

Ars Magica

Faith & Flame

The Provençal Tribunal



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Erik Dahl has been writing for *Ars Magica* for almost ten years, and appropriately this is his thirteenth book for the Fifth Edition, the thirteenth Tribunal book of the line. He lives in far-off California, which he fancies to be an Arcadian analogue of Provence. He organizes the annual Grand Tribunal America convention every summer and hopes that the reader will consider attending. He was especially glad to work with Ben McFarland, who took everything that Erik did on this project and made all of it better. Thanks, Ben!

Mark Faulkner works as a chef at the Castle nightclub in Chicago. Formerly known as Excalibur, and long before as Limelight, the building was originally the Chicago Historic Society. Legend has it that it is haunted by several various ghosts and that occult rituals are conducted in secret rooms. Mark would like to thank everyone who participated in the creation of this book: the authors, the editor, the playtesters, Atlas staff, and God almighty.

Lachie Hayes lives a very long way from Provence in a land where bunyips rather than dracs are the most famous mythical water creatures. He'd like to thank Timothy Ferguson for the inspiration for the Coenobium found in the new House Jerbiton description, but also the dedicated playtesters for being the unyielding anvil upon which this supplement was forged by repeated hammering on the part of the authors. This is Jarkman's third contribution to *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*.

Ben McFarland lives in the wilds of Upstate New York, where he continues to venture into mysterious regiones in search of adventure with the priceless support of his wonderful wife, Mandy, his family, and the excellent advice of his steadfast friend, James.

CJ Romer first encountered this Tribunal via the early books *Mistrudge* and *Pact of Pasaquine*, which helped shape his idea of what *Ars Magica* should be. He really enjoyed writing for a book where the Hermetic culture is not that different from the one described in rulebook, which after Thebes and Hibernia made a great change. He would like to dedicate his efforts on this book to the faithful grog, Hugh Wake.



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Digital Version 1.0

Blanquefort.....55
 Soulac.....55
 Dolmens.....55
 Rosefleur.....56
 Knightly Matters.....58
 Knights Templar.....58
 Knights Hospitaller.....59
 Knights of St. James of the Sword.....59
 Langon.....60
 Marmande.....60
AUCH.....60
 Agen.....61
 La Romieu.....61
BAYONNE.....61
MIMIZAN.....64
 Magi of Mimizan.....64
 Pau.....65
 Tarbes.....65
 Lourdes.....66
CASTRA SOLIS.....67
 The Magi.....68
 The Covenant.....69
THE SERPENT'S VENOM.....69
 Fruit and Seeds.....70
 Sins of the Past.....70
 Schemes of the Present.....73

VI. The Pyrenees and the Hispanic March 75

DOMAINS OF THE HISPANIC MARCH.....75
 Kingdoms of Castile and Navarre.....76
 Pamplona.....76
 County of Labourd.....76
 Lower Navarre.....77
 Viscounty of Soule.....77
 Kingdom of Aragon and the County of Barcelona.....77
 County of Besalu.....77
 County of Conflent.....77
 County of Cerdagne.....77
 County of Pallars.....77
 Counties of Jaca, Sobrarbe and Ribagorza.....78
 County of Urgell.....78
 Andorra.....78
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS.....78
 Zugarramurdi Cave.....78
 Roncevaux Pass.....78
 Mount Perditu.....78
 Breach of Roland.....79
 The Mallos de Riglos.....79
 Les Gorges de Galamus.....79
 Cave Systems.....79
BELLAQUIN.....80
 History.....81
 Setting and Description.....81
 Culture and Traditions.....82
 Magi.....82

Covenfolk.....83
AEDS MERCURII.....83
 Setting and Description.....83
 The Magi.....84
MINIATA SOPHIA.....86
 History.....86
 Setting and Description.....86
 Culture and Traditions.....86
 The Magi.....87
 Covenfolk.....88
THE BASQUES.....88
 Basque Country.....88
 Language.....88
 History.....88
 Culture.....89
 Mythology and Magic.....89
 New & Modified Virtues & Flaws.....91
THE SORGINAK.....91
 Sorginak History.....92
 Akelarre.....92
SORGINAK MAGIC.....93
 Favored Abilities.....93
 Initiations.....93
 New & Modified Virtues & Flaws.....93
 Sorginak Powers.....94
 Casting Methods.....94
 Hex.....95
 Premonitions/Visions.....95
 Wilderness Sense.....95
 Summoning.....95
 Commanding.....96
 Ecstatic Magic.....96
 Warping.....97
 Epiphany.....98
 Debasement.....98
 Hermetic Considerations.....98
 Exotic Casting.....98

VII. Narbonnais 99

LOCAL NOBILITY.....99
TERRITORY OF RAIMOND VI.....99
 County of Lodeve.....99
 St. Thibery.....99
VASSALS OF TOULOUSE.....100
 County of Béziers.....100
 Béziers.....100
 Duchy of Narbonne.....100
 Narbonne.....101
 County of Nimes.....101
 Nimes.....102
 The Bramabiau Gorge.....102
 Grotto of Faeries.....102
 The Nemausian Spring.....102
 March of Provence.....102
 Avignon.....102
 County of Rodez.....102
 Rodez.....102
TERRITORY OF JAMES OF ARAGON.....103
 County of Gévaudan.....103

Montpellier.....103
 County of Millau.....103
 County of Roussillon.....103
 Perpignan.....103
VASSALS OF ARAGON.....104
 County of Foix.....104
 County of Provence.....104
LOCAL FLAVOR.....104
 Moorish Raiders.....104
 Jewish Scholars.....105
 Knights of the Order of Aubrac.....105
 Traveling Troubadours.....105
 Via Domitia.....105
COVENANT OF STELLA DURUS.....106
 History.....106
 Setting and Description.....106
 Culture and Traditions.....106
 The Magi.....106
 Covenfolk.....109
COVENANT OF ARA MAXIMA NOVA.....109
 History.....110
 Setting and Description.....110
 Culture and Traditions.....110
 The Pilgrimage to Rome.....110
 Seeking the Hesperides.....110
 Spirits of the Vineyards.....111
 The Magi.....111
 Covenfolk.....112

VIII. Arelat 113

THE LEGACY OF FRAXINETUM.....114
THE RHONE VALLEY.....115
 Avignon.....115
 Pont Saint-Bénézet.....116
 St Andre.....116
 Beaucaire.....117
 The Drac.....117
 Aucassin of Tytalus.....117
 Tarascon.....117
 Arles.....117
 Les Arenes.....117
 The Alyscamps.....118
 The Barbegal Ruins.....118
 Pont Flavian.....118
 The Alpilles.....118
 Les Baux.....119
 The Camargue.....120
 St Gilles-du-Gard.....123
 Orange.....124
 Plaine de la Crau.....124
EASTERN PROVENCE.....124
 Marseilles.....124
 Toulon.....124
 Of Purple and of Crimson.....125
 The Hyeres Islands.....125
 Massifs des Maures.....125
 La Garde-Freinet.....125
 Mount Ventoux.....126
 Forcalquier.....127

Aix.....127
 Iles de Lérins127
 Tropaeum Alpium127
 LOWER BURGUNDY.....128
 Vienne.....128
 Grand Chartreuse128
 Aix Les Bains128
 THE COENOBIMUM RHODANIEN.....128
 History.....129
 Setting & Description130
 Avignon:
 The Sub Pontem Chambers.....130
 Arles: the Mercer House
 at St Cyprian's.....130
 The Camargue: the Factory at

Trinquetaille.....131
 Magi.....131
 Covenfolk134
 Culture & Traditions.....134

IX. The Lost Covenant of Val-Negra 135

History.....135
 Delendar the Destroyer.....135
 The Founding.....135
 The Golden Age.....135
 The Schism War.....135
 Setting & Description136
 Into the Black Vale.....136

The Village of Perdut.....136
The Labyrinthine Caverns.....137
The Valley of Mists.....137
The Fortress of Val-Negra.....137
 Sites of Interest137
 The Guardian's Tower.....137
 The Black Tower.....137
 The Iron Door.....139
 The Grand Library.....140
 Inirel's Tower.....140
 The Catacombs.....140
 The Shrine of the Aerie.....140
 THE AERIE CLAN141
 Lifecycle of the Aerie.....141

