting. Living apart from each other, the magi meet infrequently and hold council rarely, lending a somewhat conspiratorial or gossipy tone to the covenant's internal politics.

One of the covenant's perennial problems is a shortage of vis; they claim only a few sources, all of which are located a significant distance from Lübeck. Estrid, the seafaring magus of the covenant, is responsible for gathering vis from a number of sites around the Baltic. To help alleviate the shortage, Oculus Septentrionalis has come to a secret arrangement with the vis-rich Fengheld: in exchange for an annual tithe of a rook of vis, Oculus Septentrionalis sends a vast shipment every year to that covenant, consisting of luxuries and precious goods, and more than a hundred pounds of silver. With the vast mundane wealth they have accumulated — which may even surpass that of all the other Rhine covenants put together — they can easily afford this. The covenant has a good-sized library, although it is no match for Fengheld or Triamore, let alone the Great Library. Unsurprisingly, it consists mostly of mundane tomes; the best Hermetic texts cover Rego, Mentem, Imaginem, and Corpus.

With the new leadership of Waddensee, the animosity between the two covenants has worsened into outright enmity. The magi of Oculus Septentrionalis are dismayed and outraged by Waddensee's acts of blatant piracy, which have caused the loss of more than one of their ships and numerous cargoes (both mundane and magical). These conflicts are just a symptom of the deep-seated mistrust and philosophical differences between the two covenants. A major goal of Oculus Septentrionalis is thus to see the end of Waddensee. As they lack either the martial or magical power to defeat them directly, they are left with only two means: either by rule of the Tribunal or by secretly inducing a counterattack by a mundane army against the pirates. They have made attempts at Tribunal already, but have secured no major censure of Waddensee to date, having yet to provide concrete proof. In this they are somewhat hamstrung by their own desire to avoid attracting unwanted interest from the Quaesitores, who would surely take great interest in the exact extent of their mundane dealings, if they were ever fully revealed.

Recently the magus Theoderich of House Jerbiton (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Heorot) has quit the covenant to join in the founding of Heorot in Denmark. However, he remains well-disposed towards his former home.

Magi

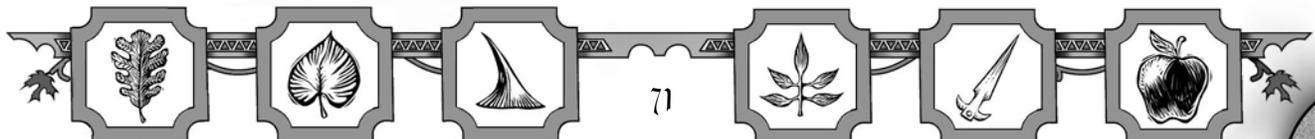
HENRI DE TOURS,
FOLLOWER OF JERBITON

Age: 66 (Master)
Personality Traits:
Ambitious +3,
Diplomatic +3,
Scheming +2



Henri de Tours is a corpulent and sociable man, dressed splendidly as befits his status as probably the wealthiest merchant in Lübeck (which makes him one of the wealthiest men — at least among commoners — in the whole of Germany). He is well regarded among the city's burghers as a cultured and able administrator and diplomat. Apprenticed in the Normandy Tribunal, he joined the covenant not long after its founding, and as the oldest remaining member now serves as disceptator. He plans that his familial dynasty will lead it for many generations to come. Henri is a master of Mentem magics, although the more he learns of that Art, the less inclined he becomes towards using it directly. He employs higher magnitude Mentem effects to increase the subtlety, not the raw power, of his magics (see his sample spell on page 72).

Brunhilda, Henri's wife, is a matronly and insightful woman originating from Sweden. They first met when Henri was a young magus, freshly arrived in Lübeck, and eager to explore the Baltic. His first encounter with the magical folk of Scandinavia set him on the course of love, not war, and the two have been married for more than thirty years. Brunhilda has the power of divination — like Norse wise women she can enter a trance, and send her spirit, in the shape of an animal, far and wide — although her magical powers are not broad enough to qualify her as a member of the Order of Hermes. The magi of the covenant, however, mostly regard her as their equal. Indeed, she is more active than Henri in the covenant's day-to-day organization. Her divinatory



Creo Mentem Spell

MY NEW BEST FRIEND

R: Eye, D: Sun, T: Individual, Level 25

Requisite: Muto

This spell causes the target to believe that the caster is an old friend. The spell actually causes the caster to be temporarily substituted for one of the target's real friends, adding realism, which means that the target will not suspect something is wrong, nor concentrate on the substitution unduly. Additionally, once the spell has expired, the target will not necessarily realize that he has been duped. The target will have one pivotal memory about the caster, usually (but not always) about how they became friends, and a host of supporting memories of minor events. Note that the caster does not know the memories that will be replaced, but can be assured of a friendly reaction (the target acquires a 'Friendly to Caster' Personality Trait at +3). Only if the target is a misanthrope with no good friends will the memories be entirely false, in which case the target gets an Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to reveal the memory as false. Henri's sigil, which reflects his trading interests, tends to create a memory associated with a business partner or a former transaction.

(Base 5, +1 Eye, +2 Sun, +1 complexity)

abilities are put to good use as, Henri displays an uncanny knack for choosing the right cargoes and the right ports, at the right times.

GUNHILDA HENRASDOTTIR, FOLLOWER OF JERBITON

Age: 31 (Journeyman)

Personality Traits:

Loyal to Family +3,
Compassionate +1,
Independent -2



G u n h i l d a
Henrasdottir, of House Jerbiton, is Henri's daughter and filia, a rather plump young maga specializing in housecraft. She suffers from being excessively sheltered by her parents, but her marriage to Estrid offers her a taste of excitement.

ESTRID DANESSON, MAGUS EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 36 (Journeyman)

Personality Traits:

Extroverted +2,
Energetic +1,
Conciliatory -3



Estrid is a relatively recent recruit and is the second Scandinavian wizard to be successfully absorbed by the covenant. Born in Ribe in Denmark, he is the younger cousin and bitter enemy of Eric Ribecus at Waddensee. Whereas Eric began his Hermetic training early, Estrid joined the Order of Hermes much later, as

a hedge wizard specializing in sailing and weather magics. The two magi have battled more than once on the open seas, although it has not yet come to a full Wizard War. A flamboyant and roguish man — the opposite of his rather demure wife — he maintains his sanctum and lab-

oratory on his ship, being more often away at sea than in Lübeck.

MARCUS NAVICULARIUS, FOLLOWER OF VERDITIUS

Age: 58 (Master)

Personality Traits:

Proud of his
Abilities +3, Skillful
+1, Friendly -2



Marcus, a large, stern-faced man with iron-gray hair and beard, is known as the foremost shipwright in Lübeck. He owns a shipyard and workshop that doubles as his laboratory, where he employs a number of highly skilled craftsmen and laborers. A master of Terram, his method of enchantment is suited to the creation of extremely large items, especially ships, although he is incapable of enchanting anything smaller than a sword. His creations thus cost a great deal of vis, which he earns from the sale of magical vessels to other covenants. Much to his chagrin, however, Waddensee has recently stolen one of his best, the *Nebelkönigin*. Nevertheless he maintains a secret corre-

Story Seed: The Dark Jerbiton

The exact extent of the dark side of Imanitos Mendax in your saga is for you to decide. For instance, he may simply be a somewhat amoral magus who poses no real harm beyond his devious moneymaking schemes. On the other hand, if you choose to introduce diabolic wizards into your saga, Imanitos makes an excellent candidate for a dark magus. Furthermore, if you use the saga plot "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" (see Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas), he fits as one of the principal servants of the demon Radevast, who seeks to corrupt the new Baltic towns (see Rostock below). Imanitos does not match the typical diabolist stereotype, at least in appearance, but a fair-seeming servant is actually a far more effective and valuable pawn than an obvious monster. Apprenticed at the powerful covenant of Doissetep in the Provençal Tribunal before being sent to the Rhine to take his gild training and Gauntlet, he might belong to a small and highly secret lineage of dark Jerbiton. Where other dark lineages have been uncovered and exterminated, this handful of tainted magi survives, and flourishes, due to their extreme subtlety and feigned preference for the mundane over the occult.

There are several ways in which Imanitos can act to spread corruption, both among magi and mundanes. Important persons of Lübeck are corrupted by visits to the *Goldenes Kalb*, sowing a dark seed at the heart of the future Hanseatic League. He might replace his covenant's precious magestones with infernally tainted duplicates gifted by his master, with the aim of slowly corrupting all the magi with greed while they work in their labs. The magi of Waddensee are similarly vulnerable. Their theft of Hermetic books may have been engineered, and these tomes tainted. For example, Lucas von Beck might unknowingly use black knowledge in his study of necromancy. Only Hachim may have the wisdom to prevent his covenant's fall into greed and darkness. Imanitos can accomplish much with the use of summoned demons of low Might, which are (relatively) easy to control. Astasians, tiny messenger-demons, can be used to communicate with his subordinates and the magi of Waddensee; they may simply be presumed to be "airy spirits." Other minor demons under his dominion may specialize in thievery, espionage, or lust.



Imanitos Mendax, follower of Terbiton

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

Size: 0

Age: 55 (39) (Gauntlet at 22; Master)

Decrepitude: 0 (2)

Warping Score: 4 (3)

Confidence Score: 2 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Master; Gentle Gift; Affinity with Finesse (gained from Twilight), Affinity with Guile, Affinity with Mentem, Apple Gild Trained, Minor Magical Focus (Deception), Quiet Magic*, Self Confident, Social Contacts, Subtle Magic; Dark Secret, Lecherous; Compulsion (Lies), Deficient Form (Animal), Deficient Form (Igm), Lesser Malediction

Personality Traits: Lustful +3, Scheming +2, Brave -1

Reputations: Amoral 2 (Hermetic), Master of minor Mentem spells 2 (Hermetic)

Combat:

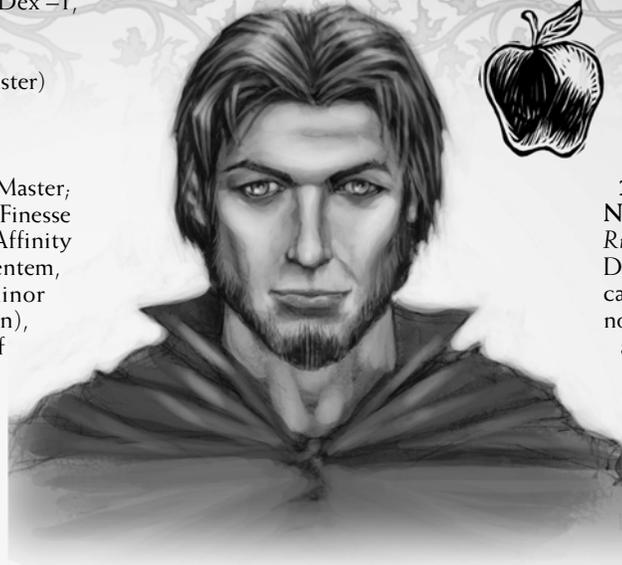
Dagger: Init -2, Attack +1, Defense 0, Damage +2

Soak: +1

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 3 (forging handwriting), Awareness 1 (in crowds), Bargain 1 (ladies of negotiable affection), Brawl 1 (dagger), Carouse 1 (staying sober), Charm 4 (women), Code of Hermes 2 (oaths), Concentration 3 (Mentem spells), Etiquette 2 (nobility), Fengheld Lore 1 (master magi), Finesse 3 (Mentem), French 2 (langue d'oc), Folk Ken 3 (nobility), Low German 6 (Saxon), Guile 7 (plots), Infernal Lore 2 (servile demons), Intrigue 3 (Hermetic politics), Latin 5 (sycophancy), Leadership 1 (employees), Lübeck Lore 3 (corruption), Magic Theory 5 (inventing spells), Music 1 (lute), Order of Hermes Lore 2 (Lindengilde), Parma Magica 4 (Mentem), Penetration 2 (Mentem), Philosophiae 1 (morals), Profession: Tavern/Brothel Owner 1 (accounts), Profession: Scribe 2 (copying books), Ride 1 (keeping level), Teaching 1 (Arts), Waddenzee Lore



2 (piracy), West Slavonic 2 (Sorbian)

Arts: Cr 6, In 9, Mu 7, Pe 8, Re 9; An 3, Aq 5, Au 5, Co 5, He 3, Ig 4, Im 9, Me 17, Te 5, Vi 11

Twilight Scars: Although he hides it well, Imanitos' tongue is actually forked. His voice is compelling, and people want to listen to him. A faint smell of funerary incense accompanies him.

Equipment: Fine clothing of the latest fashion, expensive jewelry.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Whispering Winds (InAu 15) +15

Prying Eyes (InIm 5) +19

Aura of Ennobled Presence (Mulm 10) +25, Mastery 1 (Quiet Casting)

Disguise of the Transformed Wizard (Mulm 15) +25

Invisibility of the Standing Wizard (PelM 15) +18

Rising Passion (CrMe 15) +25, Mastery 1 (Quiet Casting)

Gossip of the Marketplace (Cr(Re)Me 20) +24

Weight of a Thousand Hells (CrMe 25) +24

Perception of Conflicting Motives (InMe 15) +27

Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie (InMe 20) +27

Posing the Silent Question (InMe 20) +28, Mastery 1 (Quiet Casting)

Recollection of Memories Never Quite Lived (MuMe 5) +32

Seed of Betrayal (MuMe 15) +25

The Blinded Sentry (PeMe 5) +34

Trust of Childlike Faith (PeMe 10) +34

Loss of But a Moment's Memory (PeMe 15) +26

The Invisible Eye Revealed (InVi 20) +21

Clear Breath of the Consummate Liar (MuVi(Me) 20) +26

Masking the Odor of Magic (PeVi 20) +28

New Spells:

Rising Passion; CrMe 15; R:Eye, D:Sun, T:Ind: Raises an unnatural carnal lust in a target. The target has no control over his or her passion, and is likely to act inappropriately.

(Base 4, +1 Eye, +2 Sun)

Gossip of the Marketplace; Cr(Re)Me 20; R:Eye, D:Sun, T:Ind: Implants a piece of information in a target, who is then compelled to pass this information on to his friends until the duration expires.

(Base 3, +1 Eye, +2 Sun, Rego

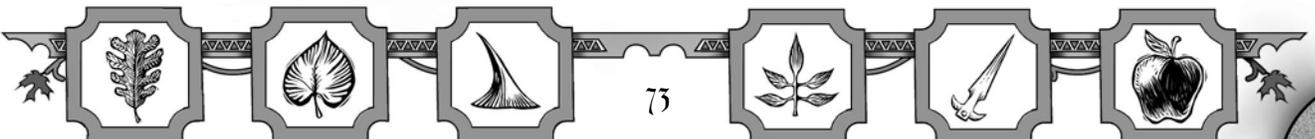
requisite to compel gossiping, +2 complexity)

Seed of Betrayal; MuMe 15; R:Eye, D:Moon, T:Ind: Changes the target's emotions towards his master(s) to contempt, such that he will readily betray them. Subtract 5 points from the target's relevant Loyal Personality Trait, for the duration of the spell. (Base 3, +1 Eye, +3 Moon)

The Blinded Sentry; PeMe 5; R:Touch, D:Mom, T:Ind: Renders the target insensate for a moment, sufficient for the caster to slip past him, raise a shout, cast a spell, or pick his pocket. Only the initial touch is registered by the target. (Base 4, +1 Touch)

Clear Breath of the Consummate Liar; MuVi(Me) 20; R:Per, D:Conc; T:Ind: Allows the caster to manipulate the workings of a Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie cast on himself. He can make himself appear to be lying or telling the truth, as desired. Casting without words or gestures is obviously advisable, and casting under Masking the Odor of Magic is also advantageous. (Base effect, +1 Conc, Mentem requisite)

Appearance: Imanitos is tall and quite lean, his medium-length hair is thick and black, his eyes are blue, and he is classically handsome, sometimes sporting a neat beard as the fancy takes him. He usually dresses in immaculate clothing of the latest



fashion, in blue or black hues, that are ostentatious and show his wealth and social awareness. He wears a large ring on his left hand, in the shape of a serpent grasping a large ruby in its mouth; he intends to make this into his talisman. Forever vain, Imanitos has had made a special longevity ritual that preserves his youthful appearance at the expense of being less effective. (It gives him a mere +2 longevity modifier, but his Apparent age only increases with an Aging roll of 7+.)

Imanitos would appear, at first sight, to be a well-intentioned and charming magus. However, a closer look at this character reveals the shadier side of both the covenant and Lübeck. As his surname ("Liar") suggests, he is guileful, but also treacherous and subtle. His debonair facade barely conceals a lack of morals — his weaknesses for pretty women and mundane finery are frequently indulged, and he is not above murder, when it suits his needs.

Imanitos poses and is commonly known as the proprietor of an upmarket tavern, the *Goldenes Kalb*. Somewhat less well-known is its secondary business —

upstairs are a number of discreet and opulent chambers, where the lusts and perversions of certain select and wealthy clients are catered to by a number of courtesans under his employ (and charms). Subtle magics greatly assist this enterprise and make it into a very profitable endeavor. For example, rich visitors who sample his wine often find their desires strangely heightened. His third and most delicate business is crime and extortion — he has gathered blackmail information on numerous well-respected citizens (and magi, for that matter).

The top floors of his townhouse, above the tavern and brothel, are devoted to Imanitos' sanctum, which is highly secret (and magically protected). Unsurprisingly, his magical focus is the Art of Mentem, although he is also competent with Imaginem magic, to facilitate disguises. He is in his fifties (though appearing twenty years younger), and has just recently become a master, having spent some time at Fengheld covenant, winning the approval of three of their magi.

About twenty years ago, when he was a peregrinator, Imanitos spent a number of years as a guest at Waddenzee when the new magi of that covenant had

just completed their takeover, ostensibly on a mission to foster good relations with Oculus Septentrionalis. He got on well with Eric and Lucas, but not Hygwald, who characteristically viewed him with some disdain, despite being his junior. Upon his return to Lübeck, it soon seemed that Imanitos' diplomacy had failed, given Waddenzee's blatant piracy. In fact, this was part of his plan, and he is involved in a major conspiracy with the pirate covenant — details of Oculus Septentrionalis' ship movements are secretly communicated in advance to Eric, so that he can plan their raids to great effect. Imanitos demands a share of the spoils in return. Thus his loyalties are seriously divided, although his greater loyalty is to himself. He simply sees this underhand scheme as an opportunity for personal enrichment. The other magi of Oculus Septentrionalis, unaware of his treachery, hold him in mixed regard — despite his loose morals, he is acknowledged to have his uses. However were his secret dealings with Waddenzee to be uncovered, he would certainly be expelled from the covenant without delay, and face their undying enmity.

spondence with Waddenzee's shipwright, Aelfhere — the two often exchange ideas.

CAROLUS, FOLLOWER OF JERBITON

Age: 35 (Journeyman)
 Personality Traits:
 Analytical +2,
 Idealistic +1,
 Organized -3



Carolus is a well-intentioned but scatterbrained young magus who poses as an eccentric scholar, sometimes lending his services to those city folk with a penchant for education. A somewhat naïve recent stay at Crintera, in an attempt to repair relations with the Rügen covenant, turned sour when his raven familiar, believed to be spying, was blinded by Caprea of Bjornaer, a guest maga there. In fact there was a raven spying at Crintera, although it was actually Kolkrabus, the devious familiar of Murion (see Chapter 6: The Black Forest, Durenmar). Caprea was fooled and her wrath was misdirected at Carolus' familiar instead.

BORIS OF NOVGOROD, FOLLOWER OF MERCERE

Age: 37 (Journeyman)
 Personality Traits:
 Indolent +2,
 Avaricious +1,
 Talkative +1

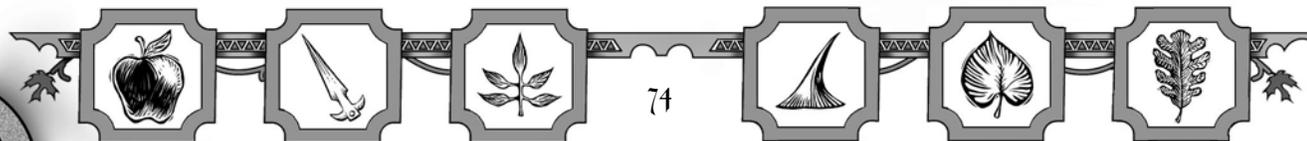


Boris is a well-traveled, shrew-like Russian who poses as an itinerant merchant. His Redcap duties commonly take him to the northern Rhine covenants and the Novgorod Tribunal, although he finds Lübeck a useful base. When not on the

road, he enjoys the comforts of the city and oversees his newly built establishment at the northern end of town, the Novgorod Inn, which is beginning to be popular with Redcaps and Russian merchants. He hopes to achieve the rank of master in the next couple of years, whereupon his inn may be entrusted with the status of a Mercer House, and attract yet more Redcaps. Boris has a habit of selling all kinds of nick-nacks to magi, from which he profits modestly; he may well be willing to initiate trades in books, items, or vis with the player covenant, at the right price, of course. In particular, he is

Story Seed: The Genesis of the League

The location of Oculus Septentrionalis in the city that happens to father the Hanseatic League is unlikely to be coincidence! The exact extent of the covenant's involvement is for you to decide in your saga. Henri de Tours, a skilled diplomat and famous merchant, may play a leading role in the negotiation of the Treaty of Lübeck and Hamburg. The League may even be the conception of the covenant itself, with Henri rising to become the Alderman. Alternatively, the magi may prefer to take a more backseat role. In any case, it is likely that Oculus Septentrionalis will be in a position to accumulate unheard-of levels of wealth. However, as their fortune grows, so too does the probable disfavor of the Quaesitores and the risk of a detailed investigation. Should these dealings be revealed at Tribunal, the magi may try to offer huge bribes to other covenants in an attempt to avoid censure.



The Hanseatic League

The advocate and common council of Lübeck: We have made an agreement with our beloved friends the citizens of Hamburg.

That if by chance robbers or other evil men rise against our citizens or theirs, from that place where the river which is called the Trave flows into the sea to Hamburg, and thence along the Elbe to the sea, and if they assail our citizens or theirs, whatever costs or expenses are incurred for extirpating those robbers we ought to share with them, and they with us.

If by chance any criminal should outrageously kill, wound, beat, or, God forbid, in any way ill-treat outside the city any burgess of Hamburg or Lübeck whom he has accused, whatever expense is incurred in taking him and punishing him, we shall share with them and they with us, this condition being added, that whatever happens to their citizens near their city, and to our citizens near our city, they with their citizens, and we with ours, shall punish at the expense of the city.

Further, if any of the burgesses of theirs near our city of Lübeck, or burgesses near the city of Hamburg, should be ill-treated, we shall surrender the doer or doers of the deed for punishment, and they will surrender such people to us at the expense of the commune likewise.

— Treaty of Lübeck and Hamburg, 1241

Hanse (trade associations; singular "Hansa") have existed in Germany since at least the 12th century. Contracts and agreements between merchants may offer mutual protection from pirates and robbers, a means for settling disputes, and agreed prices to protect and ensure profits. However, to date these trade associations remain mostly small-scale. Assuming that your saga follows real history, the treaty of Lübeck and Hamburg will be the most significant yet. In the decades following, many cities in Germany and around the Baltic join in this enterprise, which becomes known as the Hanseatic League. By the end of the 13th century, scores of cities will be members and the Hansa will have grown rich and influential, becoming a great force to be reckoned with. Lübeck is the League's leading city, with the Statutes of Lübeck forming a model for its governance.

The Baltic Cog

At the beginning of the 13th century, ships in northern Europe were not radically different from those used by the Vikings: they were long, narrow vessels that were seaworthy and suitable for warfare, but ill-suited to the transportation of cargo. At most they could carry thirty or forty tons.

Marcus Navicularius is currently working on an innovative design for a greatly improved cargo ship — the Baltic cog. To be built with abundant timber from Novgorod, his ship will feature a complete hull redesign to take a round, flat-bottomed shape made possible by his ingenious use of a new, center-mounted rudder. The ship will bear a single large mast with a square-rigged sail. A single cog will be capable of transporting hundreds of tons of cargo. By the middle of the century, if your saga broadly follows real history, this ship design will be adopted by the merchants of the new Hanseatic League, allowing trade on a scale never before possible. This breakthrough contributes in no small part to the growth of Baltic commerce and the League in the 13th century.

able to acquire vis from the Novgorod covenants relatively cheaply.

OTHER MAGI

There is room at Oculus Septentrionalis for one or two more magi (likely Jerbiton, members of the Apple Gild, or Redcaps) of your own devising, should you wish. Such characters should have the Gentle Gift Virtue and a mundane profession, or at least the semblance of one. The covenant has also recently established two laboratories for peregrinators above the Novgorod Inn, although visiting magi seldom bother to do labwork due to the lack of a Magic aura.

Covenfolk

In contrast to the virtual army commanded by Waddenzee, Oculus Septentrionalis has no turb as such. Living in a naturally well-defended city, there is no need, and in any case, a large group of independently minded soldiers would not

be tolerated. Instead, the covenant employs a handful of mercenaries who are mostly occupied protecting the covenant's commercial interests — the line between those who work for Henri's various businesses and those who serve the covenant directly is very blurred. Several of the magi, including Marcus and Imanitos, employ their own staff independently. Apart from numerous servants and two scribes, Gunhilda's elder sister Matilda (who is not Gifted) serves as autocrat and Henri's housekeeper.

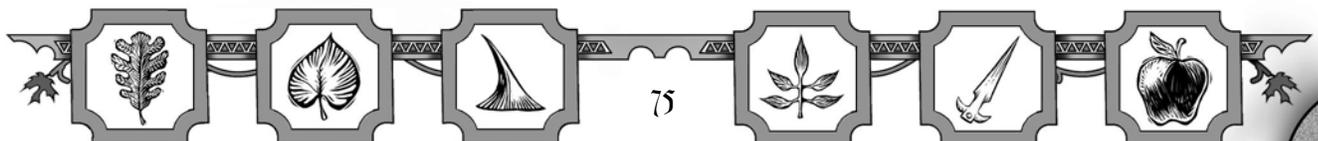
The Giant's Grave

Hidden in the Everstorf Forest to the north of Schwerin lies a rectangular bed of many large stones, 40 yards long and 10 yards wide. Here there used to live a giant who would terrorize the peasants of Naschendorf by stealing their cattle and trampling their crops. One day the farmers found the giant asleep and resolved to trap him. They gathered up their tools and dug a huge, deep grave beside him. The giant was rolled in and covered with

earth. So that he could not escape, the giant's wife dragged many stone blocks with her apron and covered over the grave. The giant suffocated and the villagers could thereafter live in peace. The giant-wife was never heard from again.

Rostock

Rostock is an expanding trading town and important port of the Baltic Sea, although somewhat overshadowed by its neighbor Lübeck. Rostock is the chief town of a dynasty of Sorbian princes, who are named after the Mecklenburg (castle), their chief seat which is situated between Lübeck and Rostock, a short distance inland north of Schwerin. Prior to the invasion of the Danish king, the family of Mecklenburg and the region they ruled were dedicated to the worship of Radegast, whose cult center was at Rethra (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Pomerania). However, in 1161 the town was burned by Valdemar I and the pagans were driven out into the surrounding countryside. Rostock is now occupied



Story Seed: The Prophet of Radegast

The Mecklenburgs pay only lip-service to the Church; they remain true to the god of their ancestors, Radegast (see Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea). His patronage has served them well, and their secret worship has granted them powers normally denied to man. Recently, a "prophet of Radegast" has made himself known to them; this is actually Imanitos Mendax of Oculus Septentrionalis, who has a place in his schemes for these powerful nobles with a dark secret.

mainly by Germans and the Mecklenburg family have now accepted Christianity and sworn allegiance to the emperor, hoping to gain his support to retake their ancestral lands.

Saxony

Saxony is a large and important duchy; apart from the Harz Mountains (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains) and the Teutoburger Forest, it consists of fertile lowlands and numerous cities, a dozen or so of which date from the time of Charlemagne. Many of these cities are home to cathedrals and powerful bishops. This is the ancestral home of the Welf family, the chief rivals to the Hohenstaufens who currently hold the imperial throne. The greatest Welf ruler in living memory is Henry the Lion (1129-95), who grew to be duke of both Saxony and Bavaria. However, he became too powerful for the liking of Frederick Barbarossa, and when he staked a claim to the rich silver mines of Goslar, Frederick stripped him of most of his estates. The current duke is Albert I of the Ascanian line, descended from Albert the Bear, a rival to Henry who profited from his downfall.

Münster

Münster lies in the center of a flat and highly fertile plain called the Münsterland, and is a prosperous market

The Holy Vehm

The League of the Holy Court, *Vehmgericht* — or simply the Holy Vehm — is a system of secret tribunals primarily of northern Germany, the principal seat of which is in Dortmund. The Holy Vehm tries all capital crimes, claiming that the Imperial Mandate granted by Charlemagne to the Vehmgerichte grants them the power over life and death (called the *Blutbann*, the blood-ban). Formerly reserved to the emperor alone, the Vehm claim that this right has been usurped by the nobility of Germany. The Vehm has a sinister reputation, which is justly earned. Their activities are characterized by secret meetings, night-time kidnappings of suspects, terrifying trials before a hostile court, torture (in some regions), followed by summary justice, the inevitable result of which is death by hanging.

Members of the Vehm style themselves the *Wissende* (wise ones). Every free man, born in lawful wedlock, and neither excommunicate nor outlaw, is eligible for membership, and the society boasts many tens of thousands of members scattered throughout the length and breadth of Germany, but concentrated in the north. Initiation into the ranks of the *Wissende* involves an oath to uphold the Vehm with all their power, to guard its secrets from all — even their closest kin — and to bring before its tribunal anything that they may discover. Each initiate is presented with a rope and a knife upon which are engraved the mystic letters SSGG, standing for *Stein, Strick, Gras, Grün* (stone, stick, grass, green), which is one of the many secret signs of the society by which members recognize each other. Any crime punishable by death is claimed by the Holy Vehm as part of its jurisdiction, but the crimes of heresy, witchcraft, perjury, secret or open murder, and sacrilegious acts receive most of its attention. Revealing the signs, passwords, membership, or activities of the Vehm is also punishable by death. Women and children are outside their competence, as are Jews and heathens. Nobles are also exempt, for the requirement of trial by peers can rarely be met for the upper ranks of society.

Presiding over each court is the *Stuhlherr* (chairman), most usually the secular or ecclesiastic lord of the region. The *Oberststuhlherr*, supreme leader of the Vehm, is the archbishop of Cologne. The actual ruler of each court is the *Freigraf*, appointed for life by each *Stuhlherr*. The greatest body of the initiated are the *Freischöffen* (lay judges) who accuse the suspect and decide the verdict. The court usually holds session on a hillock or other well-known spot, although more recently, vast underground chambers have started to be used, where available. Only the initiated are allowed to attend, with interlopers being put to death. Any *Frieschöffe* can accuse a man of a crime, at which point a summons is issued. If he does not present himself to the Vehm, and his accuser can present to the court seven witnesses to his own character as a man to be trusted, then the case is considered proven; the actual charge is not even gone into. The Imperial Ban (*Blutbann*) is pronounced, and members of the Vehm called the *Fronboten* are responsible for carrying out the only sentence of the court — death by hanging in a public spot, leaving a knife bearing mystic letters next to the corpse to indicate that the deed was not murder. If the accused is brave enough to turn up at the Vehm Court, he requires twenty-one witnesses in favor of innocence to assure his acquittal. If the accused is one of the *Wissende*, then only his oath is needed to clear him, unless his charge is that he has revealed the secrets of the Vehm, in which case death is inevitable. The Vehm even employ *Fehmenotes*, secret informants scattered throughout the empire, who watch both for those who have escaped the "justice" of the Vehm, and for those who deserve it.

Archmage Philippus Niger of Durenmar (see Chapter 6: The Black Forest, Durenmar) makes use of the Holy Vehm. Two of his trusted men are *Freigraf*s, and he knows of more than a score *Fehmenotes*. He has caused the execution of dozens of suspected hedge magicians by the Vehm Courts, and at least one Marched magus. He is also responsible for the gradual spread of the *Vehmgerichte* southwards, for he believes that this institution is a perfect tool for ridding the Order of the threat of hedge wizards. He has assured House Guernicus that there is no danger to the Order of Hermes from the Vehm, an assurance for which he has no actual grounds.



The Teutoburger Forest

Magic Might: 50

Personality Traits: Patient +3, Unforgiving +1

Special Powers: Grant Flaw (Simple-Minded), Grant Victory, Regio, Shroud, Stasis

The forest-clad slopes of the Teutoburger hills are known for an important victory of the native German people, led by Hermann against the invading Roman legions (see Chapter 2: History, Germania Magna). Charlemagne also fought a war here in the late 8th century while establishing his empire. The forest has always seemed an important beachhead to establish when conquering a land, which is possibly why it has such strong guardians. At the center of the forest is a great clearing surrounded by a circle of ancient trees of differing types. These trees act jointly as the guardians of the forest, watching over it and ensuring that it remains unsullied as one of the few remaining wildernesses bordering the northern lowlands. After the Battle of the Teutoburger Forest in the 1st century, the remaining Roman legions retreated into the heart of the forest, and were never heard from again.

At the top level of the regio, a fortified camp of the Roman soldiers is to be found in the center of the clearing. The guardians neither allow them to die nor to leave the forest (although they can leave the clearing to hunt and gather food, they remain trapped in the regio), even though they have grown to treat the trees with reverence.

city. The cathedral is named after St. Liudger, its first bishop from the time of the bishopric's founding as a monastery ("Münster" derives from the latin *monasterium*) in 805, as a base from which to convert the Saxons.

Paderborn

Paderborn is centered around a spot where hundreds of tiny warm springs rise up and form the source of the diminutive

River Pader. It is most famous for being the site of the meeting between Charlemagne and Pope Leo III in 799, at which the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire was agreed. In preparation for the pope's arrival, Charlemagne began the construction of a lofty cathedral and palace. The palace, however, lies in ruins, destroyed in two conflagrations in 1000 and 1165.

Twenty miles to the east of Paderborn, near to the town of Höxter, lies the great scholarly abbey of Corvey. It was here that the monk Widukind penned the epic *History of the Saxons* in the 10th century. South of Paderborn the lowlands give way to the inhospitable and rugged Sauerland, bordering Thuringia.

The Externsteine

In a large clearing on the southeastern edge of the Teutoburger Forest, is a jumbled array of thirteen sandstone rocks, some more than a hundred feet tall. Formerly a site of pagan worship, a series of caves beside the rocks was consecrated as a chapel in 1115. A carving of the Descent of Jesus from the Cross adorns the foot of one of the biggest rocks. Inside one of the others, one can climb up to another bare chapel, whose window catches the rays of the sunrise on the summer solstice. A sense of enigmatic peace surrounds this strange site; it is occupied only by a tiny handful of ascetic hermits, who seek solitude and divine insight. There is a Divine aura of 4 here.

Bremen

Bremen is a port city on the north bank of the River Weser. Its bishopric pre-dates that of Münster and the other Saxon cities, being founded in the 8th century when Charlemagne sent his first missionary, Willehad, to christianize the Saxon tribes. Its first church was built in 789, and has since expanded to a sizeable cathedral. Despite the fact that Bremen's market traders have long held independent rights, the archbishop, Gerhard II, vies with merchants for control of the city.

The Teufelsmoor

To the northeast of Bremen stretches an extensive swampy wasteland known as the Teufelsmoor (Devil's Bog). For many

Story Seed: Freeing the Legionaries

It is possible to bargain with the forest spirits for the release of the Roman soldiers — they may likely ask the characters to repel a mundane (or other) threat or intrusion into their forest. If released, the Romans would make loyal and well-trained grogs (though they are significantly Warped by the centuries). Alternatively, it may be found that a renegade magus or hedge wizard has remained hidden in the forest and employed the legionaries as his personal turb.

miles, a dark peat moss covers all, permitting no grass or trees to grow, and no man or beast to dwell. The moor is almost always layered with thick mist, and oppressive dank smells waft from it onto the surrounding farmland. The place has an ill reputation, and the locals, believing it to be cursed, rarely dare to venture within. At night strange shapes and lights can sometimes be seen faintly through the gloom. Some peasants harvest the rotten black peat from the edge of the moor, which makes an excellent fuel, if you can stand the smell. The Teufelsmoor would make a suitable (if somewhat unpleasant) location for a covenant.

Lüneburg

Lüneburg is notable for its extensive salt mines, on top of which the city is built. The trade in precious salt has garnered the city vast wealth, which they have used to erect grand brick buildings. Due to subsidence caused by the mines, however, houses tilt precariously over rickety streets, and many are dangerously unstable. The recent plans for a great brick cathedral to be built are thus questionable, at best. Even when built on firm ground, the Devil is known to thwart and imperil such projects.

The Lüneburg Heath

To the south of Lüneburg lies a sprawling wild area, consisting mostly of open heathland, interspersed with small woods. Only a few villagers and shepherds dwell here, tending to the flocks of





Heidschnucken (loosely translated as “heath-nibblers”) that roam all over the heath. These beasts are a cross between goat and sheep, descending from the *mouflon* of Corsica, from where they were imported about two hundred years ago.

Hildesheim

Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, arrived here in 815 to go hunting, hanging his relics of the Virgin Mary on a rosebush. When he returned from the hunt, he found that the relics could not be removed; taking this to be divine instruction, he founded a church at this spot. The venerable rosebush still stands, around which has been built a cloister adjacent to the cathedral.

Hildesheim, the jewel of northern Germany, has grown to be filled with magnificent civic buildings and churches, and is home to artists and architects. This splendor is due to the divinely inspired vision of St. Bernward, bishop of Hildesheim in the early 11th century and

advisor to Otto II. During his lifetime, the city rose to greatness and established the now-ubiquitous Romanesque style. The greatest of Hildesheim’s churches is St. Michael, a short distance to the north of the cathedral, replete with six towers, and sited on its own small hill. Inside are numerous relics, wondrous paintings, and the crypt of St. Bernward himself.

Brunswick

In the 12th century, Brunswick was the chosen residence of the Saxon duke Henry the Lion, and he beautified the city with numerous works of art and monuments. The centerpiece of the city is an opulent square in which stands the bronze *Burglöwe*, a great statue of a lion. In 1173, Henry began construction of a cathedral, which is now completed in the distinctive shape of a fortress and filled with riches. This style has caught on with a number of other Welf churches. Adjacent to Brunswick’s cathedral is Henry’s fortress

proper, Burg Dankwarderode, named after the city’s heroic founder.

Goslar

Goslar, a Free Imperial City on the northern edge of the Harz Mountains, is famed for the nearby silver mines of the Rammelsberg. These mines are the largest in Germany, and make the city one of the most prized assets of the Holy Roman Empire. However, the mines are gradually becoming flooded, and thus less productive, due to the presence of spiteful gnomes who have diverted an underground river into them. Anyone able to drive these faeries off and successfully drain the mines would surely be richly rewarded by the emperor.

Quedlinburg

For a generation early in the 10th century, Quedlinburg was the effective



Boglin

Magic Might: 25 (Aquam)

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per -2, Pre -5, Com -3, Str +5, Sta +6, Dex -1, Qik +2

Size: +3 (Body), 0 (Tentacle)

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Immunity, Ways of the Swamp; Tough; Blind, Greedy; Obese, Tainted With Evil

Personality Traits: Greedy +5, Reclusive +2, Guileful +1

Combat:

Tentacle: Init +10, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +8

Bite: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +11, Damage +13

(includes bonus for Ways of the Swamp)

Soak: +12 (immune to damage from bludgeoning weapons)

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

Wound Penalties: (main body) -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32); (each tentacle) -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

Abilities: Awareness 5 (swamp), Brawl 8 (Tentacle), Stealth 3 (swamp), Survival 6 (swamp), Swim 3 (swamp)

Powers:

Abominable Stench, 5 points, Init +2, Auram: The Boglin may rudely fart out a great cloud of noxious bodily fumes from an orifice just beneath the waterline. This choking swamp gas spreads to a radius of 15 yards over 3 rounds, taking a further 3 rounds to dissipate. Any who come into contact with it must make a Stamina roll against an Ease Factor of 9, or otherwise recoil with watery eyes, clenching their nostrils shut, unable to act further. Any who botch keel over, vomiting.

Paralysis, 3 points, Init n/a, Corpus or Animal: Each of the Boglin's tentacles is equipped with venomous barbs. This poison may be applied upon any hit that inflicts a wound: A Stamina roll against an Ease Factor of 9 may be made to resist this poison, but a failure results in a -5 penalty to all physical actions as their muscles seize. This poison wears off in about an hour. Each tentacle inflicts poison only once in any combat.

Writhing Grasp, 0 points, Init n/a, Corpus or Animal: Any hit by a tentacle

that would inflict a Medium Wound or greater instead inflicts just a Light Wound, but the tentacle envelops the victim in its choking grip. Each round thereafter, the victim may attempt either an opposed Strength roll to extricate himself completely or an opposed Dexterity roll to free his hands to be able to act. If the grip is not broken, the victim will be drawn into the water within range of the fearsome maw in 3 rounds. Only then may the Boglin use its Bite attack.

Regeneration, 20 points, Init n/a, Animal:

The Boglin may hibernate and regrow any severed tentacles at the rate of one per season.

Vis: 8 pawns of Animal vis, one pawn in each tentacle; 6 pawns of Perdo vis, in its brain (a black and smelly nodule)

Appearance: The Boglin possesses eight slimy, dark brown, 12-foot-long tentacles. Its large misshapen sack-like body, covered with a tough carapace, is rarely seen as it mostly stays under murky waters. Somewhere in it is a broad toothy orifice that serves as a mouth.

These primeval and foul spirits lurk in the swamps of northern Germany. The terrible stench of the pools they inhabit, together with occasional faint murmuring, provides clues to their presence. Only gentle ripples in the water tell of the stealthy approach of a boglin, before the beast suddenly lashes out with its tentacles at its prey (anything moving that passes by). The attacking tentacles should be treated as separate entities, with individual Wound Penalties. An Incapacitating blow may sever a tentacle; each such loss counts as a Light Wound to the creature proper. Once a live victim has been firmly grasped in its great black maw, it will withdraw and drag the victim underwater for later consumption at its leisure — horrid belching hours later tells of its pleasure in its gruesome meal. The Boglin possesses a simplistic and bestial malice — its gluttony is its overriding emotion — but nevertheless it is capable of surprising cunning in the hunt.

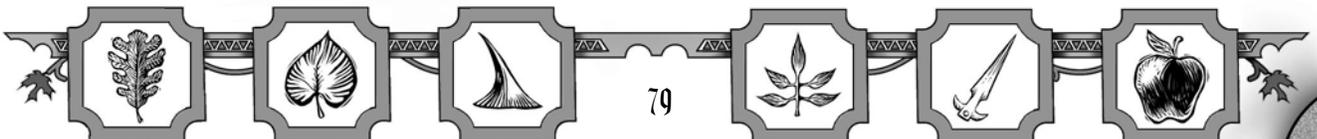
German capital and base of operations for Henry the Fowler in his eastern campaigns. He erected a castle on the Burgberg at the southern end of the town and a palace, which frequently hosted his Imperial Diets. Upon his death, control of Quedlinburg passed to Henry's widow, Mathilde. She founded a collegiate foundation for noblewomen, and the abbesses have ruled the town ever since, although it has become rather overshadowed by the other, more important Saxon cities.

Magdeburg

Magdeburg, on the west bank of the River Elbe, was the favored city of the emperor Otto the Great in the 10th century. He founded a Benedictine monastery and the city's cathedral, raising it to the seat of an archbishopric in 962. Many surrounding lands were granted to bishops and abbots, and the city thus formed the center of missionary activity (and subsequently the Church's authority) over the Eastern Marches. The Magdeburg Law promotes the continued founding of settlements in these lands by offering generous charters and rapidly establishing local courts.

The Teufelsküche

Some distance to the northwest of Magdeburg, deep in the Haldensleben Forest, lies a squat and forgotten circle of round stones surrounding an ancient stone altar. In times gone by, the pagan god Woden was worshiped at this place. His priests, tall and red-bearded, dressed in long white cloaks, would solemnly approach the grove in the hour before dawn, followed by men dressed in skins and other dark shapes. Surrounded by the chanting of the woodsfolk, a sacrifice would be slaughtered at the altar, and its vital parts burned, releasing the spirit to herald the arrival of dawn. The name of the circle ("Devil's Kitchen") dates from when Christian missionaries arrived in the region and purged most pagan beliefs and practices. Whether any remnants of the priesthood of Woden remain should be decided by the storyguide. The Teufelsküche is the origin of the Wild Hunt (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains), and the winter is a bad time to visit this place.



Central Germany

The central and southern parts of the Rhine Tribunal, stretching from the Harz Mountains on the edge of Saxony down through Thuringia and Franconia as far as the River Danube and Bavaria, are at the very heart of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. This is a diverse and only moderately populated landscape, characterized by rolling hills, rocky and isolated wildernesses, and innumerable magic and faerie forests of varying sizes. In between are a number of cities, which while not as venerable as the great Roman cities of the Rhineland, are nevertheless important in

both trade and politics within the empire. In the courts and cathedrals of this land, cultural life has, unlike elsewhere, developed a uniquely German flavor.