List of Inserts

List of Inserts.....5
 Story Seed: Golden Treasures.....7
 Charlemagne.....10
 Fallen Covenants of the Tribunal.....11
 Virtue: Troubadour/Trobairitz.....13
 Virtue: Notary.....13
 What is Heresy?.....13
 A Note On Terminology.....14
 The Consolamentum.....14
 The Cathars and Pacifism.....16
 Playing a Perfectus.....16
 The Bogomils.....17
 The Crusade and Your Saga.....17
 Saint Dominic.....17
 Example Southern French Names.....20
 The Covenant Oath.....21
 A Tribunal for Every Magus?.....22
 New Mercurian Rituals.....26
 Consecration of Priamitus.....28
 New Virtues.....29
 The Procrustean League.....30
 Tres of Ex Miscellanea.....30
 Potential Parentes
 of the Provençal Tribunal.....31
 Toulouse Covenants.....33
 Toulouse, City of Towers.....35
 Story Seed: Residence Requirement.....36
 The Mystery of the Regio.....37
 The Magic Lake.....38
 Story Seed: The Borrowed Book.....41
 Story Seed: The Ghost of Na Geralda.....43
 Story Seed: A Rare Vintage.....43
 Story Seed: The Traitors of Lolmie.....43
 Story Seed: St. John's Eve.....44
 Story Seed: An Unrepentant Bishop?.....45
 Story Seed: The Daughters of Na Loba.....46
 Story Seed: The Scrabbling Dead.....46
 Story Seed: The Way of Secrets.....51
 Story Seed: Six Deadly Spirits.....51
 Cenodoxus Superbia,
 Lord of Pride and Envy.....52
 Gascony Covenants.....53
 Adrian, the Voice of Safety.....54
 Julian/Julia, the Tempter
 of the Way of St. James.....55
 Story Seed: The Hero's True Panopoly.....56
 The Helen of Gaul.....56
 Oriande la Fée.....57
 Story Seed: Ill-Met By Moonlight.....58
 Unicorn.....59
 Story Seed: Scourge of the Way.....61
 New Virtue: Saint's Aid.....61
 Matagot.....62
 Story Seed: Feed Me.....62
 Lou Carcolh.....63
 Rebecca Ex Miscellanea and Sorgina.....65
 Sarda Whale.....66
 Story Seed: Time is Short.....66
 The Guide.....70
 The Serpent.....72
 The Stone.....74
 Tangled Ties.....76
 Story Seed: A Timeless Monk.....76
 Story Seed: The Bitter Lord.....76
 Covenants of the Pyrenees.....77
 Story Seed: Who
 Watches the Watchtower?.....79
 Story Seed: Looking for a Lord.....79
 Story Seed: Contested County.....79
 Story Seed: A Giant Witch.....79
 Story Seed & Vis Site:
 The Cairn of Pyrene.....80
 Pyrene the Spectre.....80
 Story Seeds for Miniata Sophia.....87
 The Song of Roland.....89
 Common Basque Names.....89
 The White Lord.....90
 Estranged Relatives.....90
 Story Seed: Claim the Comb.....92
 Story Seed: Power, Unorganized.....92
 Male Sorginak.....93
 The Many Faces of Mari.....94
 Example Hexes.....95
 Potent Magic.....96
 Tradition Ex Miscellanea:
 Hermetic Sorginak.....97
 Covenants of Narbonnais.....99
 Vis Site: The Ancient Wine Press.....99
 Old Man of the Bridge:
 The Tempter of St. Thibery.....100
 Story Seed: The Wolves o
 f the Massif Central.....103
 Crown of Thorns Fragment Relic.....104
 Vis Site: The Abandoned Mine.....104
 Story Seed: A Pirate's Life.....105
 Story Seed: The Rampaging Golem.....105
 The Jinn Corsair,
 Howling Knife of the Dunes.....107
 Story Seed: Marriages of Calculation.....107
 Story Seed: Vis from the Stream.....108
 Vis Site: Heracleian Vis.....110
 Story Seed: The Expedition.....111
 Saga Seed: The Rise
 and Rise of the Coenobium.....114
 Not the Lotharingian Tribunal.....114
 Arelat Covenants.....114
 Boats of the Rhone.....115
 The Hermetic Toll
 and the Price of Hospitality.....115
 Drac, Lesser.....116
 Story Seeds: Beaucaire & Tarascon.....118
 Story Seeds: Arles.....119
 A Small Tarascon.....120
 The Ogre Under the Bridge.....121
 The Ruins of Glanum.....122
 The Legacy of Balthazar.....122
 Le Chevre D'Or.....123
 Salt for Life, Life for Salt.....123
 Story Seed: The Green Magi
 in the Trees.....124
 The Pirate Isles.....125
 Story Seed: The Mistral.....126
 The Ghosts of the Garagai Gorge.....127
 Story Seed: The Magic Milestone.....127
 The Lost Chapters of Portus Cottiae.....129
 The Carthusian Order.....130
 Is the Coenobium in Good Taste?.....131
 Notes on Urban Magic
 and the Island of Barthelasse.....131
 The Masques of the Coenobium.....132
 Saga Seeds: Joining the Coenobium.....133
 Story Seed: Lighting the Way.....137
 A Ruin Wreathed in Flowers.....138
 Shroud of Memories.....139
 A Covenant of Ghosts.....139
 The Adulteration of Flambeau
 (Malignancy, Autumn).....140
 Character Guide: Aerie Guard.....142

Chapter One

Introduction

A Note on History and Myth

Much of the history presented here draws on real historical events, but allows the rich myths of southern France, the exaggerations of the troubadour songs, and the imagination of Basque storytellers to take precedence. Some liberties have been taken to enhance story potential. This is a land of dragons, where witches lurk in village covens, shepherds command the winds and herbs, and the legacy of Rome lies buried just beneath the bustle of daily life. Many mythic sites spring from more contemporary legends, while others have been woven from fantasy to make the tapestry more vivid.

Welcome to the Languedoc, the strife-torn lands south of France! Here is the home of courtly love and troubadours singing of ladies and heroes, where gender roles and traditions differ from the rest of Mythic Eu-

rope and the dominance of the Church suffers from the independent, sometimes heretical, good men and women of the Midi.

Further south, beneath the shadow of the Pyrenees and away from human settlements, dwell creatures from Basque folklore and even the occasional giant amid the foothills or woodlands.

Historically the stronghold of House Flambeau, the martial House's dominance has declined, even while they strengthened their commitment to noble codes and principles. Religious conflict tears the culture of Provence asunder, threatening the fields and towns of the Languedoc with the flames of war.

How to Use this Book

This book is primarily designed for troupes whose saga is based in the Provençal Tribunal, but sagas set in neighboring Normandy in particular may be drawn into the conflict and stories of the region, perhaps even migrating to the southern lands permanently in the wake of the havoc

wreaked by the Albigensian Crusade. Magi from more distant Tribunals may visit the Languedoc region as part of their official duties, during quests for Mystery initiations or in search of the magical treasures of fallen covenants and ruined Diedne enclaves.

These chapters provide background and details most characters would be expected to know about their region—but many of the overarching saga themes, story seeds, and game statistics throughout are intended *for storyguides only* and reading though this supplement without prior discussion may seriously affect your enjoyment as a player.

This sourcebook is a guide and reflects only one possible vision of the Provençal Tribunal in 1220. Any or all of the Hermetic elements presented here can be omitted or adapted to suit your saga. Likewise, although care has been taken to accurately present the complicated history, politics and geography of the region, this is not a history text. Your troupe must decide how closely to follow history and which additional resources help create the most rewarding stories.

Chapter Two

History & Culture

The weight of centuries of scholarship, culture, and romance lies heavy upon the Tribunal. From the ghosts of Roman glory to the strange magics of the Dark Ages, the echoes of a glorious past reach out to the turmoil of the present.

The Roman Provinces

The Provençal Tribunal comprises an area that Celtic tribes inhabited in antiquity. In what is now Gascony they were the Aquitanians, a Basque people. Greek traders, the Massalians, founded the cities of Marseilles and Trinquetaille as ports and traded upriver with the Celtic tribes of the eastern region, Arelat.

The coming of the Romans in 125 BC saw the division of the region that they called the Provincia in to two provinces. Novempopulania ("the Nine Peoples") looked to the Atlantic in the west, and Narbonensis formed the eastern district, looking south to the Mediterranean. Both regions were culturally and economically vibrant for the five centuries of Roman rule.

Only one major revolt marred the peace and abundance of Narbonensis. Tolosa (Toulouse) was the ancient capital of the Volques tribe of Celts. The Tolosates worshiped by sacrificing treasures sunk within the sacred lake on whose shores the city was built. In 106 BC, the Roman governor drained the lake to steal the golden treasures. The Tolosates were outraged, and a major uprising followed, assisted by the invasion of a Germanic migratory people: the Cimbri. The Romans suffered a series of defeats, and the treasures of the lake were lost after the Romans were defeated in battle at Arausio on the Rhone in 105 BC. The Romans returned in force and pacified the

region, but they never found the treasure.

In 419 AD the Romans fell back from the area in defense of Rome against the barbarian incursions, and the Visigoths swept down in to the region and established it as part of their kingdom. Arles held out for decades, the city only surrendering in 472, when it was overrun by the Visigoths. Even today, Roman remains litter the landscape, mingled with monuments built by faeries and giants.

The Coming of Christianity

The first followers of Christ brought the faith to the region. Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary landed at Saintes Marie-de-la-Mer in the years following the crucifixion, and many churches hold relics relating to them. Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead by Christ, accompanied the Holy Virgin and became the first Bishop of Marseilles.

The area remained mainly loyal to the

Roman religion however until the great Bishop Sernin of Toulouse (Saint Saturnin) suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Roman priests, being dragged to death by a bull around the streets of the city in 257. After his inspirational death the power of the Cult of Mercury was broken in the city, and Toulouse converted to the new religion, becoming a flourishing center of Christianity.

The Gothic Kingdom of Septimania

As the Roman Empire declined, the Visigoths settled the region. Arian heretics, the Visigoths served as Imperial *foederati*: barbarian troops stationed in defense of the empire. In return for military service, they were granted rights to settle in Narbonensis in 462. In 475 they relinquished their rights to Narbonensis east of the Rhone in exchange for recognition of their full independence. The Visigothic Kingdom was named Septimania, in honor of its seven cities. Toulouse became its capital and the

Story Seed: Golden Treasures

Rumors of golden treasures are common throughout the Tribunal. As well as the lost treasure of the lake of Toulouse, another treasure brought to the city and then lost to history was the riches seized in the Sack of Rome in 410. This included the legendary wealth and holy items taken from the Temple in the Siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70. Some of the holiest artifacts in the world may still lie hidden somewhere in the dusty lands around the city. There are also stories

of the *aurum Tolosanum* containing treasures from the sack of Delphi in 279 BC. Whatever the truth, all the legends agree that gold is still hidden somewhere in the region, and protected by a deadly curse.

When an ancient Visigothic tomb is moved during church renovations, a mysterious scroll is brought to the magi. It seems to contain encoded directions to a great treasure. Dare they investigate this ancient secret, and why is someone trying to stop them?

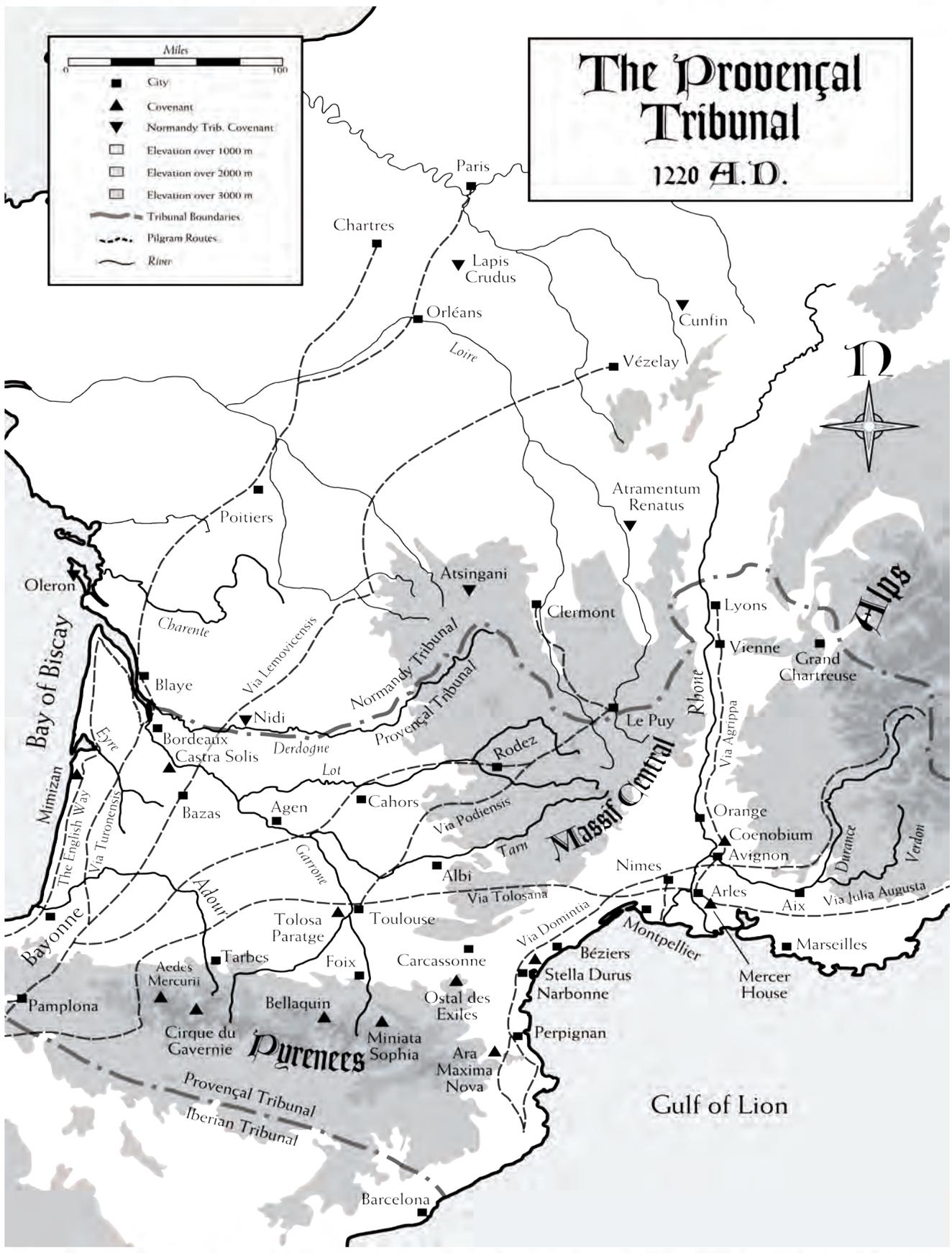
The Provençal Tribunal

1220 A.D.

Miles

0 100

- City
- ▲ Covenant
- ▼ Normandy Trib. Covenant
- Elevation over 1000 m
- ▤ Elevation over 2000 m
- ▥ Elevation over 3000 m
- Tribunal Boundaries
- - - Pilgrim Routes
- ~ River



whole region continued to bask in prosperity even as the Roman Empire collapsed.

In 507, at the Battle of Vouillé, the Franks, under the great King Clovis, defeated the Visigoths, starting the decline of Septimania as border areas fell to the new invaders. The Ostrogoths from Italy now intervened, halting the Frankish advance, and Visigothic kings continued to hold portions of Septimania (the region now called the Narbonne) until the 720s, even as the center of Gothic power passed to Barcelona.

The Visigoths converted to mainstream Christianity by the middle of the sixth century. However the influence of the old Roman religion and the remnants of the Cult of Mercury remained strong. Church councils condemned the persistence of local paganism, focusing on the custom of not working on Thursdays in honor of Jupiter. It was these pagan remnants and the last Roman priests (*flamen*) whose secrets Priamitus and Apromor were to seek, and whose legacy forms the basis of the Hermetic Cult of Mercury at Aedes Mercurii (see Chapter 6: Pyrenees, Aedes Mercurii) today.

The Frankish Conquest

By the middle of the sixth century, the Franks, a northern people, had largely defeated the Visigoths. Only in Narbonnais did the Visigothic Kingdom of Septimania survive. The Merovingian Frankish dynasty suffered from endless usurpation and royal murders, and a dark age of anarchy, pestilence, and famine descended upon the region. In Arelat, many of the former Roman cities fell to ruin and were abandoned, with only Marseilles prospering, and as drainage works fell into disrepair marshes took back land long cultivated. Local rebellions were common, and the local lords of Toulouse became increasingly independent, one eventually declaring himself Duke and becoming effectively independent of the Frankish throne.

In 719 the Moors attacked Septimania and took the capital Narbonne before proceeding north to Toulouse. The Franks sent no assistance, and yet in 721 Duke Odo, ruler of Gascony and Toulouse, defeated the Moors' advance. This bought time for Charles Martel and the Franks to prepare,

setting the scene for the great victory at Tours (732) and ending the Moors' advance into Europe.

The Franks conquered Septimania in 759, and the Pyrenees region of the Tribunal by the close of the eighth century. Frankish power now embraced the whole region, yet the Frankish dukes in the region craved autonomy. They rebelled frequently, and suffered devastating raids, pillaging, and burning of towns and crops from their northern overlords in response.

The Early Order of Hermes

With the foundation of the Order of Hermes, magi traveled to Durenmar for the First Tribunal meeting. As the population of the order grew, regional Tribunals were established in 773. These regions had no definite borders, but were instead composed of covenants located in more or less the same parts of the world.

Much of the Hermetic activity in the Val-Negra Tribunal at this time focused on the Founder Flambeau's war against the Moors in Iberia. He was the only Founder to live at Val-Negra, though Trianoma and Mercere would often visit. Other legends of Hermes who lived and practiced magic in the region included:

Apromor of Flambeau. Flambeau's first apprentice, he grew apart from his master and became the first Primus of the House in 820. He encouraged non-Hermetic wizards to join the Order, accepting pagans and worked with Priamatus to recreate the Cult of Mercury.

Kaeso, follower of Flambeau, founder of Castra Solis and member of the Legion of Mithras. Many consider him the first Hoplite. He died honorably in battle.

Elaine of Flambeau. Flambeau's second apprentice. She served as a Hoplite under Kaeso and also belonged to the Legion of Mithras, and wrote many excellent books.

Priamitus of Mercere. Mercere's first apprentice, founder of the Cult of Mercury. He and his followers established a temple to Mercury near Val-Negra, and with Apromor's blessing restored much

of the lost knowledge of the Order of Mercury.

Maugris of Diedne, one of Diedne's original followers. A solitary magus raised by faeries, he was cousin to Renaud de Montebaun, a paladin of Charlemagne's court, for whom he tamed the magical horse Bayard.

Gelon of Verditius. Verditius' first apprentice. He became Primus of the House in 801, though he lived at Val-Negra for decades. He was known for his many enchanted swords, and his followers established the Confraternity of Roland.

The Covenant of Val-Negra

Val-Negra, home to the Founder Flambeau, dominated the region politically. It was the largest covenant and included magi from many different Houses. The majority of the other covenants in the region belonged to House Diedne. Located deep in the Pyrenees, Val-Negra was an ideal location for Flambeau to train and quarter his wizardly army. Apromor expanded the covenant, establishing other Hermetic outposts at sites throughout the Pyrenees.

Raiders!

In the middle of the ninth century, Vikings established camps all along the western shores of France. Outmatched and outsmarted, and even outmaneuvered, the Franks suffered when the Vikings negotiated an alliance with King Pepin II of Aquitaine, who was seeking independence from the Frankish King Charles the Bald. In 844 Pepin was accused of apostasy after he allied with a Viking adventurer named Jarl Oscar and allowed him to raid up the Garonne as far as Toulouse.

Initially, the magi of the Tribunal avoided the struggle, until tales of strange rune magicians forced them to act against the Norse wizards. The Vikings were not the only threat, for Marseilles was looted and burned by Arab pirates in 838, by Byzantine freebooters in 849, and later by a rapacious

Charlemagne

The Frankish Carolingian dynasty faced constant rebellion from the southern lords, and King Charlemagne crushed the resistance in 770 en route to Spain. On his return from campaigning against the Moors in 778, the great tragedy of the Pass of Roncevaux occurred.

Moors ambushed and slaughtered Charlemagne's rear guard in the mountain passes, and this still forms the basis of many of the great romances told by the troubadours. The death of Roland, Bishop Turpin, and the others is a tragic tale every child knows.

group of Normans who began raids from a base deep in the Camargue.

There were many Diedne covenants in Gascony, but in the struggle against the Norse rune wizards much resentment developed in House Flambeau at what was perceived as the passive role House Diedne had taken in the defense of the Tribunal.

FRAXINETUM AND THE FOUNDING OF THE COENOBIMUM (889–975)

Two rogue Tytalan magi, who specialized in war magic and led a band of raiding Andalusian Moors, caused the most

bitter and defining struggle in the east of the Tribunal by leading attacks across the Arelat region. Their covenant, Fraxinetum, lay in the bleak basalt Massifs de Maures near the south coast and they provoked a series of disputes regarding the Peripheral Code and interference with mundanes. Fraxinetum was destroyed in 975 by a Wizard's War declared by the newly formed covenant of Coenobium Rhodanien. This alliance of Arelat covenants banded together to resist the incursions and remains a potent force in the region to this day. (See Chapter 8: Arelat, The Coenobium Rhodanien)

The Shaping of the Tribunal

In 865 the Grand Tribunal defined seven regional Tribunals. Val-Negra officially became part of the Iberian Tribunal, which also included the Pyrenees and the northern Basque country. Most of France became part of the West Franks Tribunal, except for the small strip of land from Friesland down through Burgundy and Arelat called the Lotharingian Tribunal. Over time the borders of the Tribunal shifted again, with Normandy and the Rhineland subsuming the northern half of Lotharingia as covenants located there began attending one or the other Tribunal instead. This left the remnant, now known as the Provençal Tribunal, as a Mercer House covenant at Arles, a powerful autumn Diedne covenant at Lyon, and a few other covenants nestled in the Rhone valley and along the Mediterranean coast.