The Harz Mountains

The northernmost mountain range in Germany, the Harz are a fifty-mile stretch of high granite hills — a desolate wilderness surrounded by the civilized towns of Saxony (see Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Saxony). When not being assaulted by winds from the unbroken northern plain, rain and fog usually hold sway. The peaks are often shrouded by low cloud, giving them an eerie sense of detachment from the surrounding lowlands. The lower slopes consist of gloomy forests with hidden and strange rock formations, and are dotted with whispering streams, lakes, and caves. Here are known to live a small number of secretive dwarflike folk. Gübich (see Chapter 4: The Forest, Woodland Spirits) is a morose figure who dwells in moss-covered caves. He has the ability to control the weather, by summoning rain and storms, and sometimes leads travelers astray. Kröpel, on the other hand, is a good-natured creature who often travels abroad, remaining hidden by his hat of fog.

The Brocken

The highest mountain of the Harz, the Brocken, at 3750 feet is one of the most potent supernatural sites in Germany. The bare peak is topped with a mass of huge granite blocks called the

Witches' Altar, which every Walpurgis Night bears witness to a great ritual where the fertility goddess Walpurga summons the spirits of summer to defeat those of winter. Walpurgis Night is the 30th of April — the eve of May Day — and in Germany is even more important for witchcraft than its opposite in the calendar — All Hallows' Eve. Witches from many miles around gather on this day on the Brocken's slopes, followed by many dozens of those villagers who still believe in the old traditions. Fires are lit to drive out the spirits of winter, and hymns are sung to the old forgotten gods. Only the most powerful of witches are allowed to approach the Witches' Altar, where the ritual takes place.

At other times of the year, the Brocken is still a popular meeting place for witches. In Hermetic circles, it is known to be a good place at which to find a potential apprentice. A nearby spring is called the Magic Fountain and grants visions to those who drink from it. On the rugged slopes grows a pale violet anemone dubbed the Sorcerer's Flower, reputed to be a source of vis. The lower slopes of the Brocken have a Faerie aura of 2, with 4 at the summit. These values are doubled on Walpurgis Night.

Hexentanzplatz and the Rosstrappe

A dozen miles to the east of the Brocken, in the wilds of the northeastern Harz, is a rocky crag known as the Hexentanzplatz (Witches' Dancing Ground). A set of ancient steps lead up to the weathered summit, which has a Faerie aura of 2. The witches of the Harz gather here every April to hold council, before proceeding on to the Brocken.

Directly across a ravine from the Hexentanzplatz is a lower slope with a

The Rumaquelle

The Rumaquelle is a magical spring hidden among the forested slopes of the southern Harz, whose water is of a characteristic green color. At the Römerstein castle there once lived a young giant by the name of Romer, who fell in love with a beautiful girl he met in the forest. The girl, Ruma, loved him in turn, but as she was the daughter of the dwarf king (who some believe to be Gübich), a sworn enemy of Romer's father, the two married in secret. After Ruma gave birth to a baby boy, the dwarf king found out about the marriage and was enraged. He punished his daughter and ordered her to leave Romer. When she refused, he issued a great curse, murdered the child, and imprisoned her in a cave. Ruma tried with all her might to escape and find Romer — since her mother was a mermaid she was able to transform into a stream of water and search out the many subterranean passages. After many years of labor, she finally reached the surface beyond the realm of the dwarfs. This place became known as the Rumaquelle (Ruma's spring). It is believed that Romer and Ruma still meet here to this day.



Walpurga

During the nine days before Walpurgis Night, a modest Holzfrau (see Chapter 4: The Forest, Woodland Spirits) by the name of Frau Holle, riding on a rickety wagon, is abroad in the land, pursued by the troop of the Wild Hunt (see below). She asks those villagers she encounters for aid and protection, and also checks that their household tasks are in order. Those who help Frau Holle are often rewarded with gifts of gold; for example, a peasant who carves a new linchpin for her wagon may discover the swept-away wood shavings to be transformed into gold, or a farmer who hides her in his grain barn might find his rye crop to be sprinkled with gold the next morning. After having evaded the Wild Huntsman, with the help of the good

folk of the Harz, on Walpurgis Night Frau Holle ascends the Brocken.

At the summit of the mountain, the Holzfrau casts aside her old clothes to reveal herself as the goddess Walpurga — a beautiful and ethereal lady dressed in a white cloak and crown, wearing shoes of fire and carrying a spindle and a three-cornered mirror with the power to foretell the future. Aided by the chants of the witches, she enjoins the forces of summer to arrive and do her bidding. There then follows a great tumult as powerful airy elemental spirits of various kinds do battle around the Witches' Altar, with the dark and cold phantoms of the Wild Hunt ultimately being defeated. The ritual ends as dawn breaks on May Day, and

Walpurga rides off in her wagon across the clouds below the peak.

Walpurga is a powerful lady of the Seelie Court, who represents summer and growth. She is entirely beneficent to mankind, and is the Queen of the Holzfrau. She has a Faerie Might of 50, and any powers over growth, vegetation, and healing that the storyguide deems appropriate.

The witches of the Harz who worship Walpurga as a goddess are also left to the storyguide to design. For example, they might be cunning-folk, with minor magical powers to create potions and charms. They should never be able to cast spells or display any other major magic, else the Order of Hermes would have either adopted or exterminated them long ago.



The Wild Hunt

The Wild Hunt is a pervasive myth throughout the kingdoms of northern Europe, a tumultuous band of wild spirits who sweep down from the sky, hunting sinners and innocents alike. Those caught by the Hunt have their souls dragged off to Hell, or so it is said.

In fact, there are two Wild Hunts, which are often confused in the minds of men. The first is Hellequin's Hunt, a host of the dead, trapped in a mobile regio that is centered on Hellequin, a cursed spirit whose task is to guide spirits who are unable to reach Heaven onto their resting place. The ghosts who accompany him died unfulfilled, and the Hunt grants them a chance to convince mortals to grant them grace, so that they may pass on.

The Wild Hunt proper is a troupe of faeries of storms and of winter. It arises in the Teufelsküche (see Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Saxony), and sweeps across Germany on stormy winter nights, terrorizing the peasantry. The Wild Huntsman is a powerful, Unseelie faerie lord, perhaps once a fragment of the mighty Woden, but now a wrathful spirit who seeks to maintain winter's hold on the land. The Wild Hunt seeks out the Holzfrauen, hoping that if all of these faeries of vegetation can be caught, then spring cannot come to the land. Occasionally they seek mortal prey; but, being spirits of wind, night, and winter, they cannot directly harm their prey — although terror, buffeting winds, and chilling cold are still fearsome weapons. If, however, the Wild Huntsman is able to convince a mortal to mount up and ride with the Hunt, then each of the huntsmen may strike with lethal force, and much damage may be done by them. The unfortunate mortal who accompanied them will often be found at dawn, exhausted and chilled to the bone, and will never recover from his experience (gaining the Enfeebled Flaw).

The Hunt is composed of the following faeries. A typical Hunt includes the Wild Huntsman, 10-15 Horsemen and 25-30 Hounds:

The Wild Huntsman: The focus of every Hunt, the Wild Huntsman is a grim figure on an immense black horse, wrapped completely in a storm-gray robe. The glint of a shiny helm can be seen under the hood of his cloak, and he carries a spear. The Huntsman has a Faerie Might of 50, and he has numerous powers that give him control over terror, the night, the winter, and storms.

The Horsemen: These fearsome faeries embody the icy storms of winter. They appear to be ghostly men on horseback, but when in flight, the horses and the men become one. Their very presence can spread fear, and they can control the winds and inflict bone-chilling cold. Each Horseman has a Faerie Might of 20, and can produce the effects of following spells, at a cost of 1 Might each: *Broom of the Winds*, *Winter's Icy Touch*, *Panic of the Trembling Heart*. If a mortal accompanies the hunt, then the weapons and hooves of the Horsemen become substantial, and they may directly inflict damage through trampling and spear-thrusts.

The Hounds: Immense grey dogs, whose howls are the ululation of the arctic winds. Each Hound has a Faerie Might of 10. They are as insubstantial as the rest of the hunt, and although they appear to bite those that they chase, it is actually an effect similar to *Talons of the Winds* (no Might cost), except that (unless a mortal accompanies the Hunt) this power only inflicts Fatigue damage (one level for a Light wound, two for a Medium wound, and so on); the wounds seem very real to the victim, however.

large rock called the Rosstrappe, bearing the huge imprint of a horse's hoof. Legend relates that a princess by the name of Brunhilde was being pursued through the forest by a lusty knight, Bodo. Reaching this spot, she spurred her horse to make a mighty leap across the ravine to the Hexentanzplatz, and thus evaded the tireless suitor — a nearby witch transformed him into a dog, and he fell into the chasm. Some say a hound still lives down there by

the stream, guarding Brunhilde's crown, which fell from her head during the leap.

The Bears' Cave

Amid the slopes of the northern Harz is a hidden and primeval cave with a Magic aura of 3. Strewn across the cave floor are arranged the ancient bones of bears, which may be harvested for Animal

vis. These bones, teeth, and scraps of hide appear to be from bears which are far larger and more fearsome than any which roam — or at least which are commonly known to roam — the Harz today.

Fengheld



The covenant of Fengheld is the largest in the Rhine Tribunal, both in sheer physical size and in the number of magi who it claims as members. It is also perhaps the most diverse of the Rhine covenants, having no single House or gild dominating its membership. This Autumn covenant is perceived as the most neutral of the covenants in the Tribunal, although the more paranoid magi have suspicions regarding its true agenda. It likes to give the image of being politically impartial, and a peacemaker — both the Apple and Linden Gilds were formed by members of this covenant — and often adjudicates conflicts between covenants; nevertheless,

Story Seed: Who's Been Harvesting My Vis?

The cave is in fact the secret hiding place of an ancient lineage of Bjornaer magi, all with bear heartbeats, descending from the Founder Bjornaer herself. The two current magi of this line are Archmage Urgen (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Crintera) and his filia Odorpes (see below, Fengheld) — each visits the cave on occasion, and they would be most displeased to discover any other magus harvesting from their secret vis source.



its main purpose is to keep all the other covenants so bound up in political machinations that they don't notice the burgeoning power of Fengheld. So far, this policy has been successful — although the covenant now commands more than forty Tribunal votes, nearly a quarter of the total, they are seldom all cast together.

History

Fengheld was founded in 1039 by veteran members of Houses Flambeau and Tremere returning from the Schism War in Stonehenge and Normandy. The Tribunal had no problems agreeing on the founding of a covenant for these "war heroes," but it was originally intended as a place that older magi could spend their glory days in isolation from mundanes. However, the founding of the covenant coincided with the reign of Henry III, and the politically inclined Tremere magi of Fengheld, in cahoots with the Transylvanian Tribunal, were involved in his conquests of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary, seizing numerous vis sites in the process.

As its main site grew full, Fengheld tried to sponsor daughter covenants populated by young Tremere magi, but were blocked by the Tribunal. Instead, they resorted to the founding of chapter houses, copying the common practices of and citing as precedent the Greater Alps Tribunal, reckoning that they had enough martial power to defend multiple sites. Fengheld has recently loosened its ties with the Transylvanian Tribunal, and is no longer seen as being dominated by House Tremere.

Setting and Physical Description

Fengheld's main site is a sprawling hilltop fortress in a fairly isolated spot among the hills of the eastern Harz. The south side of the hill is covered in vast vineyards and orchards, whereas grain and root crops are grown in the valley floor below. On the rest of the hill, sheep and goats graze, watched over by shepherds. On the top of the hill, an immense curtain wall surrounds the entire covenant complex, which consists of a score of individual buildings, including a tower for each of the resident magi, an elaborate guest house, an immense meeting hall, and numerous buildings inhabited by the various coven-

folk and grogs. Well over two hundred people dwell in Fengheld and its outlying hamlets; most of the food — except for a few luxuries — are grown on site. The isolation of the site partly — but not wholly — explains how this vast farming operation has remained unnoticed by the local nobility, but Fengheld has never been openly accused of manipulating mundanes to ignore their presence. The covenant is magically rich in terms of minor items and raw vis, harvesting from about two dozen different sites, some of them hundreds of miles away. Fengheld's library, while vast,

is dominated by books of lower levels than one might expect from a covenant this large. Consequentially, magi trained here tend to be generalists, although the covenant actively tries to invite specialist magi as guests so they can enhance the library. The hilltop has a Magic aura of 5.

In addition to the main site, there are also half a dozen chapter houses spread throughout northern mainland Europe. Each is inhabited by one or more magi, and they take a variety of forms, depending upon the location and needs of the inhabitants.

Fengheld's Chapter Houses

Each of Fengheld's chapters is still a part of the main covenant. All magi must accept the charter of Fengheld, and any strictures or rulings from the Tribunal that apply to Fengheld also apply to the chapter houses (and vice versa). However, a chapter usually has a local charter that applies only to those magi who live in the chapter house.

Of the eleven magi of Fengheld that live in chapters, only six are detailed in the five chapter houses given below. The placing of the other five magi has been left to the storyguide to determine. We suggest that Fengheld's biggest chapter, run by Clemens filius Stentorius, the most senior master of Fengheld, could be sited close to the player covenant. Alternatively, the player magi could themselves constitute one of the remaining chapters, which would make them beholden to the dictates of Fengheld's senior magi.

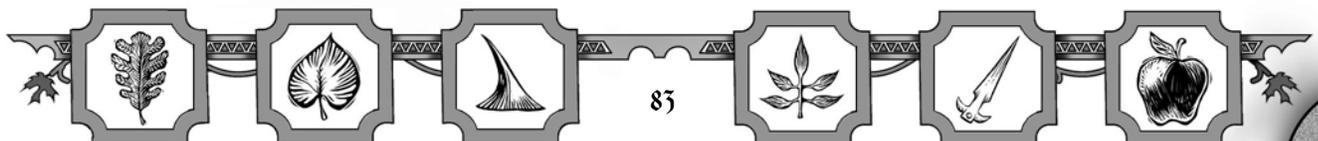
Fengheld House: The most remote of Fengheld's chapters is located in the city of Cherbourg in Normandy. Only a single maga lives here, Marguerite of Flambeau. The chapter is a simple, fortified townhouse owned by Sir Jozef of Poznan, a crusader of Polish birth. Marguerite is a woman of stunning beauty, who considers mundane folk beneath her. She is as rude as she is beautiful, and does not hesitate to make the most cutting remarks she can. This chapter runs a small trading business with England and France.

Rheingasse: Two Gentle-Gifted magi live at this chapter in the center of Cologne. Their purpose is to arrange the supplies and organize the mundane contacts of Fengheld, and they are remarkably adept at their task. Wilhelm Weiss of House Jerbiton poses as a wealthy merchant, and his companion Garrinchus is a newly apprenticed member of House Ex Miscellanea, whose master was acknowledged as an expert in physick. Both magi are members of the Apple Gild, and Wilhelm is its co-leader.

Turris Acontiarum: Hassan El-Megrayhi maintains a lone tower in the Kyffhäuser Mountains, where he studies the stars with but a single, mute companion.

Lusatia: Taking its name from the March of Lusatia (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, The Margravate of Lusatia), Lusatia is only 10 miles from the agreed border with the Novgorod Tribunal, and the foundation of this chapter house was the cause of the most recent boundary dispute between that Tribunal and the Rhine (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, History). Located in an idyllic spot on a bend of the River Sprec, this chapter has a single inhabitant, Odorpes filia Urgen of House Bjornaer. Odorpes is not exactly a model member of her covenant, and Fengheld has accused her at Tribunal more than once of failing to fulfil her duties, although they are reluctant to discipline her harshly for fear of her aggressive and powerful parents. Odorpes spends most of her time in her heartbeast (a bear), and hibernates for the whole winter.

Durenmar Chapter: Plans are currently underway to establish a chapter at Durenmar. This scheme, the brainchild of Rudolph of Bonisagus, is cautiously supported by Fengheld, although some senior members question the wisdom of this action.



Culture and Traditions

Fengheld currently boasts a membership of 23 magi, although only a dozen live at the main site. The internal structure of the covenant is an elaborate hierarchy, headed by Archmage Stentorius. Directly beneath him are Fengheld's eight magi of master rank, five of whom dwell at the main site (Eule of Bjornaer, Horst of Mercere, Peter von Würzburg of Verditius, Dorana of Bonisagus, and Indulius of Flambeau), and three at the various chapter houses (Clemens of Tremere, Hassan El-Megrayhi of Criamon, and Wilhelm Weiss of Jerbiton). The third rank of the covenant consists of 14 journeymen, with the six who dwell at Fengheld itself being given a slightly higher precedence to the other eight.

Fengheld is home to one of the Rhine Tribunal's two Mercer Houses (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*), the other being at Durenmar. It is also the home of the Tribunal's senior Redcap, and its central location and the great generosity that is shown to Redcaps ensures its popularity over Durenmar. Those who visit the northern covenants (including Boris of Novgorod, from Oculus Septentrionalis) meet here at agreed times with those who serve the southern half of the Tribunal. They exchange information and news, and occasionally meet with Redcaps from other Tribunals who do not wish to brave the Black Forest to visit Durenmar. This monopoly on the news of the Order has proved to be a great benefit to Fengheld.

Magi

STENTORIUS, FOLLOWER OF TREMERE

Age: 107 (Archmage)
 Personality Traits: Proud +3, Stickler for Rules +2, Forgiving -3



Stentorius is one of the most politically powerful magi in the Rhine Tribunal. He is the authoritarian leader of the largest of the Tribunal's covenants, an Archmage in his own right, and the Tremere exarch of the Rhine Tribunal (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*). As such, he administers about three-fifths of the sigils of the Tremere magi in the Tribunal, including those of his filius and the two



Tremere magi of Triamore (the rest are held by Severicus of Roznov).

Stentorius is a large man, nearly a hundred years from his apprenticeship, but bearing his advanced age well. He has an impressive, bushy beard, iron-gray in color, which covers his chest, and a craggy nose. He is known, rather predictably, as a master of Rego magics, although he is equally adept with most Forms. He wears ostentatious robes of deep crimson red, covered in the Hermetic symbols for Rego and the Forms, and of House Tremere.

His familiar of more than half a century is a supremely arrogant large gray cat by the name of Oswald. He wears a bejeweled golden pendant crafted for him by Stentorius (imbued with multiple uses of *Aura of Rightful Authority*, amongst other effects) and seriously considers himself the ruler of Fengheld and all its inhabitants, if not the whole Tribunal. When he deigns to visit Durenmar, he is much annoyed by the taunting of Kolkrabus, the raven familiar of Murion. Kolkrabus believes Stentorius has usurped his human's rightful role as the leader of the Oak Gild.

HORST, FOLLOWER OF MERCERE

Age: 68 (Master)
 Personality Traits: Widely-Read +3, Fascinating +2, Political -3



Horst is a famed author who has written books of high quality on a huge range of subjects, both mundane ones and on Magic Theory (despite having no Gift). His books are usually the mainstay of a Rhine magus' apprenticeship, and he is considered almost encyclopedic in his knowledge. The corpulent Redcap is asked to use his prodigious memory at Tribunals

to recall obscure points of Hermetic law, and his vast knowledge about the business of the Order would be a great asset to Fengheld, were Horst not completely apolitical. Horst is the senior Redcap of the Rhine Tribunal, overseeing the Mercer House, and many Redcaps may be found here, resting from their journeys.

EULE, FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: approximately 160 (Master)
 Personality Traits: Owlsh +6, Apathetic +3, Wise +3



A contender for the oldest magus in the Tribunal (along with Caecilus of Durenmar and Schadrit of Dankmar), Eule is an interesting phenomenon — a follower of Bjornaer who has received the honorary rank of Quaesitor from House Guernicus. For many years she was the only senior Quaesitor in the Rhine Tribunal, but is now in retirement from her official duties. Her heartbeast (as her name suggests) is an owl, and she is still sought out by magi for her famous good advice.

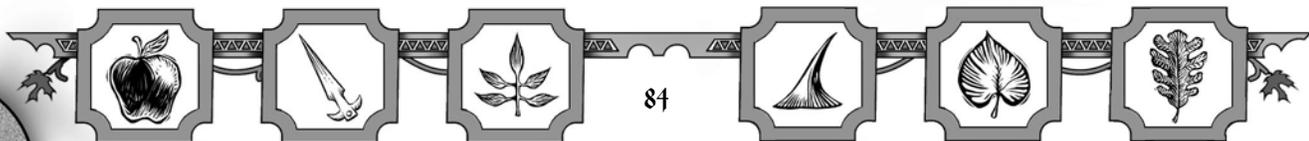
Only her filius (Günther Lupus) suspects that Eule has entered Final Twilight. She has not taken her human form for many years, and has not spoken for even longer. The myth of her wisdom has been perpetuated by a fraud set up by Günther; in the floor of the room where she receives her visitors is hidden a magic item with a low level (but very high Penetration) *Perdo Mentem* effect that calms the mind and removes emotion. With a few verbal promptings by Günther (who is "interpreting" his mistress' hoots), her petitioners usually manage to find their own answers to their quandaries, but attribute the solution to Eule's wisdom.

PETER VON WÜRZBURG, FOLLOWER OF VERDITIUS

Age: 62 (Master)
 Personality Traits: Charming +3, Generous +2, Industrious +2



Peter is a famed grower of grapes and maker of wine, both within the Order and among the nobles of southern Saxony and Thuringia. A number of minor magical items assist in the cultivation of the grapes that cover Fengheld's southern slopes, which would otherwise struggle at this rel-



atively northerly latitude; he cultivates special varieties into wine as Charged Items. His squirrel familiar is as industrious as he is, and they are often seen together, tying up the vines with twine, testing their sweetness and fertilizing the soil. Peter is often the first magus met by visitors to Fengheld as he tends to his precious grapes.

DORANA, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 76 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Hedonistic +2,
 Peaceful +1,
 Secretive -2



Dorana is the foremost maga of the lineage of Irmele filia Trianoma in the Tribunal, having settled down at Fengheld after several decades of travel as a peregrinator, during which time she accumulated a detailed knowledge of nearly all the Tribunal's covenants and many of its magi. Although she generally argues for rationality and peace in Fengheld's dealings — and her viewpoint often prevails — she nevertheless cannot stand her prima Murion. She urges Stentorius to challenge her for the leadership of the Oak Gild, and her close ally Occultes at Durenmar to challenge her for the Primacy of House Bonisagus. Dorana's expertise with weather magics is put to good use as Fengheld's agriculture requires a careful balance of sun and rain, with occasional thick fog to deter unwanted visitors. Her latest apprentice Felecia (see Chapter 3: The Rhine Tribunal, Upon Being a Rhine magus) has just completed her Gauntlet and set out on her travels.

BALASTOR, FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

Age: 26 (Journeyman)
 Personality Traits: Feral
 +3, Mischievous +3,
 Contempt for
 Humanity +2



Balastor believes that enlightenment may only be gained by throwing off the shackles of mundanity. He was born feral, and his master noticed a powerful vital spirit, which dwindled as Balastor learned to speak and took on the other trappings of humanity. Now, Balastor seeks to return himself (and others, whether they want to or not) to that primal state. His Warped Magic causes his features to take on a savage, feral cast when he uses his

magic, which is concentrated on releasing suppressed emotions and behavior. He is a mischievous, puckish figure who delights in causing trouble amongst self-important mundanes; nevertheless, his philosophy is in concordance with the Hawthorn Gild.

BEECHLEAF, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Age: 20 (Journeyman)
 Personality Traits: Other-worldly +2, Suspicious +2, Naive +1



This fresh-faced journeyman, apprenticed at Irencillia by his master, Primus Handri (see Chapter 10: Bohemia, Irencillia), is privileged to have been offered a position at the covenant's main site, but is not sure of the political reasons behind his appointment and is justifiably nervous. Beechleaf is strongly influenced by the fae; he was raised by a dryad, and understands the ways of faerie better than he does humans. His skin is a faint shade of green, and his bronze-colored hair seems to have a life of its own, ruffled in an unseen breeze.

OTHER MAGI

Another five magi dwell at Fengheld's main site. These include the remaining master, Indulius follower of Flambeau, who is a feared hoplite. He forms an unusual (but effective) team with Günther Lupus, who has the heartbeast of a wolf, when hunting down oath-breakers. Fengheld also maintains eight laboratories for the use of guest magi at the main site (and at least one at most chapters), and is a famed host of peregrinators. As the largest Mercer House of the Tribunal, there may also be up to a half-dozen Redcaps here at any given time.

Covenfolk

The mundane inhabitants of the covenant are managed through similar hierarchies to the Hermetic members, each terminating in one of the magi. For example, Peter von Würzburg is in charge of the head vintner, the orchard keeper, and the farming foreman, who each in turn head up a team of workers.

Fengheld employs about fifty soldiers, fifteen companions, and nearly ten dozen other covenfolk, from craftsmen

such as smiths, glassblowers, and percermenarii; to specialists such as scribes and huntsmen; right down to laborers such as herders and serfs.

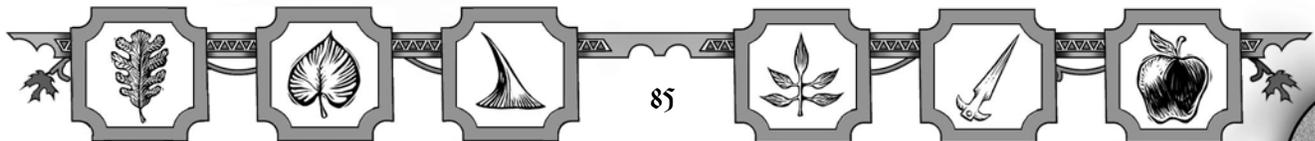
Thuringia

Thuringia is a landlocked region consisting mostly of uplands with no major rivers. As a result, it is quaint rather than bustling — it is not exactly the major player in the politics or economics of the empire that its central location would otherwise suggest. The towns of this province are bounded between the tiny

The Apple of the Kyffhäuser

Magic Might: 70
Personality Traits: Regal +4, Peaceful -1
Special Powers: Grant Victory (to anyone who manages to hang their shield on the tree), Grant Virtue (Unaging; to prolong the active life of the men-at-arms), Heal Wounds, Possession (any who fail to defeat the men-at-arms)

Forming part of the border between Saxony and Thuringia, the Kyffhäuser Mountains are a double line of hills that, in popular legend, are the resting place of any number of famous kings, most notably Frederick Barbarossa. At the base of the tallest peak of the Kyffhäuser stands a withered apple tree. The tree is closely guarded by men-at-arms, and it is said that whatever prince succeeds in hanging his shield on this tree will become lord of all the West; but those who fail are doomed to forever protect the tree as one of its warriors. The tree has been cut down three times by successful challengers (Clovis, Charlemagne, and Frederick Barbarossa) to prevent others from copying their feat. However, the tree has always sprung up again as luxuriant as ever, only to gradually fade and wither with the fortunes of those men. The next time it bursts into leaf, a terrible fight will begin; when it bears fruit, the king will hang his shield upon it and all men will rally around the shield while the wicked will be extirpated. The tree last bore fruit during the reign of Barbarossa.



The Minnesänger of the Wartburg

Since the rule of the landgrave Hermann I, from 1190 to 1217, the Wartburg has grown to become a famous center of literature and music, based on the great French courts of the period. The castle hosts lavish festivals, drawing performers and noble guests alike from far and wide. Central to these festivals are the *minnesänger* (minstrels), renowned composers and performers who travel from court to court, earning fame and wealth, and spreading stories and gossip around the realm.

The most brilliant of all the current minnesänger is Walther von der Vogelweide. At the great Wartburg festival of 1204, dubbed the *Sängerkrieg* (battle of the troubadours), he bested all of his rivals — including the famous Wolfram von Eschenbach and Henry von Ofterdingen — with a display of superlative skill. (This memorable contest itself became the subject of later tales and poems.) During the first decade of the 13th century, Walther von der Vogelweide was employed to compose poems singing the praises of successive rivals and claimants to the imperial throne. He first lent his service to the Hohenstaufen contender, Philip of Swabia, although he later turned his pen to the claim of Otto of Brunswick, helping him to gain the throne by 1209.

Literature and poetry based on traditional German legends and sagas, such as the *Nibelungenlied*, originally composed for the court of Passau in Bavaria, are extremely popular. Other popular epics include *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parzival*, and the *Gudrunlied*. Other courtly poetry, adapted from the French style, espouses the virtue of *Frauendienst*, a code of chaste and unrequited love expressed for an unattainable and idealized sweetheart, stressing the virtues of dignity and respect for the lady.

mountain range of the Kyffhäuser to the north and the mighty Thuringian Forest to the south. In the west are the heavily wooded highlands of the *Rothaargebirge* (Red Hair Mountains), named on account either of the color of the deciduous trees in the autumn or of the odd and fierce folk who live there. The *Goldene Aue* (Golden Meadow) is a fertile plain north of the River Saale in the east. The ances-

Story Seed: The Great Khan

The Great Khan of the Mongols hears of the tree at Kyffhäuser and its legend, and decides to try to hang his shield there. The fate of the West hangs in the balance — who might try to stop him?

The Master of Naumburg

The Master of Naumburg is a young architect and sculptor without peer, who travels around Germany in search of great churches in which to work. An enigmatic and secretive fellow, not much is known about him except that, although trained in France, he is of German origin. Some claim his work is aided by sorcery, others that he is divinely inspired, but none doubt the genius of his endeavors — his skill in stone and wood carving and painting is unmatched. By the end of his career, in the middle of the 13th century, the Master will have completed magnificent works in the cathedrals of Mainz, Meissen, and Naumburg, among others.

tral home of the landgraves of Thuringia is the Wartburg, near to the town of Eisenach — a great castle founded in 1067 by Count Louis I, whose walls have never been breached.

Erfurt

Erfurt, the oldest and largest settlement in Thuringia, falls under the dominion of the archbishopric of Mainz, and is thus an important episcopal city. It was from here that St. Boniface set out to convert the Slavic heathens in the east. The city is built around two hills. On the *Domhügel* stands the *Marienkirche*, which dates from the 8th century. The *Petersberg* houses a Benedictine abbey, where Frederick Barbarossa held court numerous times. The court of Frederick II visits Erfurt four times between 1214 and 1220. Significant wealth is derived from the export of woad, which is used for making fine blue dyes.

Saint Elisabeth

Elisabeth is daughter of the king of Hungary and (as of 1221) wife of the current landgrave of Thuringia, Louis IV “the Pious.” Despite growing up surrounded by the splendor of the court of the Wartburg, she finds her life unfulfilled by riches and glamour, and instead devotes her life to the welfare of the needy and ill. Her acts of charity take place unbeknownst even to her husband. A minor miracle occurs when Elisabeth tries to bring some bread to the beggars before the Wartburg in her apron. When she meets Louis on the way, her husband asks “What do you have in your apron?” and she opens it to reveal a bunch of roses.

If your saga follows real history, upon the death of Louis in 1227 the young widow Elisabeth becomes patron of the town of Marburg, where she establishes a hospice for the poor and sick. After her death in 1231, the Teutonic Knights begin construction of a great church in her honor, over the site of the hospice. Upon her canonization in 1235, the cult of St. Elisabeth, dedicated to the poor, is formed, and Marburg becomes one of the major pilgrimage sites of Germany.

Naumburg

Naumburg, whose name was originally “*Neue Burg*” (New Castle), was founded when the *Ekkehardinger* counts moved their seat from across the river in the 10th century. Now it has grown to be a well-fortified and scenic town perched high above the River Saale, with its own bishop and a prosperous market. Naumburg has just begun construction of a large cathedral, to be dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul.

Hersfeld

The town of Hersfeld is dominated by the sprawling imperial Benedictine abbey, one of the largest and most important in Germany. The springs around which it was built are known for their magical restorative powers; they and the giant bell in the *Katharinenturm* (tower) are both named



after the site's 8th century founder (and archbishop of Mainz), Lullus.

The Riesenstein

Oftentimes, the Devil stood on a mountaintop near Züschen, a short distance to the north of Fritzlar, and watched with anger as the pious folk of the village of Neuburg were happily engaged in the erection of a church in honor of the Lord. As the chapel neared completion, and the honest villagers refused to be swayed by his temptations, Satan's wrath boiled over. He lifted up a great stone and hurled it towards the village, but the rock caught on his sleeve and fell some distance short in a field. The Devil went to the field and wept bloody tears onto his rock, leaving three red stains. The Riesenstein (Giant's Stone) still stands there alone — every All Hallow's Eve, the tears run from the stains anew, and are worth *Ignem vis*.

The Thuringian Forest

One of the largest forests remaining in Germany, the Thuringian Forest covers nearly one hundred miles of the border between Thuringia and Franconia, although it averages only 30 miles wide for most of its length. The mountains that are enfolded by the forest are low, with rounded summits forming a continuous comb for much of its length. The trees are chiefly pines and firs, and form many beautiful glens and glades in the deep valleys. It is the traditional boundary between northern and southern Germany, and dialects, customs, and dress differ sharply on either side of the forest.

The Feengrotten

The Feengrotten (Faerie Grottoes) are a series of hidden caves on the eastern edge of the Thuringian Forest. If one clambers down through a series of slippery slopes, past underground streams and stalactite caves, the central crystal caverns can be reached, where one is dazzled by a spectacular myriad of mesmerizing colors and lights dancing around the walls. The Feengrotten has a Magic aura of 1.

The network of passages and caves seems to shift and change to the explorer, and clambering through the tortuous twists of the grottoes will result in being

covered with a glittering dust. Anyone getting genuinely lost in the labyrinthine passages will discover upon finally emerging that the dust is *Imaginem vis*, the quantity dependent on how many days that they were lost. Anyone who knowingly tries to get lost in the caverns to exploit this property will find that the dust is just dust. Harvesting the *vis* therefore presents a certain challenge for magi who discover the Feengrotten's secret.

Franconia

Larger and more important than Thuringia to the north, Franconia, along with Lower Lorraine, contains some of the greatest German cities. It does not have its own ruler; rather, the land and wealth is shared between the emperor and the church, each with extensive estates. The River Main is the principal artery of the province, winding westwards through it to join with the Rhine. Much of Franconia is forested, including the fifty-mile-long stretches of the Westerwald and Odenwald on the right bank of the Rhine, and there are numerous upland wildernesses in the less civilized east of the region. For the cities of Franconia west of the Rhine, see Chapter 5: The Rhine, The Upper Rhine.

Frankfurt

The city of Frankfurt was founded by Charlemagne in the 8th century after a miraculous victory in his long-running campaign to convert and subdue the heathen Saxons in the north of Germany. It is told that Charlemagne's army, outnumbered and in disarray after a recent defeat, were retreating southwards towards the River Main, pursued by the vengeful Saxons. With no bridges or ships, they found their way blocked and faced the prospect of annihilation. In dire straits, Charlemagne prayed to God for deliverance. Searching for passage across the river, the fog momentarily cleared to reveal a train of deer leaping through a ford. Charlemagne followed them, leading his army safely across to the south bank of the Main. The fog closed up again to hide the ford, and the Saxons were thwarted. Charlemagne later returned with a greater army and won a victory. Thus was the city established near this convenient crossing

The Donar Oak

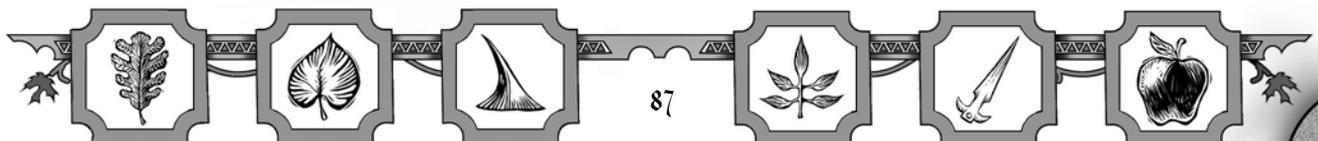
Divine Might: 40
Personality Traits: Peaceful +5, Wild -3
Special Powers: Grant Virtue (various, but rarely used), Healing

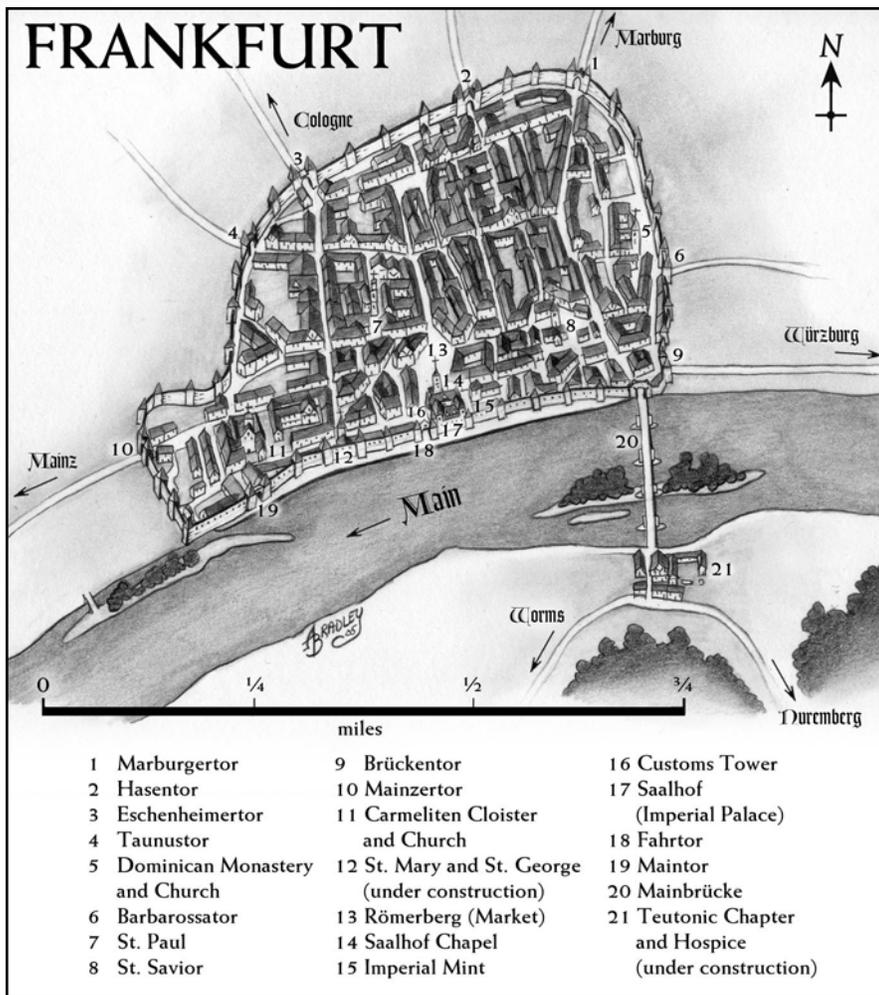
In the wilderness of Thuringia, in a place called Geismar, the remains of the great Donar Oak are to be found in a hidden glade. This tree, dedicated to the god Thunor, was formerly the focal point of the wild and pagan power of the entire Hercynian Forest. In the 8th century the missionary Boniface visited the glade and attempted to convert the pagan worshippers there. They watched with scorn as he made a superficial cut in the great oak. Yet at that moment, a terrible wind arose and the tree was smashed into four fragments and crashed to the ground. Thus were the heathens successfully converted. From the timber, St. Boniface built an oratory dedicated to St. Peter, and thereafter the wilderness was tamed and the power of the old forest diminished and fragmented.

The oak is now merely a stump, with a simple cross erected in its center, but it has regrown in a number of offshoots, symbolizing the rebirth of the Hercynian Forest into a number of smaller forests. The glade is peaceful and serene, and all manner of wild beasts become completely docile within it. In addition, any animal that eats the acorns from the remains of the oak (which are worth *Creo vis*) may be tamed, and any forest where one is planted and allowed to grow to maturity may be tamed. The exact location of the glade has passed into legend, and is believed by some to be a gateway to the Garden of Eden.

point, and named Frankfurt ("Ford of the Franks"). A fortress was built on the low hill of the Römerberg, the site of an older Roman settlement.

After the Treaty of Verdun in 843 (see Chapter 2: History, The Frankish Empire), Frankfurt became the capital of the eastern empire under Louis the German, who founded St. Saviour's church in 852. After a decline in the 11th century, the city won the favor of the Hohenstaufen emperors in the 12th century and was expanded and fortified, and began to host imperial elections. In 1220 Frankfurt hosts Frederick II's last Diet (a formal general assembly) in German lands for 15 years.





The Linden of Neustadt

Magic Might: 30
Personality Traits: Protective +6
Special Powers: Grant Victory, Grant Virtue (Berserk), Grant Virtue (Tough) to defenders of the town

This spirit has adopted the people of Neustadt as inhabitants of its realm, quite uniquely among the Forest spirits. Although having a town as the center of its realm has weakened the spirit, the people of Neustadt have become much more conservative about clearing swathes of forest and exploiting the woods. The town has even become known as *Neustadt an der grossen Linden* (Neustadt by the great Lime). On one occasion during a siege, its wide-spreading branches were devastated, but they were afterwards propped up by columns and monuments of stone, which bear inscriptions and the arms and devices of the princes and nobles who fought there. An old prophecy says that when the tree dies, the town's freedom will be lost. Despite the importance of the town as a trading post, it has seemingly resisted the temptation to spread and grow, and remains a quiet backwater.

Frankfurt is now home to about 10,000 citizens and is a well-established trading center, its bridge across the River Main acting as a principal gateway between north and south Germany. The Römerberg at the center of the city is surrounded by a large open space for markets, trade fairs, tournaments, and imperial coronation festivals. Several Italian banking families maintain houses here.

To the north of Frankfurt, between the Main and the Lahn, stretches the forested ridge of the Taunus Mountains.

Fulda

As the burial place of the martyred English monk St. Boniface, Fulda is an important pilgrimage site and home to a huge and wealthy monastery, which rivals Hersfeld, forty miles to the north. The Michaelskirche (church) is at the center of Fulda, and was built as a copy of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, in the shape

of a Greek cross. Four other monastic churches lie a short distance outside the town in the four compass directions, arrayed in the configuration of a giant cross. The eastern of these, the Peterskirche, is perched on a hill and houses the crypt of St. Lioba, kinswoman of St. Boniface.

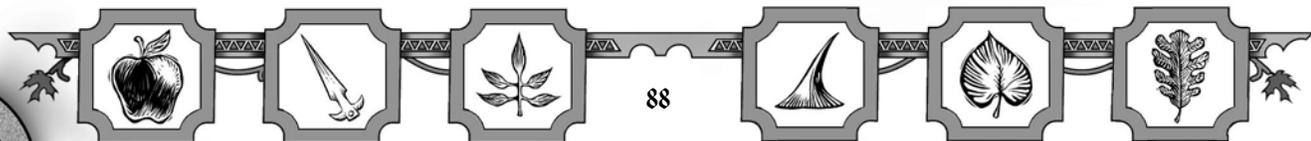
Fulda lies in a long valley bordered by two contrasting ranges of hills. The Vogelsberg, to the west, is a bright and airy region of woods, centered around the conical peak of the Taufstein. The Rhön, to the east of Fulda, is an impenetrable and secretive wilderness.

Wimpfen

The site of the small city of Wimpfen, which is located in a defensible position high above the River Neckar, has a long history, having come under the successive ownership of the Romans, the Franks, the bishops of Worms, and it is now a favorite

The Odenwald

Of all the German forests, the Odenwald comes into bloom the earliest and most spectacularly of all, with the carpet of lilies and blossom of the numerous fruit trees heralding the arrival of spring throughout the land. This would be an ideal site for the Court of the Alder Prince (see Chapter 4: The Forest, The Courts of the Seasons), siting the Willow Maiden's court in the nearby Swabian Forest. An old Roman military road, the Strata Montana, cuts north-south through the forest — nowadays this is a well-worn trading route leading to Frankfurt, called the Bergstrasse. Not all is peaceful idyll under the eaves of the Odenwald, however, due to the presence of bandits who lurk near the swampy and deserted eastern bank of the Rhine, on the forest's western edge. The construction of a number of fortified way stations along the Bergstrasse has begun, to prevent these outlaws from preying on travelling merchants.



Story Seed: One for Sorrow

A magpie has made the Linden its home, and is gradually destroying the tree. Attempts to drive off the bird have failed. What could this magus of House Bjornaer have foreseen?

imperial residence, Frederick Barbarossa having wrested control from Worms in the 12th century. The Romans, for whom this was a frontier fort on the limes (see Chapter 2: History, Germania Magna), built a temple to Mercury on the highest point of the city — where now there stands an imperial palace. The city walls are topped with a series of opulent towers, each of a different color. The Roter Turm, for example, is made from red sandstone, whereas the Blauer Turm is built of a blue-tinted limestone. The Wormser Hof is the grand

The Drudenbaum of Harberg

Magic Might: 30
Personality Traits: Mysterious +3
Special Powers: Grant Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Grant Virtue (Second Sight), Possession

A mythical tree called the Drudenbaum is said to be found on the top of the Harberg mountain, which overlooks Nuremberg. Its name stems from the fact that wizards meet beneath it. It is told that its glossy leaves from time to time shed golden drops, milk oozes out of its roots, and under it lies a treasure guarded by a dragon. On the tree sits a great black bird, who clashes his wings together and raises a storm every time someone tries to steal the treasure. Those who drink a cup of the golden liquid are reputed to become sorcerers.

The dragon and the treasure are a myth, the rest is real. Wizards meet here because the golden drops are *Creo vis*, and the milk is *Vim vis*. The Drudenbaum is of no known species of tree, but when the spirit possesses any tree of its domain, that tree temporarily acquires the appearance and *vis*-producing traits of the mythical Drudenbaum. This possession is signified by the arrival of the black bird in the possessed tree's uppermost branches.

residence of the administrator of the bishop of Worms, who retains significant land and influence in the area. The lower part of the town below is nestled around the Stiftskirche (church) and a Benedictine abbey, next to an ancient bridge over the Neckar.