The Schism War

Once the Schism War began, much fighting took place in Gascony as Diedne covenants fell to massed attacks from Val Negra. There was a great deal of activity among covenants in the Pyrenees whose magi attended the Iberian Tribunal. Val-Negra fell in the conflict, with survivors joining Aedes Mercurii and declaring themselves a Provençal covenant; many other covenants chose to join Provence at this time, partly to resist Tytalan expansion south into the region to claim the spoils of the fallen Diedne covenants. (See *The Lion & The Lily*, 16)

The terrible cost of the battles against Diedne covenants scarred the region and many once great covenants perished, their ruins littering the landscape, often all but forgotten today. The great tension between House Flambeau and House Tytalus forced a redrawing of the Tribunal maps, and resulted in the Normandy, Iberian and Provençal Tribunals as we know them today.

Askelarre (945–1011): A covenant founded by a coven of Hermetic *sorginak* or Basque witches spread throughout the Basque country and destroyed in the Schism War.



Barbegal (895–930): A watermill complex dominated by a trio of mage-smiths, this Verditiis covenant just north of Arles was abandoned in the early tenth century due to Saracen raiding of the undefended site. The surviving magi helped establish the Rhone based covenant of Coenobium Rhodanien.

Bentalone (1106–1207): A summer covenant destroyed during the crusade by the armies of Simon de Montfort when the castle they inhabited was mistaken for a Cathar stronghold and overrun in a surprise attack.

Berinor (1089–1210): A small Jerbiton covenant in the County of Toulouse that served as patron to many troubadours and troubairitz, and fell in 1210 after de Montfort's men dispossessed the lord who held the castle for the covenant. The survivors joined the Toulouse covenant.

The Birds of Camargue (901–970): A Bjornaer covenant in the swamp at the mouth of the Rhone. The magi merged with the greater grouping of Coenobium Rhodanien in response to the threat of Fraxinetum.

Campus Elysii (843–1009): A small group of spirit masters dwelling in the Alyscamps driven out by the expansion of the Coenobium. Although the group retreated to the Verdun Gorge, attempting to refound their home under the new name of Portus Termini, the settlement failed before the next Tribunal and was never officially registered as a Provençal covenant.

Donjon Leyre (955–1008): An early vassal of Montverte, at the fork of the Leyre river in the Landes, it was originally established as a forward base for raiding into the Basque-held Pyrenees. Its founding magi all perished fighting in the Schism War.

Fili Sinapis (1063–1215): A covenant established by Flambeau of the abandoned Normandy Liege of Sinapis (see *Lion and the Lily*, page 28), the site was abandoned in the wake of the crusade.

Fraxinetum (889–975): Founded by a band of Andalusian raiders and two aggressive Tytalus magi, this settlement provoked a series of disputes regarding the Peripheral Code and interference with mundanes. It was destroyed soon after

the defeat of the Saracens in 973 in a Wizard's War declared by the newly formed covenant of Coenobium Rhodanien. (See Chapter 8: Arelat, The Legacy of Fraxinetum)

Lapurdum (822–858): Founded around a mithraeum at the site of an old Roman camp at the mouth of the Adour in Gascony, this Flambeau covenant was abandoned under repeated pressure from Viking raids and internal dissension in the mid ninth century. Its ruins lie somewhere within the contemporary city of Bayonne.

Lariander (1192–1211): A Tremere Spring covenant in a faerie forest at Montgey, Toulouse, destroyed during the crusade. The magi were mistaken for a community of Cathars after a party of German crusaders was murdered by rebels while in the vicinity of the covenant.

Mistridge (1050–1209): This covenant occupied a magical tower situated in the Val du Bosque. A Wizard's War led by the magus Tres with his magical siege engines destroyed it, spurring a major Tribunal case. (See later)

Portus Cottiae (821–906): The original Mercer House and a Mercurian covenant controlling the old Roman pass from the Piedmont into Gaul, this multi-site settlement in the tradition of the Greater Alps was abandoned after repeated attacks by Berber mercenaries in the late ninth century.

Val-Negra (774–1012): Former residence of Flambeau the Founder and domus magna of his House, it is believed to have been destroyed in the last days of the Schism War. There is considerable mystery as to the reason for its abandonment, and even its exact location is now forgotten. (See Chapter 9: Val-Negra)

Windgraven (1060–1197): A covenant

famed for its cruelty and the necromantic prowess of its magi, it was destroyed by Mistridge after declining far into Winter. Few mourned the passing of its reclusive magi, who were widely suspected of diabolism, though this action may have inspired Tres' destruction of Mistridge shortly thereafter.

Yf (821–911): A Diedne covenant off the coast of Arelat, this site fell long before the Schism War to the depredations of Fraxinetum. One of its members joined the efforts of Coenobium Rhodanien in revenge but her line faded away just before the Schism War.

The Fall of Val-Negra

Little is known today of the fate of Val-Negra, once the most powerful covenant of the Tribunal. The destruction of the covenant in the Schism War is known, but the reason it never rose again is not. Given the glorious place the covenant holds in the history of the Order, the evacuation of the covenant and its replacement as domus magna of House Flambeau by *Castra Solis* might be expected to be better chronicled, but it is not. Curiously, even the exact location of the covenant somewhere in the far south of the Tribunal appears to be lost. The reasons for this are discussed in Chapter 9: Val-Negra.

The Counts of Toulouse

From the ninth century the counts of Toulouse were once again effectively independent of the distant Frankish

Fallen Covenants of the Tribunal

The troubled history of the Tribunal has left many abandoned sites and Hermetic ruins which may hold forgotten magical resources or provide sites for future covenants. As well as those listed here, nine or more other former Diedne covenant sites exist, stricken from the records in the aftermath of the Schism

War by the Quaesitores. Members of the Order are forbidden to seek them out, but now few magi know where they are not supposed to look. There are several other non-Diedne covenants that fell in the Schism War and have been lost to history, though their names can be found in old books and Tribunal records.

throne. Their fortunes waxed and waned but reached their zenith with the rule of Raimond IV, count of St. Gilles and marquisate of Arelat (1093-1105). This period saw the flowering of Occitanian literature and the troubadour culture for which the region was to become famous.

The counts of Toulouse constantly warred and conspired against their great political rivals: the counts of Foix in the Pyrenees, and the Trencavel of Carcassonne and Béziers. They often clashed with the bishops of Toulouse, who share judicial powers in the city, and sometimes ineffectively with the rising power of the *capitouls* (See Chapter 4: Toulouse). Generally the counts sought popular support and generously granted privileges and exemptions from feudal dues. As a result, the county of Toulouse has hundreds of knights (and some ladies) holding their own castles on rocky outcrops and fighting interminable wars with their neighbors, while sometimes becoming involved in the larger struggles between the Trencavel, Foix, the king of Aragon, and counts of Toulouse.

TROUBADOURS

Troubadours originated in Aquitaine and Gascony before spreading their tradition into Provence and later both Italy and Iberia. Early troubadours came from the nobility, but over time, troubadours sprang from every walk of life.

Troubadours write *cansos*, love songs, and *sirventes*, political songs, as well as courtly love poetry. *Cansos* revolve around themes of courtly love, where a noble knight expresses his devotion to another lord's wife, and yearns for her attention. She rejects his advances at first, but later grants him her favor, all according to the well understood rules of *fin amors*. Whether the romance was consummated carnally or not depended upon the individuals concerned, and certainly the ideal pursued a chaste, almost spiritual love, not a mere series of adulterous liaisons. (See *Lords of Men*, page 61).

Troubadours travel across the countryside, not as wandering entertainers, but seeking the patronage of a lord and residing for a while as a part of a court retinue when successful. Troubadours are rarer in Toulouse and Gascony since the Albigen-

sian Crusade began; crusaders often consider the itinerant artists likely spies or Cathar sympathizers.

The troubadour tradition often encounters opposition from the Church, from irate husbands, and from those who believe it leads to moral decline. In the Provençal Tribunal, it has a vast weight of tradition and custom on its side, although the recent crusade has damaged this. Many of the roaming troubadours who spread stories and news and once enjoyed the hospitality of southern nobles have been killed in the fighting, or seen the great ladies who patronized them forced into exile or killed by the crusaders. Both sides in the conflict have their troubadours; their French counterparts are known as *trouvert*, but the tradition is most strongly associated with the south, and much of the poetry is composed in the Occitan tongue.

There are also many minstrels and wandering players who perform the works composed by the troubadours, and who have also suffered from the poor fortunes of their former patrons. These patrons, often the great ladies of the isolated castles, the *chatelaines*, were just as important as the musicians and poets. Many have developed considerable influence and power in their sponsorship of the troubadours, and the webs of intrigue they can spin through cunning use of their infatuated lovers.

It should not be assumed all troubadours are sympathetic to the heretics (who are extreme opponents of sexuality) or are male. Female troubadours called *trobairitz* also exist, one famous example being the Cathar-hating Gormonda de Monpeslier ("Monpeslier" is the Occitan name for Montpellier).

NOTARIES

An outgrowth of the remnants of Roman law, notaries appeared primarily in Narbonnais in the 1140s, drafting contracts and charters, developing concurrently with the consular governments common in communes. Notaries were first self-proclaimed, but later appointed by both secular and religious leaders as a means of creating a public office which helped develop the community through the authentication of agreements and documents which could be

used in legal proceedings if needed. Their services helped stabilize communities and later notaries were prohibited from becoming clergy; those who took the tonsure gave up their membership to the notariate.

An Occitanian Tribunal

Because of disputes between Normandy and the newly-extended Provençal Tribunal, the 1129 Grand Tribunal ruled the border between Provençal and Normandy Tribunals would be defined by where the people spoke Occitan. Although initially unpopular, this distinguishing characteristic of the Tribunal has been adopted by all of the magi of the area, to solidify their claims to its vis and other magical resources. In fact, they have so embraced this legal point that many Hermetic documents are written in both Latin and Occitan, including Tribunal minutes and proclamations.

The Fall of Windgraven

In 1197 the covenant of Windgraven, situated in the south of the County of Toulouse was destroyed by magi from Mistridge in a justly declared Wizard's War. Windgraven had long had a dark reputation, and the necromancers who lived there had few allies. The covenant consisted of a selection of squat stone towers situated on a rocky plateau in the remains of a Visigothic fortress. The Mistridge magi magically bombarded it with giant rocks, almost leveling the site, in a grim foreshadowing of their own fate a few years later.

The Tribunal of 1207

Held at Aedes Mercurii, this Tribunal spent a whole day discussing the implications of the Church's attempts to suppress Catharism. Ultimately no firm decision was made, although Oxioun of Tytalus, leader of Aedes Mercurii, spoke at length about the need to avoid interfering in mundane affairs. Oxioun and the large bloc of Mercurian magi were content to wait out developments from their

mountain sanctuary despite the misgivings of the lowland covenants of the Toulousain, Narbonnais, and the Rhone Valley.

A few months after the Tribunal closed, the papal legate was murdered near St Gilles and Pope Innocent III declared a crusade against the heretics of southern France. Shortly thereafter Protantus, the Traditionalist Chief Quaesitor, died and was replaced by the more flexible Tibaut, a Transitionalist without Mercurian affiliations. The coincidence passed unnoticed to most magi, although the deaths marked the beginning of great changes in the mundane and Hermetic politics of Provençal.

Heretics

One of the defining features of the Provençal Tribunal is the prevalence of heretics in its borders. While heretics can be found throughout Mythic Europe, many heresies are limited largely to academics and theologians, and are not a general danger to the wider community. However, in Provençal, heresy has become so widespread as to form a serious challenge to the Church.

The Cathars

In the tenth century, the Provençal Tribunal saw the growth of a small heretical group, the Cathars. By 1220, the Cathar faith has become a major and entrenched regional rival to the Church. Their enemies call them Cathars, which means "pure ones," in mockery, or Albigensians after the town of Albi, a stronghold of the heresy. They refer to themselves as Believers, and regard themselves as true Christians, and the Church as hopelessly corrupt, and theologically in error.

The Cathars have developed a church structure of their own. Their "priests" are wandering preachers called Good Men or Good Women, or Perfecti. The Perfecti wear a simple black robe, fast regularly and live lives of poverty and service to the Cathar community. Their faith forbids them any food born of sexual union: eggs, milk, or meat. Fish reproduce asexually, so may be eaten. Perfecti carry a copy of the Gospels with them, and

preach renunciation of the material world as necessary for salvation. Because most people cannot live up to the ideal, ordinary Cathars usually only take the vows of the Perfecti as death approaches, donning the black robes and taking part in the single sacramental rite of the faith, the consolamentum.

BELIEFS OF THE CATHARS

Cathar doctrines vary. As heretics who have rejected the Church's authority, they are prone to internal disputes over doctrine, and Cathars have highly divergent opinions on religion, though the influence of

Virtue: Troubadour/Trobairitz

Minor, Social Status

You are not tied to any community and survive by performing, entertaining, or doing other casual work. You may take Academic skills during character creation and should have a reputation regarding the sort of material you produce and your adherence to the tenets of courtly love. The Wealthy Virtue and Poor Flaw

affect you normally, although if you are wealthy, you are supported by someone. Your supporter does not question your activities in any way, however.

Troubadour characters often possess virtues such as Famous, Free Expression, Inspirational, Puissant Performance, Social Contacts, True Love, and Well-Traveled.

Virtue: Notary

Minor, Social Status

Due to your training, you may take Academic Abilities during character creation; however, notaries may not be members of the clergy and are subject to secular law. Your responsibilities include drawing contracts, witnessing charters, verifying transactions and

documents, and affixing a specially designed seal. Notaries generally receive their salary from their employer on Christmas. Notaries only have jurisdiction in specific realms or towns, such as the County of Nimes or the city of Montpellier. The Wealthy Virtue and Poor Flaw affect you normally.

What is Heresy?

Heresy is the teaching of error as truth, the spreading of false doctrines. To be a heretic, one must remain within the faith in question—if you leave a faith, you are an apostate, and if you never held the faith you may be an infidel, but you are not a heretic. In Christianity truth is known through a number of sources, the most important of which are scripture (the Bible) and tradition (the teachings of the Church). Religious truth may also be known by special revelation (an individual's religious experiences such as visions or angelic encounters) and through natural theology (looking at the world and what can be established by empirical study of fallen creation) and by reason, where one logically examines the

nature of things. All of these can be snares for the unwary, where errors or demonic deception can lead one astray, and heresies arise where people think for themselves and choose to ignore the authority of the Church, and are misled or mistaken. It is the duty of the clergy to confront error, and correct it by teaching correct doctrine.

In *Ars Magica*, all the great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism) are by default true and share the Dominion (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*). Most Bogomils and Cathars, while dualist, still worship the Divine. Some heretics, however, are associated with other realms of power, and these groups are also discussed in this chapter.

the Cathar bishops is creating a more stable theological structure.

Cathars are dualists, seeing the universe as divided between good and evil. All matter and physical things are corrupt and evil; spirit is where goodness resides.

They ask "How can a good God allow the evil and suffering in the world?" and answer "Because the world is corrupt and ruled by the Devil." Humans are spirits ensnared in gross matter and suffering. As such, Cathars reject material things, and see procreation and childbirth—the bringing of another soul into this world of pain—as abhorrent and an evil act. Contraception is therefore a virtue, contrary to Church teaching, and mothers are of very low status, if not outright despised. Celibacy is a moral virtue highly regarded for this reason, while gluttony, avarice, and lust are despised.

Having also rejected much if not all of the Old Testament, they hold the Gospels and parts of the New Testament as the only true revelation. Some believe the God of the Old Testament to actually be the evil demiurge. They embrace poverty, charity, and love, but reject most Christian sacraments, including mass, baptism, and often marriage.

God would have nothing to do with the corrupt physical world, so he chose a pre-existent glorious being, Jesus Christ, to

enter the universe and allow a path to salvation. Some believe Jesus to be the second son of God; Lucifer was the first, but his rebellion and act of creating this universe caused the whole problem, and Lucifer has fallen to Hell becoming Satan. So Jesus entered the world as a pure spirit, taking on the semblance of humanity, but not participating in the world in any physical sense, for such a pure being could not actually incarnate. (This is the ancient heresy of Doceticism.) As such he was not crucified, merely appearing to be to deceive Satan, who tried to kill Him, and he did not actually die — the crucifixion and resurrection were symbolic spiritual acts, and the cross has no meaning to Cathars, who often despise the symbol as a sign of Satan's apparent victory. Furthermore the Virgin Mary holds no significance for them — she, after all, only appeared to give birth to Jesus, as he had no physical embodiment. The Cathars are Arian; they deny the Trinity and see the Holy Spirit and Christ as created entities, not part of the Godhead.

Finally, only spiritual sacraments such as the consolamentum are efficacious (denying the power of water in baptism and the bread and wine of the mass), and according to most Cathars they can only be administered by someone in a state of spiritual purity

and grace. This is in marked contrast to the Church's teaching, where the grace of God allows the sacraments to be efficacious even if performed by a corrupt or ignorant priest.

All of the Cathar beliefs expressed here are deeply heretical to the Church, and deeply offensive.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CATHARS

The Cathars historically represented a faith without a formal structure, except for the Perfecti. Following a debate at Lombers in 1165, however, they appointed bishops to preside over four dioceses, creating their own hierarchy. Some Cathars resisted the innovation, but the majority now accepts the system, and the number of dioceses has expanded to five.

Each of the dioceses has a bishop and two elected deacons, the *filius major* (senior), and the *filius minor*, all Perfecti. When a bishop dies he is usually succeeded by the *filius major*, and if a *filius major* dies, he is replaced by his *filius minor*. While women can be Perfecta, they cannot hold the rank of bishop or serve as deaconesses. The deacons are the administrators and treasurers of the dioceses, serving the bishops and dealing with mundane matters such as distribution of charity and the running of the houses which serve as gathering places for prayer meetings.

The five dioceses are Agen, Albi, Carcassonne, Razes, and Toulouse. Surprisingly perhaps, none of the bishops has yet been arrested or executed, and indeed the Perfecti are generally free to move about the countryside without interference. Only when the crusaders have first taken a town have executions occurred, and generally the Cathar structure remains unharmed, though Perfecti are careful not to be seen by the crusaders if possible, to avoid arrests, and public preaching is limited to areas where the crusaders cannot enforce their authority.

Six hundred Perfecti, equally split between men and women, survive mainly in the area around Toulouse and the Pyrenees where the heresy is strongest, and whole towns and villages of heretics can be found there. Cathar congregations also exist in the Rhine, Roman, Greater Alps, Normandy, and Iberian Tribunals. Cathars are simply too common and too visible for magi to ignore, and characters must learn to deal with the heretics in some way,

A Note On Terminology

As stated, the Cathars call themselves Believers (*Croyants*, Occitan, or *Credentes*, Latin), and their "priests" Good Men or Women (Occitan *Bon Homme*, *Bon Femme*). Outsiders call them Cathars, meaning "pure ones" and the "priests" *Parfaits* (French) or *Perfecti* (Latin), a jibe aimed at

their supposed "perfection." As the terms Cathar and Perfecti are far more common today, and as Hermetic magi probably use these terms to describe the group, this book uses the familiar versions, but Cathar characters and their supporters use the correct terms.

The Consolamentum

The consolamentum is the sacred rite of the faith, which baptizes the Cathar in the Holy Spirit and prepares him for death. It is administered by a Perfectus, and involves certain questions and responses, the Lord's Prayer and an exposition of its meaning in terms of the faith, and anointing with oil. It is vital not to sin or relapse in any way after it is

administered; it can only be given once and provides a Faith Point (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 74). As such, it is normally reserved for when death approaches. In the event death does not occur, it is common for Cathars to choose to starve to death, suffering the terminal fast to prevent the possibility of backsliding.

whether by accepting them or by attempting to drive them off.