South of Wimpfen, between the Odenwald and the Black Forest, is the Stromberg, a series of gentle and fertile hills, where grapes have been cultivated for centuries.

Würzburg

Würzburg, in the middle of Franconia, was established as a bishopric in the 8th century, and is an influential episcopal city of great artists and scholars. The venerable cathedral houses the shrine of St. Kilian, a 7th-century Irish missionary and martyr who first brought Christianity to this region. St. Kilian is more popularly considered the patron saint of wine, since Würzburg is at the center of Franconia's largest vineyards. Just over the city's bridge, on the west side of the River Main, the bishop has begun construction of a huge rectangular fortress high on the top of the Marienberg, where he intends to establish his residence.

Bamberg

The emperor Henry II elevated Bamberg to a bishopric in 1007 and undertook a building project to create a great city to rival Rome. Like Rome, the city is built on seven hills, the principal of which shoulders Bamberg's cathedral, founded by Henry II and the place of his burial. Although nowhere near the scale or majesty of Rome itself, the city retains

a sense of spacious and opulent grandeur from Henry's vision. In contrast to Würzburg, beer is the main export of Bamberg. The city has over a dozen breweries, the oldest and largest of which, the Bierhaus, predates the city and produces a brew of almost legendary quality.

To the east of Bamberg is a region called the Luisenburg, consisting of countless bizarre huge weathered granite blocks scattered randomly for miles around. Beyond lie the Fichtelgebirge (Spruce Mountains) — a forbidding and empty landscape of rock-strewn hills, highland moors, and forests.

Nuremberg

Nuremberg, although among the youngest of Franconia's cities, is arguably its most important, home to the Kaiserburg (Imperial Castle), an unofficial capital of sorts and treasure chest of the empire. By tradition, the castle is the site of the first Diet called by each new emperor, making the city politically powerful. Successive emperors, notably Frederick Barbarossa and, recently, Frederick II, have added extensively to the Kaiserburg — a sprawling edifice built on a sandstone hill overlooking the city — each vying to build more impressive wings and towers than the last. There is even a chapel — the Kaiserkapelle — whose upper level is reserved solely for the personal use of the emperor. Nuremberg is also an important trading city, lying at a crossroads of major trade routes. The city's principal export is linen, and it is home to many expert carpenters specializing in the crafting of looms.

Bavaria

The duchy of Bavaria, through which flows the Danube, already a great river here two hundred miles from its source, is a large province with numerous forests and bordered by hills to its east and the Alps to its south. The current duke is Louis of Wittelsbach; his dynasty has ruled since 1180. Only the smaller, less populated part of Bavaria north of the Danube (which is not Roman in origin) belongs to the Rhine Tribunal; the rest, including the cities of the Danube (principal among which is Regensburg), is claimed by the Greater Alps Tribunal.

Story Seed: The Hunting of the Drudenbaum

Attracted by stories of treasure, or the possibility of *vis*, magi go in search of the Drudenbaum. However, they are not the only ones interested in its power — other magi, hedge wizards, and altogether stranger beasts also seek the tree. The fact that the 'tree' keeps moving about the Harberg Forest as the spirit shifts its consciousness about just adds to the confusion.



The Eastern Marches

Crossing the great River Elbe from the lowlands to the west, one enters the northeastern reaches of Germany, stretching as far as the mighty River Oder. Here, civilization gradually gives way to a wild empty land of lakes and forests, roamed by *Werwölfe* (werewolves), *Hexen* (witches), and *Hünen* (giants), where the dying remnants of pagan beliefs still linger in crumbling Slavic temples.

Christianity was first established in the Eastern Marches around the 10th century, from the bordering missionary-bishoprics such as Magdeburg and Merseburg. Pagan Slavs were converted, and the centuries since have seen sporadic warfare with them, interspersed with periods of peace and marriage into Slavic families. An influx of German colonists and merchants has firmly established the German language and culture — Meissen, to the southwest, is now fully German, although Sorbs (Wends) form the great majority in Lusatia, to the southeast. Rügen and Pomerania to the north are populated by a mixture of Sorbs and Germans, with Danish overlords. With plenty of space for colonization, there is generally a lack of rivalry among rulers, at least at the local level.

Almost all the pagan and magical sites of the Slavs in the southern of the Marches have long-since been eradicated, to a greater extent than in Pomerania to the north. Except for Crintera on Rügen, the Rhine Tribunal does not have a very robust presence in the Eastern Marches, although it maintains a vigorous claim over them. Indeed, it would like to extend its territory further eastwards into Polish lands, encroaching on the Novgorod Tribunal.

The Baltic Sea

For a few months every winter, shipping and trade across the Baltic Sea ceas-

es entirely. A great chill descends from the ultimate north, and covers the sea with a layer of frost. Early each spring, a special ritual must be performed to thaw the ice and break the hold of the Queen of Winter over the land. This ritual is conducted at Arkona (see below), and is currently undertaken by Falke, Prima of House Bjornaer, in the form of an ancient ritual spell.

Heorot



The covenant of Heorot is not currently a member of the Rhine Tribunal, but it hopes to have its membership approved at the next Rhine meeting in 1221. This plan is not without controversy; Heorot is sited on the island of Zealand, which is part of the kingdom of Denmark, and therefore clearly within the territory that traditionally forms part of the Novgorod Tribunal. However, because of the perceived threat of the "Order of Odin" (see Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas, Wind, Wave, and Ice), the Order has not yet established a covenant in Norse lands that has lasted long enough to attend a Tribunal meeting; thus the territory remains a gray area.

Many in the Rhine Tribunal greet Heorot's move with glee. They have long disputed the eastern border of the Tribunal with the Novgorod Tribunal; and to "steal territory" from them is the ultimate in one-upmanship. Novgorod is currently unaware of the plans of Heorot — that Tribunal has only a small number of covenants, and with the exception of one in Poland, they are all over a thousand miles from Zealand.

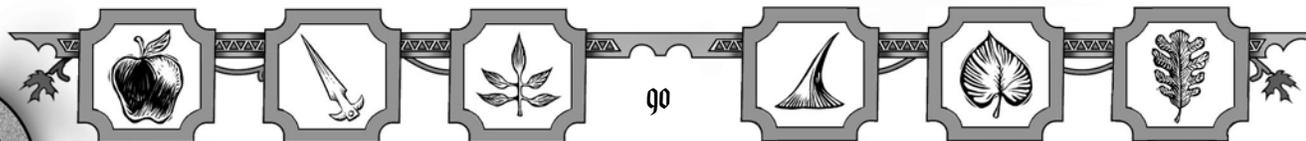
Opposition towards Heorot comes from one main quarter: Crintera. Zealand is very close to Rügen, and the domus magna of House Bjornaer is concerned that they will clash with them over vis sources. Waddenzee is not protesting — Heorot will provide them with more victims, and the covenant is dedicated to the major interest of the Ash Gild. Oculus Septentrionalis is the other covenant in the region, and as they are sponsoring Heorot, it is likely that they have worked out some agreement with them beforehand.

All the magi of the putative covenant of Heorot originate in the Rhine Tribunal, and their stated aim is that originally held by Oculus Septentrionalis — to learn what they can about the Order of Odin. Unlike that covenant, the magi of Heorot have the skills and interests to achieve this goal. They have occupied the site of the hall of Hrothgar, former king of the Danes, who was terrorized by a troll called Grendel before the hero Beowulf slew him. Unsurprisingly, the covenant is plagued by Grendel's kin, who still haunt the bogs of Zealand.

Magi

SIGNUM IRRUPTUS,
FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

Age: 53 (Master)



Personality Traits: Brave +3, Obsessed +3, Mindful of Danger -2

The leader of the covenant, Signum Irruptus is fascinated with the trolls, who he believes to be descended from degenerate gods. This obsession has so far lead to the death of 14 grogs and the loss of Signum's own left arm, yet nevertheless he still pursues his dangerous studies.

**THEODERICH OF AUGSBURG,
FOLLOWER OF JERBITON**

Age: 37 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Morbid +3,
Inquisitive +2,
Laconic +1



Formerly a member of Oculus Septentrionalis, Theoderich is a necromancer and a historian, who raises the ghosts of dead men to interrogate them about the past. Much to his chagrin, he has not found the remains of either King Hrothgar or Beowulf.

peninsulas of Jasmund and Mönchgut are hillier and partially forested. The largest forest, called Stubnitz, is on Jasmund, which contains the covenant of Crintera, ending abruptly with the dramatic chalk cliffs called the Stubbenkammer. Wittow, the northernmost peninsula, is windswept and exposed. The narrow 10-mile-long island of Hedinsey to the west is deserted heathland, with a chain of tiny hills. The island is named after a former Norwegian king, Hedin, who fought a battle on the island to win his bride and his fortune.

Rügen is sparsely populated, with Bergen as the only town of any size. There are a number of small villages and hamlets scattered around the island, including farmsteads in the western part of the island, and a few fishing villages in the east, but nothing that would qualify as a port. The Mönchgut peninsula has only recently gained that name, as cultivation for agriculture by monks has just begun there. The majority of islanders are of Slavic descent. Christianity is newly come to the island, arriving with the Danish king. The only churches of any significance are the Marienkirche in Bergen and

Story Seed: Awake, Svantovit!

A white horse is needed to perform a Great Ritual to Svantovit, but none can be found on the island, as all horses have been co-opted by the Danes. If the characters bring a white horse to the island, the old priest will convince his grandson to steal it, and gather together their scant few worshippers for a ceremony. This will reawaken the volkhv's connection with his deity, and a subsequent display of power will convert the doubting sub-priest into a zealous believer. He will take on the role of a pagan "messiah," determined to turn the island back to the worship of Svantovit. Of course, should a group of magi witness this rite, they may see it in a wholly different light, likely as not believing it to be demonic.

**PANCRESTIS FILIUS OCCULTES,
FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS**

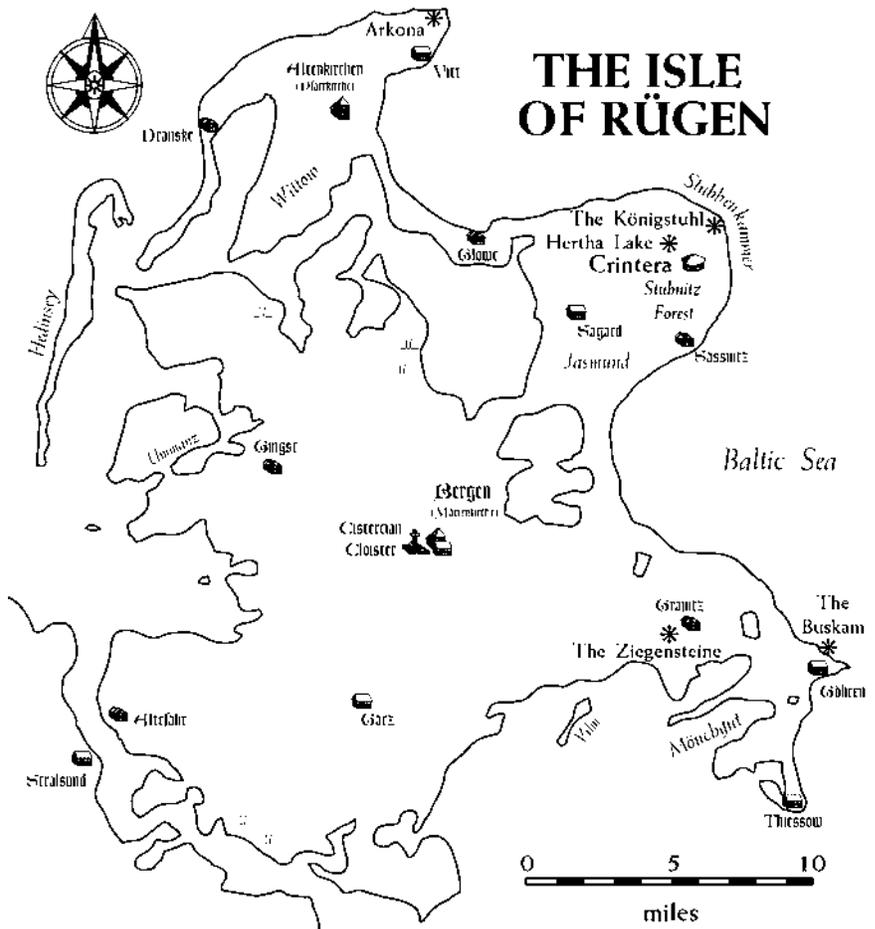
Age: 28 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
Ambitious +3, Fearful of Wilderness +2,
Decisive -2



This young magus is keen to meet with a Norse wizard and learn whatever he can about their magic. He has both a famous master and also a powerful mentor, Archmage Philippus Niger (see Chapter 6: The Black Forest, Durenmar), who has instilled in him the urgent need to reveal these secrets to the Order. However, Pancrestis has a deep-abiding fear of the wilderness, and has yet to penetrate as far as the pagan regions of Scandinavia.

Rügen

The island of Rügen is the largest in Germany, stretching 20 miles across. Apart from the northern and eastern extremities it is a landscape of low-lying grassland and heathland, surrounded by long beaches and swampy inlets. The



the Pfarrkirche in Altenkirchen, although there are plans to build one in Sagard, which is only five miles from the site of Crintera. In the wilder places of the island, the Forest Brothers Rugevit, Porevit, and Porenitz are still worshiped. These gods represent the Rowan, the Beech, and the Larch respectively. Their few remaining priests (called *volkhvy*) are exclusively male, and virtually all have the Ways of the Forest Virtue and a fierce devotion to the family.

Arkona

This Slavic fortress-temple was one of the holiest pagan sites in the pre-Christian Baltic. Its ruins are situated above the cliffs on the headland of Kap Arkona, the northernmost point of Rügen. Here the four-faced sun- and war-god Svantovit was worshiped for many centuries, and the Faerie aura generated through such devotion has yet to fade (it is currently 2), despite the fact that the temple was destroyed by Bishop Absolon of Roskilde in 1169.

Only two volkhvy of Svantovit persist, eking out a living on the Wittow peninsula. One of the priests is very old, and is cared for by his grandson, who is also his sub-priest. The elder is attempting to teach his descendant all he knows about the dying god, so that He will not be lost to future generations. The grandson, however, has little interest in Svantovit, having seen no displays of power from his grandfather, who he follows only out of a sense of family duty. Between them they have laboriously moved the remaining upper half of Svantovit's statue from Arkona into a well-hidden shrine. It has four faces gazing in four directions, and holds in its right hand a bull's horn. Before the statue is placed the god's immense sword, although the jeweled saddle and bridle that accompanied it were taken by the looters.

The Königstuhl (The King's Seat)

Rising more than 380 feet out of the sea, the Königstuhl is a chalk cliff next to the main Stubbenkammer cliffs on the northeastern shore of Rügen. Legend states that whoever manages to climb up this piece of cliff from the sea will become king of Rügen and sit on a stone

throne at the top. In 1168, when King Valdemar I took possession of the island, he first secretly came to the Königstuhl and climbed it. Once at the top he was witnessed there by islanders, and recognized as the rightful ruler. It is said that because of this act he was able to take Rügen easily. It is not known whether the current Danish king, Valdemar II, has made the climb to legitimize his claim over Rügen, but those islanders who wish to see the Danes gone have attempted the climb, and failed. Even one of the magi of Crintera (the Horse Elder who preceded Istvan Padas) has attempted to conquer the Königstuhl, but he achieved no more than half the climb before falling to his death.

Whether the King's Seat confers upon those who sit on it a Divine Right to rule, or whether it is a pagan or faerie power that rules here is unknown, and the precise effect of successfully climbing the rock should be determined by the storyguide. What is certain is that those who attempt to cheat (such as through the use of magic) will surely fail.

Hertha Lake

Hidden in the Stubnitz Forest — and therefore a short walk from Crintera itself — is a mysterious small dark lake, partially covered with lilies. Every May Eve (Walpurgis Night, see Chapter 8: Central Germany, The Harz Mountains), the goddess Hertha bathes in the lake; then, once she is finished, she drowns one of the gathered mortals who witness this holy rite. The one chosen is marked by Hertha's priestess, and is unaware of his impending fate, unlike everyone else present. The spirits of the previously drowned gather on the shore. In return for this human sacrifice, Hertha blesses the local farmers with good harvests, if they sprinkle the corners of their fields with water taken from the lake after the goddess has bathed. Hertha is a powerful faerie, and her small priesthood is led by Zora, a woman whose dark beauty is a testament to her goddess' gifts. Crintera and the priesthood of Hertha have an arrangement; the covenant protect the priestesses from discovery, and in return Zora gives them *Creo vis* every year, a product of the presence of her goddess. In addition, the priestess does not take her sacrifice from among Crintera's covenfolk.

The Ziegensteine (The Goats' Stones)

There are a number of ancient grave sites and megaliths in a small area of woodlands not far from the Mönchgut peninsula. The most prominent is a barrow built of two huge stone slabs laid over uprights underneath a giant oak tree. This area is used by the volkhvy of the Forest Brothers as a cemetery for devout believers. The huge barrow is empty; it is actually a supernatural gateway created by pre-Hermetic magic, forming one end of a faerie trod that reaches through a particularly dark and frightening region of Arcadia. Only a volkhvy can open the gate, but they often allow magi of Bjornaer to use it, due to the relationship nurtured by Crintera. The terminus is not far from the covenant of Pripet Major in the Novgorod Tribunal, and proves to be very useful for maintaining contact between the two Tribunals. Unfortunately, there is no one at the Russian end of the gate who can open it — this is a strictly one-way shortcut.

The Buskam

Rügen has a number of mysteriously placed boulders lying around, called *findlinge*, of a type of stone that does not match their surroundings. The Buskam is the largest of these, a massive ball of stone that lies partially submerged in the sea just off the Mönchgut peninsula, and it is an occasional site of worship among some of the Slavic island folk (the name means "the god's stone"). These stones were left behind by giants and are the only remains of an epic battle many centuries ago that saw the giants of Rügen banished to Pomerania.

Crintera

Crintera is the domus magna of House Bjornaer. The covenant consists of the six members of the Bjornaer council, who run the business of the House from their island home on Rügen. The council is currently split between the two factions of the House; the Harmonists, who believe that Bjornaer magi should try to live in harmony with those mundanes





who do not destroy the wild areas of the world, and the Wilderists, who fiercely protect wildernesses from the incursions of all humans. Crintera has been in its Winter season for the last 50 years due to the invasion of Rügen by the Danish king, and the subsequent spreading of the Dominion over the island.

History

Bjornaer was a Pomeranian witch (see below), and made her home on the isle of Rügen. A stronghold of paganism, the island suited her followers perfectly; as it was largely uninhabited, they could practice their magic while remaining hidden from their vengeful enemies. While a powerful force within the Tribunal, Crintera has led a relatively uneventful existence since its founding. This all changed in 1168 when the Danish king Valdemar I (along with Bishop Absolon of Roskilde) invaded the island. The heathen stronghold of Arkona was destroyed, and the nervous Christians established several churches and a Cistercian monastery to spread the Dominion. Crintera's decision to wait out the occupation was strongly opposed by the Wilderists, but the opinion of the Harmonists within the House prevailed. Two years later, the Danes were still on Rügen when Urgan was elected Primus of House Bjornaer. Urgan was the strongest proponent of the Wilderist viewpoint, and his election was symptomatic of the prevailing thoughts of the House. No representatives from Crintera attended the Tribunal in 1172, but in 1179, Urgan himself turned up. He accused the magi of Oculus Septentrionalis of assisting the Danish invasion of Rügen, in turn damaging

Crintera's magical resources, and ultimately slew their leader in a Wizard War.

In the following years, the process of the Christianization of Rügen did not proceed as fast as was first feared, and Crintera and its resources remained largely intact. Consequently, the Harmonist faction of House Bjornaer rose to prominence. At the next Tribunal (1186) the Hawthorn Gild argued that Crintera's wilderness had been invaded and was under extreme threat, and sought approval for a retaliatory strike, trying to invoke the "Guardians of the Forests" ruling. Despite support from the Ash Gild and (surprisingly) the Elder Gild, the Tribunal was split across factional lines, and no decision was made. However, it promised to investigate the affair further. This was insufficient for the more aggressive Wilderists, and a number of prosecutions against Bjornaer magi attacking Danish settlers followed, which most of the House considered to be just rubbing salt into their wounds.

At the next Tribunal, now 26 years since the original invasion, a young Bjornaer maga from Fengheld called Falke made a passionate plea to permit Crintera to actively resist the occupiers of Rügen. The Quaesitor Caecilius was quite firm that no wilderness had been invaded or destroyed — Crintera and its forest remained intact, a serious setback for the landmark "Guardians of the Forests" ruling. Stung by this rebuke, Crintera descended into a brief period of factional infighting — the Wilderists blamed the Bjornaer council for not acting when it could have, and the Harmonists feared that the philosophy of the Wilderists had been vindicated. At the Gathering of Twelve Years in 1203, Urgan resigned as Primus, but retained a seat on the Bjornaer council; Falke was elected in his place. Her leadership of the House has led to the current situation; a consolidation of the Bjornaer hold over the island, which still remains sparsely populated except for the town of Bergen, established by the Danes. Only time will tell if the ancient covenant of Crintera can continue to exist with mundane settlements — and new monasteries — on its doorstep.

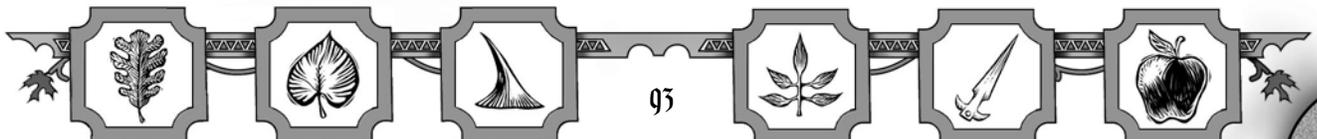
Setting and Physical Description

Crintera is found deep within the Stubnitz Forest in the east of the island. It is a difficult place to reach, since the

covenant is located in a regio. The mundane foundation of the regio apparently consists of virgin forest — dark stands of towering pine, with clusters of larch, rowan, and beech. The unspoiled appearance of the forest is a deceit carefully crafted by the covenfolk of Crintera: in fact, it is home to many of the covenant's servants and grogs, who dwell in widely dispersed clusters of huts that are concealed by magic. People from the hamlets near to the outskirts of the forest have numerous stories concerning the wood, ranging from animal attacks to shadowy monsters and witches. They universally shun the woods, except for the handful of pagan priests of the Forest Brothers, who are welcome within its bounds.

Stubnitz Forest is difficult to pass through, even to experienced woodsmen. Visitors are watched at all times, by both the covenfolk of Crintera and their animal allies. There is one path through the forest, called the Watching Path. Its beginning is marked by two crumbling moss-covered stones in a glade not far from the forest's edge, and it leads right to the heart of the forest, where Crintera lies, and is the path known by Redcaps and magi of House Bjornaer. The forest is strongly aligned with the Animal Powers, mysterious entities who ruled this area before the Bjornaer came here.

Those who penetrate the regio that shrouds Crintera often take on animal characteristics related to their heartbeast. A heartbeast should be determined for every visitor to Crintera, whether magus or mundane. These animals should be chosen to fit with their personalities; thus a brave shield grog may have the heartbeast of a stag, a troubadour that of a songbird, and a crafty magus the shape of a snake. There are four levels to the magical regio, with auras of 1, 3, 5, and 8. Each regio boundary brings the heartbeast of the affected character closer to the fore, as each is crossed, every character must resist a Corpus effect with a Penetration Total equal to the Ease Factor needed to see the next level (according to the rules in *ArM5*, page 189). The first regio boundary brings a Personality Trait change appropriate to the heartbeast, whereas the second, third, and fourth boundaries cause minor physical changes. If all four effects take place, no doubt is left to others as to the nature of the heartbeast of the character; although he is still demonstrably human, he is also a quarter to a third animal. Magi are rarely overcome by this effect if they have their Parma Magica active; however, it is deemed rude by the inhabitants of





Crintera to actively resist this change. Of course, magi of House Bjornaer can shrug off these changes with a Heartbeast roll, should they want to.

On the fourth and final level of the regio are a number of sturdily built round-houses, with the thatch of their wide, conical roofs almost reaching to the ground. These huts are the sancta of the Elders. In the very center of the regio is a clearing containing a platform built of lashed-together logs. It is in this clearing, big enough for fifty or more people, that the Gathering of Twelve Years takes place. All around the top level of the regio are strange statues in a startling variety of forms and shapes. Atop a tree stump sits a wooden image of a squirrel; a carved stone otter lies amongst a clump of cattails; a snake of dyed and woven rushes is coiled in the hollow of a boulder; a clay wolf with teeth made of broken shells sits by a log; stone birds sit in the branches of willow saplings encircled by feather-decorated leather thongs. Every type of animal is represented, but the area somehow doesn't seem crowded. From any given point only a few of these fetishes can be seen. The covenfolk of Crintera call these images the "Animal Powers," and accord them a lot of respect, laying small offerings by the fetish that represents their

The Gathering of Twelve Years

The Followers of Bjornaer congregate every twelve years at Crintera for a secret meeting, during which time they perform rituals associated with maintaining their lineage, remembering their ancestors, and solidifying the bonds within the House. It is generally believed that during the gathering House Bjornaer uses ancient, exotic magic that Bjornaer kept secret and passed on only to her filii. These rumors probably stem from the fact that most initiations into the Mysteries of House Bjornaer are conducted during the gathering; many of the rituals, led by the Elder of the Swan, are not fully understood even by most members of the House. In addition to the esoteric aspects of the Gathering, it is also a social and political occasion. The followers of Bjornaer take this congregation very seriously indeed; most of the House attends every time, and they will not speak of what goes on to members of other Houses. They deny nothing and affirm nothing.

The gathering takes place on the large platform in the center of Crintera. The inhabitants of Rügen refer to this occasion as the Teufelsjahr (Devil's Year), and dread the time that between fifty and a hundred magi (who they believe to be demons) descend upon the island in preparation for the gathering.

The next gathering, due in 1227, is likely to be politically explosive because of the controversy between the Wilderists and the Harmonists.

Sagas with Bjornaer magi should not neglect the Gathering of Twelve Years, and it is recommended that the players without Bjornaer characters are given one to play during the event. Although politics must be a focus, the esoteric activities of the House should not be ignored. Bjornaer magi will seek out the Animal Power of their heartbeast, and may experience mystical visions. Ardea (see below) will organize ritual re-enactments of ancient stories and legends. The characters will have the possibility of interacting with powerful and enigmatic Bjornaer magi from across the Order.



The Harmonists and the Wilderists

For many centuries, the followers of Bjornaer have been divided into two factions. Central to the philosophy of the House is that the wellspring of all magic is those areas that remain in their pristine state, untouched by the hand of man. To the Bjornaer, the Realm of Magic is the pristine state of the world, pre-dating the fae. The fae spring from wilderness tempered with man's curiosity, which is why they are associated with the trappings of heathenry and the ways of man. Bound up with this philosophy is, therefore, the need to protect the wilderness from the ingress of mankind, the Church, and the fae. However, just how the wilderness is to be defended has divided the House.

Harmonists believe that the "invasion" of the wilderness by the growing human population is inevitable. There are far too few Bjornaer magi to be able to defend all the areas that need it. The solution is therefore to persuade mundanes that they need to live in harmony with the wild. If they treat it with respect, and learn to co-exist with nature rather than try to tame it, the inherent magic of those wild places need not be destroyed. Wilderists, on the other hand, are more extreme. They wish to see humankind sent back to the cities, corralled within stone walls where they can do no harm. They ensure that humans consider forests, marshes, and moors to be places of danger where wild beasts

roam and untamable forces are in control. The more zealous members of this faction seek to revert wildernesses that have already been tamed to their original state, driving out settlers and protecting them from further incursions.

The Six Elders of Crintera are elected from the members of the House. When an Elder dies or passes into Final Twilight, he will not be replaced until the next Gathering of Twelve Years. Then, the remaining Elders will perform an ancient divination ritual to guide them to the next one. How much mysticism and how much politicking is involved in this decision is unknown, but there are records of at least one occasion where a Great Beast (that is, a Bjornaer who has passed into Final Twilight) has indicated to the council who the successor should be.

One seat on the council is reserved for the elected Primus of House Bjornaer. The Primus is the political leader of the House, and the leader as far as the Order of Hermes is concerned. However, for many issues, the Primus is merely passing on the dictates of the Council of Elders. Although the whole House is involved in choosing the Primus, it is the Council of Elders who choose the prospective candidates, and they have a large amount of influence on the decision. As the "leader of the pack," the Primus's seat is referred to as The Seat of the Wolf.

One seat on the council, that of the Senior Elder, is always reserved for a magus with a bear heartbeast, in memory of Bjornaer (who also had the heartbeast of a bear). Currently, this seat is occupied by Urgan, former Primus of the House, who has some rather radical ideas about the role of the House as protectors of the Wild. Should the elected Primus have the heartbeast of a bear, as Urgan did when he was primus, the Seats of the Bear and the Wolf are combined, and an extra seat, called the Seat of the Fox, makes the numbers up to six. The Senior Elder has the casting vote in any decision of the council, and tradition states that his words are treated with deference and honor.

Apart from the Seats of the Wolf and the Bear, there are also the seats of the Horse, the Stag, the Eagle, and the Swan. Each of these seats has traditional responsibilities. Horse is in charge of keeping track of Crintera's magi (and Bjornaer magi elsewhere), Stag is the protector, Eagle looks outward, keeping an eye on the Order, and Swan is the leader in the rituals that take place at Crintera. The seat of the Swan has been held, for as long as anyone can remember, by an esoteric lineage of magi with the heartbeast of a heron, all of whom are skilled seers.

heartbeast. The Animal Powers are truly ancient, and some say that they house primordial spirits of nature. Those touching the Power that corresponds to their own shape feel an indescribable, deep level of connection. Those who have resisted the changes wrought by the regio boundaries feel a strong compulsion not to touch the images, as do those approaching a fetish that is not representative of their own heartbeast.

the Elders do not spend all their time in the form of their heartbeast — it is difficult to do lab research as an animal. The practice of religion (of any kind) is banned in Crintera; this is one of its earliest laws, in honor of the Animal Powers. Those wishing to pay homage to their god(s) must leave the regio before doing so.

Urgan holds the Seat of the Bear. He was the Primus of the House from 1165 to 1203 during the Danish invasion of Rügen, and is a committed Wilderist — possibly the most influential of that faction. He argues that the Order must hold back a burgeoning mundane population to protect the wild lands and calls on the followers of Bjornaer to involve themselves in Hermetic politics to accomplish this goal. Some accuse him of secretly harassing mundane populations with "animal attacks" to drive them off. He did not have enthusiastic support for his ideas when he was Primus, but with the continuing situation on Rügen, more are flocking to his side. He is stepping up his covert campaigns now that he is free of the responsibilities of leadership of the House. Instead, he leads the Hawthorn Gild. Urgan is well-known for his pugnacious nature: he has slain two powerful magi in the last fifty years in Wizard Wars by literally tearing them apart. Thanks to

Culture and Traditions

Despite being members of the Order for over four hundred years, House Bjornaer is still run as a tribe. Family loyalties run strong in the tribe of Bjornaer, but all pay allegiance to the Council of Elders. The six magi who constitute the council are the only permanent residents at Crintera. Contrary to popular belief,

Magi

URGEN, FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: 114 (Archmage)

Personality Traits:

Quick-Tempered +5,

Authoritarian +4,

Peaceful -4



Falke, Prima of Bjornaer

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

Size: 0

Age: 49 (45) (Gauntlet at 23; Master)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 3 (16)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Master; Major Magical Focus (Bodies of water); Affinity with Aquam, Famous (gained upon becoming Prima of House Bjornaer), Great Presence, Heartbeast*, Improved Characteristics, Inspirational, Linden Guild Trained, Piercing Gaze; Optimistic, Study Requirement; Covenant Upbringing, Deficient Form (Ignem), Slow Caster

Personality Traits: Committed to an Ideal +3, Cheerful +2, Humble +1

Reputations: Prima of House Bjornaer 5 (Hermetic), Master of Aquam Magic 1 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Dodging: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense -1, Damage n/a

Soak: -1

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 3 (rhetoric), Awareness 2 (vision), Bargain 2 (contracts), Charm 3 (mundanes), Code of Hermes 2 (attitude towards mundanes), Concentration 2 (Aquam spells), Dominion Lore 1 (miracles), Folk Ken 3 (peers), French 1 (Norman), Low German 5 (Saxon), Guile 1 (good intentions), Heartbeast 3 (in haste), Intrigue 3 (House Bjornaer), Latin 4 (speeches), Leadership 3 (Harmonists), Magic Lore 3 (shapeshifters), Magic Theory 5 (Aquam), Order of Hermes Lore 4 (House Bjornaer), Parma Magica 3 (Corpus), Philosophiae 2 (ritual spells), Swim 2 (lakes), Teaching 1 (Magic Theory), Theology 1 (debate), West Norse 2 (Danish), West Slavonic 2 (Sorbian)

Arts: Cr 7, In 8, Mu 9, Pe 5, Re 7; An 5, Aq 16, Au 6, Co 7, He 5, Ig 4, Im 6, Me 6, Te 5, Vi 6

Twilight Scars: Falke's feet are always wet — if she stands still too long, she will leave a small puddle.

Equipment: Her talisman.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Mighty Torrent of Water (CrAq 20) +27

Voice of the Lake (InAq 25) +36

Sculpt the Living Water (MuAq 20) +29 or +38

Neptune's Imprisoning Arms (MuAq 25) +29 or +38

Appease the Queen of Winter (MuAq 60) +38

Break the Oncoming Wave (ReAq 10) +34

Breath of Winter (ReAq 15) +34

Still the Raging Waters (ReAq 15) +34

Chaos of the Angry Waves (ReAq 20) +34

Parting the Waves (ReAq 30) +34

Broom of the Winds (CrAu 15) +12

In Christ's Footsteps (ReCo 5) +16

Eyes of the Eagle (InIm 25) +13

Aura of Ennobled Presence (Mulm 10) +14

New Spells:

Sculpt the Living Water; MuAq 20; R:Voice, D:Sun, T:Ind: Allows the caster to mold water as if it were clay. The shaping procedure is done mentally; once complete the sculpture remains for Sun Duration. (Base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Sun)

Neptune's Imprisoning Arms; MuAq 25; R:Voice, D:Sun, T:Group: Operates like *Trap of the Entwining Vines*, but the 'vines' are made from water, which takes on a semi-solid form for the duration of this spell. The 'vines' can hold still a small rowing boat, or up to 6 people. (Base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +1 Group)

Appease the Queen of Winter; MuAq 60; R:Voice, D:Year, T:Boundary, Ritual: Propitiates the Queen of Winter, who then allows the Baltic Sea to thaw that year. Falke learned this spell with the assistance of the volkhvy of Arkona and a laboratory text in the possession of Crintera. If this spell is cast at Arkona (which Falke and magi of Crintera do every year), the Casting Total receives a bonus of +10, due to the presence of the sun-god Svantovit, who is opposed to the Queen of Winter. (Base 15, +2 Voice, +4 Year, +3 Boundary, Ritual)

Still the Raging Waters; ReAq 15; R:Voice, D:Conc, T:Ind: Causes all the waves on a small body of water to be stilled to mirror-smoothness. (Base 4, +2 Voice, +1 Conc)

In Christ's Footsteps; ReCo 5; R:Per, D:Conc, T:Ind: Allows the caster to walk on water. (Base 4, +1 Conc)

Magical Items:

Talisman: a silver anklet-ring decorated with a checkered pattern of watery crystal and amber. Attunements: +5 water-related effects, +3 Corpus

Perceive the Change; InCo 15; R:Touch, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun): Detects whether Falke has changed form, and if she has, triggers the next effect. With 2 uses per day (+1 level) and an environmental trigger (+3 levels), this is a constant effect. Falke can choose not to resist this effect, and she always does. *Final level: 19*

Change Size; MuTe 10; R:Per, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base 4, +2 Sun): Triggered by the previous effect, her talisman becomes a leg-band. With 2 uses per day (+1 level) and an environmental trigger (+3 levels), this is a constant effect once triggered. It also has a linked trigger, to the preceding effect (+3 levels). *Final level: 17*

Perceive Motives; InMe 10; R:Eye, D:Mom, T:Ind (Base 5, +1 Eye): As *Sight of the Transparent Motive*, this effect has a Penetration of 0 to ensure it does not work on Hermetic Magi, and 3 uses per day (+2 levels). *Final level 12*

Appearance: Falke is a small, lithe woman with an incredible natural presence. While she is not physically attractive, she has a palpable aura of self-control about her. She appears to be in her mid-forties, although her hair, always pale, is a uniform silky gray. She dresses simply; like many Bjornaer she puts little stock in clothing. She never wears footwear, which clearly displays her talisman, worn around her ankle. Her heart beast is a silver-gray falcon with white-banded wings.

Falke is the current Prima of House Bjornaer. She had the leadership of House Bjornaer thrust upon her; she had never considered a political career before the fateful Grand Tribunal that raised her profile in the House. While not firmly declared as a Harmonist, Falke has sympathies for that position. She currently strives for a strategy of isolation and patience, and she is trying to regain the trust of the Quaesitores and others in the Order. Until taking the Seat of the Wolf, she had been immersed in her magic; since then she has struggled to acquire the qualities of leadership, and to achieve master status, as befits the Prima of House Bjornaer. Having succeeded in the latter, she has wasted no time in beginning the training of her first apprentice.

As a powerful and influential person in the Tribunal, Falke is not suitable as a player character in most sagas.



ARDEA, FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: 83 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Neutral +2, Serene
 +2, Hungry for
 Knowledge +1



Ardea holds Seat of the Swan, and has the heartbeast of a heron, like all who take this seat. She is quiet and contemplative, and rarely offers an opinion on political matters. Thus far she has studiously avoided committing herself to either the Harmonist or Wilderist viewpoint, knowing that her opinion holds much weight with others, famous as she is for her foresight and her divinatory powers. She has the thirst for magical knowledge that might be expected of members of House Bonisagus rather than Bjornaer.

ISTVAN PADAS,
 FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: 48 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Hot-Headed +3,
 Brave +2, Subtle -2



Istvan Padas occupies the Seat of the Horse, appropriately enough, as his heartbeast is that of a magnificent stallion. He is the youngest of the Elders and the most willful — a magus of action rather than thought. He is descended from a line of horse-shaped Bjornaer who were inducted in the early days of the Order into the House from the invading Magyars (see Chapter 2: History, Rise of the New Empire). His stance as a Wilderist is supported strongly by his lover Zora, the faeblooded priestess of Hertha (see above).

this, and his advanced age, he commands respect within the House.

JON ARNSSON, FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: 98 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Pious +3, Conflicted
 Loyalties +2,
 Peaceful +2



Jon Arnsson serves the council on the Seat of the Stag. He assumed this role at the Gathering of Twelve Years in 1167, little suspecting that the job of protector of the covenant would become so important in the following year. Jon has an additional problem in that he is a devout Christian, and as such believes that the invasion by King Valdemar I was righteous, supported as it was by the Church. As he is also fiercely loyal to Crintera, his loyalties are seriously divided. Needless to say, despite his genuine faith, his ideas would be considered heretical by any other Christian. Jon has the heartbeast of a lion, although by nature he is gentle and detests violence — but he sees the need

for it in some circumstances. Apart from Urgen, Jon is the eldest member of the council, and a fervent Harmonist. In his role as protector, he takes it upon himself to participate in Marches against members of his House, if feasible.

PHYLLIA, FOLLOWER OF BJORNAER

Age: 58 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Curious +3,
 Restless +1,
 Discreet -3



Phyllia is the Eagle Elder, in charge of keeping the council informed of the doings of the rest of the Order. She travels widely and has contacts all over the Tribunal (and beyond), but is a notorious gossip and largely incapable of keeping any secrets she discovers to herself. She has the heartbeast of a polecat, and believes in the Harmonist viewpoint.

OTHER MAGI

Occasionally, other Bjornaer magi take up temporary residence at Crintera. Since the membership of the covenant is strictly limited to the six council seats, such magi always retain the status of a "guest," even though they may stay for years before they either depart or are voted onto the Council of Elders. Visiting Bjornaer magi may establish a temporary sanctum on the third (penultimate) level of the regio. One such current guest is Caprea. In an unfortunate recent incident, she accidentally blinded the familiar of a visiting Jerbiton magus from Oculus Septentrionalis, Carolus, ironically sent from his covenant to Crintera as a peace



envoy of sorts. As a result, relations between the two covenants have further worsened. Caprea is currently consulting Crintera's library to put the finishing touches to her bestiary, which she will present at the next Tribunal.

Covenfolk

Crintera's covenfolk mostly remain on the mundane or first level of the regio. Several of them can change shape, either due to their own power or because of magic given them by the magi. The turb of the covenant has historically been large, with a reputation as the fiercest and most bestial of all the Rhine covenants', although it is becoming increasingly hard to recruit new blood due to the spread of the Church over Rügen, and numbers are dwindling. The grogs are all trained in wood-craft as well as fighting.

The grogs and covenfolk are divided into six clans, named just as the six seats of the Elders. Each Elder is responsible for the maintenance and conduct of his clan, with which the elder usually has a strong bond. The clans are based on family, although they also adopt members. The six round-houses exist on all the regio levels; on the first, they serve as familial residences for the clans, and on the second, they serve as barrack-houses. Clan warriors are chosen because they have the heartbeast of his clan animal, or a similar one. The turb trains in a large practice ground on the second regio level, where each grog takes on some of the characteristics of their clan animal, which strongly influences their wild fighting style. Each clan, therefore, does battle as a separate unit with a distinctive technique, and with its own choice of specialized weapons. Each has a different shield design (a depiction of their clan animal).

The Wolf Clan make up the bulk of the covenant's warriors and servants, and its primary duty is to protect the Prima, to whom its members are fiercely loyal. The clan leader, chosen by the Prima, serves as her personal shield grog and carries a shield enchanted with defensive magics. Within living memory, the clan leader has always been a wolf skinchanger. They fight with axes, emulating the swiping claws of their clan beast.

The largest and strongest men are usually chosen for membership of the Bear Clan. They are the covenant's fiercest warriors, and it is considered an honor to be a member. The mace is their preferred weapon, although they also specialize in

unarmed combat. The clan leader (who carries a bearskin cape imbued with the power of transformation — in popular legend, though not in actual fact, the skin of Bjornaer herself) is a huge man by the name of Dietrich. He has the uncanny ability to spot shape-changers — he always seems to be able to tell if an animal he meets sometimes walks on two legs, or if a human can take animal form. This ability even seems to work to some extent on Bjornaer — he still cannot say for sure, but his guesses are more often correct than one would expect by chance. Historically, the Bear Clan are berserkers, but this tradition is fading. They remain the most independent and perhaps the most bestial of all the clans.

Appropriately enough, the Horse Clan maintains the steeds of Crintera. They all possess the Animal Ken Virtue, and are skilled horsemen and spearmen. The horses are wild and independent rather than placid domesticated beasts, roaming at will across Crintera, and will only accept riders at the behest of this clan. The Horse Clan provides most of the provisioning for Crintera, and acts as a messenger service when Redcaps are not appropriate or available.

The Stag Clan oversees the covenant's defense. Of them all, they are the most skilled soldiers, fighting with swords and taking the lead in battle. The clan leader (effectively the turb captain) directs the other clans in all military matters and has a sound grasp of combat strategy. Among the non-warriors of this clan is a weaponsmith, who works in their clan house.

In the Eagle Clan are the nimblest and most keen-eyed of the covenant's grogs. They are expert archers, and their primary duty is to keep an eye on the other inhabitants of Rügen, acting as spies and hunters. They also operate as an informant network for their Elder across Europe, and have even infiltrated some other covenants. The Eagle Clan leader, who sometimes acts as an emissary, is usually chosen on the basis of her diplomatic skills.

The smallest is the Swan Clan; these are both the crafts-folk of the covenant and those companions who display magical powers other than shapechanging. The warriors of this clan, who fight with the polearm, serve a mostly ceremonial function and perform a special ritual role at the Gathering of Twelve Years. Janis, *volkv* (priest) of the Forest Brothers, is leader of the clan and is the covenant's contact among the pagan people of Rügen. He is often consulted by the magi on matters pertaining to the island or its

supernatural inhabitants, although he is not allowed to practice his religion in Crintera itself.

Pomerania

Pomerania is a sparsely-populated realm of Slavic peoples in between the Baltic Sea and Poland, bordering the Novgorod Tribunal. Most of the towns are huddled along the coast or rivers, away from the primal inland forests. It has only belonged to the Holy Roman Empire since 1181, when Frederick Barbarossa awarded it to Bogislaw, declaring him a duke of the empire. The years since have seen an increase of German migration into Pomerania. The current ruler is Prince Mestwin I, who has sworn an oath of alle-

The Knights of the Sword

The Livonian Order was founded in 1202 by Albert von Buxhövdn, bishop of Riga, in order to prosecute a crusade against the pagan tribes of Livonia (some distance to the east of Pomerania along the Baltic coast, in the Novgorod Tribunal). Its rules and practices were largely based on those of the Knights Templar. In 1211, the Knights of the Sword, as they are commonly known, captured the town of Fellin in Livonia, which now forms their base of operations, brutally slaughtering captives and forcibly baptizing townsfolk. The Knights are increasingly out of control, with murder, rape, and robbery commonplace during their violent conquests. They have an uneasy alliance with the Danish king and Bishop Albert, who struggles in vain to control their excesses.