THE CATHARS AND THE DOMINION

The Cathars, being aligned with the Divine, use the Divine column of the aura interaction table (ArM5, page 183). However, some odd but important exceptions exist. Churches and altars are not the center of Cathar-aligned Dominion auras; instead the auras are focused upon the meeting houses where the Cathars hold their prayer meetings, themselves typically mundane dwelling houses. They are rarely stronger than 1 or 2.

Cathars do not invoke the saints (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* page 87), and in fact do not pray to saints, even the Virgin Mary. The Cathars despise and mock relics; they do not carry them, though in fact relics work as well for Cathars as anyone else. Apart from the consolamentum, they have no sacraments, but attendance at a prayer meeting grants a single Faith Point until the Cathar next sins, which may be used as a Confidence Point. Sin being ubiquitous in the world, this rarely lasts beyond the day. Of course Cathars can still benefit from the sacraments, so they can be converted, baptized, and do penance, for example.

THE CATHARS AND THE ORDER OF HERMES

The Order of Hermes lacks a unified response to the Cathar heresy. While a number of Provençal magi embrace Cathar beliefs, others find the blasphemous tenets appalling. Some magi actively call upon the Church to take action against them, approving of the Crusade as necessary to save souls from damnation. Some argue that the falls of Lariander and Mistridge demonstrate how Cathar magi have brought destruction upon their sodales, justifying their delivery to the Church or Wizard's March. So far no case has been brought against any avowedly Cathar magi; however the tensions have led to a state of internal Wizard's War which has torn the covenant of Tolosa Paratge apart. (See Chapter 4: Toulouse, Tolosa Paratge) There is an Ex Miscellanea tradition, the Gorgiastic

Cathars, within the Tribunal who practice a magical form of the Cathar religion mixed with Criamon mysticism. (See Chapter 3: Hermetic Culture, Gorgiastic Cathars).

In turn, most Cathars distrust wizards or witches, and neither understand the Order of Hermes nor know a great deal about it. They are far more likely to attack those they perceive as sorcerers than the Church, as their pacifism often does not extend to supernatural entities and anyone casting spells or using magic is clearly a supernatural entity. Individual magi are fully accepted, and can even become Perfecti, but anything hinting at paganism or supernatural forces opposed to the Divine is usually evil in the eyes of Cathars. At least one Blatantly Gifted magus is believed to have lost his life at the hands of a superstitious mob of Cathars believing him a demon in human form.

The Waldensians

Not all heretics deeply oppose the Church like the Cathars. Some accept it, and long only to reform it. Most important of these are the Waldensians. Despite their enthusiasm for reform, they often stray into heresy. They were popular preachers who translated the Bible into Occitan, but 1215 saw the Waldensians condemned as heretics, even though Pope Innocent III believed them "good Christians." Waldensian characters may be modeled upon the Franciscans depicted in *The Church*, Chapter 8, as can their Dominican adversaries once they come to be organized in their efforts to convert back lost souls.

The Luciferians

Not all Cathars ally with the Divine realm, and not all claiming the Cathar mantle hold the same theological beliefs. Some extreme Cathar theologians call for the desecration of holy items and relics, an act considered terrible even by many other heretics. While many are casual diabolists who foolishly allow anger at the crusade and lust for personal power to tempt them down dark pathways of demonic lore, others are sincere holy men and women who

have made fundamental doctrinal errors, and see Lucifer as the savior of mankind. This heresy originated in the Rhine Tribunal, but has adherents here, hiding among the Cathars and slowly spreading their corruption. They are detailed in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 127.

The Albigensian Crusade

The recent history of the Tribunal has been marked by the atrocities and horrors of the Albigensian Crusade. This violence, now temporarily abated, will have had a strong impact on many characters from the Tribunal. The reason for the crusade is the prevalence of heresy in the region, and heretics can be found throughout the Tribunal, but the most infamous and numerous of these heretics are the Cathars, described earlier.

WINNING BACK SOULS

The heretics have existed for centuries, but in 1145 Bernard of Clairvaux was sent to the region to preach and bring the heretics back to the Church. He was only present for one hot summer, and met with success in Albi and Toulouse, but outside of the cities was met with scorn and insults. The heretics were denounced in 1163 at the Council of Tours, as were those who gave them shelter, and entered in to commerce with, or even fraternized with them. While the response to the various heresies varied, the Cathars were the main targets of this anathema, which had very little effect. As was said by the nobles of the region during the crusade, how could they take up arms against their own friends and relatives, people they had lived with all their lives and knew to be good neighbors?

In 1165 a disputatio took place at Lombers, where the Cathars met with assembled churchmen. Unsurprisingly, the Cathars were found to be heretical, but they were allowed to depart in peace. In

The Cathars and Pacifism

The Cathars are extreme pacifists, and take non-resistance to evil very seriously, just as they will not swear oaths, lie, or perjure themselves. When captured, most rejoice in martyrdom, walking happily to their deaths. Non-Cathar characters may well be surprised, annoyed, and frustrated when, after considerable effort to rescue a *Perfecta*, the imprisoned Good Woman condemns them for violence and remains in her cell to await death. However, after 1214, a new doctrine developed among some of the Cathars, mitigating their extreme pacifism. While it is wrong to war with

humans or harm animals, it is acceptable to fight demons and those possessed by demons to resist supernatural evil. As such, anyone with a Might score or who employs supernatural powers is a legitimate enemy, and some Cathars have gone as far as to take arms against Crusaders, arguing they are tools of devils. Magi may well find themselves treated with suspicion, or even violence. Cathars' sympathizers and friends were often willing to resort to violence to protect the Cathars anyway, else there would have been no real need for a crusade to begin with.

1167 the Cathars formed their own "church hierarchy," with five dioceses and a system of bishops and deacons.

In 1179, the third Lateran Council declared an anathema on the heretics, and called on all Christians to take up arms against them. In 1181 Cardinal Pietro d'Albano raised an army and marched to Lavaur, besieging the town, but only two Cathars recanted after the surrender, and little came of this expedition. Seeing no success, in 1203 the pope dispatched two papal legates, but this mission only revealed a further problem.

The region had a number of corrupt and wealthy bishops, who neglected their duties and yet proved almost impossible to remove, and who bitterly resented the intervention of the pope in their private affairs. The pope created another legate, one Arnaud Amaury. One of his chosen new bishops, Bishop Foulque, on being appointed to the See of Toulouse, found the bishop's status had sunk so low under his predecessor he needed to travel with an armed escort and could not reside in his diocese lest he was murdered.

It also became clear the nobility were

not driving heretics from their lands. In May 1207, Count Raimond VI of Toulouse was excommunicated for sheltering heretics. He immediately assured the pope he would comply and drive them from his domain; in August, the excommunication was lifted. When it became clear Pope Innocent III would call a crusade to ensure this was done, Raimond played for time, arranging to meet the papal legates in January 1208 at St. Gilles. The stage was set for catastrophe.

DEATH ON THE RIVERBANK

At the meeting, Raimond equivocated and stalled negotiations with the legates. Angrily, they rode away and the count publicly threatened them with death in a frustrated outburst. The legates traveled through the night toward Arles, and before dawn celebrated mass while waiting for the ferry. After the service, one of the legates, Pierre de Castelnau, took his mule down to the riverbank to watch for the ferry. Suddenly a knight appeared, lance leveled, and struck down the unarmed cleric. Pierre de Castelnau was dying by the time the others reached him, his murderer having ridden off. He died asking God for forgiveness for his assailant; it was too late, and the first victim of the impending horror died as the sun rose.

Playing a Perfectus

Perfecti are, by their nature, world-denying ascetics, and so may prove difficult characters to fit into many sagas. Despite that, some players may relish the challenge. In Mythic Europe, a few *Perfecti* have powerful supernatural abilities; these are represented by Mythic Companions, played in place of a magus (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 94). It is, however, quite possible to play a *Perfectus* as a normal companion character.

VIRTUE: PERFECTUS

Minor, Social Status

Due to your training, you may take Academic Abilities during character creation. Your responsibilities include

preaching the Gospel, abstaining from eating meat and dairy produce, from sex and romance, and from other acts that ensnare you in the sinful world. You should take the Flaw: Vow to represent your solemn religious obligations. You may not take the Wealthy Virtue, as you are supported by the tithes and contributions of your congregations. As a heretic you are currently at great risk from the Crusade, which will execute you if you are caught and refuse to recant your beliefs. You may take the Purity and Transcendence Supernatural Abilities from *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* if your character has the True Faith Virtue, but these are not free Virtues. You may, however, take them as Virtues, as normal.

THE CRUSADE IS PREACHED

The pope was incensed, convinced that Count Raimond had ordered the murder. Legate Arnaud Amaury and Bishop Foulques of Toulouse traveled abroad to preach a crusade, and the pope offered those who participated not just the usual benefits, but all debts to Jewish moneylenders were to be annulled, and the crusaders could take a share in the lands of the heretics they displaced.

French nobles and younger sons eyed their wealthy southern neighbors with avaricious eyes, and saw a chance to carve out great new estates. A crusading army assembled at Lyons, and sensing disaster, Raimond tried to make amends, undergoing strict penance and being led barefoot with a rope around his neck to be scourged in front of a huge crowd in the square at St. Gilles. His excommunication was lifted, but he was ordered to dismiss his mercenaries and all

Jews from his service, surrender seven castles, restore Church lands he had misappropriated and actively persecute the heretics. It was not expected he would comply with the conditions, but in June 1209 he did the unthinkable, and joined the crusade that had been declared primarily against him, hence depriving it of its major target. The Trencavel domains became the new target.

KILL THEM ALL; GOD WILL KNOW HIS OWN

As the crusade approached Montpellier, a Raimond-Rogier Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers, asked to be allowed to join. Having lost the chance to overthrow Raimond VI of Toulouse who had cunningly joined the crusade, Arnaud Amaury refused; Raimond-Rogier retreated to Béziers, took the town's Jews to safety, and retreated further to Carcassonne, promising to send reinforcements back to Béziers. As the crusade approached, the townsfolk were asked to surrender two hundred known heretics. They refused and bolted the gates.

A huge group of crusading camp followers, ruffians armed only with knives and clubs, gathered near the walls as the crusaders' soldiery and knights planned their assault. Seeing unarmored men below, a group of Béziers' young warriors opened the gate and rushed out, slaughtering a few in the chaos. Suddenly, however, the mob of camp followers turned the tide, and ran in to the city beginning indiscriminate slaughter. Seeing the gates open, the crusading knights charged in as well. It may have been at this moment that a knight asked Arnaud Amaury the question as to how the good Christians could be separated from the heretics. His reply is said to have been the infamous words, "Kill them all; God will know his own."

The city was destroyed, and even those who took shelter in the churches were massacred. Perhaps fifteen thousand, perhaps twice that, died.

TREACHERY AT CARCASSONNE

When the crusaders arrived at the walled city of Carcassonne, it was clear the city could withstand a siege for a consider-

able time. The crusaders laid siege anyway, and by August Viscount Raimond-Rogier Trencavel was willing to negotiate. He left the city for discussions with the crusaders; his foes treacherously took him prisoner and confined him. (See Chapter 4: Toulouse, Lastours). The city surrendered, and while the citizens and garrison were spared, the city was looted of treasures. A mystery remains as to why the city was forced to surrender.

A NEW LEADER

When the French noble leaders of the crusade finished their forty days' service, they returned home. Arnaud Amaury and a committee elected a new leader, a minor knight called Simon de Montfort, who held estates in the Ile de Paris. He had lost his English estates by a decree of King John stating one could hold lands from the French King or from him; he had elected

The Bogomils

The Bogomils hold many doctrines in common with the Cathars, and may historically share a common origin, but while the Cathars are strongest in the Provençal Tribunal, the Bogomils can be found in the Thebes and Transylvanian Tribunals (see *Against the Dark* page 50 for details). The Bogomils and Cathars regard each other as brethren, and in the

12th and early 13th centuries there was a considerable traffic of missionaries and scholars between them. While geographical distance has increased their doctrinal differences, the two great dualist religious movements continue to be linked, and Bogomil preachers from the East continue to arrive to inspire and preach among the communities of the Languedoc.

The Crusade and Your Saga

Any saga set in the Provençal Tribunal must face the reality of the recent horrors of the crusade, and it is highly likely that the events of the past eleven years have had a formative effect on newly Gauntleted magi, companions, and grogs alike. Are they Catholic, Cathar, Waldensian, Jewish, or of another faith group? How do they feel about the heretics? Do they support the crusade, or are they hostile to the de Montforts? Are they patriots supporting the southern lords, or do they look to the foreign French throne? It is likely that characters

of very different background and beliefs may come together in a covenant here, and will switch sides, betray friends, and change loyalties as events unfold.

When designing a character from the region, consider whether they have been caught up in any of the recent events, and how that back-history has influenced them. Did they survive Béziers? Fight at Muret? Take part in the betrayal at Carcassonne? Were they apprenticed in one of the covenants like Mistridge or Lariander that fell in the fighting?

Saint Dominic

The Church did have one outstanding missionary among the heretics in this period, Dominic of Guzman (later Saint Dominic), who walked barefoot among the heretics, begging for alms and practicing the strict personal sanctity and holiness familiar to the region only from the Cathar Perfecti and Waldensian preachers. Defeating demons, preach-

ing against heresy, and risking his life among his enemies, he won more personal admiration than converts, but his was a bold example of what a mission to the region could be. From 1206 to 1208 he was a familiar sight, and became well loved even among the heretics he opposed for his personal piety, humility, and bravery.

to maintain his French estates, but he was determined to take new lands in the south. Ably assisted by his wife Alice, he now led the crusade.

A HANDFUL OF KNIGHTS

In the autumn of 1209, as the crusaders returned home, de Montfort commanded thirty knights and five hundred foot soldiers both to garrison an unruly and hostile city, Carcassonne, and to face whatever resistance may emerge. De Montfort declared himself Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, but King Pedro of Aragon refused to accept him as a vassal.

THE FALL OF MISTRIDGE

The covenant of Mistridge had long been famed for its powerful magi and awe inspiring location, a magically-created tower on the edge of a precipice in the Val du Bosque, seemingly impregnable to any mundane assault. In the winter of 1209 a magus named Tres declared Wizard's War on every member of the covenant. Some say he intended to avenge the magi of Windgraven, others claim he had a personal dispute with the proud magi of this covenant after they refused him hospitality and treated him as little more than a hedge wizard. Despite his infamous trial at the Tribunal of 1214 his reasons for the attack remain obscure. Tres had with him two other magi of the *rusticani* (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 130), his tradition, and a large number of mercenaries armed with magic weaponry of his own devising. The magical siege engines he brought with him demolished Mistridge, killing the defenders.

MURDER OF THE MONKS

Despite his overall success, de Montfort failed to take the strongholds at Las-tours. The de Cabaret family provided a core of resistance. The Abbot of St. Gilles and a group of clerics were ambushed and slaughtered by a knight (the brother of then Bishop Raimond of Carcassonne) who fled to Cabaret for protection. As rebellion flared, most of the previously

surrendered castles and towns changed loyalties again. De Montfort began a new campaign to suppress the revolt, taking Bram and conducting one of the greatest atrocities of the crusade (see Chapter 4: Toulouse, Bram) before marching to Alairac, taking it, and killing the entire garrison.

Raimond VI did nothing to fulfill his vows, resulting in excommunication. Having protested to the pope he needed more time, Raimond's excommunication was once again lifted in January. Meanwhile, in Toulouse, Bishop Foulques de Marseilles formed his White Brotherhood to attack heretics, money lenders and Jews. A Black Brotherhood developed in opposition, and street battles begin.

THE FALL OF MINERVE AND TERMES

When the castle at Aguilar held out, the crusaders abandoned the siege and marched to besiege Minerve. One hundred and thirty seven Cathars were burned; only three women chose to recant and save their lives. De Montfort took several more castles and towns, establishing himself as lord over the Trencavel lands. Yet only 150 Cathars had been executed during the crusade, most of them at Minerve. It became clear the crusade was more about military conquest of the south than about heresy, despite the efforts of the papal legates.

A LAST CHANCE AT PEACE?

In 1211, King Pedro of Aragon attempted to broker a peaceful settlement. He finally accepted homage from de Montfort as viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne. Count Raimond of Toulouse met with the legates, also attempting one last effort to end the crusade. The terms were too harsh, and the south responded with general warfare. The atrocity at Lavaur followed (See Chapter 4: Toulouse, Lavaur), and the executions of sixty more Cathars captured at Les Casses. Finally, after an extended campaign in the north of the county, de Montfort besieged Toulouse. Loyal members of the Church

looked to Bishop Foulques for leadership — he told them to surrender the city, and renounce the count, or suffer the same fate as the heretics. This appalled and angered the Church's faithful, and they turned against the Bishop who was forced to flee, even as de Montfort failed to take the city.

THE MASSACRE AT MONTGEY AND THE FALL OF LARIANDER

In the summer of 1211, peasants and a small party of southern knights massacred a large party of three hundred German knights as they passed through a faerie forest near the village of Montgey. The reprisals destroyed the village and the Tremere covenant of Lariander in the forest, leaving a terrible warning that even the Order could fall victim to the Crusade's violence.

THE BATTLE OF ST MARTIN-LALANDE

In autumn 1211, Count Raimond gathered his forces and menaced de Montfort's small outnumbered force, but de Montfort constantly raided and took the initiative. Finally, the southerners attacked only to be routed and decisively defeated in open battle by the crusaders.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

The year 1212 saw an extraordinary popular movement, as thousands of children and peasants followed a young visionary south from the Rhineland, passing through Northern France before entering the region and marching toward the Mediterranean. They claimed the sea would part, allowing them to cross and convert the Muslims of North Africa before marching on to Jerusalem. When they reached Marseilles, the sea did not part, but a large number boarded ships to sail to Africa, and were never seen again. It is feared many were sold into slavery in Africa, though the truth remains obscure. Others simply gave up and returned home, or found employment in Marseilles.

THE BATTLE OF MURET

With King Pedro II of Aragon now actively supporting the southerners, the crusaders were again outnumbered and in real trouble. Ten miles downriver from Toulouse, the town of Muret was attacked by Pedro, Raimond, and the Count of Foix with a vast army in autumn 1213. They took the town easily and hanged the garrison, but de Montfort appeared on the other side of the river, and while greatly outnumbered, a surprise flank march through the marshes ensured his victory. King Pedro was killed, and ten thousand men died in a battle lasting less than half an hour; the southerners routed. Many drowned trying to flee across the Garonne; their ghostly cries still issue from the river when rainfall swells the waters and disturbs their bones. The Battle of Muret ended the resistance for many years, forcing Raimond to seek redress in Rome rather than on the battlefield.

THE STRUGGLE FOR TOULOUSE

In 1215 Simon de Montfort triumphantly entered Toulouse and installed himself in the Château Narbonnais. Within a year a popular uprising occurred, and fighting throughout the city was put down after great efforts. In the autumn of 1217, while de Montfort campaigned in the north of the region, Count Raimond suddenly returned and the jubilant citizens admitted him. On his return, de Montfort found the city gates locked against him, and Raimond restored as count, so once again besieged the city. After many months, a stone from a siege machine upon the walls struck de Montfort directly upon the head, killing him. Some suspect this may have been one of the magical siege engines devised by Tres Ex Miscellanea and employed in the destruction of Mistridge.

Amaury de Montfort laid claim to Simon's titles, and Alice de Montfort continues to play an important role as a leader and strategist for the campaign, but Simon's death precipitated the disintegration of the great domain he carved out. Today there are no clear borders; castles owing allegiance to either side stand within a few miles of each other, and both sides maintain garrisons scattered across the County and beyond.

THE FRENCH INTERVENTION

In 1219, a second crusade began. Directed by the French royal court, the nobility of northern France supported this endeavor to incorporate the South within greater France. After taking Marmande and conducting a massacre there, the invaders were repulsed before the walls of Toulouse, and today Count Raimond is re-ascendent, restoring control over his County.

Languages of Southern France

The following living languages, each with distinct regional dialects, are spoken in the cultured lands of southern France. Most characters should take the appropriate dialect as a specialty but Educated or well-travelled speakers will have tried hard to rid themselves of their dialect and may have standard specialties (see ArM5, page 66).