Although the main center of their activity is some distance to the east, the Knights maintain a presence in Pomerania, where their campaigns are mostly successfully concluded — or at least, there is no longer any organized resistance to the Church. A number of knights have settled here, among the numerous estates seized by the Order — these lords are rightfully feared, especially among those folk whose Christian piety may be lacking.



The Holm Oak of Romowe

Magic Might: 45 (currently 30 due to entrapment)

Personality Traits: Domineering +3, Cruel +1

Special Powers: Grant Flaw (Depression; upon anyone who breaks a branch or kills an animal), Possession (anyone who takes a branch of the tree)

The Pomeranian Forest is one of the most oppressive and fearsome in Germany. Dominated by pine, fir, holly, and evergreen oak, it remains green and dark all year around. Its borders spill over into Pomerania and Poland, and it is reputedly a stronghold of witches and werewolves. In the northern reaches of the forest there is a sacred grove called Romowe; all locals know the perils of breaking a twig or slaying a beast there. Dominating the center of the grove is a massive holm (evergreen) oak, bedecked with ribbon of cloth and talismans. A small band of foresters tends the grove, ensuring that a fire beneath the oak's boughs never goes out. The fire is fed with fallen branches. Contrary to first appearances, this is not a pagan revival; the foresters know that if the fire ever goes out, the malevolent spirit of Romowe will escape. Even taking a twig from the tree releases some of the ancient evil of the oak, causing some calamity to the taker. When Romowe was last free, it possessed a human who violated the sacred grove; the spirit became a tyrant, ruling over the whole region. It took St. Adalbert of Prague to defeat the spirit, drive it back into the Holm Oak, and light the fire that keeps it trapped.

Story Seed: Taking a Bough

Suspecting the power of the Holm Oak, a magus steals a bough to make into his talisman. A substantial portion of Romowe's spirit enters the branch, and then possesses the magus. Under the influence of Romowe's spirit, this powerful Herbam specialist begins to flagrantly break the Code of Hermes by exerting his dominance over the people of the region while restoring the forest to its former glory.

giance to Valdemar II of Denmark. He dies on the 1st of May 1220, leaving four sons, the oldest of whom, Swantopolk, becomes duke. In contrast to the rest of Germany, the power and holdings of the Church here are small. However, the unscrupulous Knights of the Sword are now active here, founding Christian towns and monasteries, and rooting out the remnants of paganism in the forests with religious fervor.

Stettin

Stettin is a small port city on the River Oder, overlooked by an old Wendish fortress, which is the ancestral home of the Pomeranian rulers. Since the

middle of the 12th century, Germans have begun to settle in the city. They have funded the construction of the church of St. Jakob, completed in 1187.

Rethra

Rethra was once a great Slavic pagan fortress-temple, much like its ancient rival, Arkona (see above). A triangular citadel enclosed the great Oracle of the god Radegast. Each of the three walls, adorned with paintings of ancient gods, holds a gate; two lead to the surrounding forest and the third backs onto a holy lake. For a number of centuries this site was also a covenant inhabited by Slavic magi-priests, but it entered a deep Winter

The Werewolves of Pomerania

Witches and werewolves are staples of the fire-side stories in Pomeranian villages, but these stories are not told for entertainment — they are warnings. The villagers are ever vigilant for signs that might give one of their neighbors (and especially strangers) away as one who walks in a different form when the moon is full; signs such as unusual features or accents, a bad reaction from animals, or a prickly feeling on the back of the neck.

The ability to change shape is inherited — reliably if both parents are werewolves, not quite so reliably if only one of the parents is. There are distinct lineages of the shapeshifters, which form a wide-reaching extended family. Some seek to live lives entirely separate from the rest of humanity, others delight in their bestial side and have no difficulty preying on the livestock and children of humans. Only once a year, on Walpurgis Night (April 30th), do the werewolf factions of a region meet. While within the glow of the huge bonfires that the shapeshifters build, they are forbidden by ancient compacts to fight. This night is for settling arguments, agreeing on territorial boundaries, and reaffirming kinships. In addition, it is the time that the youngsters hear the legends of the shapeshifters, including their glorious past united under a war-leader against the Romans, and how the traitor Bjornaer turned on her heritage and took their secrets to the Roman priests. It was because of this, so the shapeshifters believe, that they are no longer the kings of men, but instead skulk on the fringes of human society. This is the only organization of these werewolves that exists, contrary to the beliefs of House Bjornaer.

A child born into a werewolf family will acquire the Skinchanger Virtue. Those unlucky enough to be born into human families will usually acquire the Lycanthrope Flaw, and be unable to control their change. Animals often seem to be able to detect these werewolves, getting nervous in their presence. This will cause startled fear in small animals, skittishness in horses, and frenzied barking in dogs, unless the shapeshifter is lucky enough to have the Animal Ken Virtue. At the option of the storyguide, there may be clans of skinchangers who can change into bears or lynx instead of wolves. Some members of the shapeshifter families (particularly women) develop stronger supernatural powers; these witches gain the Shapeshifter Virtue instead, and often have other magical abilities, such as Entrancement, or Second Sight. They are treated with great respect by their kin, and tend to be as malefic or peaceful as the rest of their clan. Bjornaer the Founder was one of these witches.

Pomeranian werewolves may make suitable companion characters; along with the Virtue or Flaw that allows them to change shape, the following may also be appropriate:

Virtues: Animal Ken, Close Family Ties, Ways of the (Land), Wilderness Sense
Flaws: Dependants, Enemies (Rival clans), Feral Upbringing, Magical Air, Offensive to Animals, Reclusive, Tainted with Evil



Story Seed: Raiding the Temple

Rethra might be haunted by the ghosts of long-dead magi, or perhaps it still houses an ancient magus on the cusp of Final Twilight. In either case, the Oracle might be a source of *Intellego vis*; however, the princes of Mecklenburg will not appreciate magi plundering the mouthpiece of their god.

for a century or more, as the local forest folk abandoned the site and their old beliefs. Nearly twenty years ago, the Knights of the Sword arrived to desecrate and plunder the already-crumbling temple. No word had been received from the magi of Rethra for many decades; the Tribunal of 1207 therefore declared the covenant abolished. The site, however, retains a Faerie aura of 4. The nobility of Mecklenburg (see Chapter 7: The Lowlands, Holstein) still come here in secret to honor their god, even though his "priests" have passed away.

The Margravate of Brandenburg

Low-lying lands on the eastern bank of the River Elbe comprise the March of Brandenburg, founded by Albert the Bear in 1150, a Saxon who adopted the title of margrave after his vigorously successful campaigns against the Wends. Since then it has been ruled by his descendants, the Ascanian line, and is populated by a mixture of Germans and Wends, now much intermingled. In 1220 the current margrave, Albert II, dies and is succeeded by Otto III "the Pious." The land is mostly forest, but is gradually being cleared to make way for farmland.

Brandenburg

The only city of note in the Margravate of Brandenburg east of the Elbe occupies the site of an old Wendish

settlement, straddled across three adjacent islands in the River Havel. The middle of the three houses a cathedral rebuilt by Albert the Bear. This was the first bishopric to be established east of the Elbe, in 948, by Otto the Great, although it was temporarily lost after a Slavic counterattack later that century.

The Margravate of Meissen

A moderately populated rolling land dotted with several towns and small cities, the Margravate of Meissen is the most civilized of the Eastern Marches. Nevertheless it is still a bit of a backwater of the empire, unimportant in politics, trade, or the Church. Perhaps this is due in part to the unfortunate geography of its borders — it is bounded by the impenetrable Thuringian Forest and Ore Mountains to the south, and by the Elbe and Saale rivers to the north. The Wettin dynasty has ruled here since 1089; the current margrave is Dietrich the Oppressed.

The last Hermetic covenant in Meissen was Sirmium, which was destroyed in the 10th century by invading Magyars. At that time the margravate was a very different place. There now appears to be a dearth of magical sites and vis sources — those that were known to the Order were destroyed along with Sirmium long ago.

Meissen

The city of Meissen, on the left bank of the River Elbe, is the seat of the eponymous margravate, with the margraves residing on the Burgberg (Castle Hill) above. This stronghold was founded in 929 by Henry I, and in 963 Meissen became the seat of a bishopric. It has a prosperous market where German merchants mingle with traders from Lusatia, Silesia, and Poland, although the city is not yet grand or rich enough to have built its own cathedral.

The Bastei, upstream from Meissen near the Ore Mountains, is a spectacular

set of limestone cliffs and rocks, some a thousand feet tall, overlooking the Elbe. In fact there are many unique and dramatic rock formations around this hilly region, and also in southern Lusatia immediately to the east.

The Ore Mountains

The Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) are a bleak and unsettled range covered with evergreen forest, adjoining the Spruce Mountains in Franconia. The River Elbe punctures the eastern end, forming the principal connection between Meissen and Bohemia. Although this region is wild, silver and tin have recently been discovered in its slopes, giving rise to a handful of mining towns and villages, the biggest of which is Freiberg (Free Mountain), founded in 1186. Due to a 12th-century imperial decree, anyone may come to these hills to prospect for minerals and keep the proceeds.

The Margravate of Lusatia

In contrast with Meissen, the Margravate of Lusatia (or Luzica in its native tongue), east of the Elbe bordering Silesia, is mainly forest wilderness. Most of the sparse settlements are populated entirely by Sorbs, although it has for several generations been ruled by the margraves of Meissen.

Bautzen

Bautzen (Budysin), not too far from the city of Meissen, is the only place in Lusatia with any real German influence. In 1018, the Peace of Bautzen was signed here by Henry II, ceding the territory to the Polish king Boleslaus I, but it reverted to the empire in 1033. The Knights of the Sword maintain a sizeable fortification here, where slaves (mostly from Pomerania) are kept before transporting them south to the market in Prague.



Chapter Ten

Bohemia

The southeastern lands of the Rhine Tribunal consist of the subject kingdom of Bohemia and its own March immediately to the east, Moravia. Bohemia is a land of broad, partially forested plains, through the center of which flows the River Elbe, and which is divided and bordered by long chains of wooded mountains. There are no great cities here; instead, modest towns and villages are spread quite thinly, lending a sense of remoteness to much of the land. The Margravate of Moravia is in the easternmost reaches of the empire — the borderlands with the kingdom of Hungary and with the Transylvanian Tribunal, whose influence (particularly that of House Tremere) is often felt by the magi here.

Bohemia

Bohemia has been ruled by the Premyslid dynasty, the descendants of the legendary Czech, since the 8th century. Christianity arrived in the next century with the missionary St. Methodius, although it took several generations to become established. With natural borders on all sides, the region was ruled as a semi-autonomous tributary of the German empire, interrupted by the attacks of Hungarians at the beginning of the 12th century. A generation ago, Frederick Barbarossa elevated Bohemia from the status of a duchy to a subject kingdom of the empire. The current Premyslid king is Otakar.

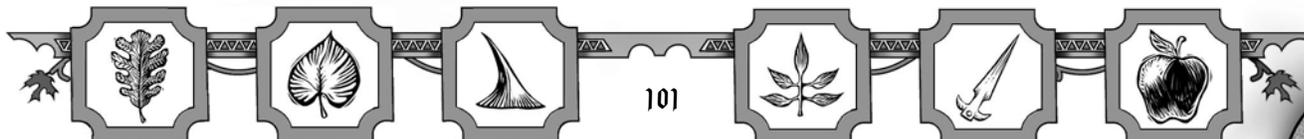
The only towns of note in 1220 are located around and to the north of Prague. However, Bohemia experiences rapid growth throughout the 13th century, with the founding of numerous towns and cities in the outlying regions, where German-style feudalism replaces the old Slavic system of tribal chieftdom. Apart

from farming and hunting, there are a number of nascent industries, including mining, glassblowing, brewing, and the breeding of horses.

Prague

Prague, founded in the latter half of the 9th century, straddles the River Vltava — a tributary of the Elbe — at the center of Bohemia. The bishopric was created, under the jurisdiction of Mainz in 973, and Thietmar of Merseburg became Prague's first bishop. With only three

thousand inhabitants, Prague is by no means a large city, at least in comparison to the rest of Germany, but nevertheless it is Bohemia's principal settlement and the ancestral seat of the dukedom (now kingdom). Prague Castle, occupying a commanding position on a hill above the west bank of the river, encloses part of the city within its walls, including the Basilica of St. George (and its attached convent) and the Basilica of St. Vitus. The latter church contains the shrine and grave of St. Wenceslaus and houses the relics of St. Adalbert. Nearby is Strahov monastery, which was founded in 1140 by the Premonstratensians, an austere religious



The Slavs

The founders of the Slavic peoples were three brothers: Czech, Lech, and Rus. They set out on an epic journey with their tribes to find new lands in which to live. Upon reaching the River Dnieper, Rus proclaimed that he had found a suitable territory and he settled there with his tribe, the Russians. The remaining two brothers continued for many miles. Climbing the top of the Rip hill, the ancestor Czech espied a rich land overflowing with milk and honey. His tribe, the Czechs, settled there, in Bohemia. The last brother Lech continued on and settled in Poland.

order. In the 11th century, the city spread onto the opposite bank — there is a market run largely by German merchants, and a small Jewish quarter. Prague produces inexpensive glassware, that is traded with the cities of northern Germany.

Vysehrad Rock

Princess Libuse, the Gifted granddaughter of Czech, came to this spot, a hilltop just a short distance to the south of Prague, in the 8th century. Her father, Krok, had died without a male heir and the Czech people agreed to accept whoever Libuse chose as her husband as their new ruler. Here she had a great vision where she foretold the identity of this

man, a farmer who was to be found in a specific spot by the River Belina beyond the hills, plowing a field with two oxen. The prophecy was fulfilled as he, Premysl, became her husband and the founder of Bohemia's ruling dynasty. A small settlement has since grown up next to Vysehrad Rock, including Prague's second castle.

Most

Most (Bridge) is located to the south of the Ore Mountains. It is so named on account of the intricate network of wooden bridges built over the swampy terrain here, to allow merchants to travel more easily between Freiberg and Prague. A town and market have grown up around the bridges.

The Slave Trade

Prague is home to a large slave market. The word "slave" derives from "slav," since the Slavic lands are the principal source of these unfortunates who are sold into captivity. The Church forbids making Christians into slaves. The trade in slaves is controlled by the Knights of the Sword, and is a lucrative source of income, helping to fund their corrupt expansionary and missionary campaign in Pomerania and beyond. They transport the slaves to Prague and sell them to Jewish merchants, who then transport them to Muslim lands and sell them again. An unremarkable slave may be purchased for as little as a few schillings — less than a decent horse — although individuals with exceptional skills, physique, or appearance may easily fetch ten times as much. As a general rule, the younger, healthier, and stronger the slave is, the more he or she may be sold for.

In the market may be spotted a dubious fellow by the name of Ladislaus. He is, in fact, a trusted companion of Roznov covenant (see below) and uses his Magic Sensitivity to spot and filter out any Gifted children among the slaves. They then find themselves delivered to Coeris, the domus magna of House Tremere in the Transylvanian Tribunal. Other slaves are traded or employed by Roznov.

NEW MAJOR STATUS FLAW: SLAVE

Likely of Slavic origin, you have at some time in your past been sold into captivity and transported to a land beyond your original home. As a possession of your master, you are beholden to his or her will completely, and are only likely to earn your freedom through some exceptional act of service, if ever. Disobedience, on the other hand, will earn you very severe punishment, possibly even death. You have no belongings of consequence, except that which is given to you by your master. Playing a slave will prove to be challenging, and may be difficult unless your master is another player character.

NEW MINOR GENERAL VIRTUE: SLAVE-OWNER

You are the owner of one slave. Unless the slave is another player character, your slave will be largely unskilled, and be suitable only as a personal servant. While it is legal to own a slave in Germany, it is frowned upon by the Church and you are likely to receive negative attention in most major cities. You may free your slave at any time, in which case you lose this Virtue. You also lose this Virtue if your slave is killed. You may take this Virtue multiple times.

Boii Springs

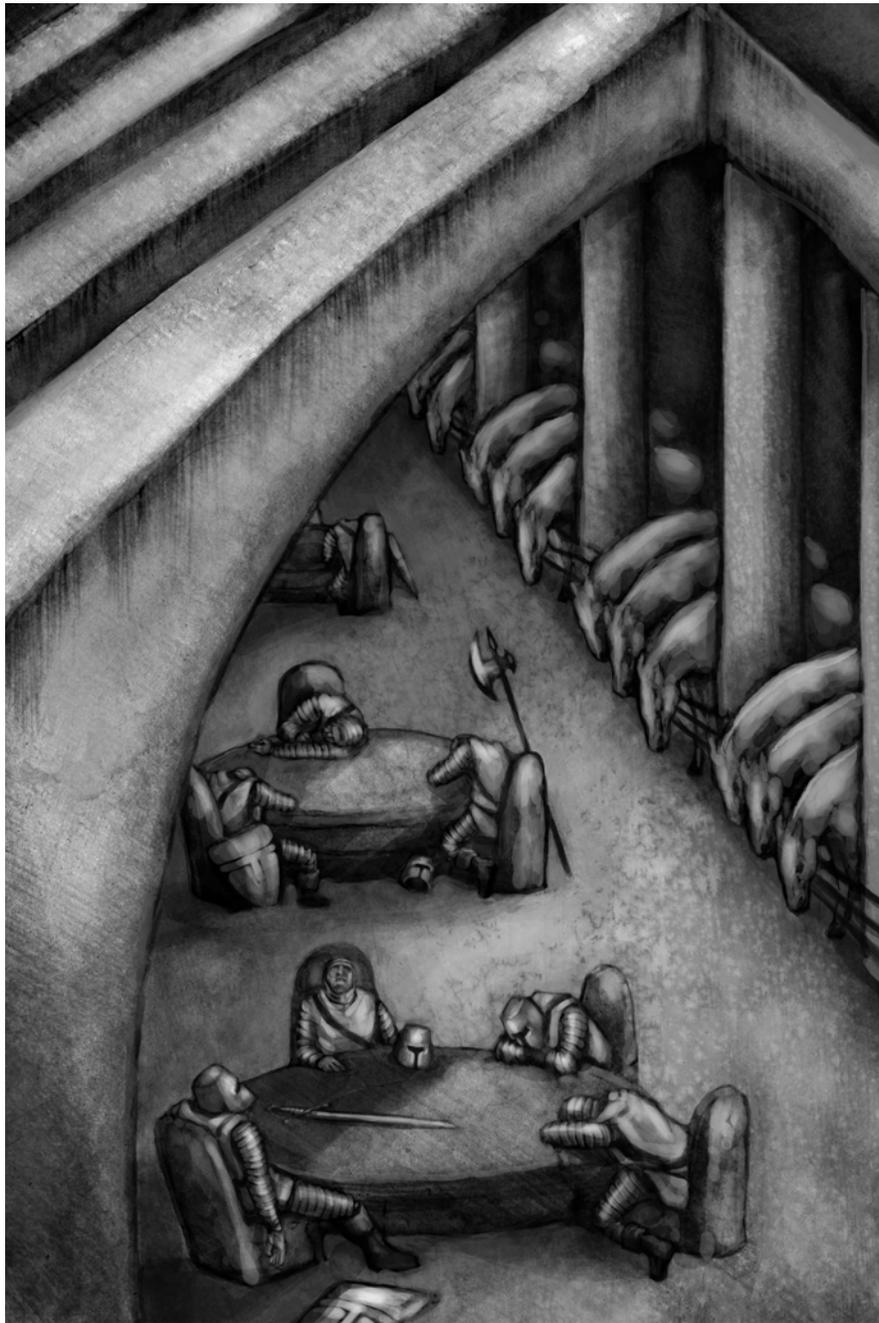
Amid the hills of western Bohemia are 12 hot mineral springs near to the remains of a Celtic settlement. The largest of these is a geyser that rises to a height of 40 feet; the springs produce such a volume of hot water that the River Tepla even runs warm for miles downstream. Drinking the waters will help cure digestive disorders. The name of the springs derives from the Celtic Boii tribe, from which Bohemia takes its name.

Mount Blanik

On the slopes of Mount Blanik, at a place where springs rise from the earth, there is an arch-shaped opening in the rock face. This passage leads to a huge underground cavern, arched and pillared with the appearance of a great hall. The columns are bedecked with weaponry and armor, and along one side of the hall, hundreds of horses stand. Yet the steeds are motionless in sleep. In stone chairs around stone tables sit the owners of the horses, the Knights of Blanik — this is the sleeping army of St. Wenceslaus. This chamber is at the center of a Divine regio that covers the mountain.

Bohemia's patron saint and former duke, Wenceslaus, was murdered by his pagan brother Boleslav in the early 10th century. It is foretold that, when the Czech people are in the time of their direst need, St. Wenceslaus will rise from





the dead, take up the legendary sword of Bruncvik, and come to Mount Blanik to awaken and call forth his army.

Kutna Mine

A couple of dozen miles to the southeast of Prague is the Cistercian monastery of Sedlec, founded in 1142. A monk by the name of Anton took a nap one afternoon after a hard morning's work in the

vineyard. When he awoke, he saw that three rods of silver had sprouted up next to his head. He left behind his *kutna* (frock) to mark the spot, and returned excitedly to the monastery to report his discovery. The monks have recently opened up a silver mine at the spot, and it appears to have fantastically rich deposits.

If your saga follows real history, the town of Kutna springs up in a chaotic rush around the mines in the latter half of the 13th century, later growing to become a wealthy royal town, taking over the role

Story Seed: The Silver Rush

Immediately after the discovery of the silver deposits at Kutna, a mysterious but far-sighted magus purchases the land from the monastery for a nominal fee. A covenant or chapter house is erected here, and its magi begin to secretly mine vast amounts of silver with the aid of magic. As they spend this silver profligately, the merchants of Bohemia begin to notice an inflation of prices and the Quaesitores of the Tribunal begin to take a dim view.

of Goslar in producing a significant proportion of the empire's silver.

The Bohemian Forest

Nearly as massive in terms of area as the Black Forest, the Bohemian Forest is safe from the incursion of man due to its generally harsh climate, as well as its numerous peat bogs, swamps, and marshes. It is the haunt of lynx, wolves, and deer, as well as giants. In the northern reaches the forest is open beech woodland, but once the lower slopes of the mountains that form the spine of the forest are reached the beech and chestnut give way to birch and evergreen forest. The south is in the rain-shadow of the Alps, and this is where most of the standing water is to be found, shrouded with water-loving trees like willow and alder mixed in with the pine. Other trees are left stunted by the waterlogged soil and often rot and die, lending to the sinister atmosphere of the region. The western mountains are drier and more normal woodland prevails, giving way to pine and fir on the higher slopes. The powers and personality of this mighty forest have been left to the storyguide to devise.

The Giants' Castle

Obri Hrad (Giants' Castle) is the remains of a primeval Celtic fortress on the edge of the Bohemian Forest in the south of the land. A hilltop landscape overlooking the River Losenice is covered with large fractured rocks, originally gathered here by giants. The hill has a Magic aura of 3, and thus might make a suitable

The Maddenhofen Woods

This name is given to a stretch of woods on the northwestern fringe of the Bohemian Forest by the members of House Merinita. Irencillia is particularly protective of these woodlands, although they do not apparently collect vis here. The woods are well-known due to the disappearance of Tytalus here in 807 AD, who claimed he was planning to face the Queen of all the Fae. While followers of Merinita scoff that such a Queen would ever exist, a powerful faerie does indeed live in the Maddenhofen Woods. She is capable of granting one's Heart's Desire, but those who ask must afterwards perform a task for her; and as yet, no one has ever completed one of these tasks.

covenant site, although it is possible that the giants of the Bohemian Forest still visit occasionally.

Irencillia

*Immutable in the depths of rivers,
In the eternal twilight of forests,
The spirits of the old days live on*

— inscription above
the gate to Irencillia



Irencillia, the domus magna of House Merinita, hidden deep in faerie woods, was founded when this area was wild and uncivilized. Due to the meddling of members of the covenant the area is still largely untouched, and Irencillia has a timeless quality, seemingly unaffected by the pas-

sage of years. The encroachment of humans into traditionally faerie areas has caused members of House Merinita to come to their domus magna in larger numbers, and the Autumn covenant has never been as large as it is now. Irencillia has little to do with the politics of the area or of the Tribunal as a whole, preferring seclusion above all else.

History

Irencillia was never the home of Merinita herself, contrary to current belief. It was established by Quendalon, second Primus of the House, when he returned from Arcadia and turned House Merinita towards the path of the fae. Since that time the covenant has remained unchanged — and ever changing.

Setting and Physical Description

Irencillia is located in the northern stretches of the Bohemian Forest, bordering the Bohemian plain. Primarily composed of beech and oak, this part of the forest does not have dense undergrowth, just an expanse of brown leaves beneath the wide green canopy of the trees. Low-growing shrubs are discouraged by the numerous fallow deer who dwell here, and wild boar root around in the leaf litter searching for acorns, beechmast, and mushrooms. There are only a few wolves, who prefer the cover in the denser southern and eastern reaches. Lynx and bears are relatively common.

Many people approaching Irencillia for the first time expect to see a faerie castle built out of living wood, populated by elegant courtiers; this is exactly what they see. Other, more practical heads expect a forest hamlet, peopled by foresters wearing oak-green and earth-brown; once again, this is precisely what they see. Mixed groups of visitors, each with their own preconceptions, see different things before them. Some might see a wooded hill with a trilithon leading to an underground labyrinth. Others might experience a narrow gully whose high walls are dotted with cave entrances populated by humans with twisted forms. Wanderers through the region who do not know of the covenant's existence see what they expect as well — nothing but open expanses of woodland. This curious prop-

erty of the covenant has existed for many centuries, and no-one knows whether it is a spell, a faerie power, or something else.

All views of the covenant have a few features in common. Some form of boundary surrounds the entire covenant, whether this be a wooden palisade, a dry-stone wall, or a tall thorny hedge. Through this wall there is a single gateway that may or may not have a door, above which is an inscription (which may be elegantly carved into stone, roughly scratched into a plank of wood, or otherwise etched), said to be the last words uttered by Merinita before her disappearance in 785 AD.

The different appearance of the covenant to each visitor is more than just visual illusion — it is a peculiar faerie glamour that causes the actual experience of the covenant to differ between individuals. A wall that feels like smooth marble to one person will be living woven withies to another, and if one plucks a leaf, the other character will swear blind that it is a chip of marble. Likewise, the covenfolk will appear different. A character experiencing an underground tumulus will find the covenfolk to be short, squat, and ugly, and might get strange looks from those seeing the covenant as a faerie castle, as they will seem to be talking to the chest of a tall lady of the court. The covenfolk seem oblivious to these inconsistencies, but then, it is impossible to tell precisely what version of Irencillia they are experiencing! Presumably, this effect should be stopped by sufficiently strong magic resistance, although no Hermetic magus has ever reported this occurring — but then, it would be difficult to know if the view you were seeing was the real one, anyway. If a piece of Irencillia's physical structure is removed from its aura, it will turn into dust, dried leaves, and twigs once the sun rises or sets.

No one ever forms the same global picture of Irencillia — it is impossible to

Story Seed: The Return of Tytalus

A young follower of Tytalus enters the Maddenhofen Woods, determined to find her Founder. This Heart's Desire is granted, and while she attempts to complete her task, Tytalus himself emerges from the woods, protected from the centuries by its Stasis power. What could his Heart's Desire have been, and now that he has it, what will he do with it?



construct a map of the place that would be of any use to another. Some areas have a "firm reality" where a consensus picture has emerged: the sancta of the magi, for example. Each magus has a firm idea of what their own sanctum looks like, and this reality fairly quickly establishes itself. The sancta become highly personalized, taking the form of castles, town-houses, mysterious gardens, barrows, and so on. To a lesser extent, important communal covenant areas (such as the library, council chamber, and dining hall) take on a consensus. The other details, the connecting paths or walkways, and the configuration and placement of buildings always remain highly subject to personal interpretation.

The Faerie aura of Irencillia is highly patchy. All areas within the boundary wall have an aura of at least 1, and sancta have been established where the aura is strongest (up to a strength of 6), but the strangest places can have unexpectedly high aura values. For example, a covered walkway that leads to the kitchens has a Faerie aura of 4 along its length. Some (but by no means all) of the patches of high Faerie aura reside within a regio; most of the sancta of the magi fall into this category. Each regio entrance is marked with a symbol, such as a badger's head or a crescent moon. The meaning of these symbols is not readily understood by outsiders. It is theorized that the scattered aura and fragmented regiones of Irencillia are the product of an immense magical out-pouring; those who know the early history of the House will realize that the war between Quendalon and Myanar was just such an event.

The Lost Domus Magna

Merinita was descended from the Roman priestesses of Diana who penetrated the German wilderness while the priests of Mercury tried to build their walls around it. She was the last priestess; the cult was in its final death throes due to the waves of Christianization following Charlemagne's conquests, and it took all of Trianoma's persuasive power to draw her from her temple to join the Order. Irencillia was not her original home, however; rather, it was built by Quendalon. The House knows that Irencillia was not the temple to Diana, but they do not remember where the original temple is, nor what it was called.

Those not expecting to find a covenant in the midst of the Bohemian Forest will not see it. Nevertheless, these rare visitors will wander through its halls, seeing only dense undergrowth and the occasional forest animal. Such visitors are strictly avoided by Irencillia's inhabitants, and eventually they will find the exit and wander out, none the wiser.

Culture and Traditions

Irencillia consists of two co-existing cultures, human and fae. Every magus resident at Irencillia has a "double" in the faerie court. These fae partners do not necessarily resemble their human counterparts closely, but it is usually easy to match faerie with magus. For example, a faerie double might adopt the same style of clothing as his counterpart, or resemble his familiar. He may have the same identifiable feature, such as a birth-mark or long nose. Inhabitants of Irencillia refer to these faeries as caricatures, and soon grow to ignore them. The caricatures lead lives separate from their humans, but they will often be found dining together, or standing near each other at public events, even though they are seemingly ignoring each other's presence. Any magus who lives at Irencillia for more than a season will gain a caricature, raised from the ranks of the servant-folk. The prospective copy will begin by shadowing his target for a season, gradually adopting the target's mannerisms and changing his appearance. At the end of this time, the caricature is complete and the two return to independent existence. This process can be quite spooky, even for Merinita who haven't been apprenticed at Irencillia. Upon the death or departure of a magus, his caricature will return to the ranks of the covenant-folk and gradually lose its individuality. In game terms, every long-term resident of Irencillia gains the Faerie Friend Flaw for the duration of his or her visit.

The Faerie Might of a caricature varies. It often becomes higher over time, up to a maximum determined by the status of the magus at Irencillia. This status does not necessarily equate with magical power, although old magi do tend to have powerful caricatures. Political power or a deep understanding of faerie ways can also cause caricatures to become strong. Some magi who revel in their caricatures by adopting their mannerisms and personalities have found in return that they become quite closely tied to their faerie copy. The two may become more difficult

Story Seeds: Caricatures

A caricature is kidnapped, and used to exact revenge upon the magus to whom it has adopted, by exploiting the Arcane Connection between the two.

One of the magi of Irencillia is occupied with an important project, with no time to attend the Tribunal gathering, and so sends his caricature in his stead, with some basic instructions. It remains to be seen whether the caricature will be able to successfully impersonate the magus, and avoid getting into mischief.

to distinguish from each other, and become Arcane Connections to each other.

Magi

HANDRI, PRIMUS OF HOUSE MERINITA

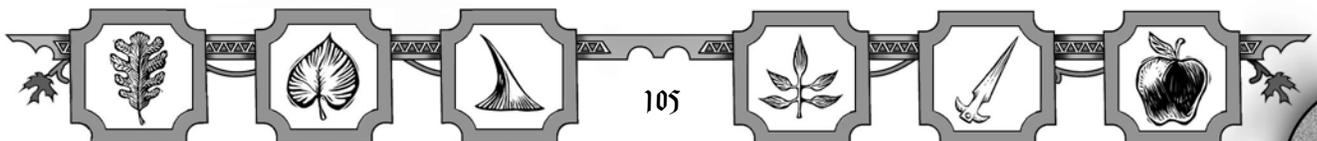
Age: 81 (Master)

Personality Traits:

Obsessively Secretive +6, Indecisive +1, Secure in Position -2



Handri, the Primus of House Merinita, is a secretive man who shares his concerns and plans with only his most trusted advisors. Whereas his predecessor Vinaria encouraged political dialogue with the Primi of other Houses, Handri has turned his attentions wholly to the faeries, conducting long private diplomatic missions into faerie areas. Rumors suggest that he has even met with survivors of House Diedne. Handri is equally secretive about his magical abilities — none can be found who have witnessed him using magic (or will admit to having witnessed it) apart from his signature spell, which earned him the status of master (see Chapter 3: The Rhine Tribunal, Upon being a Rhine magus). Handri has been a magus for about six decades and has trained two apprentices, Iacob and Beechleaf (see Chapter 8: Central Germany, Fengheld), but has not yet (apparently) sought the status of archmage. His caricature is the Queen of



Ioannes Acer, follower of Merinita

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

Size: 0

Age: 23 (23) (Journeyman)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Journeyman; Flawless Magic; Deft Art (Herbam), Elder Gild Trained, Knight, Skilled Parens, Special Circumstances (When riding); Creative Block; Deleterious Circumstances (in city), Magical Animal Companion, Reckless, Short Lived Magic, Vow (Chivalry)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Honorable +3, Deep Thinker -2

Reputations: None

Combat:

Greatsword: Init -1, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage +10

Lance (mounted): Init -1, Attack +11, Defense +6, Damage +6

Fist: Init -3, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +1

Soak: +8 (full metal scale), +5 (half metal scale)

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

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

Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (steeds), Artes Liberales 1 (writing poetry), Brawl 3 (punch), Charm 1 (ladies), Code of Hermes 1 (fae), Concentration 1 (Herbam spells), Etiquette 2 (fae), Faerie Lore 2 (knights), Faerie Magic 2 (Herbam spells), Finesse 1 (Rego), High German 5 (flowery language), Great Weapon 2 (Lance), Latin 4 (about plants), Magic Theory 4 (recognizing spells), Order of Hermes Lore 2 (Elder Gild), Parma



Magica 2 (Rego spells), Penetration 1 (Rego), Ride 2 (Kervus)

Arts: Cr 6, In 1, Mu 7, Pe 0, Re 10; An 3, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 3, He 10, Ig 0, Im 1, Me 0, Te 6, Vi 3

Twilight Scars: None.

Equipment: Half scale mail (made in bronze), great sword, lance.

Encumbrance: 3 (4)

Spells Known:

Sooth the Ferocious Boar (ReAn 10) +15, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

Bind Wound (CrCo 10) +11, Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)

Bridge of Wood (CrHe 20) +18, Mastery 1 (Still Casting)

Transformation of the Thorny Staff (MuHe 10) +19, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

Piercing Shaft of Wood (Mu(Re)He 15) +19, Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)

Repel the Wooden Shafts (ReHe 10) +22, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

Strike of the Angered Branch (ReHe 15) +22, Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)

The Treacherous Spear (ReHe 15) +22, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

Coils of Entangling Plants (ReHe 20) +22, Mastery 1 (Fast Casting)

Eyes of the Treacherous Terrain (InTe 15) +9, Mastery 1 (Still Casting)

Wielding the Invisible Sling (ReTe 10) +18, Mastery 1 (Multiple Casting)

Appearance: A young, robust-looking magus, with flowing golden locks and a sun-burnt youthful face. He is invariably dressed in ornate bronze scale armor polished to mirror-brightness, but never wears a helm. He carries a shield with his device (a white field with a green sycamore leaf), and a lance. His caricature has taken the form of a huge stag called Kervus who is capable of bearing his weight, and Ioannes rides him everywhere, even practicing his jousting from atop this magnificent beast. When not mounted, he usually removes part of his armor.

Ioannes Acer is the youngest apprentice of Archmage Vinaria, freshly-Gauntleted. He is young, idealistic, and bound up in a romantic notion of chivalry and honor which that not serve him well should he leave the protective atmosphere of Irencillia. Note that his status as Knight (and its accompanying Vow of Chivalry) has been granted by a Faerie Court, not by a mundane one. Secular lords (should he come into contact with them) will recognize his status, as long as they do not probe too deeply into the identity of his liege. Ioannes would make a suitable player character.

Irencillia's fae, an imperious-looking woman by the name of Rosmert. The caricature of the Primus is always the monarch of the Faerie Court, but whether there is a single, shape-shifting ruler or whether the king or queen changes as regularly as the Primus remains unknown.

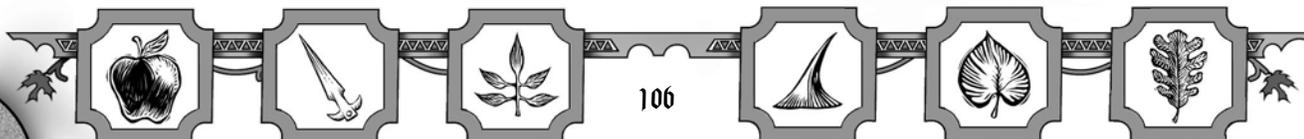
Personality Traits: Enigmatic +3, Self-Assured +3, Hostile -3

Vinaria was the previous Prima of the House, but she stepped down after being outmaneuvered in its politics by her successor, Handri. Initially, it was claimed that she had entered "Faerie Twilight," but seven years later she returned with no apparent change in her appearance or personality. Secretly, Handri is scared of her — since her return he feels that she has an inner strength that never existed before.

He avoids her at all costs, and even allows her to do what she wants without interference. Vinaria is politically strong — in her days as Prima, she held long councils with many of the other Primi, and is exceptionally good at manipulating these contacts to her own ends. Her caricature was the faerie king of Irencillia, who is now Handri's caricature; since her return, she has mysteriously not acquired another, which is another cause of unease for Handri. Her magic is particularly strong in the raw elemental arts, although her

VINARIA, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Age: 97 (Archmage)



spells are always clothed in beautiful glamour.

GLESIG, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Age: 62 (Master)
Personality Traits:
 Impatient +2,
 Friendly +1,
 Tolerant of Fools -2



Glesig is considered to be the member of House Merinita who is most versed in the subterranean fae. She is a massive-boned maga with plain features, although her hair appears to be made of threads of shining copper due to Twilight. Naturally, she specializes in Terram magics. Her caricature, Humnel, has taken the seeming of an immense troll, and Glesig has made him into her faerie familiar. Humnel is very protective of his mistress and particularly dislikes her being insulted.

JACOB, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Age: 43 (Master)
Personality Traits:
 Independent +2,
 Suspicious +1,
 Talkative -2



Jacob filius Handri is the most politically active magus of Irencillia (excepting perhaps Vinaria), being the somewhat precocious leader of the Elder Gild. He is also in charge of a secret project conceived by Handri upon his succession to the position of Primus of House Merinita — to establish a religion in the name of the fae. Jacob is careful not to reveal any magical powers to the mundanes; nevertheless, should the Quaesitores find out about the scheme they will be deeply unhappy. Jacob is a master of Mentem magics, achieving that rank at a notably young age, and has invented a number of spells that implant thoughts and ideas in the minds of his targets. He is a tall man, apparently in his early thirties (but actually a decade older), who has a charming personality and an almost hypnotic voice. His caricature is Nestor, a white crow who accompanies him on his travels.

GRAVIS, FOLLOWER OF BONISAGUS

Age: 33 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits:
 Cheerful +2, Driven +2, Sensitive +1



Gravis has come to Irencillia to pursue his life-long fascination with the fae. He is from House Bonisagus, and has found it particularly frustrating that he has been unable to grasp even the basics of Faerie Magic, despite having a knowledge of Faerie Lore that exceeds that of many Merinita magi. Gravis has avoided becoming bitter, however, and still works toward his goal. His caricature Danket is almost his opposite; a grumpy, stick-thin dwarf with a perpetual scowl that contrasts with Gravis' chubby frame and sunny disposition.

RICHENDA SPINOSA, FOLLOWER OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 28 (Journeyman)
Personality Traits: Bitter +3, Prickly +2, Fae -2



Richenda is a very atypical member of House Flambeau. As an apprentice she showed a great aptitude for flame-magics, but it was unknown to her master (Indulius of Fengheld) that this was due to her secret faerie heritage, descended as she was from Kupala, a faerie lord who guards the Fire Flower in Slavic lands. Her master's bungling (in her opinion) scarred her Gift, and she was left unable to use fire magics except with great difficulty. Her natural aptitude for Herbam made her a laughing stock in her House, particularly when they learned that she had faerie blood. Richenda has become a very angry young maga with an affinity for spells involving thorns, and has sworn vengeance on her master. She has not fully come to terms with her fae side, although her caricature Jennis is helping here; he appears to be a male version of the Polish maga, and they have learned much from each other.

OTHER MAGI

There are three other magi at Irencillia, all members of House Merinita. The storyguide should let his or her creativity run wild with these magi (and their caricatures) — they are likely to be both powerful and eccentric.

The God of Truth

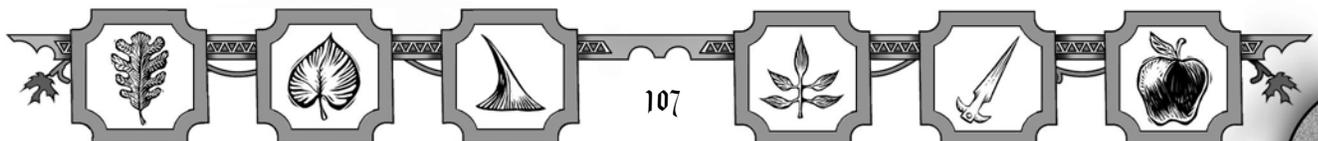
In the last decade, a new religion has sprung up in the villages near the Bohemian Forest. It is a dualist faith: there is a God of Truth, who created the cosmos, and a God of Law, who created and rules the material world, but who cares not for its inhabitants. Proponents of the faith teach that the Church is in error, worshipping the stern God of Law rather than the God of Truth, who instead can only be found in the wild places of the world. The God of Truth is immaterial, unable to manifest in a world made and ruled by the cold god of the cities. Instead, he has sent his angels to show man the way. These angels are apparently what man calls faeries. The religion has no clear catechism other than a reverence for the wild and an abandonment of the churches; those churchmen who know of it are finding it difficult to crush a religion with no clear leader and no obvious means of transmission.

There is a leader, however. Stories tell of the Prophet Iacob, identified by the presence of an albino crow who always accompanies him. The arrival of the Prophet cannot be predicted, and no-one knows where he goes. He never preaches, but wherever he is seen the new religion seems to spontaneously arise.

are as unobtrusive as possible, ignored in the main by magi and their caricatures alike. Their actual appearance depends upon what version of Irencillia is being experienced — they may be a squad of goblin-like creatures, else they might be elfin ladies dressed in pastel shades, or hairy outdoorsmen with more than a little animal blood in them. They are either humans with faerie blood or faeries who have dwelt too long among humans — they have lived at Irencillia among both peoples for so long now that it is impossible to tell. All have a Faerie Might of around 10, and some minor magical ability related to their job; thus, cleaners can animate brooms and pans to ease their work, cooks can make tasty meals out of meager pickings, and the librarian can cause books to come to him at a gesture. None of these powers rate as more than a first magnitude spell. No-one has ever reported the same covenfolk taking different appearances; as soon as one is identified uniquely from his fellows, he will always appear that way in future. The

Covenfolk

The covenfolk of Irencillia seem to be an anonymous group. None really stand out from any of the others, and they



grog of Irencillia are no different, although active duty has caused some to become more individual than others. Irencillia also employs a cadre of foresters who are more human than their other servants, primarily because they do not live in the covenant but rather in family groups in isolated forest bothies.

The Margravate of Moravia

Moravia is the eastern March of Bohemia, and the margrave is usually the Bohemian king's son or brother. In 999 it became part of Poland under Boleslaus I, but since 1019 has been part of Bohemia. The province is bordered by the Carpathian Mountains and the kingdom of Hungary (part of the Transylvanian Tribunal) to the east, and through the center flows the River Morava, which joins with the Danube in the duchy of Austria to the south.

Brünn

In the early 11th century, the castle of Brünn (Brno) and the church of St. Michael were founded on Petrov Hill, at the confluence of the Svitava and Svatka rivers. This is the seat of the Premyslid rulers in Moravia, around which have grown up a market town and mines. A small handful of German settlers have recently arrived.

THE DRAGON OF BRÜNN

Some generations ago, a dragon lived near Brünn in a cave by the River Svatka and tormented the local townsfolk, devouring them at his leisure. The council of the town offered a reward of a hundred pounds, but nobody knew how to get rid of him. One day a travelling butcher came to a local inn, where everybody was talking about the dragon. He listened for a while and then proclaimed that he could rid them of the beast, requesting a large ox pelt and a sack of unslaked lime. The townsfolk were dubious, but brought him

what he had asked for. The butcher sewed the lime into the ox pelt and took it away on a wagon. He laid the bait outside the dragon's cave and waited. Sure enough, the dragon crept out and ate the pelt, washing down the meal with water from the river. The lime boiled up in his stomach unbearably until it burst, and the dragon was no more. The butcher claimed his reward and went on his way. Whether he really was just a plain butcher, or instead a wizard or magus in disguise, was never known. The carcass of the dragon was stuffed and now hangs in Brünn's town hall.

Roznov



The Autumn covenant of Roznov, in the extreme east of Moravia bordering Hungary, is unusual in that it combines two strong, but entirely different traditions. Half of the covenant forms the pagan priesthood of the ancient Slavic god Radegast; the other half is an arch-conservative stronghold of House Tremere. The two halves of the covenant seem to be entirely independent of each other — although their political ambitions often coincide, it is not unusual for one half to be unaware of the schemes of the other, and to only learn about them through a third party. Roznov's allegiance appears to be somewhat split between the Rhine Tribunal, which they attend, and the adjacent Tremere-dominated Transylvanian Tribunal, with which they are believed to maintain regular contact. As such, they are not really trusted by many of the other Rhine magi.

History

Roznov was settled in 1067 AD by three magi of House Ex Miscellanea. Due

to its location in the Carpathian Mountains it could have easily claimed membership of either the Novgorod Tribunal or the Transylvanian Tribunal instead of the Rhine. However, Durenmar and Criteria between them offered more resources than the other Tribunals, and Roznov was inducted into the Rhine Tribunal in 1074. Almost immediately thereafter the covenant accepted two new members, both followers of Tremere from the Transylvanian Tribunal. Some in the Rhine have suspected that this covenant's founding was a ploy by House Tremere to acquire a beach-head in the Rhine Tribunal, and that the members of Ex Miscellanea were merely dupes. What is certain is that since Roznov's founding they have grown to be a significant political force in the Tribunal.

Setting and Physical Description

The covenant consists of two physical structures, both in the same valley at the edge of the Carpathian Mountains. A small castle with twinned towers enclosed by a curtain wall is located about two-

Story Seed: The Secret is Out

It seems remarkable that this covenant can have existed for so long with half of its members completely unaware of the annual human sacrifice perpetuated by the other half. There is clearly some supernatural agent at work here keeping mouths from blabbing. If Severicus and his filii were ever to discover what takes place every year up the mountain they would be horrified and appalled. They might bring accusations of diabolism, attempt to pre-emptively March the pagan magi, or, if all this fails, declare Wizard War upon them. This could have repercussions both in the Rhine and the Transylvanian Tribunals.

Alternatively, the Tremere really do know what is going on, but choose to ignore it. Given the attitude of House Tremere towards religion in general, and human sacrifice in particular (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*), this is highly unusual, suggesting that if this is the case then the Tremere have a very good reason for keeping quiet.



thirds of the way up Mount Radhost. It dominates the valley that it overlooks, but is completely hidden from view from any other direction. This is the home of the covenant's three members of House Ex Miscellanea. At the base of the mountain, controlling the only pass up to the castle, is a fort surrounded by a small village. Here the three followers of Tremere live along with most of the covenfolk, who occupy the village. These two sites are referred to as Roznov Castle and Roznov Fort, respectively, and are connected by tunnels that lead through the mountain. The whole valley has a Magic aura of 4.

Mount Radhost

The summit of Mount Radhost, at 3700 feet, is home to a crude stone temple that bears witness to the covenant's rituals to Radegast. It has a Magic aura of 6. Every summer solstice the god is honored here by a great festival, in which all the covenfolk and villagers participate, with an orgiastic excess of drink and debauchery. This worship and revelry enables the magi of Roznov Castle to harvest dozens of pawns of vis; however, the ritual needs to be fuelled by the blood of human sacrifices. A small number of victims from among the celebrants are surreptitiously seized and taken into the temple. Their sacrifice is only witnessed by the most loyal servants of Igor Rastvan — the practice is never openly discussed — but most covenfolk can guess at the reason for the regular disappearances every summer. The blood of the sacrifices is harvested for Corpus vis.

Radegast

Radegast is an archetypal god of chieftainship and war, as well as fertility and harvest. His worship was, in ancient times, centered in Pomerania, but Mount Radhost was always a site sacred to him. His current devotees often have links to noble or "royal" pagan families, and may act as tribal or court advisors (Temporal Influence Virtue). Those he favors often display the Inspirational and Great Presence Virtues, as well as the Overconfident Flaw. A possible saga plot involving Radegast is detailed in Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.

Culture and Traditions

Archmage Igor Rastvan leads the covenfolk of Roznov in the worship of the pagan god Radegast; he is the high priest of the god, and attributes his power to the blessing of his deity. The Tremere magi of Roznov Fort are completely unaware of the exact nature of the annual festival on Mount Radhost, and have nothing to do with the pagan aspects of life at the covenant. Unusually for members of House Tremere, they do not discourage it or even appear to disapprove of it.

Magi

IGOR RASTVAN, MAGUS EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 101 (Archmage)
 Personality Traits: Devoted
 to Radegast +6,
 Overconfident +2,
 Peaceful -2



Rastvan is about 80 years from his Gauntlet, but is still hale in body and (apparently) mind. He has black curly hair and a beard that reaches to his waist and has only a few wisps of gray. He wears elaborately embroidered robes at all times, which depict mythological scenes and denote his rank as priest of Radegast. Rastvan is the filius of one of the founders of Roznov, and possibly the only archmage of his House. His magic draws deeply from the Slavic traditions of cursing magic, and he is feared for his ability to slay his victims from afar. Many of his spells have a non-Hermetic ritual element that draws power from leading a pagan ceremony of many worshippers — the more worshippers, the more power he can achieve. Rastvan's ambitions revolve around his god; he desires to assert dominance over the Slavic lands, united under the worship of Radegast. This obsession has grown stronger in recent years, and his filii fear that his overwhelming zeal is a symptom of a mind unhinged by Twilight.

SEVERICUS, FOLLOWER OF TREMERE

Age: 77 (Master)
 Personality Traits:
 Unyielding +3, Obsessive
 +2, Sympathetic -2



Severicus is a remarkably tall man, and thin as well. He is totally bald, but maintains a neat beard that is starting to grey with age. He is a noted master of Terram magics, and detests change in any way (magically, politically, or otherwise). Other than Stentorius of Fengheld, Severicus is the only member of House Tremere in the Rhine Tribunal to hold his own sigil, and controls about two-fifths of the sigils of the other Tremere magi, including those of his two filii and that of Hygwald Veritas of Waddenzee.

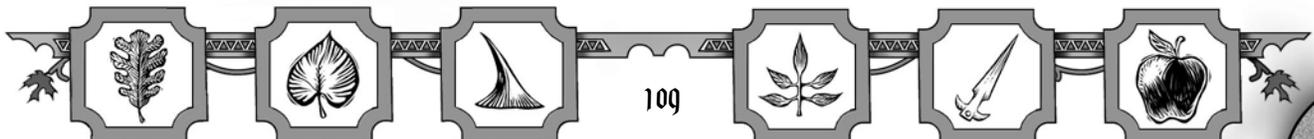
OTHER MAGI

Roznov has two other members of House Ex Miscellanea, both former apprentices of Igor. There are also two other members of House Tremere and a follower of Tytalus. All are members of the Ash or Oak Gilds.

Covenfolk

The covenfolk of Roznov are split into two. A score of servants and soldiers serve at the castle itself, the rest (about four times the number) remain below in the village, guarding the trail up to the mountain. There is a continual rotation of covenfolk between the two locations. Many of them are devotees of Radegast, but a significant number are slaves, purchased by a representative of Roznov at the Prague market (see above). Given the rumored need for human sacrifices, who are usually taken from the slave population, they work with feverish diligence, hoping that the next call up to the castle will be as a result of their worth rather than their expendability. Some of the slaves achieve promotion to the turb and earn their freedom with a blood pledge of loyalty to the covenant.

Among the companions of Roznov there are no less than three young men who believe themselves to be the rightful heirs to a "Kingdom of the Slavs," and who dream of uniting their people and winning independence from German hegemony. The magi of Roznov encourage all three, reasoning that competition will make each even more driven towards the goal. As long as the kingdom that each plans is to be united under Radegast, Igor Rastvan has no favorites.



Rhine Sagas

This chapter presents a number of ideas for sagas set in Mythic Germany. The Rhine Tribunal is diverse enough to support a wide variety of saga types: those focusing on the wilderness, the Fay, mundane nobility, trade, the Church, or Hermetic politics are all possible. The middle six chapters of this book (Chapters 5 to 10) each describe a distinct region of the Rhine Tribunal, including the covenants and mythic sites to be found therein. Each has a different flavor and feel, and which area you choose may well influence the course of your saga. The grand plots described in this chapter are intended to be played out gradually over the course of a saga, perhaps taking several decades before they are completely resolved. While none of these ideas are mutually exclusive, we do not recommend that they all be implemented simultaneously, at least not to the same level of intensity. A covenant set in the east of the Tribunal should not be dragged into the

plots of those magi who wish to establish the Lotharingian Tribunal, although they may hear of these schemes at Tribunal. Similarly, you should take into account the mood of your saga and the interests of your troupe when deciding which plots to use. Some of these story-arcs are political, others are action-oriented, and they may not be suitable for all players. Chapter 12 consists of a single saga worked up in much greater detail.

If you are intending to be a player (rather than a storyguide) in a saga set in the Rhine Tribunal, then you should not read any of this chapter beyond the first section, nor Chapter 12.

Establishing Your Covenant

Antagonists in Your Saga

This chapter suggests a number of powerful organizations and entities (such as the Order of Odin, powerful devils, sects of rogue wizards, and so on) that are strictly optional, and by no means all of which should be assumed to be present in the Rhine Tribunal. These are merely suggestions for the kinds of powerful antagonists and plots that you might design for your saga. You should think carefully about the consequences for your saga before introducing any of these elements. How might this affect the focus and tone of the saga? To what extent is it widely known? How might the magi of the Tribunal react to this threat? What challenges will this pose, and how might the player characters overcome them?

cient resources might support chapters, but of the covenants described in this book, currently only Fengheld does. Chapters are not new covenants, therefore they do not require the approval of Tribunal; also, the motherhouse will provide resources for its foundation. The major disadvantage is a lack of independence—the magi of a chapter are bound by the charter of their parent covenant, although they may write additional clauses that apply to the chapter only.

SETTLING AT AN EXISTING COVENANT

While this is certainly the easiest option for young magi, not many covenants are likely to both have room and be welcoming. Fengheld, Triamore, Oculus Septentrionalis, Irencillia, or a covenant of your own devising might be willing to accept new members. However, the magi would likely chafe under the dominance of elder magi and the chores they might demand.

TRAVEL FROM COVENANT TO COVENANT

This may appear to be the most unorthodox choice, although it is in fact much more common here than elsewhere, as the Rhine Tribunal has long-established traditions of hospitality for wandering magi, known as *peregrinatores*, who may guest at other covenants (see Chapter 3: The Rhine Tribunal, On the Founding of Covenants). New covenants in the Rhine Tribunal occur rarely, but a talented group of young magi working together ought to be able to accomplish it.

FOUNDING A NEW COVENANT

This is the default and probably most popular choice, although also the most challenging, requiring at the outset both the finding of a suitable covenant site and the garnering of sufficient political support for Tribunal approval of a new covenant (see Chapter 3: The Rhine Tribunal, On the Founding of Covenants). New covenants in the Rhine Tribunal occur rarely, but a talented group of young magi working together ought to be able to accomplish it.

ESTABLISHING A CHAPTER HOUSE

This tradition, originating in the Greater Alps Tribunal, allows covenants to exist on several sites, possibly quite remote from one another. Any covenant with suffi-

Potential Sites

Here is a list, by no means exhaustive, of suitable locations for the siting of new covenants (or chapter houses), together with the themes that are likely to

accompany them. Some specific sites are also suggested in previous chapters.

THE RHINE GORGE

Thought by some in the Tribunal to be cursed, this region is the site of several failed covenants, although it is also believed to have a number of ancient vis sources. It is a well-populated region, however, and any covenant established here is likely to have to deal with the nobles, archbishops, and robber barons who control the trade along the river. See Chapter 12: Curse of the Rhine Gorge.

LOWER LORRAINE

This is a fairly large territory currently without a covenant, and is likely to have at least some unclaimed vis sources, perhaps in the south of the region and in the Vosges Mountains. A saga set here might get involved with the schemes of the Apple Guild devised by Triamore and covenants of the neighboring Normandy Tribunal, which might be linked to competing mundane German and French interests. See Chapter 5: The Rhine.

THE BLACK FOREST

There are sufficient magical resources within the Black Forest to support a third covenant. This is likely to be a saga with a high fantasy component and low mundane involvement, as the characters get involved in the schemes of the dark fae of the forest and the rivalry between Durenmar and Dankmar. See Chapter 6: The Black Forest.

DENMARK OR SCANDINAVIA

Officially part of the Novgorod Tribunal, although this will soon be contested at the Grand Tribunal (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Heorot), themes here would involve colonizing lands that are new to the Order of Hermes and interactions with the Norse wizards. Oculus Septentrionalis has a strong interest in this region also, due to their desire to control trade on the Baltic Sea. See Chapter 7: The Lowlands.

ONE OF THE CENTRAL FORESTS

The central regions of the Tribunal are widely forested and rich in mystical

sites (particularly faerie sites), but with little Hermetic presence. This setting will particularly suit a covenant or chapter stemming from Irencillia due to the influence of the faerie courts, but any covenant could forge an existence in these forested uplands. One of the Alpine covenants to the south could even attempt to establish a chapter here, as a (likely unwelcome) incursion into their neighboring Tribunal. See Chapter 8: Central Germany.

THE POMERANIAN FOREST

This is a wild and untamed region, traditionally the haunt of witches, werewolves, and giants. A covenant sited here might try to civilize the region, or else be dominated by the non-Roman houses such as Bjornaer and Ex Miscellanea. Pomerania is another region of contention between the Rhine and Novgorod Tribunals, and there is likely to be a fair amount of internecine strife in a saga set here. See Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches.

THE EASTERN MOUNTAINS

This is a region rife with the intrigues of the Transylvanian Tribunal. The covenant of Roznov was intended to be a bridgehead for House Tremere's policies, and any new covenant founded here is bound to be caught up in their schemes. In addition, this wild region is one of the very few remaining places in which pagan remnants may be found in the Holy Roman Empire. See Chapter 10: Bohemia.

begin with an overall neutral stance to the Wilderist-Harmonist debate, and have their political leanings develop over the course of the saga.

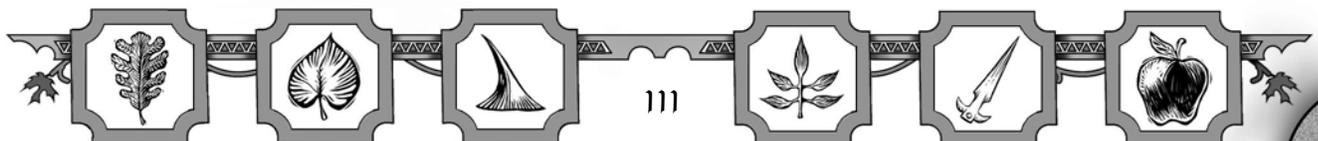
The troubles begin innocuously enough. Prima Falke desires to put an end to the animosity between House Bjornaer and the non-Hermetic shapeshifters. She therefore encourages a group of young magi to attempt to meet with these "wizards," and learn about them, specifically pinpointing precisely what their grievances are — House Bjornaer has never really understood the source of the feud, for they abandoned an oral history after joining the Order. Infiltrating the tight-knit community of Pomeranian shapeshifters should not be easy, but they are not a coherent society and have their own internal factions and feuds. Eventually, the most peaceful of the factions agrees to a meeting with Falke, which must be done in secret. This meeting will be opposed both by members of House Bjornaer and by rival factions in the shapeshifter communities.

Assuming the initial contact is successful, the shapeshifters may be invited to join the House, despite the fact that most of them do not have the Gift. This issue will first be brought up at the Gathering of Twelve Years in 1227, followed by the Grand Tribunal meeting in 1228. Falke will face strong opposition at both meetings, but she will argue for the need to strengthen her House and use the precedent of the unGifted members of Houses Mercere and Jerbiton to argue the legality of this issue to the Tribunal. Ultimately, it comes down to the issue of whether the Grand Tribunal has the authority to tell the Prima of Bjornaer how to run her own House, which has implications for the whole Order. It is likely that, to stave off a major change in the Code of Hermes, the shapeshifters will be allowed to enter House Bjornaer.

In the meantime, the crisis on Rügen has by no means been resolved, while the Danish king withdraws from Pomerania and Holstein in 1227 (coincidentally, the same year as the Gathering of Twelve Years), the settlements on the island remain and the Harmonist faction stays dominant in Crintera. Unfortunately, many of the newly inducted members of the House have a natural inclination towards the Wilderist faction, something that Falke had not anticipated. The balance of power shifts in the House, and at the next Gathering of Twelve Years the tension is palpable. Urgen and Falke battle over the fate of the mundanes on Rügen, each supported by similar numbers of

The Crintera Schism

This saga concept revolves around the troubles within Crintera. There are three major concerns of Prima Falke that come to a head here: the non-Hermetic shapeshifter enemies in Pomerania, the split between the Harmonists and Wilderists, and the crisis on the island of Rügen. This saga may be easily integrated into a conventional saga (although at least one magus should be from House Bjornaer), but an interesting variant would be for most or all of the players to have magi of House Bjornaer. In this situation, it is recommended that the player characters



magi. The factions cannot be reconciled, and the covenant is sundered in two. Urgan and the Wilderists head for Pomerania, claiming that they are the true domus magna; Falke and the Harmonists remain besieged on Rügen, claiming the same. The two factions war for many years, and Tribunal meetings of the Rhine are dominated by internecine conflicts between the two rival domus magnae of Bjornaer. Each covenant holds its own Gathering of Twelve Years, at which they plot the downfall of their opposite number.

The Rhine Tribunal does not sit idly by while this conflict takes place. Support for each faction of House Bjornaer from other magi hides personal and political agendas. The Oak Gild aligns with the Harmonist Bjornaer to start a territorial dispute between the Rhine and Novgorod Tribunals. The Ash Gild aligns with the Wilderists, hoping to hijack their aggression to gain control over the mundanes. Either side might be joined by Flambeau, Tremere, and Tyalus magi from other Tribunals, spoiling for a fight. Is it really possible that the Schism War could happen all over again?

As the Grand Tribunal of 1261 approaches, it is clear that the affair must be settled once and for all. Hostilities will escalate between the Wilderists and Harmonists as they vie for supremacy, and may even spill over into other Tribunals. Attempts are made on the lives of both Falke and Urgan, as well as other powerful members of the House who may be able to sway the Grand Tribunal. Both factions try to occupy the traditional grounds at the Tribunal Field of Durenmar, and both Falke and Urgan (or their successors) try to take the ancient seat of Bjornaer in the Forum. Precisely how the conflict is resolved is up to the storyguide, but the player characters, by now powerful members of the House, should have a central role. Whatever occurs, Crintera will be reunited (by force, if necessary) at this meeting.

Wind, Wave, and Ice

Sagas set around the Baltic Sea are likely to be a mix of a number of story types — high adventure in unexplored lands, diplomatic missions, political wrangling, and direct conflict against unknown foes are all possibilities. We have not sug-



gested a single, over-arching plot for a Baltic Saga; instead, presented below are a number of ideas and components that can easily be integrated into a saga rich in many facets of life near the Baltic Sea.

An organized group of powerful pagan wizards in Scandinavia (dubbed "The Order of Odin") has always been a threat and bugbear of the Order of Hermes, and none feel this more acutely than the Rhine Tribunal, bordering so close to the northern lands. The existence of the Order of Odin has never been doubted, except by those few magi who have actually attempted to locate members of this Order, and failed.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

Two powerful demons have fought for dominance over the souls of the German people ever since the Fall. Gyimir's earthly fief is Scandinavia, whereas Radegast controls the Slavic lands. At the same time they fight each other, each of the demon-princes struggles against the incursion of the Dominion into their fiefs. Previously, they warred for control of Germany proper, but this is a battle they have now mostly lost to the Church. Nevertheless, the lands of Germany often form the battleground upon which they meet. A saga

revolving around the machinations of these two powerful demons should start slowly, with occasional demonic plots, so that only later will the players realize they are interlinked to form a greater menace. The overt presence of demons should be kept to a minimum; corrupt humans can be all the more terrifying. The level of demonic involvement in the dealings of the Order must be carefully gauged according to the wants of the storyguide and players. If a dark, brooding saga that is rife with paranoia is desired, then the Order could be heavily infiltrated by the two demons, with both knowing and unknowing pawns. The former will be few in number, and even then will rarely know the full extent of their Infernal master's plans. Alternatively, the Order might be free from demonic taint, and be at the forefront of the fight against the two demons; this lends a more optimistic, "crusader" feel to the saga. Once again, those magi who understand the full story regarding the demons' feuds will be very few, but enough to subtly guide the player characters on the correct path.

The two infernal princes operate under different strategies. The heartland of Radegast's power, which is now the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, is still largely pagan, and the biggest threat to his plans are the invading Germans, rather than Christianity. Radegast wants to encourage them to expand northwards, deflecting them from moving east towards his chosen people, the Slavs. He wants to see the Hanseatic towns spread, and destroy Gyimir's pagan followers, but also see these new settlements corrupted by greed. Simultaneously, Radegast operates in the Slavic lands under the guise of the "Old Ways," taking multiple personae



among the huge pantheon of gods. Radevast is both subtle and tricky, and most likely to manipulate innocents (including player characters) to fight his enemy for him. The subtle and wily demon has one key ability — he is able to disguise his infernal power as magic or faerie power; thus, the auras of Rethra (Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Pomerania) and Mount Radhost (Chapter 10: Bohemia, Roznov) are really Infernal auras, they just appear to be otherwise to those who can detect these things.

Gymir's primary goal is to repel any incursion of the Dominion of God into the Northlands, and he controls an aggressive faction of wizards. Gymir targets the Church as his primary foe; the Scandinavian kingdoms were the last to convert to Christianity in Europe, and many parts of Sweden have still not accepted the Cross. Gymir uses natural catastrophes and extreme weather as his primary weapons, and mostly operates through the Norse people. He is a more direct, brutal foe than the slippery Radevast, but under assault from the Dominion, Gymir has adopted a much more defensive position over the last century. Nevertheless, he is still powerful enough to resist Radevast's tactics. Gymir is a lot less subtle than his enemy, and in the wild lands of the North can afford more showy displays of power to impress his allies. However, Waddensee also fits into his plans, as its piracy is one means of thwarting the German expansion. Also, he has recently begun infiltrating and corrupting the Holy Vehm (their leader, the pious archbishop of Cologne, is murdered in 1225), which he plans to use as a surrogate to destroy Radevast's pagan followers in northern Germany.

Unsurprisingly, these two demons are using the Order of Hermes directly or indirectly in their plans. There are some few actual diabolist magi — Hermetic, Norse, and others — who are directly involved. Imanitos Mendax of Oculus Septentrionalis is a willing pawn of Radevast, trying to corrupt the Hanseatic towns. The covenant of Roznov is also his unwitting pawn — Radevast plans to form a broad coalition of magi (headed by the Ash Guild), that will support and instigate a war of the Order of Hermes against the Norse. Radevast also has a sect of worshippers in the cities of Holstein and among the Slavic Mecklenburg princes, who are drawn from the nobility and the priesthood. Like Roznov, they serve the demon, believing him to be a god, in return for diabolic powers. Imanitos Mendax, while he did not found this cult, exploits it, gaining power

among its members by posing as a high priest of their "god." Gymir also has pawns with magical power. Depending upon your view of the Order of Odin (see above), these wizards may be native Norse magicians (and may even form the bulk of the much-feared Order of Odin itself), or they might be renegade Hermetic magi.

You may wish to dovetail the schemes of Radevast and Gymir with either the corruption of the Knights of the Sword, the taint of the former covenant of Rudiaria (see Chapter 12: The Curse of the Rhine Gorge), and/or the Dark

Jerbiton (see Chapter 7: the Lowlands, Oculus Septentrionalis).

The Hidden Covenant

In the early years of the Order, there was a battle for control over House Merinita. Fenistal, the original home of this House,

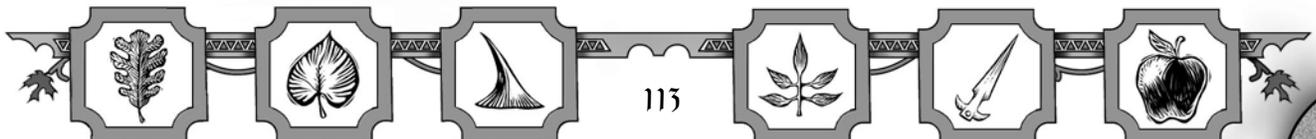
The Order of Odin

This book makes no definitive statement about the existence (or not) of the Order of Odin, and each storyguide should decide the "truth" as it applies to their saga. The question is two-fold. Firstly, are there wizards or other wonder-workers resident in Norse lands who are the match of a Hermetic magus? Secondly, is there an organization of Norse wizards, and furthermore, how organized are they? The answers to these questions will shape the putative Order of Odin for your own saga. The options range from a Norse equivalent of the Order of Hermes, casting their runic spells at their foes, right down to a mere scattering of disorganized and weak hedge magicians who can do little more than brew up a love potion.

Broadly speaking, Norse legends speak of magicians who can shift shape, foretell the future, and see places from far away. Some can also use runic spells to raise corpses from their graves, to control the weather, to assist in battle, and to curse their foes. No single Norse magician should be capable of doing all these things.

Covenants of the Rhine might be involved with the Order of Odin in the following ways:

- The covenant of Oculus Septentrionalis desires to exploit the rich resources of the Baltic Sea to their advantage. They are active in the leadership of Lübeck, strongly promoting trade and the founding of new port cities, and become centrally involved in the formation of the Hanseatic League.
- Crintera pays little attention to activities on the Baltic Sea, being currently occupied by its own troubles. Crintera nevertheless clashes with Oculus Septentrionalis over the ownership of vis sites on the shores of the Baltic at almost every Tribunal.
- The covenant of Waddensee is the permanent thorn in the side of the mercantile ambitions of Oculus Septentrionalis, mainly due to the risk to trade routes that Waddensee poses. However, Waddensee has other interests in the northern lands. Some of its members are active members of the Ash Guild, and pursue its agenda of aggression against the Norse wizards. Waddensee land regularly on the shores of Norway and Sweden, and push deep inland in exploratory expeditions. They have found both vis and a handful of non-Hermetic wizards (all of whom have been exterminated), but they have no evidence to support the hypothesis of an "Order of Odin," despite perpetuating this myth for their own reasons.
- Recently, the covenant of Heorot has been founded on Zealand, with the express purpose of discovering more about the wizards of the North. Heorot is closely allied to Oculus Septentrionalis, and therefore has not received the benefits of Waddensee's experience. In fact, the scholarly interests of Heorot are in direct conflict with the martial aspirations of Waddensee, and it is ironic that if they pooled their knowledge, both of their agendas would be advanced.
- The Knights of the Sword (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches) are an active presence in the Baltic States to the east. This order of knights fights under the banner of crusade against the pagans of Prussia, Livonia, and beyond. Any saga that revolves around the Baltic Sea cannot ignore the substantial presence of this order, although whether they are on a righteous crusade gone awry, corrupted by Satan, or merely holy fools, should be decided by the storyguide.



Fenistal

Hidden deep in the southern Bohemian Forest is the "covenant" of Fenistal, the base of the exsules. Fenistal was the original temple of Diana at which Merinita served as the goddess' last disciple in Germania, and has been occupied ever since its presumed destruction by the surviving renegades of House Merinita. Fenistal, while isolated, is still dangerously close to Irencillia, which is perhaps the exsules's greatest enemy (as they perceive it — Irencillia are totally unaware of the existence of the exsules). Diana's temple lies in the upper level of a powerful magic regio, and the most powerful magics at the disposal of the exsules have been bent on keeping Fenistal hidden. Consequentially, only the uppermost level of the regio, with a Magic aura of 8, exists; there are no intermediate levels, making access very difficult. Nevertheless, two members of the covenant are always on guard to ensure wanderers do not stumble across Fenistal by accident. Fenistal maintains no warriors, and only the barest staff of servants, all of whom were once animals, who the exsules transformed to human form, making it almost impossible to infiltrate.

The exsules may provoke stories in a number of different ways:

- The renegades keep up to date with advances in Hermetic magic by stealing books and spying, although this is done sufficiently rarely so as not to raise suspicions. They prefer to target weak covenants, particularly those with few resources available to them to fight back. Unfortunately for the renegades, the yield of such raids is correspondingly poor. Being attacked by seeming Hermetic magi blatantly flouting the Code, but being unable to track down the perpetrators, will provide a challenge to any Spring covenant. Further confusion can arise if the player characters mistakenly identify the raiders with a rival covenant due to disguises and other subterfuge.
- Fenistal actively recruits Hermetic apprentices who have failed to complete their apprenticeship, for whatever reason, and who harbor resentment for the Order that has abandoned them. Such individuals are usually persecuted by aggressive Hermetic magi to prevent them from revealing the secrets of the Order, and the exsules give them shelter. These rare individuals are capable of supplying key information about covenants, as well as providing occasional meager updates to their magic.
- The ancient curse leveled on the renegades by Quendalon haunts them still. Faeries instinctively hate the exsules, and the favor is returned in full. Consequentially, they will rarely pass up an opportunity to put the fae and the Order of Hermes at loggerheads with one another.
- There is a secret society in the Order called the Huntress in the Wood, comprised mainly of followers of Bjornaer. The Huntress is primarily concerned with preserving primal, nature-oriented magic. Although the Huntress is totally unaware of the existence of Fenistal, it is actually a pawn of the exsules. The society meets in secret, faces hidden with animal masks, so they are ignorant of the fact that not all of their members are members of the Order. Fenistal has guided the agenda of the Huntress since its inception, and has instilled it with a secret agenda to take over the Elder Gild, and with it, Irencillia.

was abandoned, and most of the losing faction sought shelter in House Bjornaer where they soon died out. The leader of the winning faction, a magus by the name of Quendalon, founded the covenant of Irencillia and turned the focus of the House away from nature-oriented magic and towards the Mysteries of Faerie Magic.

Contrary to what the Order of Hermes believes, the losing faction did not wholly perish; there was a group who rejected the Order entirely. They reasoned that the Order had failed in its main objective — to protect its members from the aggression of others. If the First

Tribunal had intervened — which was the very thing it was set up to do — then their leader Myanar would never have been killed, and the war would not have occurred. They therefore eschewed the Order altogether, and went into hiding from the zealous vengeance of Quendalon's followers. Ever since, these renegades have been stockpiling magic, and while there are only a few of them, they have the potential to wreak much havoc. A saga can revolve around what happens when the descendants of these magi finally decide to have their revenge upon the Tribunal who spurned them.

The Exsules

This small band of wizards refers to its own members as *exsules* (exiles, singular *exsul*), a name they bear with pride. There are less than a dozen at any one time, and they preserve a tradition similar to that of the Order, but, divorced as they are from more recent advances in Magic Theory, display some unusual features. Their magic has a distinct exotic flavor; they know Hermetic magic although all suffer the Weird Magic Flaw due to their isolation from the Order. More dangerous to the Order, they all know the Parma Magica as well; however, this has been imperfectly passed down from the original members of the Order, and all have inherited the Flawed Parma Magica Flaw. Most of them have studied from vis for their entire careers, and the Poor Reader Flaw is common. Their line has also been cursed with the Faerie Enmity Flaw. Many have the Mythic Blood Virtue, stemming from Merinita herself or powerful magical spirits. The Virtues Ways of the Forest, Free Study, and Study Bonus are also common. As inheritors of Merinita's tradition of nature magic, many have walked the Paths through the Forest (see Chapter 4: The Forest), and it may be common for them to be able to overcome one or more of the Lesser Limits of Hermetic magic. It is possible that they have also accepted magi of House Diedne fleeing the destruction of the Schism War; in this case, they should excel at spontaneous magic. Their spells should be mostly different from those of the Spells chapter of *ArM5*, as they have little access to the grimoires of the Order of Hermes. They prefer to cause the fury of nature to rise up against their enemies, rather than attack them directly. Most importantly, their magic should be alien and frightening to a Hermetic magus.

This saga arc is particularly suited to a covenant set in a remote, forested location, but, with a bit of work, can be made to fit most settings. The storyguide should decide just how powerful these Hermetic exiles are, how many there are, and how aware they are of the affairs of the Tribunal. This saga may be run in isolation (in which case the renegade magi should be a powerful threat in their own right), or their plots may take advantage of a different crisis (such as the Crintera Schism) to sow further confusion.



Curse of the Rhine Gorge

This chapter illustrates how the various ingredients presented in this book may be assembled into a playable saga. If you wish, it can be readily used as the basis for your saga, although it is but one of many possibilities (see Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas for other ideas). Here you will find a suitable starting point — a reason for a group of magi to gather together in the Rhine Tribunal with a common cause, descriptions of local places and legends, some starting non-magus characters (who may be suitable for either player or non-player roles), a variety of initial challenges, as well as suggested long-term themes and plots.

The setting for this saga is the valley of the middle Rhine, between Mainz and Cologne, and surrounding lands. For a stretch of about twenty miles the River Rhine narrows to a gorge and is especially rich in mythic sites and ancient legends. Numerous robber-baron castles perch over the river, profiting from tolls on the river traffic which is the lifeblood of the region. Here is the intersection of the domains of three powerful archbishops, and two ancient faerie courts. Here is the venerable city of Trier, with the most complete Roman remains in Germany,

and the wooded expanse of the Westerwald, at whose edge the hero Siegfried slew the dragon Fafnir. Here are also the remains of four lost covenants.

Local Hermetic History

With its many supernatural sites and reputed vis sources, the Rhine Gorge has long been attractive to magi, despite the various dangers of the region. Over the past centuries several covenants have established themselves here, although none has endured. In 1220 the history of these lost covenants is forgotten by many, although the records of the Rhine Tribunal allow at least a partial picture to be patched together. Among those few who have made a detailed study of the Tribunal's history, some have noted that all of these covenants failed within a period of exactly 11 Tribunals (77 years). This has given rise to a myth that holds that the Rhine Gorge is cursed. This appears to be merely speculation — or at least, if any living magus knows the real reason for any such curse they are certainly keeping quiet about it.

rather that it would be too dangerous for the Order for magi to inhabit it). The Rhine Tribunal of 1200 AD ruled that magi were forbidden from practicing any form of magical activity there for the next twenty years. It is now 1220, and with the expiry of this ban it is considered safe for magi to return to the region.

The leadership of Durenmar covenant has decided that the founding of a new covenant in the Middle Rhine would help to reinvigorate the Tribunal and further its interests. No new covenants have been founded in the Tribunal for several decades, which has resulted in the proliferation of Fengheld's chapter houses, adding to their power, and a number of magi moving instead to neighboring Tribunals, diminishing the power of both Durenmar and the Rhine Tribunal. With Durenmar's sponsorship, a prospective covenant may stand a fair chance of getting past the Tribunal's rigorous approval process (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Upon Founding a Covenant). A group of freshly Gauntleted magi are therefore recruited; some from the Rhine Tribunal already find themselves at Durenmar as they complete their apprenticeships, and others may be invited to travel there from other Tribunals. They are tasked to investigate potential covenant sites, to choose one, and to establish a covenant there, subject to the approval of the other covenants of the Tribunal.

The Lessons of Failure

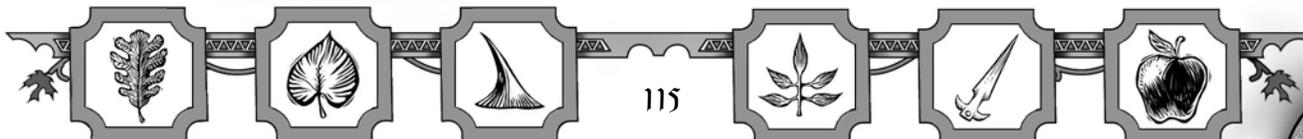
The fate of each of these four covenants provides a lesson on the common causes of covenant failure, which may be instructive. Respectively, don't deal with demons, don't make powerful Hermetic enemies, don't meddle drastically with mundanes and the Church, and make sure your dealings are subtle enough and your defenses strong enough. Should the magi in your saga fail to heed these warnings, a similar fate may await them.

The Saga Begins

After the loss of the covenants of Treverorum and Rheinstein, it was deemed that the Rhine Gorge was at that time too dangerous for magi to inhabit (or

Magi

Your first task together with your players is to generate the magus characters, together with suitable backgrounds for each. Some of these young magi may have been apprenticed in the Rhine Tribunal, in which case the Minor Virtue (Gild) Trained (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, Upon Being a



Excerpts from the Records of the Rhine Tribunal Relating to the Covenants of the Middle Rhine

- 1031 AA (892 AD):** The First Tribunal sponsors a proposal for a new covenant, Rudiaria, affiliated to House Flambeau, which is duly founded. The tribunal asserts Rudiaria's ownership of all magical sites along the river Rhine between the towns of Mainz and Cologne.
- 1073 AA (934 AD):** The covenant of Oakdell is founded by magi of House Diedne in the Westerwald, just to the east of the Rhine, with the sponsorship of magi of the First Tribunal. It is clarified that Oakdell is forbidden from infringing on the territory of Rudiaria covenant.
- 1101 AA (962 AD):** The Tribunal has heard charges of diabolism brought against Eginolf of House Flambeau of Rudiaria covenant, which remain unproven. Reports of malefic activity in the vicinity of Rudiaria are, however, noted with disapproval, and that covenant is therefore ordered to investigate and report within seven years. The magi of Rudiaria are also urged to redouble their efforts to avoid disturbing the mundanes of the region.
- 1108 AA (969 AD):** House Mercere reports that Rudiaria covenant has been destroyed — burnt down in an apparent catastrophic magical accident, with all of its magi slain or missing. Diabolic involvement is suspected, though the exact cause is not revealed. It is noted that this event coincided with a crippling famine in the region, which has contributed to mundane unrest. Declarations of regret are heard for the believed loss of these magi.
- 1115 AA (976 AD):** House Mercere reports that nothing is salvageable from the former covenant of Rudiaria, and that the site has been sanctified by a local archbishop from Mainz. Oakdell covenant's claim of ownership of all sites formerly belonging to Rudiaria is refused.
- 1136 AA (997 AD):** Oakdell covenant brings charges of espionage and of meddling in their affairs against magi of Durenmar covenant. These spurious claims are unproven.
- 1143 AA (1004 AD):** Severus Maximus of House Flambeau declares Wizard War against Caithlinn of House Diedne (of Oakdell covenant). Magus Cirion of Tremere declares Wizard War against Pietro of House Diedne (of Oakdell covenant).
- 1155 AA (1016 AD):** It is reported that the covenant of Oakdell was razed to the ground, with all of its magi of House Diedne slain during the recent Schism War.
- 1227 AA (1088 AD):** Magi Xantippes and Julia, both Jerbiton, and maga Selena Tibicena, House Bonisagus, announce their intention to establish a covenant in the city of Trier dedicated to recovering the lost secrets of the Romans. No sponsors of the proposed covenant are forthcoming from the covenants of Irencillia, Crintera, or Dankmar, and therefore the First Tribunal does not recognize this proposed covenant.
- 1234 AA (1095 AD):** Magi Xantippes and Julia, both Jerbiton, and maga Selena Tibicena, House Bonisagus, together with Arliandus of Tremere, again announce their intention to establish a covenant in the city of Trier. The First Tribunal approves the founding of Treverorum covenant.
- 1248 AA (1109 AD):** Treverorum covenant brings charges against Valdus of House Tytalus for theft of vis, claiming that he has twice harvested from a site belonging to them. Valdus accepts that he harvested this vis, but argues that the site, lying outside the city walls of Trier, does not belong to Treverorum. He also claims that magi of Treverorum had neglected to harvest this vis for themselves. It is ruled that the site, being within a day's march from the covenant, belongs to Treverorum. However, it is noted that Treverorum has suffered no harm or loss of vis as a result of Valdus' actions. Valdus is therefore fined one pawn of vis and ordered to seek the permission of Treverorum before harvesting from the site again.
- 1262 AA (1123 AD):** Magi Schwall of Bjornaer and Fulmonious of Tytalus found the covenant of Rheinstein in the Rhine Gorge with the sponsorship of the First Tribunal. Rheinstein simultaneously announces it will pay a tithing of three pawns of vis each Tribunal to every other covenant, for the next five Tribunals.
- 1290 AA (1151 AD):** The murder of the Redcap Ioanna in the city of Trier is reported. The Tribunal expresses sincere regret. Magi of Treverorum covenant disavow any knowledge of this incident. A Quaesitorial investigation is ordered.
- 1297 AA (1158 AD):** Magus Xantippes of House Jerbiton is found guilty of significant meddling in the affairs of mundanes, having repeatedly used Mentem magics of his own devising on the inhabitants of the city of Trier for personal enrichment, setting in place a chain of events which caused damage to relations between the Order of Hermes and the mundane world, and that may have contributed to the death of the Redcap Ioanna. He is fined ten pawns of vis, ordered to distribute his accumulated fortune to the covenants of the First Tribunal equally, and charged to spend three seasons scribing a tome or tomes for the Great Library.
- 1304 AA (1165 AD):** A Quaesitorial investigation into reported unrest in the city of Trier has revealed that magi of Treverorum covenant are guilty of interfering in the affairs of mundanes and the Church, to the extent of causing possible harm to their sodales. Treverorum is fined fifty pawns of vis and warned in the strongest possible terms to repair relations with the inhabitants of Trier without delay. Treverorum is ordered to pay this fine by the next Tribunal.
- 1311 AA (1172 AD):** Magus Scholastus of House Jerbiton of Treverorum covenant announces that he is the sole surviving member of his covenant, which is duly abolished. He announces that, due to the activities of local churchmen, in his opinion the city of Trier is currently not safe for magi to visit. He refuses to be drawn on further details and departs immediately for the Tribunal of the Greater Alps.
- It is later noted that the fine imposed on the former covenant of Treverorum remains in part unpaid. It is ruled that Scholastus is liable for the remainder of this fine and a request is dispatched to the Greater Alps by Redcap.
- 1339 AA (1200 AD):** Horst of House Mercere reports that Rheinstein covenant was attacked and destroyed by an army of irate mundanes, led by the archbishop of Trier. The fate of the magi of Rheinstein is unknown. Horst notes that their actions have in large part contributed to their demise, and may have caused undue attention to the Order of Hermes in the region. It is ruled that magi are forbidden from practicing any form of magical activity in the Rhine Gorge for the next twenty years.

Hilda

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

Size: +1

Age: 28

Decrepitude: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Custos; Great Strength, Puissant Single Weapon, Covenant Upbringing, Obese, Oversensitive (to disrespect)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Loyal to Magi +3, Tolerant -3

Reputations: None

Combat:

Mace and heater shield: Init -1, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +12

Mace: Init -1, Attack +12, Defense +6, Damage +12

Short bow: Init -4, Attack +7, Defense +1, Damage +10

Pole axe: Init -1, Attack +9, Defense +1, Damage +15

Dagger: Init -2, Attack +7, Defense +2, Damage +7

Fist: Init -2, Attack +5, Defense +2, Damage +4

Grapple: Init -2, Attack +6, Defense +3, Damage +4

Soak: +9

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



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

Abilities: Athletics 2 (endurance), Awareness 3 (ambushes), Bows 2 (short bow), Brawl 4 (grappling), Carouse 1 (drinking quantity), Folk Ken 2 (peasants), High German 5 (orders), Great Weapon 2 (pole axe), Latin 3 (making reports), Leadership 5 (grogs), Music 1 (singing loudly), Order of Hermes Lore 2 (Fengheld), Single Weapon 6+2 (mace and heater shield), Teaching 2 (Martial Abilities)

Equipment: Full metal scale armor, mace, heater shield. Hilda also carries a

pole axe and a short bow, and a standard traveler's kit with any number of useful tools.

Encumbrance: 0 (4)

Appearance: Hilda is an immense woman, both in height and girth. She wears her blonde hair short, to suit her helmet more comfortably, and has piercing blue eyes. Her armor, specially made for her, has the appearance of being made by a cooper rather than an armorer.

Hilda is a covenant grog, born and bred at Fengheld. Given this upbringing she finds nothing unusual about a woman being a warrior, and is constantly surprised that the "mundanes" have such an issue with this. She is prime leadership material, and will whip any unformed grogs into military shape with ease. She is also competent at her main job — breaking heads — and Fengheld valued her highly, making the gift of her to young magi all the more valuable. She has a forceful personality and brooks no disobedience, disrespect, or laziness, which tends to make her less popular with the other grogs — but as she sees it, she is not out to make any friends.

Rhine Magus) may be taken, if desired. The parents of such a magus might even be one of the magi (of master or archmage rank) described in this book. It is equally possible for a freshly Gauntleted magus to have traveled from further afield, from another Tribunal. In this case the young magus is less likely to be familiar with the Hermetic traditions of the Rhine. A mixture of Rhine and non-Rhine magi of different Houses is suggested, although this saga works for almost any conceivable complement of magi.

At least one or two of the magi should come from a rich or well-established covenant, which allows them to start with a personal shield grog and a reasonable sum of money. Others may have gifts from their masters or be accompanied by traveling companions, although likely not all will be lucky enough to have their own grogs or significant possessions. Thus, by pooling their resources, the magi should at least have a small number of grogs and sufficient funds in order to begin their exploration. It is suggested that several of your magi (but less than half) originate from the Rhine's largest

covenant, Fengheld, which will add an interesting political dimension (see below). These magi should deliberately be favored with the allocation of initial resources, each having a well-trained personal shield grog and a generous sum of money.

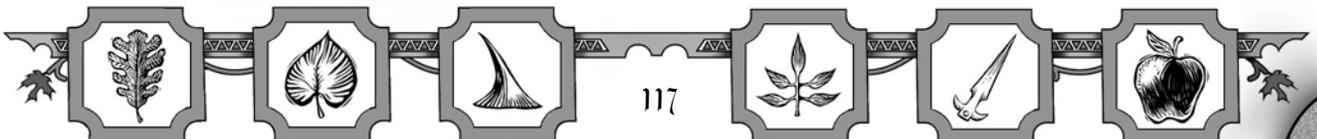
Durenmar

Apprentices in the Rhine Tribunal usually travel to Durenmar for their final seasons of tuition before their Gauntlet. Here they may choose to join a gild and be inducted into its philosophy by one of its members. Should you so wish, you may play out these seasons at the start of the saga, allowing your magi-to-be to build political contacts, and perhaps presenting the Gauntlet as a roleplaying challenge. Alternatively, you may start out by simply choosing a suitable gild as part of the magus' background and assume that the Gauntlet has just been completed, beginning the saga with the formal and grand initiation into the Order of Hermes that

takes place at the Forum. The new magi then achieve the rank of journeyman. For details of Durenmar, see Chapter 6: The Black Forest, Durenmar.

The magi are greeted by Murion, Prima of House Bonisagus and Praeco of the Rhine Tribunal at the Forum, immediately after the ceremony of initiation. Here she will present the outline of her plan to recolonize the Rhine Gorge, offering the support and sponsorship of Durenmar in this endeavor. Her plan is suitably grand, if a little light on practical details. Murion is a powerful and somewhat overbearing archmagus, so the characters should feel suitably daunted in her presence, and thus disinclined to bother her with petty questions.

Next the magi need to gather together what information they can and prepare for exploring the Rhine Gorge. It would be highly beneficial to consult the Tribunal records that may be found in the Great Library; it takes a season of painstaking work for one magus to extract the relevant pieces of information (see the insert on page 116) from the many ancient tomes that constitute these



The Records of House Mercere

Salve sodales,

In response to your recent request, herewith is the information that I have been able to find concerning the locations of the former covenants of Rudiaria, Oakdell, Treverorum, and Rheinstein. The following are directions to these sites, as listed in the notes of the followers of Mercere who were responsible for this part of the Tribunal. Since the covenants in question no longer exist, doubtless much of this information is no longer accurate. Nevertheless, I hope this may be of some limited use to you in your endeavors.

"The covenant of Rudiaria is located on the right bank of the River Rhine, opposite the town of Bingen, some twenty miles downstream from Mainz. The fortress of the covenant is partially visible from Bingen, and they have a number of boatmen often to be found dockside who should be willing to ferry Redcaps across the river." — Crumena filius Mercere, 1032 AA

"Oakdell covenant is some dozen miles within the Westerwald forest. It is not easily reached from the Rhine direct, rather it is better to take a boat from Koblenz to the village of Ems just up the River Labn. From there the covenant can be reached in half a day: take the forest track northwards, asking for the village of Herschbach. After two hours, turn left — westwards — at the standing stone. The magi of Oakdell are rather unwelcoming and secretive, so I do not recommend that you visit frequently. I have not heard of any threats from the fay of the Westerwald." — Harundo, follower of Mercere, 1075 AA

"Treverorum covenant is located in the city of Trier, on the Fleischstrasse. There is a merchant's shop which sells an assortment of luxury and esoteric wares — identify yourself with the phrase "Pax Hermae," and you will be shown to the magi, who are housed in the rest of the building and below. You can usually be assured of a comfortable stay." — Ioanna, follower of Mercere, 1236 AA

"The covenant of Rheinstein proper is located on the tiny island of Pfalz in the Rhine between Bingen and Koblenz, near to the village of Kaub. This island is not to be confused with that one further upstream near Bingen, which is reputedly haunted and to be avoided. The covenant seemingly also occupies Burg Rheinstein, near Bingen, though the magi are not usually to be found there. Beware of the treacherous boating conditions of the Bingen Hole, and travel only with an experienced crew on a sturdy vessel." — Ioanna, follower of Mercere. 1265 AA

— Xavier of House Mercere (Archivist of the Rhine Tribunal)

records. (Should any of your player magi belong to House Mercere, this task may constitute a suitable Gauntlet.) Out-of-date directions to the former covenants may also be found by consulting the records of House Mercere (insert above). This may have been prepared in advance, if you wish to set out immediately. Some magi at Durenmar (for example, Occultes) may offer support and encouragement, but most are preoccupied with their own work. There are always a number of visiting magi at Durenmar, which presents an opportunity to introduce non-player magi who may later feature in your saga, or to introduce other story hooks.

The task that now faces the magi — to leave the relative safety of Durenmar and strike out on their own — may seem rather daunting. This can be tailored to different levels of difficulty, as desired. For example, here are two contrasting possibilities:

A GENTLE INTRODUCTION

The saga commences within the support structure of an existing friendly covenant, which provides some labs,

books, grogs, vis, or money (or some combination thereof) to the young magi. This is likely to be a covenant at which some of the magi were apprenticed — Fengheld or Durenmar may be suitable for this purpose. They may be allowed to stay for several years at their parent covenant(s) before they are expected to set up by themselves. With plenty of starting resources, there is no immediate hurry to establish a covenant of their own, and they may make an number of exploratory forays to the Rhine Gorge first before moving there permanently. This saga setup is suitable for newcomers to *Ars Magica*.

IN AT THE DEEP END

Upon their arrival at Durenmar, the young magi find that the so-called plans laid for this new covenant are rather less detailed than had been hoped. Indeed, the Tribunal's oldest covenant (and most of its magi) are found to be hopelessly disorganized. They will have to undertake the bulk of the research and preparation themselves, using their initiative to gather together some scant starting resources.

Story Seed: The Black Forest

One evening, an injured young magus emerges from the Black Forest surrounding Durenmar and staggers back to the covenant's guest quarters in a state of fear and panic. It seems that he had blithely set out on an ill-conceived hunting trip into the forest, ignoring various dire warnings from Durenmar's covenfolk about its dangers, and that his amicus, a somewhat inexperienced and reckless Jerbiton magus, together with their grogs, are now missing, having been dragged off by horrid shadowy figures who attacked their camp at night. The other magi of Durenmar are either holed up in their labs or seem reluctant to help, so it is left to the characters to organize a search party and attempt to rescue this missing magus, possibly with the help of a small number of Durenmar's foresters and trackers. A successful completion of this rescue could even constitute a suitable Gauntlet for Flambeau, Tytalus, or even Merinita apprentice(s). This state of affairs might be a genuine accident; alternatively it could be an elaborate setup by the parens of one of your characters in order to test him. Either way, there is the opportunity for plenty of mischief in the Black Forest, perhaps encountering some of its more sinister denizens (see Chapter 6: The Black Forest). If successful, the rescued magus will surely be grateful and may readily reward the characters with some gesture of support (for example, a promise to sponsor their covenant proposal at the next Tribunal).

Some moral support may be found from other magi or covenants, but precious little in the way of practical help. Traveling to the Rhine Gorge only lightly equipped, the magi are left to establish a covenant from the ground up, relying on their wits, their magic, and not a little luck. This saga setup is more suitable for experienced *Ars Magica* players.

Grogs

Grogs — the various warriors and servants who accompany, serve, and protect the magi — are less important than



the magus characters. Indeed, not every player needs to take a grog at the very beginning of the saga, since the first sessions will present several opportunities to acquire and recruit grogs from the local area. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the other covenants of the Tribunal will donate some of their grogs as part of their founding gift, if the covenant is formally approved. One such grog is given below.

A grog who is assigned to be the shield grog of a particular magus should be played by someone other than the player of that magus.

The Rhine Gorge

From Durenmar to the Rhine Gorge is a journey of nearly one hundred miles, typically taking about a week. The likely route leads from the northeastern edge of the Black Forest, via Wimpfen, through the Odenwald, where bandits are known to waylay poorly-protected travelers, to Frankfurt, which has a large market fair, and then to Mainz.

Downstream from Mainz, the valley of the Rhine begins to close in, with its banks becoming mostly forested and hilly. At least as far as Bingen or Rudesheim the banks can be navigated by foot along a poor-quality road, although by far the majority of traffic travels on the river itself. The banks gradually become steeper as one enters the gorge proper, culminating in cliffs at its center at Loreley. Between Bingen and Koblenz more than a dozen castles are sited along the river, and even more are under construction or planned. The reason for this building spurt is that the narrowed width of the river in the gorge allows an adjacent castle (together with the height advantage of the slopes) to enforce a toll on the passing river traffic. Given the high volume of this traffic (the overland alternative is unfavorable), the collection of these tolls is a highly lucrative endeavor. In fact, only the most important nobles, including the local archbishops, have formal permission from the emperor to collect tolls on his behalf, although many minor nobles collect "unjust" tolls independently. The worst of these, the so-called robber-barons, impose tolls that blur the distinction between the selling of a right of passage and theft. The map of the Rhine Gorge thus resembles a

Byrek

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -2, Pre 0, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +3
Size: 0
Age: 27
Decrepitude: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Covenfolk; Affinity with Athletics†, Enduring Constitution†, Long-Winded†; Clumsy, Depressed, Simple-Minded
 †Possibly due to a magical item (see below)
Personality Traits: Demoralized +3, Morose +2
Reputations: None
Combat:
Long spear: Init +6, Attack +10, Defense +10, Damage +7
Axe and round shield: Init +4, Attack +8, Defense +8, Damage +6
Axe: Init +4, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +6
Fist: Init +3, Attack +4, Defense +7, Damage 0
Soak: +4
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, 0, -2, -4, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)
Abilities: Athletics 7 (running), Awareness 2 (obstacles), Brawl 2 (fist), Carouse 1 (solitary drinking), Craft: Whittling 2 (figurines), Folk Ken 2 (emotions), German Lore 2 (Pomerania), Great Weapon 5 (long spear), Hunt 2 (birds), Leadership 1 (revolt), Low German 2 (Pomeranian), Ride 3 (at speed), Single Weapon 2 (axe and round shield), Survival 3 (heathland), West Norse 2 (Danish curses), West Slavonic 5 (Sorbian)
Equipment: Long spear, axe, round shield, and a heavy leather hauberk, which he sheds when running.
Encumbrance: 2 (2)
Appearance: Byrek is tall and sturdily built, and quite awkward. He is most often slouched against some vertical surface, propped up by his spear. He takes no care of his appearance or his equipment. Rarely clean-shaven, he has lice in his thick black hair and scratches constantly. His weapons are rusty, and his hauberk filthy.

Byrek's mother was a witch of the Horse Clan at Crintera covenant (see Chapter 9: The Eastern Marches, Crintera) and when he came of age she gave him a magical amulet carved of horse bone that she told him would make him as swift and as tireless as a horse. Byrek attributes his running ability and mighty constitution to this amulet, which he never takes off; but whether it actually works is unknown. Nevertheless, Byrek is capable of amazing feats of endurance, and he was often used by Crintera to run messages. Due his focused mind he is able to remember messages very well, but he does tend to be very single-minded about tasks and neglect things that are second nature to most grogs. He is also remarkably clumsy for one who is so graceful at speed.

Byrek feels rejected by Crintera, he feels that the reason that he was given away by the covenant was because of some fault in his abilities. Consequently, he has become very depressed and demoralized and may even appear surly to some. Once he is convinced that he has a useful function to fulfill at the characters' covenant his depression may lift.

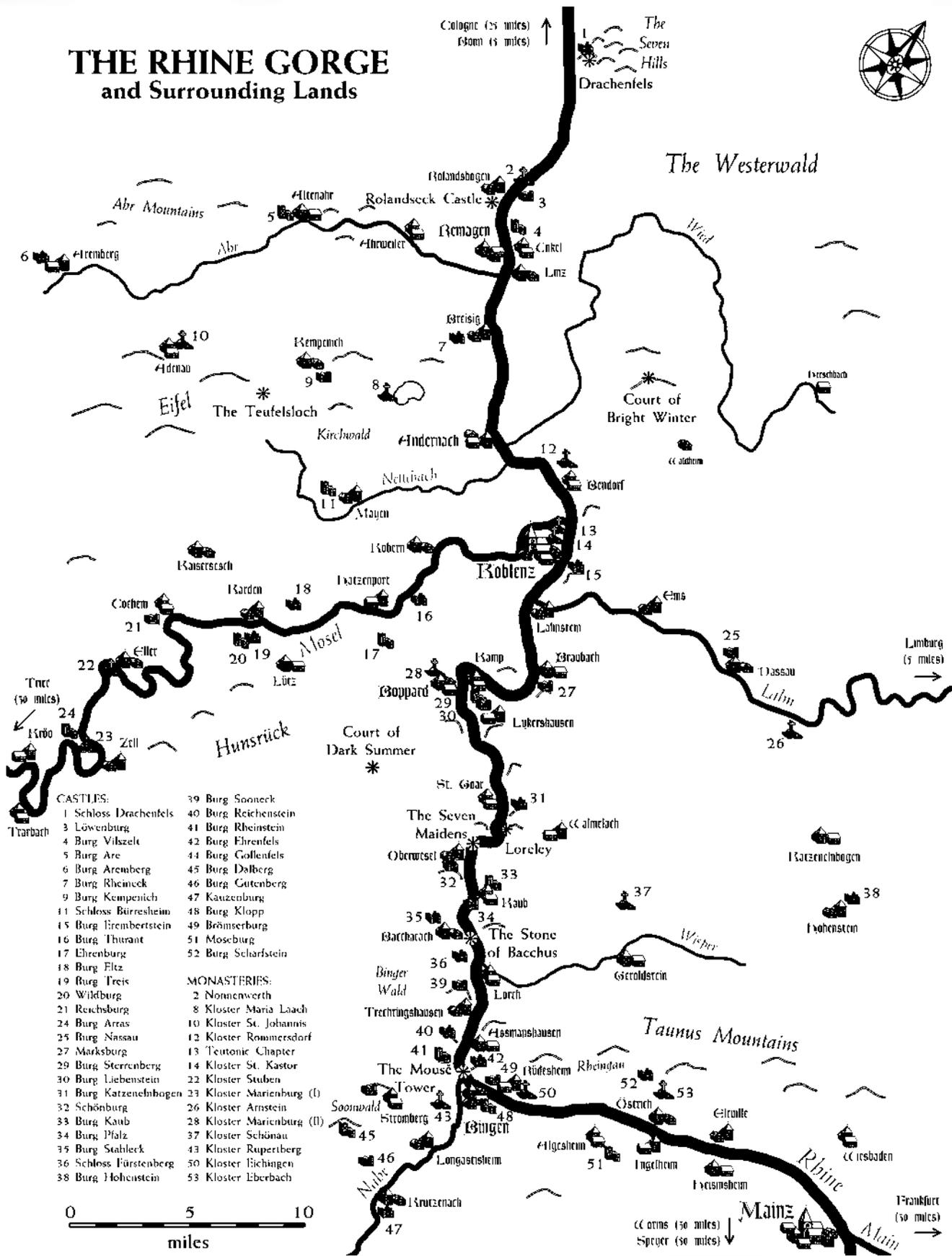
kind of chessboard, as its various nobles jostle for position and control of the tolling stations through the conquest or exchange of castles.

Rudesheim

In searching for the remains of the covenant of Rudiaria, it will be found that the only part of the ancient Redcap

instructions that is still accurate is the reference to a fortress standing on the right bank of the river, opposite Bingen. In fact, very little trace of the former covenant or of any magic remains. Investigation of this site is therefore likely to prove fruitless — of the four potential sites, this one is the least suitable for the founding of a new covenant. After the destruction of Rudiaria in the 10th century, archbishop Rudbrecht of Mainz claimed and sanctified the land — the keep formerly occu-

THE RHINE GORGE and Surrounding Lands



- CASTLES:**
- 1 Schloss Drachenfels
 - 3 Löwenburg
 - 4 Burg Vilzelt
 - 5 Burg Are
 - 6 Burg Arenberg
 - 7 Burg Rheineck
 - 9 Burg Kempenich
 - 11 Schloss Bürresheim
 - 15 Burg Erenbertstein
 - 16 Burg Thurant
 - 17 Ehrenburg
 - 18 Burg Fltz
 - 19 Burg Treis
 - 20 Wildburg
 - 21 Reichsburg
 - 24 Burg Arras
 - 25 Burg Nassau
 - 27 Marksburg
 - 29 Burg Sterrenberg
 - 30 Burg Liebenstein
 - 31 Burg Katzenelnbogen
 - 32 Schönburg
 - 33 Burg Kaub
 - 34 Burg Pfalz
 - 35 Burg Stalbeck
 - 36 Schloss Fürstenberg
 - 38 Burg Hohenstein
 - 39 Burg Sooneck
 - 40 Burg Reichenstein
 - 41 Burg Rheinstein
 - 42 Burg Ehrenfels
 - 44 Burg Gollenfels
 - 45 Burg Dalberg
 - 46 Burg Gutenberg
 - 47 Katzenburg
 - 48 Burg Klopp
 - 49 Brämsenburg
 - 51 Moseburg
 - 52 Burg Selharstein
- MONASTERIES:**
- 2 Nonnenwerth
 - 8 Kloster Maria Laach
 - 10 Kloster St. Johannis
 - 12 Kloster Rammersdorf
 - 13 Teutonic Chapter
 - 14 Kloster St. Kastor
 - 22 Kloster Stuben
 - 23 Kloster Marienburg (I)
 - 26 Kloster Arnstein
 - 28 Kloster Marienburg (II)
 - 37 Kloster Schönau
 - 43 Kloster Rupertberg
 - 50 Kloster Lichingen
 - 53 Kloster Eberbach

0 5 10 miles



The Rulers of the Middle Rhine

- Siegfried II**, Archbishop of the Holy See of Mainz and Archchancellor of the Holy Roman Empire; holds extensive lands including Mainz (customs duties), Bingen, Burg Klopp (just tolls), Moseburg, and Burg Rheinstein.
- Engelbert I**, Archbishop of Cologne and Archchancellor of Italy; holds Cologne (customs duties), Schloss Fürstenberg, Burg Drachenfels, and Burg Rheineck (just tolls).
- Dietrich I**, Archbishop of Trier; holds lands including Trier (customs duties), Koblenz (just tolls), Burg Erembertstein, and Burg Treis.
- Louis I Wittelsbach**, Duke of Bavaria and Count Palatine of the Rhiner; holds Baccharach, Burg Stahleck (just tolls), and Burg Thurant.
- Werner IV**, Count of Bolanden; vassal of Mainz and fervent castle-builder, holds territory southwest of Mainz and Burg Ehrenfels, Burg Sterrenberg (unjust tolls), and Burg Liebenstein.
- Dieter II**, Count von Katzenelnbogen; a fervent castle-builder holding a large but sparsely populated territory between the Taunus and the Lahn east of the Rhine Gorge, including Kaub (unjust tolls), Burg Hohenstein, Burg Kaub, and Burg Katzenelnbogen (unjust tolls).
- Henry II the Rich**, Count of Nassau; holds territory along the Lahn and around the Westerwald, including Burg Nassau, Nassau (unjust tolls), and Limburg (unjust tolls).
- Gerlach IV**, Count of Veldenz; vassal of Trier, holds territory southwest of Koblenz and along the Mosel.
- Eberhard II**, Count of Aremberg; holds lands bordering the Eifel west of Koblenz, including Altenahr, Burg Are, and Burg Aremberg.
- Philip I**, Baron Falkenstein; vassal and younger brother of the count of Bolanden, where he holds some lands, plus Burg Reichenstein.
- Jürgen**, Baron Schönburg; holds Oberwesel, the Schönburg, and Burg Pfalz (unjust tolls).
- Eberhard von Eppstein**, Baron of Braubach; vassal of the Count Palatine, holds Braubach and the Marksburg (unjust tolls).
- Thibaud the Fat**, Baron of Rüdesheim; minor vassal of Mainz, holds Rüdesheim and the Brömserburg.
- Arnold**, Baron von Eltz; a minor noble holding Karden and Burg Eltz (unjust tolls).
- Hermann von Wien**, Baron of Sooneck; a minor noble holding Burg Sooneck (unjust tolls).

Story Seeds: Rüdesheim

There is a tragic story in the recent history of the Brömser family. An ancestor in the 12th century, Hans Brömser, departed on the Second Crusade but had the great misfortune to be captured by the Saracens. With no end to his captivity in sight, the noble lord offered up a prayer, promising his only daughter to the Church if he would be freed. The crusaders returned to storm his prison, granting his wish, and the knight returned home. His daughter, Mechthild, was most distressed when he recounted the tale of his solemn vow and his rescue, for in the meantime she had fallen in love with a young knight from Bolanden. She could not be reconciled to living her life as a nun, and so cast herself into the Rhine in despair and drowned. Her sorrowful father built a chapel on a nearby hill in her memory and lived out the rest of his days in grief. Ever since, the restless ghost of Mechthild has haunted the Brömser family and castle. The current baron, Thibaud, discreetly asks a visiting group of knowledgeable strangers for aid.

Although the covenant site was sanctified long ago, Rudiaria's old dungeons beneath the castle were merely bricked up and are long since forgotten. They may hide Hermetic treasures, as well as sinister hints of the covenant's black past. Perhaps the current baron stumbles on and opens up these old chambers, thereby releasing a demon from its captivity who now blights the local area.

Hildegard of Bingen

Hildegard, educated at a Benedictine monastery from the age of eight, was a most remarkable woman and probably the most famous abbess in German history. In the middle of the 12th century she founded the Rupertsberg monastery that overlooks Bingen. Her talents were extraordinarily broad, encompassing theology, medicine, mysticism, diplomacy, poetry, and politics, although it was for her near-miraculous musical compositions that she was most famed. Despite never fully mastering Latin, she corresponded widely (with the aid of a scribe) and her advice was eagerly sought by the emperors, popes, and archbishops of her day. Hildegard also exchanged letters with several Hermetic magi, and many say that she was admitted into House Jerbiton around 1158 as a Larta (unGifted) maga and afforded their protection and tutelage. However, she never attended Tribunal and met only a handful of magi in her life, and the truth of this story has not been ascertained.

SELECTED WORKS

- Scivias* (Know the Ways) — Tractatus on Theology
- Liber Vitae Meritorum* (Book of Life's Merits) — Tractatus on Philosophiae (moral philosophy) and Theology
- Liber Divinorum Operum* (Book of Divine Works) — Summa on Philosophiae (metaphysics) 2 and Theology 5
- Physica* — Tractatus on Philosophiae (natural philosophy) and Medicine
- Causae et Curae* — Summa on Philosophiae (natural philosophy) 2 and Medicine 3
- Ordo virtutum* (Play of Virtues) — Tractatus on Artes Liberales (music), Philosophiae (moral philosophy), and Theology
- Symphonia Armoniae Celestium Revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations) — Tractatus on Artes Liberales (astronomy, music)

The originals of Hildegard's works all have a Quality of 13, which is exceptional (Hildegard had a Communication of +4 and the Good Teacher Virtue). Substandard copies might have a lower Quality, however.

The Mice of the Mäuseturm

Infernal Might: 10 (Animal)
Size: -10 each (swarm Size 0)
Powers:

Swarm, 0 points: Each mouse swarm contains about a thousand individuals, enough to fully engage about three average-sized people. When attacked by a swarm, a victim will be bitten on any exposed flesh. No attack roll is required for the mice; the amount of damage taken each round is dependent on the amount of protection possessed:

Protection	Damage Total per round (armor does not add to Soak)
None (loose clothes).....	Stress die + 6
Minimum (sturdy clothes).....	Stress die + 3
Moderate (winter garb or partial armor).....	Stress die
Good (half armor).....	Stress die - 3
Excellent (full armor).....	Stress die - 6
Total (full armor, helm, and gauntlets).....	Stress die - 9

Anyone attacked by a swarm will be able to kill 10 mice for each 5 points of their Brawling Attack Total each round. As soon as over half the mice are killed, the swarm will retreat. Spells that affect areas (T: Group or Room) may kill or affect the entire swarm if placed correctly, but the target would certainly include any victims of the swarm. The mice have fiery teeth and are immune to all forms of fire damage.

Each swarm of the demonic mice that inhabit the Mäuseturm should be treated as a single creature, and there are about ten swarms here, although the number of swarms that emerge depends upon the level of threat. Animal spells of R: Voice, D: Conc, T: Group will affect one swarm (assuming that Penetration Total is sufficient), and at one magnitude higher (extending T: Group tenfold) the island can be temporarily cleared of the mice. However, the Infernal aura of the island causes them to be spontaneously generated — until the aura is cleansed, the mice will never be permanently defeated.

pieced by the magi was rebuilt and has long since been occupied by a minor noble family, vassals of Mainz, and a sizeable village has grown up around it. The squat and square castle is now called the Brömserburg, and the name of the town itself, Rüdeshheim, likely either derives from the name of the covenant or the archbishop.

Bingen

Bingen is at the southern edge of the Rhine Gorge, with a Roman bridge over the River Nahe where it meets the Rhine. The old walled town is guarded by Burg Klopp, where tolls are collected on behalf of Mainz. Immediately downstream is the Bingen Hole, one of the two most hazardous river stretches, where numerous rocks together with the suddenly accelerating river flow and treacherous eddies make navigation perilous. Only skilled and experienced (or foolhardy) sailors and

boatmen — of which there are sufficient number — venture therein.

The Mouse Tower

A small island at the mouth of the Bingen Hole shoulders a half-ruined slender tower, the Mäuseturm (Mouse Tower), which was built in the 10th century by the greedy archbishop Hatto II of Mainz, to exact extortionate tolls. Not long after it was built there was a terrible famine in the lands around Mainz. One day a horde of starving beggars came to Hatto's episcopal palace, imploring him to lower the exorbitant price of the corn that he had selfishly hoarded in his storehouse. Tired of being pestered by these wretches, Hatto tricked them into a barn, promising them their due. However the barn was empty — the archbishop locked the peasants inside and they were burnt alive on his order. Hearing their screams from his palace, he scornfully proclaimed "Listen, how the mice squeak among the corn!" Yet at that

Bishop Hatto

Infernal Might: 30 (Mentem)
Characteristics: Int +1
Size: 0

Personality Traits: Hateful +6, Merciless +4, Brave +3

Combat:

Touch: Init +3, Attack +6*, Defense 0, *Chill Touch* (see below)

*This attack can only be dodged with a Brawl defense; weapon defense rolls automatically fail as the weapon passes through the bishop's ghost.

Powers:

Lurk in Shadows, 0 points: The ghostly bishop can remain within a shadow and be totally unseen. Even when moving towards his victim, the patch of darkness will only be spotted on a Perception + Awareness roll against an Ease Factor of 12 (9 during the day). Only if the bishop is seen can his attacks be dodged.

Fear, 4 points, Init +0, Mentem: The bishop can instill an overwhelming fear of the island in up to 10 people per use of this power. If they cannot escape, repeated applications of this power might drive them insane, or cause them to drop dead of fright. Such is the fate of any who spend a night on the island.

Chill Touch, 0 points, Init +3 (with attack), Corpus: The touch of the bishop is like a blade of ice, removing a Fatigue level from the target. This will also restore 5 Might to the Bishop.

Vis: 6 Perdo, in crosier. This can only be found once the Bishop has been destroyed.

Appearance: A ragged, vaguely man-shaped shard of darkness. As it looms closer, the demonically twisted face of the bishop can be discerned, complete with mitre.

The shade of Bishop Hatto is wholly insubstantial and cannot be engaged in combat, nor does he have meaningful Characteristics — he owes his existence to his overwhelming hate.

moment, in divine retribution, thousands of ferocious mice emerged from the burning barn and attacked the palace. Hatto fled in a boat to his tower, but the mice swam after him onto the island, gnawing



their way inside, and ate him alive. The corruption of the mad archbishop and the famine were possibly linked to Rudiaria's misdeeds.

The island, which has an Infernal aura of 3, is uninhabited except for the powerful demonic shade of Hatto that haunts it. Passing sailors shiver and cross themselves — none have dared to land on it in decades.

The Stone of Bacchus

The town of Baccharach is surrounded by extensive vineyards, and its potent wine is much appreciated in the local area. Every autumnal equinox the wine harvest

is celebrated here by a lively festival attended by townsfolk and peasants from several miles around. A short distance opposite Baccharach's modest quayside is an island in the river, where the most riotous of the festivities are known to take place. On the far side of this island, a few yards out into the river, is the Stone of Bacchus — a weathered finger of rock jutting fifteen feet out of the water. Locals believe that touching this stone brings luck to the wine harvest. The island has a Magic aura of 2; it has a small copse of

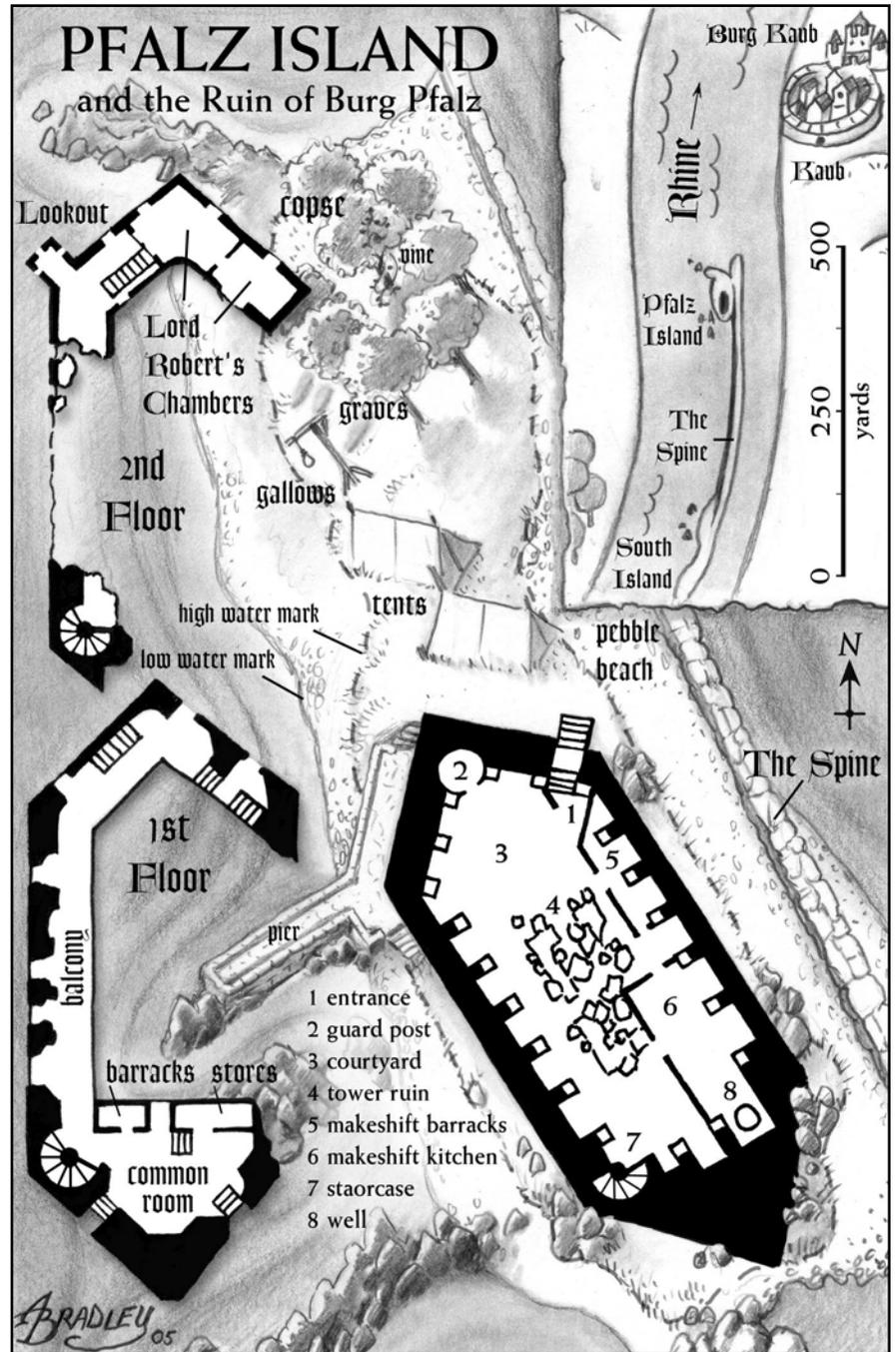
trees but is not really large enough for a covenant.

Pfalz Island

The island that formerly housed the covenant of Rheinstein occupies a unique position in the center of the river and retains a Magic aura of 2. It is not especially large, being only 100 yards long and less than half as wide. The upstream half

Story Seed: The Morning After

Any grogs who have been recruited in the local area will likely profess a great keenness for the festival and ask permission from the magi to attend. Those who stay in the town do not experience anything remarkable, but things get more interesting for the small number of braver souls who venture onto the island. Typically, a number of vats of wine are mysteriously procured and ferried over, and as night falls the party begins in earnest. Copious quantities are drunk, but few show any ill effects (+6 to all rolls to resist adverse effects of alcohol). The wine instead begins to induce hallucinations and visions, subtle at first, but becoming increasingly vivid as more is drunk, ultimately inducing all kinds of crazy and debauched behavior that each participant perceives differently. (Appropriate Personality Traits may be acquired and existing ones adjusted by up to 3 points for the duration of the night.) As dawn breaks, the spell is broken (-6 to all rolls to resist adverse effects of alcohol for the next day, resulting in a terrible hangover). Any leftover dregs of the wine retain their potent hallucinatory power, as Muto vis. (A typical harvest is about 6 pawns. It might be reasoned that by leaving more wine undrunk, the amount of vis could be increased. However, that has the opposite effect — the more riotous and magnificent the celebrations, the more vis will be found, up to a maximum of 12 pawns, regardless of the actual volume of any remaining wine.)



Lord Robert Schönburg

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

Size: 0

Age: 29

Decrepitude: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Gentleman; Entrancement; Arcane Lore, Educated, Premonitions, Privileged Upbringing; Avaricious, Black Sheep; Nocturnal, Tainted with Evil

Personality Traits: Arrogant +3, Greedy +3, Scheming +2

Reputations: Little More than a Thug 2 (Local)

Combat:

Fist: Init -1, Attack +1, Defense +1, Damage 0

Soak: 0

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

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

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (accounts), Athletics 2 (jumping), Awareness 1 (light sleeper), Bargain 1 (gaining advantage), Brawl 2 (dirty fighting), Charm 4 (women), Chirurgy 2 (burn wounds), Civil and Canon Law 2 (tolls), Concentration 1 (Entrancement), Entrancement 5 (women), Etiquette 2 (subtle insults), Faerie Lore 1 (Loreley), Folk Ken 2 (soldiers), High German 5 (fine speech), Guile 3 (to affronted husbands), Hunt 2 (from horseback), Infernal Lore 4 (pacts), Intrigue 2 (nobility), Latin 3 (incantation), Leadership 2 (ruffians), Magic Lore 3 (occult properties), Philosophiae 3 (natural magic), Pre-

monitions 3 (expeditious retreats), Ride 2 (while hunting), Rhine Lore 3 (nobles) Stealth 1 (eavesdropping), Theology 1 (mortal sin)

Equipment: Fine clothing, sword (for show — he can't use it), any number of pouches with herbs, strange rocks, and animal pieces. He owns about 10 pawns of vis of mixed types.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Robert is a tall, handsome man, with black hair at shoulder length. He prefers to be clean-shaven, and usually affects attire of solid black or dark green. His clothes are always of the most expensive materials, and he also favors ostentatious jewelry, often bearing his personal symbol: an eagle with wings displayed, pierced through the heart with a spear. He has startlingly green eyes, that captivate the victims of his charms, particularly women.

The illegitimate son of Baron Schönburg, Robert was given a fine education in Cologne, which is where he met the mentor who initiated him into the Dark Arts. He then returned to his father's court, where Baron Schönburg put him in charge of collecting the toll duties from Pfalz Island. From this base, Lord Robert has collected a motley group of suspicious characters who assist him in what amounts to piracy. He flaunts his ambivalent status in noble circles, turning up to social events to which he has not been invited, then acting disgracefully. The baron is ashamed of his only son's behavior; furthermore, he sus-

pects him of exacting a grossly unjust toll. However, Schönburg's loyalties are divided and this has left him impotent to settle the matter.

Robert is a committed servant of the Devil, not because of any religious fervor, but rather for the benefits he can reap from such service. Robert's natural desire for wealth has become much stronger since his initiation, and he has discovered that people tend to avoid his company more often. This does not faze him; with his new power of bewitchment, he has been able to ensure that people do what he says without hesitation, a power that he loves and tends to use in frivolous ways. Another of his Dark Powers is the uncanny knack to know if he is in trouble or about to be exposed — a power that has saved his skin on many occasions. Finally, his forbidden knowledge of the occult has allowed him to exert control over minor natural magics. Lord Robert can cast spells using his Intelligence + Infernal Lore + aura + stress die as a Casting Total, but such spells must be cast as if they were Ritual spells, requiring both time and vis. He may use gemstones and the like in such magics to give him a bonus to this roll equal to their Shape and Material bonus.

Robert is not suitable as a player character, but rather should be the villain of a saga whose covenant is set in the Rhine Gorge. As the saga develops, Robert may become more proficient at his Hell-born magic and may even develop powers to rival a Hermetic magus by dealing directly with a demon. The exact nature of these powers are left to the storyguide to develop.

Hidden among the trees on the south (upstream) island are two burial mounds. Robert violated these ancient graves for their paltry treasures (possibly vis), awakening the grave guardians — powerful undead corpses with powers of stealth and destruction. These specters wait patiently to exact their revenge, until one night in midsummer when the river level has dropped enough so as to allow them to walk across the rocky spine and attack the castle.

From the rocky spine, which extends across the eastern flank of Pfalz island, can be harvested one dripstone every season. The power of these rocks remain unknown until one day a passing

Story Seeds: Pfalz Island

ship's captain inquires after a charm that may protect him from the Loreley siren (see below), which the former inhabitants of the island seemingly sold.

Among the copse of trees on the island grows a vine that seems to bear a similarity to Durenmar's famous vine, although it is much younger and smaller. Indeed, the magi of Rheinstein secretly took a cutting of that vine and grew it here. Its sap can also be harvested for Intellego vis, although only in very modest quantities and with great care. However, were the magi of Durenmar

aware of someone taking this cutting, and might they not be displeased to hear of it?

DRIPOSTONE (CHALCEDONIUS)

A brownish stone with the feel of hardened wax. When pierced through and worn around the neck, the wearer can perceive magical or faerie illusions on a Perception roll against an Ease Factor of 3 plus the magnitude of the illusion, and can discern truth from falsehood on a Perception roll against an Ease Factor of 6. A dripstone is worth 1 pawn of Imaginem vis.



shoulders a partially ruined castle — the damage inflicted by the archbishop of Trier's army remains unrepaired. Within its walls (or what remains of them) is a tiny courtyard, in the middle of which only the rocky stump of a central tower remains. The side of the island facing the left bank (where most river traffic passes) has a small pier built on top of partially submerged rocks. The downstream half of the island has a tiny copse of maybe a dozen trees, in front of which swings a fresh corpse from a makeshift gallows. A couple of hundred yards upstream is another island, longer and thinner, but with more trees, crescent-shaped around a curve in the river. The two islands are connected by a narrow spine of rock, which only emerges when the river level is at its lowest. When the river level is high, however, Pfalz island becomes flooded, with only the castle (whose inner courtyard is also prone to flooding) and the trees above water. With its elongated shape and the sturdy and thick walls of its prow-like upstream end, it gives the eerie appearance of a stone ship floating on the Rhine.

The walled town of Kaub, little more than a prosperous village a couple of hundred yards downstream on the right bank, has recently come under the rule of the Count von Katzenelnbogen, who is constructing a castle (Burg Kaub) on the hillside high above. He has begun collecting

tolls from those merchants who travel overland from Rudesheim.

The magi may take a liking to the island — if the castle were to be rebuilt, it would make a suitable, albeit somewhat cramped, covenant. The problem, however, is its current occupant — Lord Robert Schönburg, bastard son of a local baron, who lives in the ruins with a band of about a dozen malcontents and ruffians, making a living by charging exorbitant tolls on the passing river traffic. (The island has a unique advantage as a toll station; the entire width of the river can be covered by bowshot.) He has acquired an ill reputation, as his "tolls" often more closely resemble outright theft. Unless the magi were willing to fall in with this band (whereupon they would soon discover a darker side to Robert), they would likely need to be evicted by force.

The Schönburg

The prosperous town of Oberwesel lies two miles downstream from Kaub, on the left bank of the Rhine. It is held by Baron Jürgen Schönburg, who owns a large castle of the same name on a riverside hill immediately to the south of the town. The Schönburg family is distantly descended from the fae of the nearby

Count von Katzenelnbogen

Over the last couple of generations, the Katzenelnbogen family has expanded prodigiously from their relatively humble beginnings in a backwater territory on the east bank of the Rhine. Their aggressive castle-building and recent intrusion into the Rhine Gorge has caused the archbishops some considerable consternation. The current count, Dieter II, is a tall, proud, but not particularly pious man, with a fondness for tournaments and warfare. Like his forefathers, he has a great love of the ruthless accumulation of territories and castles, and it would be very easy to make an enemy of him. With considerable respect and care, however, the player characters may alternatively become an ally — he has no bones about dealing with wizards, if they prove to be of use.

Court of Dark Summer (see below), and a small measure of faerie blood thus flows in their veins. A faint trace of a faerie aura is even found at certain times of year around the castle, and the red crocuses that grow

Wolkan

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

Size: 0

Age: 23

Decrepitude: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Branded Criminal; Improved Characteristics, Social Contacts; Ambitious

Personality Traits: Self-Interest +3, Loyal 0, Brave -1

Combat:

Short Sword: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +6

Thrown Knife: Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +6, Damage +3

Dagger: Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +4

Fist: Init +2, Attack +4, Defense +4, Damage +1

Soak: +1

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 1 (escaping), Awareness 1 (being watched), Brawl 2 (dagger), Carouse 1 (putting at ease), Charm 2 (getting out of trouble), Folk Ken 2 (criminals), High German 5 (criminal cant), Guile 2 (to authorities), Intrigue 3 (outlaws), Leadership 1 (thieves), Legerdemain 3 (filching), Profession: Boatman 2 (rowing), Rhine Lore 3 (criminal types), Single Weapon 4 (short sword), Stealth 3 (in towns), Survival 2 (in towns), Swim 1 (holding breath), Thrown Weapon 3 (knife)

Equipment: 2 daggers, short sword, change of clothing.

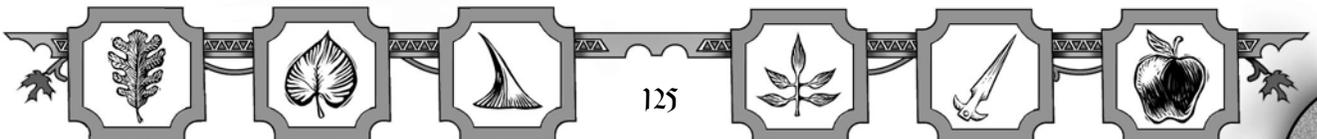
Encumbrance: 0 (1)

Appearance: Wolkan would be handsome were it not for the livid brand on his cheek that marks him as a convicted criminal. He has shoulder-length brown hair that he allows to fall across his face, obscuring the brand. He dresses plainly, but has a

sense of self-assurance and grace that often impresses people.

Wolkan was imprisoned on Pfalz Island by Baron Schönburg for theft. Lord Robert offered him freedom from the jail, if he volunteered to assist Robert collecting the tolls. Wolkan has no idea that what he is doing is unjust, or that Lord Robert is any more than he seems to be.

Wolkan would make a good grog for a covenant set on Pfalz. He knows the system for toll collection, the selling of the dripstones (see their description on page 124) for protection against the Loreley, and has contacts in towns both up and down the Rhine with a number of minor criminals and mercenaries who might prove useful to the magi. However, he has his own agenda — to gain leadership of his criminal contacts and grow rich on the proceeds. He may use the covenant's resources to further this ambition.



in early summer immediately outside the walls are a source of *Ignem vis*.

The Seven Maidens

Many generations ago, seven virgins lived at the Schönburg. Their father died broken-hearted at the lack of a son, leaving these beautiful but cold-hearted maidens to be raised by their aunt, who was too meek to curb their excessive desire for liberty and self-indulgence. Often the sisters held magnificent banquets, or went out riding and hawking, and they attracted the interest of many knights from far and wide. All these suitors were cruelly rejected, however, after much wooing and toying. In frustration, two knights urged

the sisters to make a final choice, but they grew so tired of these suitors that they resolved at last to leave the Schönburg altogether. They embarked on a boat on the Rhine and the eldest delivered a scornful speech to all those who had gathered at the riverside. Yet at that moment a terrible storm arose, and a wave swept over the boat, drowning them all. At this spot, immediately downstream from Oberwesel, seven pointed rocks now stand just above the surface of the waters, as a warning to the young maidens of the Rhineland.

Loreley

At the most treacherous and narrowest stretch of the Gorge, the Rhine narrows to a canyon of merely 150 yards wide, where the roar of the fast-flowing waters over lurking rocks echoes back from the rocky slopes. Here a siren by the name of Loreley calls out from the cliffs to lure passing sailors and ships to their deaths in the rapids. The 400-foot-high cliff has a Faerie aura of 2, but is near-impossible to climb from above or below. *Vis* may conceivably be harvested here, although it would be extremely hazardous to try. Even without the siren — sometimes she will not be seen, for example, at night, in rain, or in fog — this stretch of river is tricky enough (Profession: Boating, Ease Factor 9 for those who have not learned the positions of the rocks).

Koblenz

Koblenz, whose name derives from the Latin for "confluence," is a fair-sized city located at the point where the River Mosel joins the Rhine. A Roman fort on the site was long ago destroyed, but the old town walls still remain. The principal church and collegiate foundation of St. Kastor, dating from 830, has recently been enlarged into an impressive four-towered structure. In 1018 Koblenz received its city charter from emperor Henry II, and ever since it has been under the ownership of the archbishops of Trier. The city is home to a handful of other churches, a courthouse, and numerous merchants who prosper on the trade in wine from the Mosel valley. The Teutonic Knights have recently established a chapter house at the north end of the city.

Kloster Maria Laach

The Benedictine monastery of Maria Laach, located in isolated and idyllic meadowlands adjacent to Laach Lake, is foremost among the several monasteries around the Middle Rhine. Founded in 1093, the abbey church itself is a both a masterpiece and a landmark in Romanesque architecture, being the first columned basilica built with arches. An elaborate and exquisite garden courtyard in front of the building, replete with many statues of beasts and fountains, is a divinely inspired mortal re-creation of the paradise of the Garden of Eden, and has a Divine aura of 4.

The Teufelsloch

Amid the hills to the west of Laach Lake, a giant hole has been eroded into the rocky ground. The edges of the hole are steep and treacherous, and only blackness can be seen within, although a foul stench emanates from the rotting carcasses of the sheep and cattle that have fallen to their deaths inside. No-one knows how deep it is. An Infernal aura of 1 surrounds the void, dubbed the *Teufelsloch* ("Devil's Hole") by the locals.

Rolandseck

The ruined Rolandseck castle stands on the left bank of the Rhine, overlooking the peaceful idyll of the island of Nonnenwerth in the middle of the river, which is home to a nunnery. The famous Roland, count of Angers, was the nephew of Charlemagne and the greatest knight of his day, his deeds in battle and in tournaments being the stuff on legend. One day Roland came to this spot and fell in love with Hildegunde, daughter of a local count, Heribert. The two pledged to marry with his blessing, and Roland began the construction of a castle and watchtower where they would dwell. Alas, Roland was called away to battle against infidels in Iberia. The news brought to Hildegunde was grievous indeed, and her betrothed was believed lost. At last, after many months of waiting, she joined the island convent in despair. Roland returned to his castle too late, his beloved having become a bride of the Lord. The couple could only occasionally and sorrowfully

Story Seed: Acquiring Pfalz Island

Pfalz island is owned by Baron Schönburg, and so the magi will probably need to deal with him if they wish to establish a base there. Should his bastard son Robert be immediately dislodged by force, they will likely make an enemy of him — despite the fact that Robert's crimes are tarnishing the family name, the father is unfortunately blind to his son's misdeeds. These schemes, therefore, need to be clearly exposed, before he will turn against his son. The baron's daughter and heir, Karlotte, is a striking red-haired young woman with seemingly more than the usual dose of faerie blood, and, unlike her father, is all too aware of the unpleasant nature of her half-brother and rival Robert. On a recent journey through the woodlands west of the castle, she was attacked by an unknown dark figure. She has succumbed to her seemingly superficial wounds, and now lies in a coma from which she cannot be roused. The magi may need to consult the fae of the Court of Dark Summer, who will reveal a cure... for a price. Should they manage to cure Karlotte and prove the involvement of Robert in this attack, they will win Baron Jürgen's gratitude. He may then be willing to lease the island and agree to an arrangement about the tolls — for example, a share of the profit if the magi agree to oversee reconstruction of Burg Pfalz and the toll collection. However, they will still need to evict Robert and his band by force.



Loreley

Faerie Might: 30 (Aquam)

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

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Hateful to Men +3, Jealous of Women +3

Combat:

Dodging: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense 0, Damage n/a

Soak: +5

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

Powers:

Faerie Nature: As a faerie, the Loreley does not suffer from Fatigue, nor is she affected by diseases or old age. She can understand any languages, and can be understood by anyone. All faeries also have the Second Sight Virtue, and gain the benefits or penalties of any supernatural aura when using their faerie powers, according to the Realm Interaction table (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 183).

Vulnerability to Iron: Cold iron is extremely painful to the Loreley, and she will take a Light Wound even from the merest touch. Any iron weapon that hits her (that is, still has a Damage Total after subtracting her Soak), has its wound level increased by one.

Infatuation, 4 points, Init +0, Imaginem:

The Loreley's voice can create a strong desire in all who hear it to approach her. They will do everything in their power to get close to her, even leaping into the river and scrabbling up the cliff, or steering their craft towards the rocks, if that is what it takes. This power can affect up to ten people each round, who get a single Intelligence stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to resist it. Women receive a +3 bonus to this roll, as do those who have blocked their ears with wax. Possession of a dripstone (see page 124) allows the wearer to ignore the song if he makes a Perception roll against an Ease Factor of 6.

Control Person, 8 points, Init +2, Mentem:

If the Loreley can lure someone close enough to make eye contact, she can attempt to dominate his mind. This power only works on men, and can only affect one person at a time. The victim must make an Intelligence stress roll against an Ease Factor of 12 or do anything that the Loreley tells him, even leap to his death if that is what she desires.

Control Water, 1 point per magnitude, Init +0, Aquam: The Loreley may cause any Creo or Rego Aquam effects up

to 30th level, at a cost of 1 Might per magnitude of the effect.

Form of Water, 10 points, Init +3, Aquam:

The Loreley can transform herself into water and slip into the Rhine. While in this form she will regenerate 5 Might points per hour (four times her usual rate), and she will recover from wounds in minutes, hours, or days (for Light, Medium, and Heavy wounds, respectively), rather than days, weeks, and months. This makes her almost impossible to kill.

Vis: 6 Aquam, in blood; 4 Imaginem, in comb

Appearance: An exceedingly beautiful maiden, clothed only in her long, golden hair, which she is forever combing with a jeweled comb.

The daughter of the Rhine Spirit (see Chapter 5: The Rhine, The Rhine-falls), the Loreley resents humankind's attempts to tame her father and tries to wreak as much havoc on shipping as she can. Women do not escape her fury either — she is jealous of their ability to win the hearts of men when she can only hold their attention with her glamor. She will lure mariners towards her cliff and then nimbly scramble down to greet them, capturing them with her Control Person power and causing them to drown.

greet each other from across the distant waters until the end of their days.

Drachenfels

Drachenfels (Dragon's Rock) is one of the most famous sites of legend, being the cave where the great hero Siegfried slew the dragon Fafnir and bathed in his blood to become invulnerable, as told in the Nibelungenlied. A Magic aura of 3 pervades an extensive series of catacombs; this might be a suitable site for a covenant, were it not for the presence of the Schloss Drachenfels, a large castle erected directly on top of the hill above, which is owned by the archbishop of Cologne. Although Fafnir was slain many centuries ago, perhaps his brood, or that

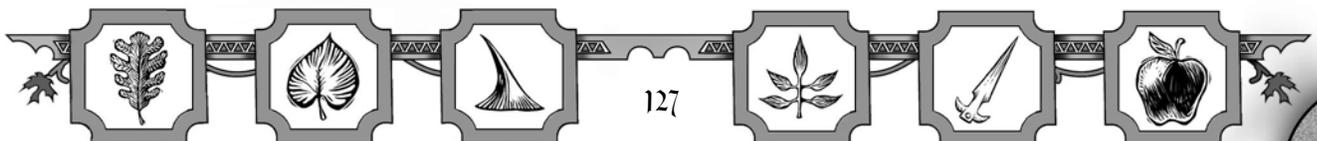
of his brother Regin, who conspired with Siegfried in the slaying, endures.

The Drachenfels hill, 1000 feet high, is the lowest and nearest to the Rhine of the Seven Hills. Long ago the wild Rhine formed a large lake here, which would occasionally spill over in a destructive torrent into the valley below to the north. At the behest of the local people, seven giants arrived in the land to fix the problem. With their huge spades, they dug a gap in the mountainside and the lake was emptied. The grateful folk gifted them rich treasures, which they had taken out of the mines, and the giants went on their way. However, the great heaps of rocky ground that they dug out — the Seven Hills — remain.

The Westerwald

The broad expanse of the hilly Westerwald stretches more than fifty miles east from the right bank of the Rhine north of Koblenz. A mostly uninterrupted, rumpled blanket of forest, it consists mainly of birch, beech, and oak, with some fir and pine trees on the higher slopes. Bordering the Westerwald to the south is the valley of the River Lahn. Some two dozen miles upriver from the Rhine, the fortified town of Limburg (not to be confused with the duchy of the same name) defends a large wooden bridge over the river dating from the 12th century.

In searching for the site of the former covenant of Oakdell, the old Redcap instructions still apply: taking the forest track northwards from Ems on the River Lahn, an ancient and weathered standing

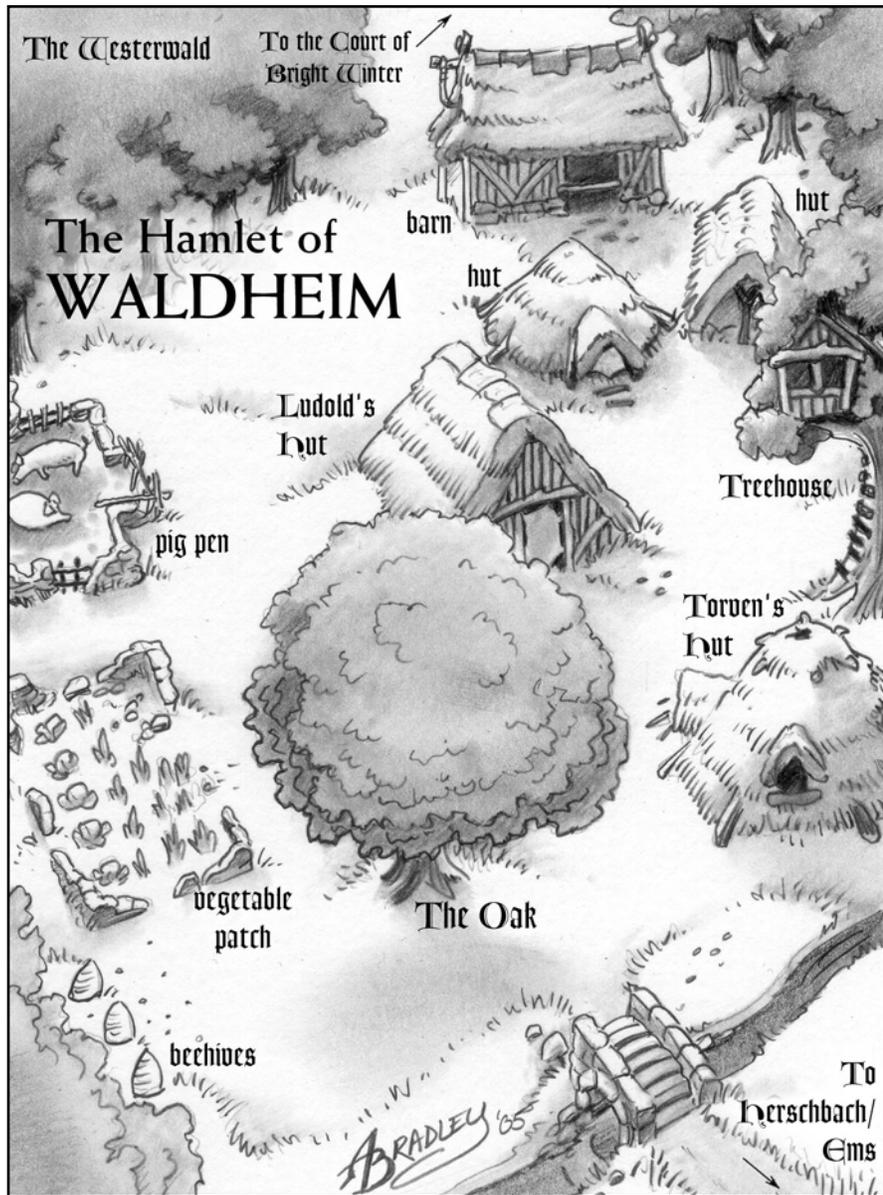


stone is to be found on the left of the track after several miles. This marks the point where a barely used path winds its way off to the northwest. After another couple of hours, this path crosses a small stream before opening out into a glade surrounding an ancient oak. Here is the tiny hamlet of Waldheim, comprising a handful of rude buildings and little more than a dozen people in all. The largest hut is home to the hamlet's elder, Ludold, a gaunt white-haired man wearing a bone necklace. His son Torven, a wild-looking young man dressed in leathers, occupies a smaller dwelling. Two more huts housing Waldheim's two other families and a barn round out the hamlet. On one side of the clearing can be seen a spot where two sizeable stone buildings formerly stood, but little more than the crumbled foundations remain. One of the plots is home to neatly planted vegetables and the other forms an open pig pen. Despite the wild appearance of the pigs, they do not disturb the vegetable patch and feed obediently at a trough. The hamlet has very little contact with the outside world, except to occasionally trade some of their pigs for grain. The glade has a Magic aura of 2.

Seldom does Waldheim receive any visitors, but any that arrive are likely to be greeted in a polite but cautious fashion. These mysterious and reclusive inhabitants appear to be harmless, but on closer inspection the father and son may be revealed as minor hedge wizards. Ludold is a cunning man, a lesser hedge wizard with the power to create minor potions and charms. Inside his hut all kinds of ingredients are arrayed on shelves; old bones, dried herbs, mushrooms, preserved organs, and so on (some of which may be vis). Torven befriends many forest creatures, and is accompanied by a wolf, which he has seemingly tamed. He appears to exert some kind of unspoken control over the creatures of the glade.

On the far side of the clearing the forest path continues, leading towards the center of the Westerwald and the faerie Court of Bright Winter. The inhabitants of Waldheim are friendly and subservient to the "good folk of the forest," ensuring the blessing and protection of their hamlet. However, they seldom visit the court and are reluctant to reveal details to strangers, instead professing to be loyal subjects of the count of Nassau.

Should the magi wish to settle here, they are faced with a choice of either ousting the existing inhabitants or peaceful coexistence with them. Neither is likely to be very difficult at first, but each has consequences. If they violate the hamlet,



Story Seeds: Waldheim

In order to hunt or harvest vis in the Westerwald, it is recommended that mages seek the permission of the fay of the Court of Bright Winter, since otherwise their disfavor may be earned. In exchange for the granting of such permission, a favor must be performed in return. The count of Nassau, who holds lands immediately south of the Westerwald, has begun an aggressive policy of expanding into and controlling the forest. To this end, he sends bands of foresters into the woods to hunt down its wolves. The Court therefore asks that the wolves be protected and the intruders expelled. Note that a landmark ruling of the Rhine Tribunal (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, History) does permit magi to actively defend such wilderness areas.

Waldheim's elder, Ludold, may be willing to trade minor potions or charms, or vis (which he harvests in various forms from in and around the glade), with the characters. In exchange, he asks that they should find a suitable wife for his son, since there is no-one of marriageable age in the hamlet. The son Torven is friendly enough, but rather distant, preferring the company of animals to people.



Torven

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

Size: 0

Age: 24

Decrepitude: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Wise One; Animal Ken, Intuition, Latent Magical Ability, Wilderness Sense; Magical Air; Magical Animal Companion, Reclusive

Personality Traits: Brave +2, Loner +2, Loyal to Waldheim +2

Reputations: Wise One 1 (Local)

Combat:

Short bow: Init 0, Attack +9, Defense +4, Damage +6

Knife: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +3, Damage +2

Fist: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +3, Damage 0

Soak: +2

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

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

Abilities: Animal Ken 3 (wolves), Animal Handling 3 (pigs), Athletics 2 (in forest), Awareness 2 (while hunting), Bows 2 (short bow), Brawl 2 (breaking holds), Charm 1 (peasants), Chirurgy 1 (animals), Faerie

Lore 2 (Bright Winter), Forest Lore (Westerwald) 3, High German 5 (Franconian), Hunt 3 (roe deer), Leadership 1 (Waldheim), Magic Lore 2 (herbs), Stealth 3 (in forests), Survival 3 (forests), Swim 2 (rivers), Teaching 2 (wilderness skills), Wilderness Sense 3 (forest)

Equipment: Plain brown clothing (well made), wolf-fur jerkin, bow

Encumbrance: 2 (2)

Appearance: Torven is an unassuming man of average height, with scruffy brown hair and a patchy beard. He takes little care of his appearance. Red-Hame is a wolf, with a distinct ruddiness about the neck and along his back, from which he gets his name.

Torven is the unofficial leader of Waldheim, but couldn't be less suited to the role. The other villagers treat him with reverence because of his ability to speak to and befriend animals, but Torven would rather he was just left alone — he doesn't get on very well with people, finding it hard to maintain a conversation without running out of things to say. He also tends to make strangers wary, although animals instinctively trust him.

He much prefers to be out in the deep forest, accompanied by his constant friend Red-Hame, a large wolf who has adopted him. He is also still young, and does not seek the burdens of leadership. Nevertheless, he feels responsible for the villagers and will be the first to come to their defense if they should be threatened. His hunches about danger have saved the villagers more than once from both natural and human disasters.

On more than one occasion, when Torven has been in sore need of help — such as when facing a fierce animal or the count's huntsmen — one of the many packs of wolves that prowl in the Westerwald have appeared and helped him. Torven has no control over this Latent Magical Ability, and has learned not to rely upon it; however, it makes him a potent force in the forest. Torven was taught to use a short bow by his uncle, who was a forester under the count of Nassau; he has had no other exposure to Martial Abilities.

Red-Hame is a faerie wolf, with a Faerie Might of 12. He is the messenger of the Winter Court, and expresses its wishes to the villagers of Waldheim through Torven.

they may subsequently find the forest and faerie court to be ill-disposed to them. The site is lacking in all but the most basic of facilities (although it has the virtue of being isolated), but the inhabitants are reluctant to see any major construction or disruption to their home.

The Faerie Courts

The Courts of Dark Summer and of Bright Winter are rival faerie courts on opposite sides of the River Rhine. The Seelie Bright Winter, associated with light, snow, cold, and the hunt, may be found in midwinter at daytime among the highest snow-covered hills of the Westerwald. The Unseelie Dark Summer, associated with dark, fire, warmth, and agriculture, may be found in midsummer at nighttime amid the lowest swampy ground of the Hunsrück forest to the west of the Rhine Gorge. Dark Summer holds dominion over Bright Winter from Walpurgis Night until All Hallows Eve, and vice versa. Either of these courts may

become a contested vis source, with some measure of diplomacy and skill on behalf of the magi. Further details and inhabitants have been left to the storyguide(s) to devise.

As an alternative, you may wish to use the Courts of the Seasons (see Chapter 4: The Forest) instead. For example, King Holly (Winter) may be placed in the Westerwald, the Alder Prince (Spring) in the Odenwald, King Oak (Summer) in the Palatinate Forest, and the Willow Maiden (Autumn) in the Hunsrück.

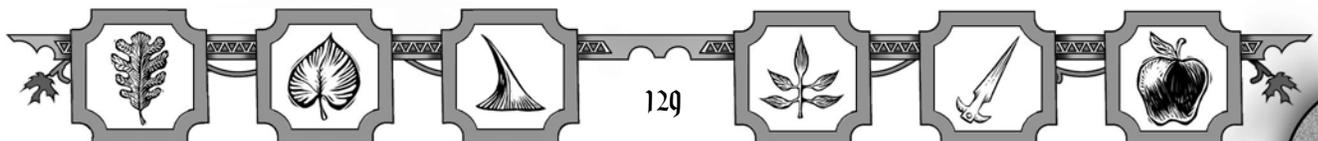
The Mosel Valley

The River Mosel rises in the Vosges Mountains and flows through the middle of Upper Lorraine. The lower Mosel, between Trier and Koblenz, winds its

way in tortuous curves between the rugged forested hills of the Eifel and the Hunsrück, past a handful of castles and vineyards on the south-facing slopes. Although not as large or as busy as the Rhine, a fair amount of river traffic travels upstream from Koblenz as far as Trier or Metz.

Trier

The name of Trier, the oldest German city, derives from the Celtic Treverii tribe who first settled on the site. Then came the Romans; the emperor Augustus raised the city to a regional capital, naming it Augusta Treverorum. However, it was during the reign of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor of Rome in the early 4th century, that the city reached its peak. Augusta Treverorum became the capital of the western Roman empire, home to more than 80,000 people; in contrast, the current population is barely a tenth of that. The current city walls enclose a much



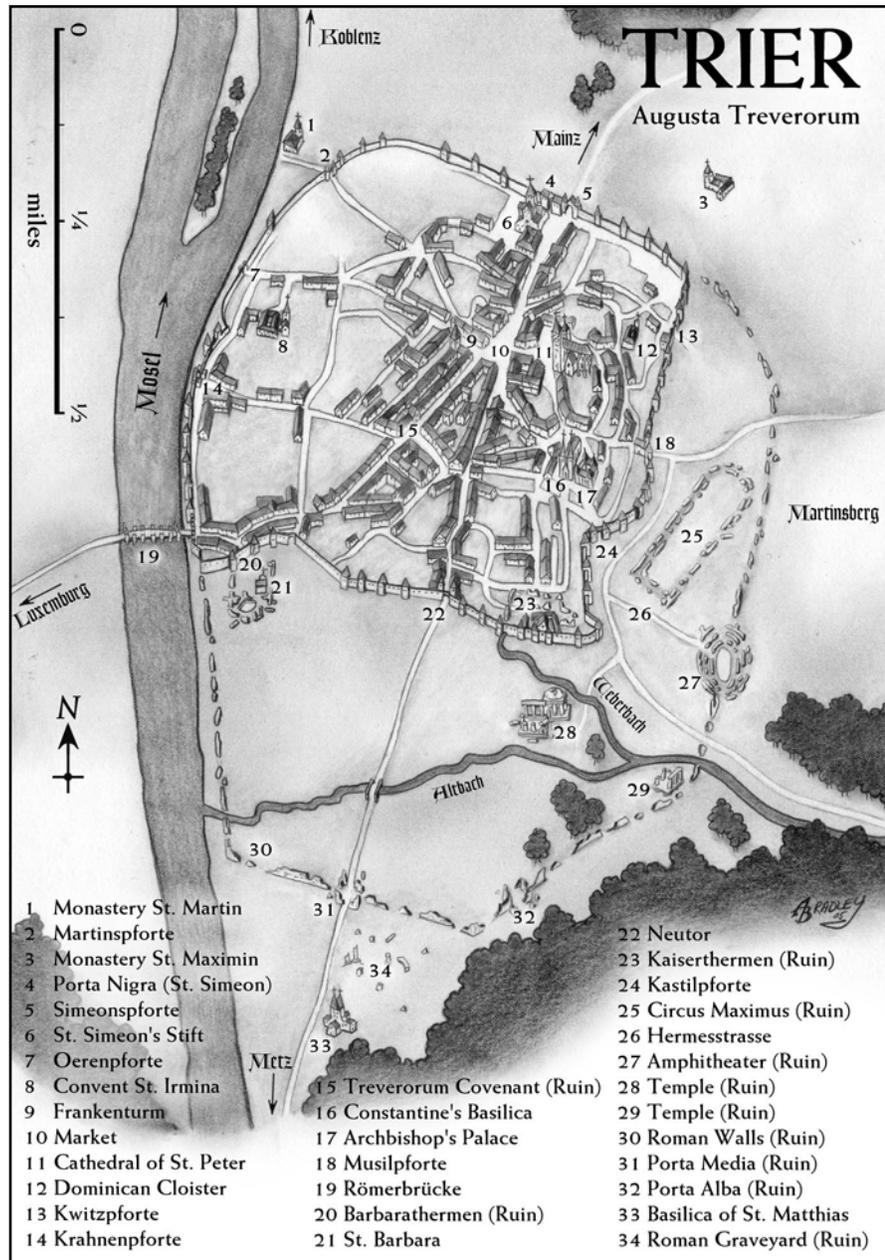
smaller area inside the footprint of the old city, which is bordered by the remains of Roman walls. Trier thus has the most complete set of Roman remains in Germany — inside, outside, and underneath the current city.

Constantine's Basilica is a dramatic arched brick edifice enclosing a huge throne room 80 yards long, which is now the palace of Trier's archbishop. The cathedral of St. Peter, although partially rebuilt in the 11th century, is the oldest church in Germany, being one of the four venerable churches founded by Constantine (the others are St. Peter's in Rome, the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and the Nativity in Bethlehem). The site of the cathedral was donated to the emperor Constantine by his mother, St. Helena. Its greatest relic is the Seamless Robe, the garment worn by Christ during the crucifixion. The Porta Nigra (Black Gate) is an awesome four-story sandstone Roman gatehouse in the north wall. In 1035 it was converted into the church of St. Simeon, in honor of a Greek hermit saint who had taken refuge there. Adjacent is the collegiate foundation of St. Simeonstift. In the southeast corner of the city, the remains of the Kaiserthermen (Imperial Baths) have been rebuilt into a castle as part of the city walls.

Trier is surrounded by extensive vineyards — wine is the principal export of the city, transported down river to Koblenz and the Rhine. Just to the south of the city is the Basilica of St. Matthias, housing the remains of the apostle who replaced Judas Iscariot, brought to Trier by St. Helena.

The Merchant's Shop

The Fleischstrasse is a main street leading to the city's major marketplace. In searching for the site of the former covenant, it may be found that the merchant's shop formerly owned by Treverorum has since changed hands and now sells wine. The proprietor, Isaac, knows nothing of magi, or of the former covenant. To the left of the shop is an inn, the *Blaue Keiler* (Blue Boar); immediately to the right is a narrow alley leading to a back street and a butcher's shop. Isaac is a Jew, taking advantage of recent changes in rabbinical law that now permit the selling of grape products to Gentiles. Isaac manages the shop on behalf of its owner, his uncle, who is a prominent Jew called David ben David.



The covenant site occupies two underground levels immediately behind the shop, between the two streets and beneath the alley. It may be discovered and accessed in at least five different ways. Perhaps the most likely is through investigation of the wine shop's cellar, where a passageway leading to the upper level has been bricked out — Isaac will relate that the former owner told him that he believed this to be haunted. Two of the upper-level sancta have wooden shutters in their ceilings, which may be uncovered by clearing out the disused back yard, formerly a small garden, but currently a waste tip. In one corner of the neglected

graveyard on the other side of the alley is a raised stone grave bearing the name Selena Tibicena, with a sanctum marker in place of a cross and the words "May she rest here in peace." This small structure is not, in fact, the burial place of this maga, but instead conceals a secret set of stairs leading down to what was formerly her sanctum. On the Niederstrasse, the less prosperous back street, the burnt-out remains of a house adjacent to a brothel are inhabited by vagabonds. A disused set of stairs leads down. Lastly, and least likely, the lower level may be accessed through the ancient underground culvert from outside the city walls (see below).

David ben David

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

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Decrepitude: None

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Merchant; Wealthy; Educated, Puissant Bargain, Social Contacts, Well-Traveled; Pious, Outsider; Judged Unfairly

Personality Traits: Devout Jew +3, Honest +2, Insensitive to Insults +2

Reputations: Jew 3 (Local)

Combat:

Dodging: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense 0, Damage n/a

Soak: +1

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

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

Abilities: Aramaic 3 (Torah), Animal Handling 2 (horses), Artes Liberales 3 (accounts), Awareness 2 (faulty goods), Bargain 5+2 (luxuries), Bavarian Lore 2 (towns), Carouse 2 (amongst Jews), Charm 2 (gaining trust), Civil and Canon Law 3 (regarding merchants), Etiquette 2 (gentlemen), Folk Ken 3 (empathizing), French 2 (trading), Guile 2 (perceiving cheats), High German 6

(Yiddish), Intrigue 3 (merchants), Italian 2 (trading), Latin 3 (bargaining), Leadership 1 (amongst Jews), Low German 2 (trading), Medicine 2 (infected wounds), Philosophiae 2 (debate), Profession: Merchant 4 (luxury goods), Profession: Ship's Captain 2 (on the Rhine), Rhine Lore 3 (towns), Ride 1 (good roads), Swabian Lore 2 (towns), Swim 2 (rivers), Teaching 2 (Academic Abilities), Theology: Jewish 3 (duties)

Equipment: Plain clothing befitting a merchant, bearing the wheel symbol of Jewdom, skull cap.

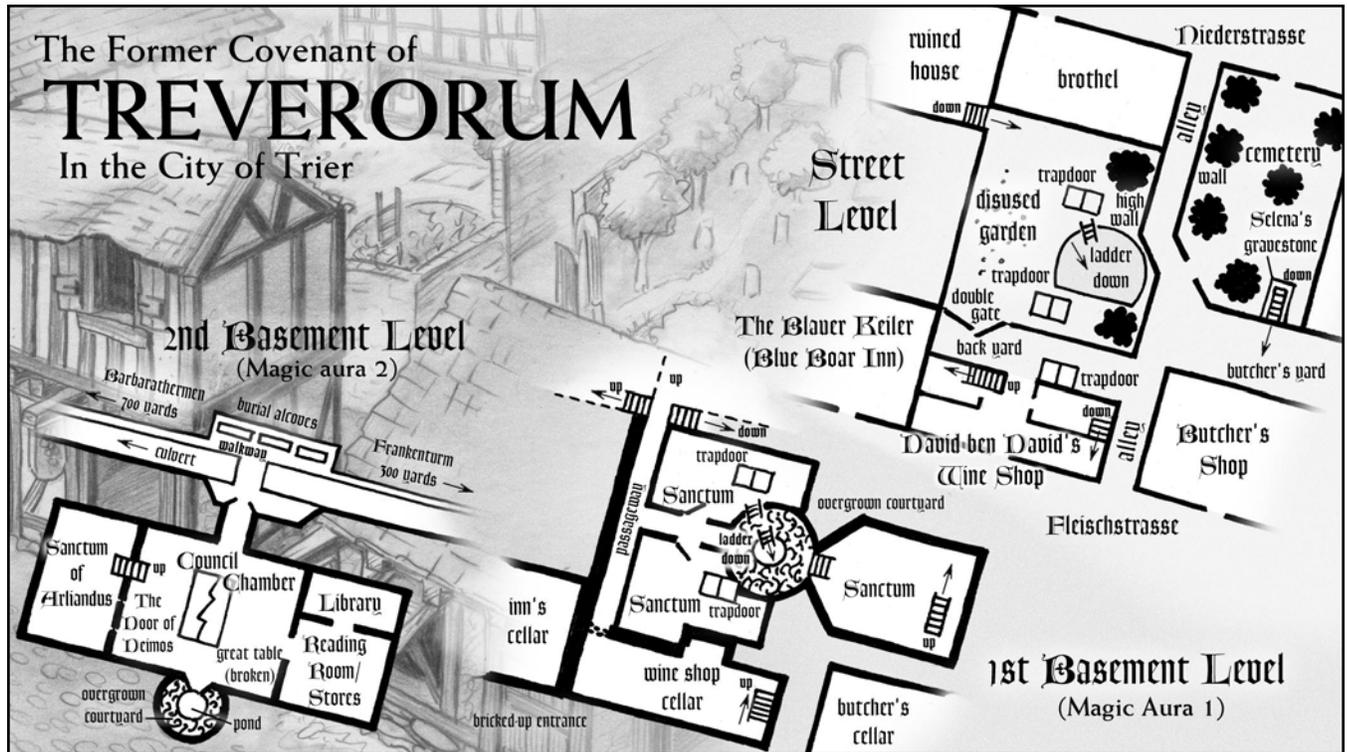
Emburance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Of average height, David is unmistakably Jewish, both through physiognomy and through cultural symbols. He wears his black hair short, with two long curly braids in front of each ear. When appropriate he dons the skull cap and/or prayer shawl, unashamed to be seen in public with these clear symbols of his religion. He dresses moderately, not flaunting his wealth.

David ben David is a wealthy merchant from an even wealthier Jewish family, who plies his trade between Trier,

Koblenz, Bingen, and Mainz. His family has operated in this region for years, and as a child he traveled far and wide with his father and uncles, learning all about the Rhine, its tributaries, and its trade. When he reached thirteen, he entered the famous Jewish academy at Mainz and learned both his Aramaic and Latin letters, as well as scholarly pursuits such as (Jewish) Theology, Artes Liberales, and Medicine. When his father died ten years ago he returned to Trier to take over the business, which also involved taking a wife, Sophie. They have yet to have any children.

David's biggest stumbling block is his religion. He is a devout Jew, and proudly wears the patch of cloth identifying him as such (see Chapter 5: The Rhine, Jews in the Holy Roman Empire), despite it being a symbol of the Christian oppression of his people. He refuses to compromise his religious devotion to make his life easier, as so many other fellow Jews have. Despite suspicion and outright hatred from his Christian competitors, David has maintained a level head and a very thick hide. Given his age, education, and convictions, it will not be long before he is asked to become a rabbi by his community, where his kindness is greatly respected.



Magic Items in the Sanctum of Arliandus

THE DOOR OF DEIMOS

This is an iron door, with faces and skulls embossed onto its surface and highlighted in inlaid lead and silver. Arliandus named it after the son of Ares, whose name meant "Terror." The door is not locked, but has a complex latch requiring putting one's hand inside the mouth of a leering face and twisting the catch. The door is also invested with the following effects:

Recognize Your Master, InCo 5, R:Touch, D:Mom, T:Ind (Base 4, +1 Touch): A compartment on the inside of the door holds an arcane connection (currently to the long-dead Arliandus). If the arcane connection matches the person touching the door, then nothing happens. If it does not match, or the toucher successfully resisted the effect (it has a Penetration Total of 0), then the second effect is triggered. The toucher may choose not to resist this effect if he knows it exists. This effect is triggered even if the door is not touched with bare flesh. Operates 6 times per day (+3 levels). *Final level: 8*

Repel the Intruder, CrMe 15, R:Touch, D:Sun, T:Ind (Base 4, +1 Touch, +2

Sun): This effect is triggered by the first effect (+3 levels). Anyone affected must make an Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 12 or flee in terror. Operates 6 times per day (+3 levels), has a Penetration Total of 22 (+11 levels). *Final Level: 43*

THE CRYSTAL OF A HUNDRED CANDLES

As the door opens, a small crystal embedded in the ceiling blooms into light, illuminating the whole chamber.

Lamp without Flame, Crlg 10, R:Touch, D:Conc, T:Ind (Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Conc). Operates 24 times per day (+5 levels), item maintains concentration (+5 levels), environmental trigger (+3 levels). *Final Level: 23*

THE MIRROR OF DREAMS

An ornate, gold-framed mirror is surrounded by a set of elaborate smaller mirror fragments — a willing subject who stares into it will see his own thoughts visualized before his eyes. This assists greatly with certain types of lab

work; +3 may be added to any Lab Total involving Mentem. However, use of the Mirror is unsettling and tends to disturb the user's dreams; 1 Warping Point is gained for each season of use (this is due to it being a Powerful Mystical Effect). It also counts as a continuous effect for calculating yearly gain of Warping Points.

Depiction of the Waking Dream, InCrMeIm 35, R:Eye, D:Conc, T:Ind (Base 25, +1 Eye, +1 Conc). The thoughts of the subject become visible as images surrounding his head in a mirror. The workings of Mentem spells can thus be analyzed quite precisely. Unlimited uses (+10 levels). *Final Level: 45*

THE TRUMPET OF GHOSTLY SUMMONING

A small silver trumpet, when blown, summons forth any ghosts or spirits in the area and renders them visible.

Vision of the Haunting Spirits, MuMeIm 40, R:Touch, D:Sun, T:Room (Base 15, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 Room). Operates twice per day (+1 level). *Final Level: 41*

The magi may decide to establish themselves at Treverorum. On the one hand, this is the most intact site, and its chambers could easily be claimed. On the other hand, the sancta are hidden away underground, in the middle of a city. It would be near-impossible to set up here without the knowledge of the merchant above them, and maintaining their privacy would be difficult.

THE UPPER LEVEL

The first level of the former covenant consists of three sancta, in a poor state of repair and mostly empty, apart from detritus and rats. The former sanctum of the necromancer Selena Tibicena, underneath the graveyard, contains a variety of skeletons. A wide circular shaft formed the center of the covenant, bringing light down from the garden to the lower levels. A path around it connected the chambers at this level, but it is now completely overgrown and impassable. An old ladder leads up. Unlike the Divine aura present at street level, these chambers have a Magic aura of 1. This also holds true for

many of the underground chambers of Roman remains elsewhere in the city.

THE LOWER LEVEL

The central room of the lower level, reached by the stairs from above, was the council chamber of Treverorum. A great oak table bearing the covenant's symbol (the Porta Nigra) is smashed. One wall of the chamber has a solid metal door bearing a sanctum marker, which may be determined to be magical in nature. Opposite is an opening leading to two smaller chambers, the library (containing waterlogged and moss-covered remains of books and parchment), and stores (empty). The other walls each have double wooden doors. One merely leads to an overgrown pond at the base of the central shaft. The other leads to an underground stream — a disused sewer, perhaps. Here are a handful of burial alcoves, where the magi of the covenant were laid to rest. The Roman culvert leads in a few hundred yards all the way to the Barbarathermen (ruined Roman baths) just outside the city walls, which have a maze of passages and

chambers beneath them. In the other direction it leads underneath the Frankenturm, a fortified residential stone tower in the city occupied by a prominent merchant family. This deeper level has a Magic aura of 2.

THE SANCTUM OF ARLIANDUS

The chamber of Arliandus of House Tremere is protected by an item of his creation, an immense metal door. Should the magi bypass or successfully resist its protection, they will discover this one intact sanctum, complete with a modicum of Hermetic treasures (see insert). Here is

Story seed: The ghosts of Treverorum

In investigating the burial alcoves, one of the ghosts of the magi of Treverorum is disturbed. He may either pester the characters or be willing to reveal some of the covenant's lost secrets, for a price.





a well-equipped Hermetic laboratory, specialized in the study of Mentem. The storyguide may additionally place a number of books, items, or laboratory texts here that may be of value to the magi. Among any vis that may be found are a number of old Roman coins (a few pawns of Mentem).

The Amphitheater

A few hundred yards outside the city walls to the east, along a road named, perhaps by coincidence, the Hermesstrasse, a large oval-shaped Roman amphitheater is located at the base of the Martinsberg hill. This deserted ruin has a faint Magic aura of 1. At the sides of the sandy floor of the arena, overgrown passages lead to a small set of empty chambers in the adjacent hillside and immediately underneath the amphitheater, which were used by the gladiators. Here the aura is slightly stronger (2); one may be able to detect (either through the use

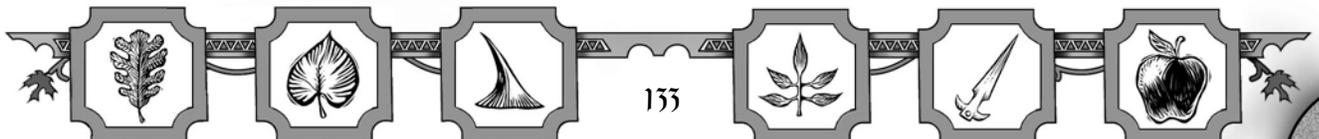
of spells or with Second Sight) the faint presence of ghosts.

If the Trumpet of Ghostly Summoning is played here, at night, the ghosts of three gladiators gradually coalesce. They don their arms and armor and march up to the amphitheater, whereupon they will boldly challenge anyone present to a duel to the death. None of their faces are visible, but each seems to be a powerful warrior wearing minimal armor, his muscles gleaming in the faint light. Each will wager some trinket (such as a piece of jewelry or a handful of Roman coins) on the outcome of the fight, and any challenger must offer something of similar value in return. The fight then commences — the ghosts are formidably skilled — which seems deadly real to the participants. However the gladiators are not completely substantial and to onlookers their blows do not appear to draw blood - a killing blow will merely render a person unconscious. Although all damage should be reported to the player as normal, the storyguide should keep a track of it as if was non-lethal combat (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 174).

Only once the character has received medical attention should the player be told what wounds his or her character has really suffered. If a gladiator wins he claims his reward before bowing solemnly to his fallen foe and fading away into nothingness. (The wagered item may later be discovered buried in the sands of the underground chambers, but weath-

Story Seed: The Amphitheater

The clues are present that may allow the magi to piece together the secret of this site and enable them to harvest vis here: The 1248 AA excerpt from the Tribunal records suggests the existence of a vis source not far from Trier, which may lead them to investigate the amphitheater and thus detect the presence of a weak Magic aura and the faint traces of ghosts. This in turn may lead them to try out the trumpet found in Arliandus' sanctum.



Ghostly Gladiators

MARCUS THE VALIANT

Magic Might: 20

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

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Duty-Bound +3, Honorable +1

Combat:

Gladius and round shield: Init +3, Attack +14, Defense +13, Damage +7

Gladius: Init +3, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +7

Dagger: Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +8, Damage +5

Soak: +7

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

Appearance: Marcus is the leader of the three gladiators. He is a stocky man equipped to fight as a *hoplomachus* — with a round shield, a manica on his right arm, greaves on his left leg, a gladius, and an ornamented, brimmed bronze helmet.

CYRILLUS OF ARGENTORATUM

Magic Might: 20

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

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Duty-Bound +3, Crafty +1

Combat:

Trident and net: Init +7, Attack +12, Defense +14, Damage +7

Net: Init +4, Attack +11, Defense +11, Damage +7*

Dagger: Init +4, Attack +8, Defense +8, Damage +5

*Resolve as a scuffle attack (see ArM5, page 174) to immobilize or entangle a weapon.

Soak: +4

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

Appearance: This combatant is a wiry, dark-haired figure armed as a *retetarius*, with a trident and a net. His shoulder is protected by a *galerus* (metal shoulder guard) and his left arm by a *manica* (heavy linen quilting). He wears a copper mask of Poseidon.

CAUDELIX THE GAUL

Magic Might: 20

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +5, Sta +4, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: +1

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Duty-Bound +3, Violent +1

Combat:

Great axe: Init +1, Attack +16, Defense +9, Damage +15

Hatchet: Init +1, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +9

Gauntlet: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +8, Damage +7

Soak: +8

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

Appearance: The final gladiator is a burly giant of a man, his fair braided hair falling behind a fierce-looking iron skull cap with an attached "spectacle" mask. He wields a long-handled axe and his only body armor consists of leather *bracae* protecting his thighs, and bracers on his forearms.

ered or rusted into uselessness by many centuries.) If a gladiator is defeated he likewise fades away, leaving behind his wagered trinket, which is worth 2 pawns of *Mentem vis*. After he has fought, each gladiator cannot be summoned again that year.

many story possibilities). By now they should have recruited (or begin recruiting) some grogs from the local area. Possibly they have picked up a companion or two, as well.

Choosing a Site

No one site is perfect, each having contrasting advantages and disadvantages requiring a measure of compromise or prioritization. This is a choice between the Forest or the City (or something in between), mirroring the choices already made by the existing Rhine covenants. Those such as Crintera, Irencillia, and Dankmar have chosen the former, hiding themselves away in the wilderness, whereas *Oculus Septentrionalis*, Triamore, and Waddenzee have chosen the latter — while not all are located in actual cities, they are all deeply involved with mundane affairs in one way or another. Thus, their choice of site is likely to influence how they are viewed by the other covenants and guilds of the Tribunal.

It might be that the magi have trouble agreeing on a preferred site, in which case they could conceivably establish themselves in more than one place, for example a main covenant site and a subsidiary chapter house. However, a new covenant that already starts out with its own chapter house(s) is a little unusual and precocious, and may result in greater challenges.

Establishing a Covenant

After a certain period of investigation (and doubtless several adventures), the magi will hopefully have found one or more sites in or around the Rhine Gorge that they think may be suitable for the siting of a covenant or chapter house. It then remains to choose one such site, successfully establish residence there, gain formal Tribunal approval (if they wish to found a covenant), and establish the necessary infrastructure, security, comforts, and supplies to ensure their prosperity (which has

A Covenant or Chapter House?

Arguably, the two most powerful covenants in the Tribunal, Durenmar and Fengheld, have different preferences about this new establishment. Durenmar wants to see a politically neutral covenant, broadly respecting the old traditions, in order to help pull the Tribunal together. Fengheld would prefer to found a new chapter house in the Rhine Gorge — this would boost their numbers, establishing them as a true giant of the Tribunal. Fengheld will therefore make seemingly

Story Seeds: Sponsor's Gifts

One of the sponsors presents a gift of a strange magic item. When asked what it does, the magus merely offers up an enigmatic smile and hints to its activation. Are the magi brave enough to try it out?

One of the sponsors unexpectedly presents extravagant gifts, impressing the Tribunal with generosity towards the new covenant. However, once the Moon Duration Imaginem spells wear off, the gifts are revealed to be far more mundane, even somewhat insulting. This is a forewarning of that sponsor's true feelings towards the characters' efforts.

Companions

As the magi begin to settle in at their chosen site, they may befriend certain noteworthy persons, who may be played as companion characters. Possibilities include forester (for example, Jarvis from Semita Errabunda), merchant, priest, monk, ship's captain, architect, minor noble, or someone linked to one of the faerie courts, each of whom may be useful to the covenant in certain ways. Some of the characters described in this chapter (Torven, David ben David) are suitable and may be chosen by players. Since a player rarely adventures with both his companion and his magus at the same time, these two characters should ideally be dissimilar.

Albertus Magnus

Albertus Magnus, also known as Albert of Cologne, was born in Bavaria in 1206. If your saga follows real history, he grows to become arguably the most talented natural magician and philosopher of his time. He might come into contact with your magi or even be recruited into the Order of Hermes.

Educated in Padua, Albertus joins the Dominican order in the early 13th century and studies at Bologna. He travels widely and teaches at Cologne, Regensburg, Hildesheim, Freiburg, and Strassburg, before moving to Paris in 1245. In 1260 he is appointed bishop of Regensburg. He produces works on theology, the natural sciences, alchemy, astrology, and the mantic arts (divination from dreams), all of which is compatible with his Christian belief, he argues.

generous offers of support to the magi, if they will agree to join their covenant in this fashion. Access to their considerable resources, and not needing to seek sponsorship for the formation of a new covenant, may be attractive, at least in the short term. However, the magi would, to a large extent, be sacrificing their independence. Some of them may be in favor of forming such a chapter house (probably those that were apprenticed at Fengheld), while others prefer sticking to Durenmar's original plan. If they are to stay together, they need to find a solution accommodating both parties.

for providing a sponsor, unless they perceive the proposal as a direct threat. It is also not necessary to convince an entire covenant; the sponsorship of one sole magus (who may not necessarily agree with his fellows) suffices. The most sensible time for such politicking is the days immediately preceding the formal start of the next Tribunal gathering at Durenmar.

THE RECEIVING OF GIFTS

Each sponsor presents a gift to the nascent covenant. The nature and magnificence (or otherwise) of this donation reflects the greatness of the sponsor covenant, as well as its attitude towards the new covenant. Those whose sponsorship was grudging at best are unlikely to give anything of any great value, but at least some of these gifts should prove of significant worth or usefulness, such as books, magic items, valuables, or grogs. Some gifts are presented immediately, others are merely promised and delivered in subsequent seasons (or years).

Seeking Tribunal Approval

A restrictive and bureaucratic provision of the Rhine Tribunal (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, On the Founding of Covenants) stipulates that a prospective covenant must be sponsored by one magus from every other covenant in the Tribunal. Securing promises of sponsorship is likely to involve making all kinds of promises in return, so that the prospective covenant ends up owing a number of debts and favors. The pawns of any magus trained in the Rhine will probably be willing to act as a sponsor from his covenant. Also, Murion will likely throw the weight of Durenmar behind the proposal. It should be born in mind that failure to provide a sponsor reflects badly on a covenant, therefore most covenants will agree to fairly modest terms in exchange

covenants, although steering a neutral course may be possible with some skill. (Durenmar and Fengheld are rivals, but certainly not enemies.) In either case, although the magi will have little power themselves to begin with, they may nevertheless play a significant role in determining the balance of power within the Tribunal.

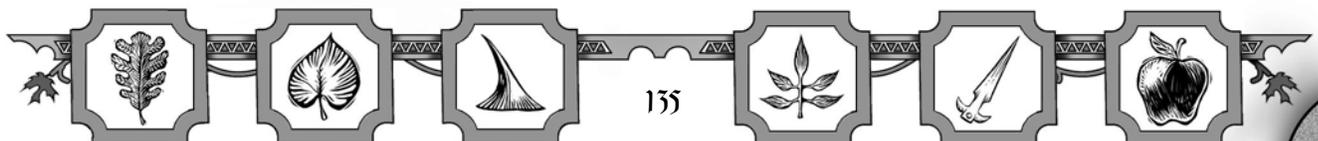
An issue that may sooner or later arise is that a faction of the northwestern covenants develops — the so-called Lotharingians — wishing to secede from the Rhine Tribunal in order to more freely allow themselves dealings with the mundanes (see Chapter 3: Tribunal History and Customs, The Lotharingian Tribunal). Finding themselves at the border of these two regions, the player covenant would have to choose between loyalty to Durenmar and the ancient traditions of the Tribunal, or granting themselves a freer hand in mundane meddling and a potentially greater say in a smaller Tribunal.

Hermetic Politics

The magi will find it difficult to avoid becoming embroiled in the Tribunal's politics. They are expected to choose a gild to join (likely not all the same), and thus become involved in the politics of that gild. In choosing between forming a covenant of their own or a chapter house of Fengheld, they are straightaway having to choose between two powerful

Survival and Settling In

The new covenant or chapter house will face a number of challenges and story possibilities. Mundane involvement is inevitable (unless the characters choose the path of complete retreat to the forest) — the region is densely populated by



The Business of Toll-Gathering

The magi will early on consider the problem of how to secure significant funds for the prosperity of their covenant. After all, paying for the upkeep of buildings, grogs, and labs is certainly not cheap. An obvious and potentially lucrative possibility, if they establish themselves in a fortified position in the Rhine Gorge itself, is the charging of tolls.

IMPERIAL TOLL LEVELS

Small rowboat (5 persons or less) — 1d
Large rowboat or fishing vessel — 2d
Small ship (10 tons capacity or less) — 4d
Single-masted ship — 8d
Large ship (two or more masts) — 12d

These are the prices set by the emperor, which those levying “just” tolls (with his permission) are obliged to abide by. Those levying “unjust” tolls are free to set their own levels, although higher prices will likely attract additional resentment and resistance to payment. On a typical day, at least two dozen vessels of

various types will pass by a toll station, providing a daily income of 10 schillings or more — this is sufficient to feed a couple of hundred peasants or maintain a typical castle. However, the tolls need an effective means of enforcement, both to protect against rival toll-gatherers and to ensure payment. If a toll station is perceived to be weak, or their force is a bluff, sooner or later ships will try to run the tolls, especially if the prices are excessive. Word spreads quickly among ship captains about any changes among the toll stations.

BY LAND OR BY RIVER?

Despite the widespread imposition of tolls, the transportation of goods along the Rhine is generally preferable to the overland alternative and remains a profitable endeavor. In making this choice, a merchant has to balance an equation involving the risk of a ship foundering (based partly on the experience and competence of the crew) versus the risks of

overland portage (such as banditry), and the likely tolls imposed on either route. Portage is generally slower and less convenient, therefore river transport is preferred unless its risks or costs are significantly higher. However, close to half of the merchants choose to avoid the risks of the Bingen Hole and instead portage overland from Rudesheim to Lorch. Recently, some merchants have started going further overland from Rudesheim as far as Kaub. Although difficult, this route bypasses several tolling stations on the river. The count of Katzenelnbogen has noticed this, however, and has started imposing tolls on this overland traffic at Kaub. No matter which route the merchants take, there is usually someone there to charge a toll.

THE RHINE LEAGUE

The number of tolling stations slowly grows, and by the middle of the 13th century there are a dozen between Mainz and Cologne — a barely manageable number. Amid the imperial power vacuum of the Interregnum in the 1250s, however, the number of stations doubles in just four years, as the severity of the robber-baron problem increases rapidly. Merchants struggle to stay in business, and legitimate toll-gatherers suffer with an ever dwindling share of the take — the system only works for so long as there are a moderate number of toll-gatherers with acceptable toll levels.

An alliance, the Rhine League, arises, founded by Mainz and Worms to protect the interests of their merchants, and is soon joined by many other cities, the princely nobility (the legitimate toll-gatherers, including the three archbishops and the Count Palatine), and a number of lesser nobles. The League seeks suppression of unjust tolls through both trade sanctions and the destruction of robber-baron castles. It disbands after only three years, having largely met its aims, successfully besieging or destroying nearly a dozen castles and unseating several robber-barons.

At least, this is what happens if your saga follows real history exactly — you should, however, feel free to adjust any details as suits your story needs. The Rhine League will likely be a formidable challenge for any covenant that has set itself up as robber-barons, or that is allied with them — it has a great deal of resources at its disposal and the ability to raise a large army, to say nothing of having God on its side.



powerful nobles, archbishops, and merchants. However such people also provide the potential or temptation for the gain of significant wealth or influence. If they choose the city site, there are many possibilities. At the island site, the charging of tolls is the most immediately obvious profitable endeavor. The magi would not be alone in collecting tolls without formal permission, but a certain measure of martial power is required for enforcement. The forest site provides a more conventional challenge of survival — how to clothe, shelter, feed, and protect themselves to a standard befitting magi, while hidden away in the wilderness.

Rhine. In return, his dynasty (and any kingdoms or wise men who follow in his footsteps) was doomed to fail within seven decades. The Burgundian kingdom did indeed fall, defeated by Attila the Hun. The power of the Merovingian kings failed, and even the empire of Charlemagne was eventually fractured by attacks of Norsemen. The covenants and noble families of the Rhine Gorge have likewise shared this fate, all failing within seven decades. Should this curse be broken, it may be possible to reveal the lost Rhinegold, and other treasures. But perhaps this would require the untaming of the powerful elemental spirit of the river itself? This may be linked to the schemes of Schwall of Bjornaer (see Chapter 4: The Forest, The Path of the Heartbeast).

temptation, agreeing to sign away their souls to a powerful devil after a period of 70 years in return for many gifts. Rudiaria thus grew to great power, even at one time holding the corrupt archbishop Hatto II of Mainz under its sway. But when the appointed time came, the magi — now fearing their fate — attempted to cheat their way out of the bargain. They failed, and their covenant was destroyed battling the forces of Hell in a great conflagration. In retribution, this powerful devil lured the later covenants of the region into temptation and to their falls in a similar timeframe. This might be linked to another infernal-oriented saga plan (see Chapter 11: Rhine Sagas, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea).

The Curse

One possible long-term focus of the saga is the purported curse of the Rhine Gorge. If such a curse does indeed exist, the characters may gradually accumulate clues, with sinister threats arising as the manifestation of the curse. The saga may be designed to reach its climax in about seven decades, as these forces gather and the doom of the covenant and nature of the curse becomes clear. The magi face destruction, unless they are able to prevail where their predecessors have failed, by defeating the curse and establishing a Hermetic center of power that will endure.

There are a number of possible causes of the Curse of the Rhine Gorge. Below are four suggestions, each associated with one of the four supernatural realms. (Or maybe there is no curse, other than the misfortune the magi of the region have brought upon themselves?)

THE REVENGE OF THE NIBELUNGS (MAGIC)

As told in the Nibelungenlied, the hero Siegfried cheated the ancient races of dwarves and giants who first tamed the

THE RIVALRY OF THE COURTS (FAERIE)

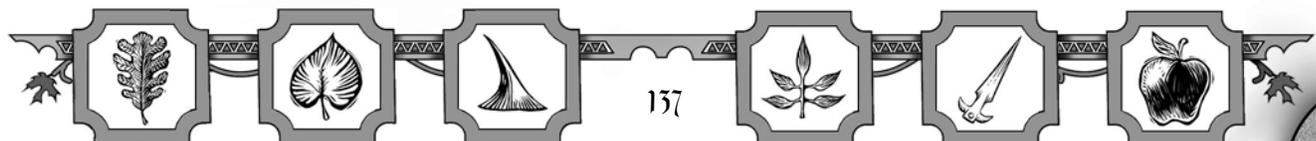
Since time immemorial, the two faerie courts on opposite sides of the river have played out a game, using the nobles of the Rhine Gorge as their pawns. Due to the ancient rules of this game, the "board" must be cleared after 77 years, and then the game started anew, resulting in the loss of any nobles, covenants, or even kingdoms that may have unknowingly been under their sway. The characters may be clued in on this given the 77 years between the destruction of each of the covenants of the Rhine Gorge. The games go back more than a thousand years, when the river formed the frontier between Roman and barbarian lands. The Romans were the pawns of the Court of Dark Summer, and the barbarians the pawns of the Court of Bright Winter. In a later round of the game, the summer court adopted the Burgundians and the winter court the Huns; the plays of the game are reflected and recorded in the events of the Nibelungenlied.

THE PACT OF RUDIARIA (INFERNAL)

The first covenant in the Rhine Gorge succumbed to the lure of infernal

THE CORRUPTION OF THE MEROVINGIANS (DIVINE)

In the 5th century, the Merovingians, great Christian wizard-kings, rose to ascendancy as part of God's plan. Merovech himself was descended from David and in possession of the Holy Grail. However, within seven decades, his descendants became corrupted, battling between themselves, and the lineage fell from grace. God instead blessed the mayoral (Carolingian) dynasty, cursing the endeavors of all wizards in the region to fail in the same time as it had taken the Merovingians to fall. Unfortunately, the Order of Hermes shares in this fate. Indeed, a quick glance at the geopolitics of the Rhine Gorge reveals that God's plan clearly favors the Church above all else — three powerful archbishops rule unchallenged with great estates. Only those magi and wizards who have demonstrated humility and piety (which the former covenants did not), such as the pious Larta maga Hildegard of Bingen, have any part of his plans and have met with success. Perhaps by seeking out the knowledge and writings of Hildegard, and the counsel of future saint and natural magician Albertus Magnus, the magi might find the path to enlightenment and prove their worth in the eyes of the Lord.



Appendices

Appendix A: Languages and Names

LANGUAGES IN GERMANY

The following Living Languages are spoken in Germany and bordering lands. Each consists of several distinct regional dialects, which are given in parentheses; most characters should take the appropriate one as a specialty. For West Norse and French, only the dialects commonly encountered in Germany have been listed. Educated or well-traveled speakers will have tried hard to rid themselves of their dialect, and may have standard specialties (see *Ars Magica* 5th Edition, page 66).

- High German (Swabian, Franconian, Bavarian, Swiss, Yiddish)
- Low German (Saxon, Pomeranian, Friesian, Flemish)
- West Slavonic (Sorbian, Polish, Czech, Slovak)
- West Norse (Danish)
- French (Norman)

High German is spoken by the largest number of people, in the central and southern areas of Germany. Yiddish, a hybrid of High German and Hebrew, is the mother tongue of German Jews, who mostly live in city enclaves. Low German is spoken in the northern lowlands of Germany, and the Saxon dialect is becoming the *lingua franca* for Baltic trade. Norman French (a dialect of the northern French language referred to as *Langue d'oïl*) is spoken in the western parts of Lower and Upper Lorraine. Sorbian (Wendish) is the language of the Sorbs (Wends), and is

spoken in Lusatia and Rügen, and partly in Brandenburg and Pomerania. Czech is spoken in Bohemia and Moravia. However German migration into the Eastern Marches means that either High or Low German is likely to be understood to some extent by the middle and upper classes.

These languages are inter-related to some extent, and the speaker of one language may find the speaker of another language intelligible. The following modifiers apply to the base language (ignore dialect specialties, if applicable):

- Same language, different dialects: -1 penalty to both speakers
- High German vs Low German: -2 penalty to both speakers
- High German (Yiddish only) vs Hebrew: -2 penalty to both speakers
- Low German vs West Norse: -3 penalty (only -2 if Saxon dialect) to both speakers
- Low German vs English: -3 penalty (only -2 if Friesian dialect) to both speakers
- High German vs West Norse or English: -4 penalty to both speakers

Exempli gratia: A character with High German 5 (Bavarian) speaks to fellow Bavarians with an effective score of 6, High German speakers with no dialect with an effective score of 5, Franconians with an effective score of 4, all Low German speakers with an effective score of 3, and can even communicate basic concepts to Englishmen (effective score 1).

DEAD LANGUAGES

- East German (Gothic, Vandalic, Burgundic)

German Names

A list of suggested medieval German names is given below. Names in bold are

those most commonly occurring; some names have an English equivalent that is listed in parentheses.

MALE NAMES

Adam, Adolf, Albert, **Albrecht**, **Andreas** (Andrew), Anshelm, **Arnold**, Arnulf, Augustin, Baldermar, Baldwin, Bartel, **Berchtold**, **Bernhard**, Berthold, Bertram, Burgolt, Burkhard, **Caspar**, Christoph, Clemens (Clemence), **Conrad**, Daniel, David, Dideric, Dietmar, **Dietrich**, Ditwin, **Eberhard** (Edward), Eckehard, Eginolf, Emelric, Erwin, Fabian, **Franz** (Frank), Friedebert, **Friederich** (Frederick), Gerhard, Gerlac, Gotschalg, **Gottfried** (Godfrey), Gotwin, Gregor (Gregory), **Günther**, Guntram, Hagen, Hans, **Hartmann**, Hartmut, **Heinrich** (Henry), Heidolf, Helfric, Herbord, **Hermann**, Hertwig, Hildebrand, Holger, Hugo, **Jacob**, **Johannes** (John), Jörg (George), Karl (Charles), Lambert, **Lorenz** (Laurence), Ludold, Ludwig (Louis), Lukas (Luke), **Marcus** (Mark), **Martin**, **Mathias** (Matthew), Meffrid, Meingot, Merbot, **Michael**, **Nicolaus**, Nidung, Ortlieb, Ortof, Ortwin, Oswald, **Otto**, **Paul**, **Peter**, Philipp, Reinhart (Richard), Rupert, Rüdiger, Rudolf, Ruprecht, **Siegfried**, Sigenand, **Sigmund**, Sifrid, **Stefan** (Stephen), **Simon**, Theoderich (Theodore), **Thomas**, Traugott, Tristram, Trutwin, **Ulrich**, Urban, Valten, Vincent, Volker, Volkmar, **Walther**, Weccelo, **Werner**, **Wiker**, **Wilhelm** (William), Wilrich, Wigand, Winand, Withekind, Wittich, Wolfhart, Wolfgang, Wolfram, Wolkan.

FEMALE NAMES

Adelheid (Adelaide), Adelinde, **Agathe** (Agatha), Agnethe, Agnes, Alice, Almut, Amalie, Andrea, **Anna** (Anne), Barbara, Beate, Benedicta, Berchte, Berta, Bin-

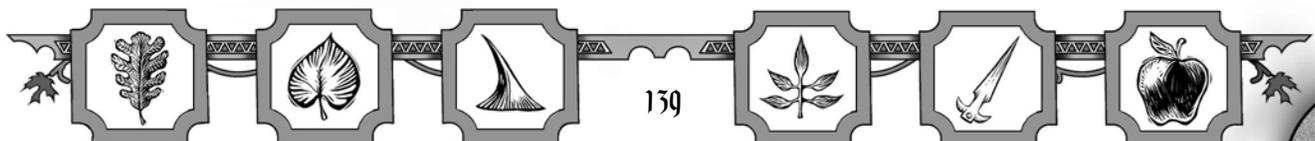
hild, Bringfriede, Brunhilde, Cecilia, Clare, Clothilda, Constance (Constance), Christine, Demut, Dorothy, Elisabeth, Else, Eneide (Enith), Engeltraud, Friederica, Fye, Gele, Gerdhild, Gertrud (Gertrude), Grete, Guda, Gudrun, Gunhilda, Hannelore, Hedwig, Heidindrud, Heike, Helga, Henrike, Herlinde, Hilda, Hildeburg, Hildegard, Ilsa, Inge, Ingrid, Irmele, Irmeltrud (Ermintrude), Irmgard, Isentrude, Jutte, Judith, Karlotte (Charlotte), Katherine, Kriemhild, Kunegunde, Liphild, Lisa, Lucie, Margarethe (Margaret), Marie (Mary), Mechthild (Mathilda), Meckil, Olinda, Osanna, Otilie (Odelia), Reinhed, Ricarda, Romilda, Rosamund, Serhilda, Siegrida, Sieglinde, Sofie (Sophie), Susanna (Susan), Trude, Ulrike, Ursula, Ute, Veronica, Wilhelmina, Winfrida.

Appendix B: Timeline

This appendix provides a summary of the major events of mundane and mythic history in the Rhine Tribunal, and a short excursus into the future.

Past Events

- 53 BC Julius Caesar produces the first written account of the German peoples.
- 51 BC Caesar successfully concludes his campaign in Gaul. The lands immediately to the west of the Rhine are conquered and divided into the provinces of Germania Superior and Germania Inferior.
- 38 BC Establishment of a Roman settlement at the site of Cologne.
- 16 BC Roman founding of Augusta Treverorum (Trier) as a regional capital. This is the oldest city in Germany and predates the Romans.
- 13 BC Founding of Moguntiacum (Mainz).
- 9 AD The Roman legions are defeated by the Cheruscan hero Arminius (Hermann) at the Teutoburger Forest.
- 50 Colonia Agrippensis (Cologne) becomes a city.
- 51-96 Construction of the limes fortifications, which secures Roman territory in the lands beyond the Rhine and the Danube, Germania Magna; the 2nd century AD marks the greatest extent of the Roman empire.
- 64 Establishment of a Mercurian temple at the later site of Durenmar in the Black Forest. The priests of Mercury attempt to usurp the primeval power of the Hercynian Forest that covers most of Germany.
- 74 The Black Forest Road is completed with the aid of Mercurian priests.
- 98 Tacitus writes Germania.
- 3rd century The Romans abandon the limes and retreat in the face of repeated attacks by Franks, Alemanni, and Goths.
- 306-337 Augusta Treverorum (Trier) reaches its zenith under the rule of Constantine the Great, becoming capital of the western Roman empire; construction of the Cathedral of St. Peter, the oldest church in Germany.
- 341 Some of the Goths convert to Christianity; Wulfilas becomes the first German bishop and translates the bible to Gothic.
- 4th century The Huns begin invading Europe.
- 413 The Burgundians settle in the city of Worms on the Rhine.
- 430-453 Events from the Nibelungenlied: the great knight Siegfried arrives in Worms, weds Kriemhild, and is later slain.
- 445 Attila murders his brother and becomes undisputed leader of the Huns.
- 451 Attila conquers the Burgundians at Worms and weds the widowed Kriemhild.
- 451 The Battle of Chalons — an alliance of Romans, Franks, and Visigoths lead by the legendary Merovech defeat the Huns and Ostrogoths in Gaul, ending Attila's westward conquests.
- 452 Pope Leo miraculously saves the city of Rome from the army of the Huns.
- 453 The Burgundians war on the Huns and are destroyed; Attila the Hun is killed.
- 455 The Vandals sack Rome.
- 470-485 Successful campaigns of the Visigoth king Euric across western Europe.
- 476 Fall of the western Roman empire as Italy is conquered by the Gothic king Odovacar; the beginning of the Dark Ages.
- 481 Clovis, a Gifted descendent of Merovech, rises to become king of the Franks; the start of the Merovingian dynasty.
- 496 Clovis is baptized and becomes the first Christian Frankish king. His people follow suit, although paganism takes centuries to fade among the Franks.
- 507 Clovis has by now defeated the Romans, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths, united the Franks, and established a capital in Paris.
- 511 Death of Clovis, though his magical lineage endures.
- 561 Under Chlotar, son of Clovis, the Frankish kingdom has grown to include all of Provence, Burgundy, and Swabia.
- 567 Sigebert wars on Chilperic; the Frankish kingdom fractures and becomes corrupted.
- 594 St. Gregory of Tours writes the *Historia Francorum* (History of the Franks).
- 687 Pepin "the Large," of the Frankish mayoral dynasty, gives himself the title *Dux et Princeps Francorum*, and rules most of the Frankish empire. The power of the Merovingian kings is by now insignificant — they are little more than puppets.
- 7th and 8th centuries Irish and British missionaries begin work in the pagan lands of Germany to the north and east of the land of the Franks — Frisia, Saxony, and Bavaria.
- 718 The English monk St. Boniface begins his missionary work throughout Germany.
- 725 St. Boniface miraculously fells the Donar Oak, a great pagan relic, in Thuringia. The potency of pagan magics and relics begins to wane throughout the land, as does belief in the Old Ways. The power of the great Hercynian Forest is broken and divided among the numerous lesser and separate forests it has become.
- 731 Trianoma meets Bonisagus in his Alpine cave, becomes his apprentice, and learns his great invention, the Parma Magica.
- 731-767 Trianoma travels widely and contacts numerous wizards who visit with Bonisagus — many of these become Founders. Learning from his visitors, Bonisagus gradually improves his unified system of magic. The mysterious maga Merinita comes out of the wilderness and convinces the sorceress Bjornaer to abandon her shapeshifting tradition and join the new Order. Bjornaer is condemned by her former fellows, including the sorceress Gyongy.
- 738 Charles Martel, illegitimate son and successor of Pepin II, campaigns successfully against the barbarian tribes.
- 742 Birth of Charles (later Charlemagne), son of Pepin III.



751 Pepin III "the Short" becomes king proper, crowned by St. Boniface, the start of the Carolingian dynasty, as the last of the Merovingians is retired to a monastery. He is the first king to seek the Pope's anointment.

754-756 Pepin III campaigns south of the Alps and conquers Lombardy, establishing a German presence in Italy.

754 St. Boniface is martyred; he is buried in Fulda.

754-767 Bonisagus travels to Durenmar in the Black Forest and establishes a permanent base at the site of a ruined Mercurian temple, where there is room for many magi to work together.

767 Foundation of the Order of Hermes at Durenmar. Bonisagus and the other Founders swear the Oath of Hermes. The first Tribunal gathering takes place.

767-773 Flambeau departs Durenmar with a number of his apprentices to found the covenant of Val-Negra in the Pyrenees. Several other magi also depart after the Founding and establish other covenants, based on the Durenmar model.

768 Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks.

771 Bjornaer and her followers travel to the island of Rügen and hold a council. Thereafter, House Bjornaer holds a gathering there every twelve years.

772-782 Charlemagne campaigns at length against the pagan Saxons, and eventually conquers and subdues them. The defeated Saxons face either baptism or death.

773 Second Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. Procedures for lesser Tribunals are established: a Tribunal shall consist of at least twelve magi from at least four covenants. Founding of the covenants of Crintera, domus magna of House Bjornaer, and Fenistal, domus magna of House Merinita.

774 Charlemagne defeats Desiderius and becomes king of Lombardy. He confirms the "donation" of these lands to the Pope, and becomes protector of the Church.

780 Inaugural Rhine Tribunal of 919 at Durenmar: Founding of the covenants of Arae Flaviae in Swabia and Rethra in the Eastern Marches.

782 Charlemagne initiates schooling in the Frankish kingdom, and promotes literacy and education.

788-791 Charlemagne campaigns successfully in Slavic lands.

789 The Founder Jerbiton meets with Charlemagne, after having adopted a number of apprentices of the emperor's mage-smith, Carolinus. Charlemagne issues a decree outlawing sorcery and paganism, but permits "benevolent magic" such as that practiced by Jerbiton.

792 The last recorded sighting of the Founder Merinita — she departs to places unknown to seek the spirit of the wilderness. With the loss of its Founder, the covenant of Fenistal is the first to slip into Winter. The new Primus Quendalon founds Irencillia.

799 Amongst numerous administratia, Charlemagne initiates the office of "Count Palatine," a chief justice.

799 Third Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. Following this, Quendalon, the first Primus of House Merinita, enters faerie woodlands in Bohemia, leaving Myanar in charge of the House.

800 Charlemagne is crowned emperor in Rome; re-establishment of the western (Holy) Roman Empire.

801-802 Quendalon reappears, but Myanar refuses to recognize him as the true Quendalon. An internal struggle ensues in House Merinita, resulting in the death of Myanar and the loss of Fenistal. Irencillia becomes the new domus magna of House Merinita, which becomes dominated by faerie magic. The Elder Gild splits from the Hawthorn Gild.

807 The Founder Tytalus enters the Maddenhofen Woods in Bohemia to challenge the Queen of Faerie, and is not seen thereafter.

814 Death of Charlemagne; he is succeeded by his remaining son Louis "the Pious."

817 Fourth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

831 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera: Bjornaer speaks her final words to the magi of her House and disappears into the forest in bear-form.

832 Fifth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. From henceforth, Grand Tribunals will meet every 33 years, regional Tribunals every 7 years from 836 AD.

840-855 Reign of Lothar I.

843 The Treaty of Verdun ends four years of civil war amongst the grandsons of Charlemagne — his empire is divided among them.

850-948 Hercynius establishes a lineage of Bonisagus magi, and attracts others to his teaching.

855-875 Reign of Louis II.

857 Rhine Tribunal of 996 AA: The spirits of three Twilight magi famously return to the Tribunal gathering.

865 Sixth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. The boundaries of the Tribunals are formally set according to the break up of the Frankish Empire; they are also named as the Rhine, Normandy, Provencal, Britannian, Roman, Theban, Eastern, and Greater Alps Tribunals.

875-877 Reign of Charles II "the Bald."

878 Rhine Tribunal of 1017 AA: The Tribunal adopts firm rules concerning the voting of "retired" magi, ending two decades of controversy.

881 Charles III "the Fat" becomes emperor. By now the empire is beset by attacks from Norsemen.

885 Rhine Tribunal of 1024 AA: The Tribunal abolishes Arae Flaviae and Schwarzburg, and agrees to strict rules for the establishment of new covenants.



887 Charles III is deposed and the Frankish empire is split into five kingdoms, of which only one is still ruled by a Carolingian, Arnulf of Carinthia. He forces the other, Norse, kings to pay him homage.

896 Arnulf of Carinthia is crowned emperor.

898 Seventh Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

899 Arnulf dies seemingly of a stroke under suspicious circumstances; two hedge wizards are convicted of his murder and executed.

910 The empire is beset by attacks from all sides; Hungarians defeat Louis "the Child" at Augsburg.

919 Henry I "the Fowler" of Saxony is elected king.

929 Henry I issues a decree appointing his son Otto as sole king and heir, so ending the Frankish tradition of shared inheritance.

931 Eighth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

933 Henry I defeats the Hungarians at Riade.

936 Death of Henry I; Otto I "the Great" crowned.

941 Rhine Tribunal of 1080 AA: The Rowan Gild is founded by all the followers of House Diedne in the Tribunal, formerly part of the Hawthorn Gild.

955 In a great victory, Otto I inflicts a final and decisive defeat on the Hungarians at Lechfeld.

955-973 The Slavs and Danes are converted to Christianity. New bishoprics are founded in the Eastern Marches and in Denmark. A number of pagan Slavs retreat to Rügen.

962 Otto I is crowned emperor in Rome.

964 Ninth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

973-983 Reign of Otto II.

983-1002 Reign of Otto III.

990 Followers of Hercynius leave Durenmar to found Waldherz; first a chapter house, later a (disputed) covenant.

993 Magi from Crintera and Rethra sponsor the formation of the covenant of Grand Silesia, the easternmost expansion of the Order to date. The Bjornaer magi of Grand Silesia, along with the Bonisagi of Waldherz, join the Rowan Gild.

997 Tenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

1002-1024 Reign of Henry II.

1004 Rhine Tribunal of 1143 AA: The entirety of the Rowan Gild is

Marched, sparking the Schism War in the Rhine Tribunal. Magi of Tremere and Flambeau destroy the covenants of Oakdell and Waldherz.

1008 A group of Slavic covenants, including Rethra and Grand Silesia, break ties with their sponsors and declare themselves to be members of the New Slavonic Tribunal. Grand Silesia is destroyed in the same year.

1018 Rhine Tribunal of 1157 AA: The Schism War is declared to have ended. The Linden Gild arises over the next couple of decades.

1024-1039 Reign of Conrad II; the start of the Salian dynasty. He reaffirms the principle of sole inheritance, campaigns successfully in Italy, and wins the Burgundian crown.

1030 Eleventh Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. The New Slavonic Tribunal is given formal authority over the settlement of new covenants in Slavic lands, despite protests from the Rhine Tribunal.

1037 Conrad II defeats Odo of Champagne in a massive battle at Bar in Upper Lorraine.

1037 Introduction into the German feudal system of ministeriales (unfree knights).

1039 Rhine Tribunal of 1178 AA: The covenant of Fengheld is founded in the Harz Mountains, with the approval of the Tribunal, by veteran Tremere and Flambeau magi returning from the end of the Schism War in Britannia.

1039-1056 Reign of Henry III. He campaigns against, and secures the loyalty of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary.

1048: Aschlaranda, formerly of Waldherz, reappears at Durenmar.

1052 In the New Slavonic Tribunal, a number of Bjornaer magi formerly at Grand Silesia settle at the covenant of Pripet Maior. A cross-Tribunal alliance develops between Crintera and Pripet Maior.

1053 Rhine Tribunal of 1192 AA: The "Guardians of the Forest" ruling is made. Dankmar is occupied by Aschlaranda and her apprentice Schadrit, but is not recognized by the Tribunal due to Durenmar's influence.

1056-1106 Reign of Henry IV.

1063 Twelfth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. Wishing to rein in the power of the Rhine Tribunal, the Grand Tribunal rejects its claim over the Polish territory left by the fall of the Covenant of Grand Silesia. This land (along with all Slavic lands) is

granted to the New Slavonic Tribunal.

1067 Rhine Tribunal of 1206 AA: The covenant of Roznov is founded, and Dankmar finally achieves recognition as a Rhine covenant.

1074 The Peace of Gerstungen — Henry IV is forced to return the seized territory around Goslar to the Saxons.

1077 Henry IV is humiliated by Pope Gregory VII at Canossa.

1084 Henry IV returns to Rome and is crowned emperor.

1085 A major raid against Durenmar by forces of the King of the Black Mountain, a powerful faerie lord of the Black Forest, results in the death or capture of a number of Bonisagus magi and many covenantfolk. (None of those captured are ever returned and their fate is unknown.)

1096 The First Crusade — Crusaders destroy the Jewish quarter of Worms; there are massacres of Jews in Worms, Speyer, Cologne, Trier (where many choose suicide by drowning instead of forced baptism), Mainz (where many commit ritual suicide with knives in the episcopal palace), and Bohemia. Henry IV attempts to punish those responsible but is not supported by the Church.

1096 Thirteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

1098 Birth of Hildegard of Bingen.

1106-1125 Reign of Henry V, the last of the Salian dynasty.

1122 Proclamation of the Concordat of Worms, settling the Investiture Contest between papacy and monarchy.

1125 Lothar II is narrowly elected king.

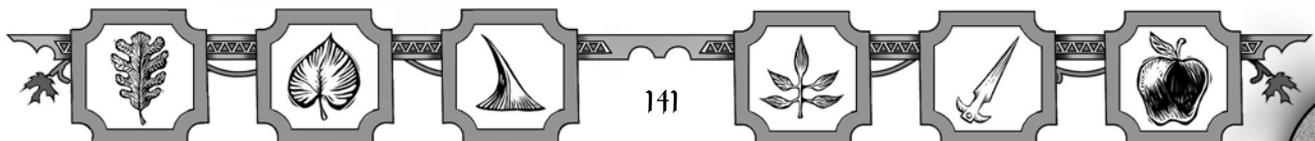
1127 Conrad III is elected anti-king by the Swabians; start of conflict between the Welfs and the Hohenstaufens.

1129 Fourteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

1137 Conrad III is elected king after the death of Lothar II; the start of the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

1144 Rhine Tribunal of 1283 AA: At the order of the Tribunal, three magi form the covenant of Oculus Septentrionalis, dedicated to investigating the Order of Odin.

1146-1147 The Second Crusade — widespread slaughter of Jews in many Rhine cities and Würzburg, amidst religious fervor. The Saxons mount their own campaign against the pagan Wends in Pomerania and the northeastern Marches.



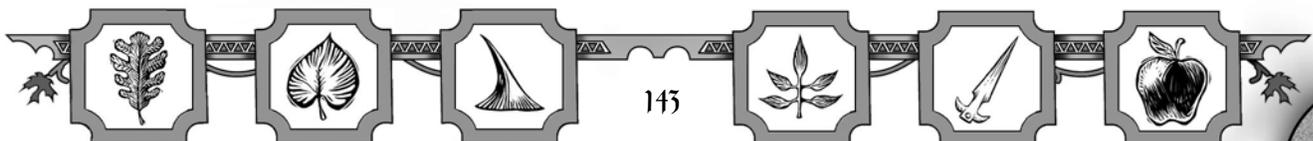
- 1151 Rhine Tribunal of 1290 AA: Dankmar accuses Durenmar of faerie molestation and of plundering faerie sites of the Black Forest for vis; with the support of Crintera, Irencillia, and Fengheld, Durenmar is fined ten pawns of vis to every other covenant in the Tribunal and restricted from taking further vis from faerie sites for fourteen years, unless a peace is made with the fae. The covenant of Trimore is founded, attached to the court of Emperor Conrad III, by magi of the newly formed Apple Gild.
- 1152 Conrad III dies before being crowned in Rome; he is succeeded by his nephew, Frederick I "Barbarossa."
- 1155 Ulm becomes a Free Imperial City.
- 1157 Henry "the Lion," duke of Saxony and rival to Frederick I, seizes the settlement of Lübeck and develops it into a city.
- 1158 Rhine Tribunal of 1297 AA: The magi of Oculus Septentrionalis are fined for not having fulfilled their charter in establishing a base to study the Order of Odin. Agnes of Irencillia extraordinarily announces a sighting of the Founder Merinita in Bohemia, but little credence is paid to this claim.
- 1162 Fifteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes. The Rhine Tribunal once again loses a boundary dispute over Poland to the Novgorod Tribunal (formerly the New Slavonic Tribunal).
- 1164 The Relics of the Three Magi are taken by Frederick I from Milan, and placed in the cathedral of Cologne.
- 1165 Rhine Tribunal of 1304 AA: The covenant of Treverorum are found guilty of interfering in the affairs of mundanes and the Church, given a fine of fifty pawns of vis, and warned in the strongest possible terms to repair relations with the inhabitants of Trier without delay. Oculus Septentrionalis announces its new location in Lübeck to the Tribunal. The Quaesitores, however, prompted by the current troubles of the Tribunal's other city covenant, Treverorum, insist on additions to their charter. The covenant of Terschelling is founded on the Friesian island of the same name.
- 1168 The island of Rügen is invaded by the Danish king, Valdemar I; the pagan temple of Arkona is broken and christianization of the island begins. Crintera is thrown into confusion and crisis.
- 1172 Rhine Tribunal of 1311 AA: Treverorum is abandoned by its sole surviving magus and abolished.
- 1179 Death of Hildegard of Bingen.
- 1179 Rhine Tribunal of 1318 AA: Primus Urgen of House Bjornaer accuses Oculus Septentrionalis of aiding the Danish invasion of Rügen, and kills its leader Prudentum in a Wizard's War.
- 1180 Henry's lands in Saxony are divided and he is sent into exile.
- 1186 Rhine Tribunal of 1325 AA: Crintera is denied permission from the Tribunal to expel the Danish invaders of Rügen under the "Guardians of the Forest" ruling.
- 1189 Hamburg is granted numerous trade privileges by Frederick I and becomes a Free Imperial City.
- 1182-1192 The Third Crusade.
- 1190 The Order of Teutonic Knights is founded in Acre, in Palestine.
- 1190 Frederick I dies on crusade — he is drowned while attempting to cross the River Seleph in Asia Minor on horseback.
- 1190-1197 Reign of Henry VI.
- 1191 Avarret of Bonisagus is elevated to Primus of House Bonisagus, marking a return to the conservative philosophy of refining the existing Hermetic theory.
- 1194 Birth of Frederick, son of Henry VI.
- 1194 Rhine Tribunal of 1333 AA, occurring a year late to accommodate the Grand Tribunal: Falke of Bjornaer fails to persuade the Tribunal to permit the defense of Crintera.
- 1195 Sixteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.
- 1198 Two rival kings are elected in Germany: Philip of Swabia (Hohenstaufen) and Otto of Brunswick (Welf).
- 1200 Rhine Tribunal of 1339 AA: Another covenant has been destroyed in the Rhine Gorge — Rheinstein falls to an army of irate mundanes, led by the archbishop of Trier. The Tribunal rules that magi are forbidden from practicing any form of magical activity in the Rhine Gorge, for the next twenty years.
- 1201 The Danish king Valdemar II "the Victorious" conquers Holstein.
- 1202 The Livonian Order of the Knights of the Sword is formed in Pomerania and Livonia to prosecute a crusade against the pagans of the Baltic.
- 1203 Falke of Fengheld covenant becomes Prima of House Bjornaer.
- 1204 The Fourth Crusade; Constantinople is taken.
- 1204 A great festival is held at the Wartburg in Thuringia.
- 1205 Birth of the legendary knight and minstrel Tannhäuser.
- 1206 Albertus Magnus (later to become a famous natural magician and saint) is born.
- 1207 Rhine Tribunal of 1346 AA: The new magi of Terschelling controversially rename their covenant Wadenzee, and completely rewrite their charter. After a Quaesitorial investigation, the Tribunal narrowly rules that this does not constitute a new covenant.
- 1208 Philip of Swabia is murdered by Otto of Wittelsbach, the Count Palatine, in Bamberg.
- 1209 Otto IV (of Brunswick) is crowned emperor in Rome.
- 1210 Otto IV is excommunicated (and later deposed).
- 1213 Before slipping into Final Twilight, Primus Avarret of House Bonisagus selects maga Murion as his successor. This is a deliberate snub to the arguably more qualified Occultes (who he deems too dangerous), and Murion's selection signifies the continued dominance of the conservative philosophy in the House.
- 1214 The Battle of Bouvines — Philip II, king of France, supported by Frederick, defeats the combined armies of Otto IV, the English, and the Flemish.
- 1214 Frederick II is crowned king in Aachen.
- 1215 Three Rhine magi found a covenant called Heorot on Zealand (technically territory of the Novgorod Tribunal).
- 1217 The Fifth Crusade.
- 1218 Death of Otto IV.
- 1218 Death of Berthold V, the last Zähringen duke of Swabia. The Hohenstaufens subsume much of the Zähringen lands.
- 1219 Nuremberg becomes a Free Imperial City.
- 1220 Frederick II grants a number of customs privileges at the Diet of Frankfurt. He then travels to Rome, vows to undertake a new crusade, and is crowned emperor. He spends the next several years in Italy and Sicily. The hedge wizard Michael Scot becomes his court magician.

Future Events

- 1221 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1360 AA.
- 1225 Thomas Aquinas (later a saint) is born.
- 1225 Frederick II marries Isabelle of Brienne, heiress to the kingdom of Jerusalem, in Brindisi.
- 1225 Engelbert I, archbishop of Cologne, is murdered.
- 1226 Lübeck becomes a Free Imperial City.
- 1227 Frederick II is excommunicated for delay in embarking on crusade (he and his army are struck with fever). The Danish king Valdemar II is defeated; Holstein and Pomerania return to the Holy Roman Empire.
- 1227 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1366 AA, held a year earlier than usual to accommodate the Grand Tribunal next year. Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1228 The Sixth Crusade. Frederick's lands in Italy are invaded by Pope Gregory IX.
- 1228 Seventeenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.
- 1229 Frederick II is crowned king of Jerusalem.
- 1230 The Treaty of San Germano — Frederick II and the Pope are reconciled; the emperor is absolved.
- 1235 Frederick II returns to Germany with a varied retinue of Moors and other foreigners, and a menagerie of exotic animals. He marries the English princess Elizabeth at Worms, and imprisons his rebellious son Henry. The Peace of Mainz — promulgation of the Laws of the Empire by Frederick II, the first imperial law in the German language. An imperial court is established and restrictions are placed on the right of private feuds.
- 1235 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1374 AA.
- 1237 The Livonian Order of the Knights of the Sword is reprimanded and subsumed into the Teutonic Order, after numerous excesses in Baltic lands. The Mongols attack and conquer much of eastern Europe. The Teutonic Order, seizing on the weakness of the Russians, attacks them from the west.
- 1239 Pope Gregory IX excommunicates Frederick II for the second time, labeling him a heretic and beast of the apocalypse.
- 1239 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1240 The Teutonic Knights conquer Prussia.
- 1241 The Treaty of Hamburg and Lübeck is signed, marking the beginning of the Hanseatic League; in subsequent decades they are joined by many other northern cities.
- 1242 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1381 AA.
- 1243 Famine and a plague of rats spread across Germany.
- 1245 Frederick II is deposed by order of Pope Innocent IV. Frederick's son Conrad struggles to retain control in Germany; the Church is divided between loyalty to the Pope and to Frederick.
- 1248 Cologne begins construction of a mighty new cathedral, which will be a more fitting home for the Relics of the Three Magi.
- 1249 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1388 AA.
- 1249-1252 The Seventh Crusade.
- 1250 Frederick II dies in Florentina in Italy. He is succeeded by his son Conrad IV. Aachen and Erfurt become Free Imperial Cities.
- 1251 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1254 Death of Conrad IV; the Great Interregnum (a period of nineteen years in which the imperial throne remains empty) begins.
- 1254 The right to appoint the German king is by now restricted to seven Electors (Kurfürsten): the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier, the king of Bohemia, the duke of Saxony, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, and the margrave of Brandenburg.
- 1254 The Rhine League is formed — an alliance of cities which successfully attacks a number of robber baron castles along the Rhine Gorge. The League supports the claim of William of Holland to the throne, but he dies two years later battling the Friesians.
- 1256 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1395 AA.
- 1257 Electors are divided between Richard of Cornwall and King Alfonso of Castile. In the absence of Alfonso, Richard is crowned in Aachen.
- 1258 Crops fail in Germany; famine and disease follows. The flagellant movement arises as a result, the members of which conduct self-flagellation to atone for the sins for which God is punishing them.
- 1261 Eighteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.
- 1263 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1402 AA, Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1267 Death of Tannhäuser.
- 1270 The Eighth Crusade.
- 1270 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1409 AA.
- 1273 Rudolf I of Hapsburg is elected; the end of the Great Interregnum.
- 1273 Thomas Aquinas, having studied under Albertus Magnus, completes the *Summa Theologiae*.
- 1274 Death of Thomas Aquinas.
- 1275 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1277 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1416 AA.
- 1278 The Battle of the Marchfeld — Rudolf I defeats King Otakar of Bohemia near Vienna and claims the duchies of Austria and Styria.
- 1280 Death of Albertus Magnus.
- 1284 The Pied Piper of Hamelin miraculously leads away first the city's rats and then (after he is given no payment) the city's children with his magical flute.
- 1284 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1423 AA.
- 1287 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.
- 1288 Cologne becomes a Free Imperial City.
- 1289 Rudolf I restores order to Thuringia at the Diet of Erfurt.
- 1291 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1430 AA.
- 1291 Death of Rudolf I; he is succeeded by Adolf of Nassau.
- 1294 Nineteenth Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.
- 1298 Rhine Tribunal Gathering of 1437 AA.
- 1298 Adolf is deposed and Albrecht, son of Rudolf I, is elected. Albrecht I defeats and slays Adolf at the Battle of Göllheim in the Palatinate.
- 1299 Gathering of Twelve Years at Crintera.

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