- Occitan** (Gascon, Provençal/Languedoc, Limousin, Auvergnat, Vivaro-Alpine, Aranese)
- French** (Bourguignon, Orelanais, Poitevin)
- Burgundian/Romand**
- Catalan** (Western, Eastern)
- Lingua Franca** (Western, Eastern)
- Basque/Euskara**

Dialects of Occitan (also known somewhat confusingly as *Langues d'Oc*) are spoken throughout most of the tribunal, in particular: Gascon, Provençal/Languedoc and Vivaro-Alpine (also spoken in some mountainous valleys in northwestern Piedmont). In the northern parts of Aquitaine, bordering the Normandy Tribunal, the following dialects are used from west to east: Poitevin (actually a French or *langue d'oïl* dialect), Limousin, and Auvergnat (both Occitan dialects). The troubadours sing and compose their songs and poems in dialects of Occitan throughout the area and into Catalonia, Castile, and northern Italy, although Provence and the Toulousain remain the

major centers of courtly culture.

The majority of Lower Burgundy, consisting of the Kingdom of Arelat and the County of Provence, speaks the Provençal dialect of Occitan, although the Vivaro-Alpine dialect can be found in southern Dauphine and up to the northeast border with Savoy. The French dialect of Bourguignon is heard in the north near the French-aligned Duchy and County of Burgundy. The transitional language of Burgundian or Romand is spoken around Lyons and in the northern part of Dauphine into Savoy. Speakers include those in the western parts of the Greater Alps Tribunal and a few isolated Italian Alpine valleys. Orleanais, the Parisian dialect of French, is spoken mainly by northern clergymen, crusaders, merchants, tradesmen, and those needing to communicate with the nobility of France. Toward the Mediterranean coast and particularly in Marseilles, *lingua franca* or Sabir (the pidgin language of trade) is more common, although Italian, Veneto, and various Spanish dialects can be heard.

A rare dialect of Occitan, Aranese, is spoken only in the small Catalan county of the Val d'Aran, in the valley on the northward face of the Pyrenees that holds the source of the Garonne.

Closely related to Occitan but distinct enough to be a separate language, the eastern dialect of Catalan is spoken in the courts of the county of Provence under its Catalan counts and Roussilon is the same as that spoken in Barcelona, the Catalan counties of the former Frankish March, and the Balearic islands. A western dialect of Catalan is spoken in Valencia and the mountain country of Ribacorga.

Basque, known as "Euskara" to its speakers, is spoken on both sides of the Pyrenees and in parts of northern Navarre. It has a multitude of dialects but for simplicity is treated as one highly distinct language, too unrelated to Latin or its descendants to be easily understood by anything other than a native speaker. It still uses the Latin script, however.

A small number of Jews, particularly in Montpellier, speak Hebrew or the local Provençal dialect—a distinct Judeo-Provençal dialect has not yet emerged. Arabic is spoken by either slaves (Andalusi or Maghrebi dialects) or the rare scholar (Classical dialect).

Example Southern French Names

Many southern French names are similar to their northern French counterparts. See *The Lion and the Lily*, pages 136–137 for an extensive list of northern French, Breton and Flemish names that may be used for characters with northern French backgrounds. A selection of Occitan names with their northern French equivalents in parentheses is given here to aid in conversion, but some names are either the same as in French or without a direct French equivalent. Thus Raimond-Berengiers is the Occitan version of the more common French pronunciation of Raymond-Berengar, the Catalan count of Provence. Catalan names are similar to Occitan names and are used predominantly in the county of Provence and the southern coastal district of Rousillon — the Count of Provence is thus referred to as Ramon-Berenguer in his native Catalan domains.

MALE OCCITAN NAMES

Aimeric (Aimery), Aliazars (Éléazar), Aloys (Louis), Arnald (Arnold), Baudoïs

(Baudoin), Bausas (Bausan), Berengiers (Bérenger), Bernart (Bernard), Bertrans (Bertrand), Bochartz (Bouchard), Claris (Clarín), Crespi (Crépin), Dalmatz (Dalmás), Donat, Ebratz (Evrard), Enricx (Henri), Estève (Estève, Stephen), Folcaut (Foucaud), Folquets (Folques), Gaston, Garnier, Gaucelis (Josselin), Gui(s) (Guy), Guillhelm (Guillame), Imbert, Jaufres (Geoffroy), Jaques (Jacques), Johan (Jean), Jordas (Joudain), Joris, Lucatz (Lucas), Marius (Moreau), Martis (Martin), Nicholas, Otes (Eudes), Otz (Ot), Peire (Pierre), Ponce (Pons), Raimond or Ramon (Raymond), Rainaut (Renaud), Reimbals (Raimbaud), Rogers (Roger), Rotlans (Roland), Savarics (Savary), Segui (Sequin), Sicart (Sicard), Simos (Simon), Tibaut (Thibaud), Ucs (Hugues)

FEMALE OCCITAN NAMES

Alienor (Éléonor), Alazaïs, Anaïs (Anna), Bausanna (Bausanne), Constanza (Constance), Elena (Hélène), Elionor (Éléonore), Ermengarda, Ermessenda,

Garsenda, Girauda (Giraude), Magali (Margaret), Mirèio (Mirelle), Petrona, Rixenda (Richenda), Rubea

MALE CATALAN NAMES

Alfons, Amat, Andrea, Arbert, Arnau, Artal, Berenguer, Bernat, Bernad, Bertran, Bonadona, Calvet, Dalmu, Dolcet, Ferrer, Gilabert, Guilabertus, Gombal, Guerau, Guillem, Guillelmus, Hug, Matthew, Miró, Olivar, Pere, Perpinyà, Ponç, Ramon, Ricart, Seguinus, Vidal

FEMALE CATALAN NAMES

Arsendis, Ermessendis, Ermessèn, Guillema, Guillelma, Titbores, Raimunda, València

BASQUE NAMES

Examples of Basque names in Euskara are given in Chapter 6: the Pyrenees.

Latin remains the scholarly language of the Provençal Church and scholars at the new University of Montpellier. The vernacular poetry of the troubadours is primarily written and performed in Limousin, but is under threat from the strife of the Albigensian Crusade.

Same language, different dialects: –1 penalty to both speakers

French vs Occitan: –2 penalty to both speakers

Occitan vs Catalan: –1 penalty to both speakers

French vs Catalan: –3 penalty to both speakers

Lingua Franca vs Occitan or Catalan: –2 penalty to both speakers

Burgundian vs French (Bourguignon) or Occitan (Provençal or Vivaro-Alpine): –1 penalty to both speakers

Burgundian vs French (other dialects) or Occitan (other dialects): –2 penalty to both speakers

The other pairs are so disparate that comprehension is likely to be based on signing and good guesswork, or magic.

Example: A character from Arles with Occitan 5 (Provençal/Languedoc) speaks to his fellows in Provence and the Toulousain with an effective score of 6, Occitan

speakers with no dialect with an effective score of 5, Occitan speakers of different dialects with a score of 4, Burgundian or Catalan speakers with an effective score of 4, and speakers of French or Lingua Franca at an effective score of 3, but would have difficulty speaking with English crusaders if they spoke Anglo-Norman (effective score 2). He cannot be understood by speakers of Basque, however. A character speaking one of the southern Occitan dialects has the same communication issues, except he communicates with Burgundian speakers with more difficulty at an effective score of only 3.

Hermetic Culture

Unlike their northern neighbors, the magi of Provençal have lived easily until recently, generally remaining apart or hidden from settled mundane society in the southern wilderness and the bastions of the Pyrenees. The feudal society dominating the north exists here in a softer form, with emphasis placed more on paratge, the individual bonds and mutual responsibility between nobles, rather than the more hierarchical feudal culture of the north where it is harder for magi to hide from liege lord relationships. The Albigensian Crusade has now fragmented the structure and culture of the south while changing the entire mundane political landscape. Whether the Hermetic magi will retain their existing traditions or become more influenced by their more aggressive northern sodales, who ape feudalism even in Hermetic society (see *The Lion & the Lily*) remains to be seen.

This book presents a Provençal Tribunal of just over a hundred magi. Not all the individual magi or apprentices in each covenant have been described, leaving room for player magi to have lived or been apprenticed in one of the existing covenants. Other covenants exist, one of which may belong to the player characters.

The Covenant Oath

One unusual aspect of the Provençal Tribunal is that covenant oaths are by the Peripheral Code enforceable by Tribunal rulings. This leads to many minor internal disputes which would in other Tribunals be resolved by certamen or by the covenant councils being brought to the attention of the whole Tribunal.

Founding a New Covenant

Compared to the hurdles set before magi in the Rhine or Normandy Tribunals, founding a Provençal covenant is straightforward and relatively unrestricted. A group of magi may meet, agree to work with each other toward a common goal, draw up a suitable charter detailing their oath of covenant, and together swear to the oath—the act of taking an oath together being the most important component. The only legal aspect of concern is the requirement demanding a Quaesitor notarizes the charter, which renders the

contents of the charter legally enforceable under the Peripheral Code, but some groups of magi delay this formality.

The covenant's creation does not need to be brought to the attention of the Tribunal for any form of formal approval, but it is considered good manners to notify the local Mercer House and send a representative to the next Tribunal meeting to announce the covenant's formation. This makes establishing a new Hermetic settlement simple, but as a consequence of the relative lack of safeguards many promising covenants are short-lived and the Provençal landscape is littered with



A Tribunal for Every Magus?

This book details a Tribunal where it is assumed the default Hermetic culture as presented in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* is the norm. Thus, magi live in loose covenants of allied individuals, generally far removed from mundane society, and communicate with each other through a loose Redcap network. Tribunal meetings occur every seven years and consist of a gathering of representatives from each covenant, overseen by the oldest magus in the Tribunal, the Praeco, and run by the Chief Quaesitor, elected at

the close of each gathering. *Vis* is available to those willing to harvest or fight for it, but not so abundant as to be without value, nor scarce enough to require communal rationing or open conflict over its distribution. Relationships with mundane nobility and the Church exist but are not actively encouraged—recent developments have forced magi to take a stance on issues long thought beneath their notice. Finally, the Code is neither strictly enforced nor observed more in the breach.

a disproportionate number of failed and abandoned covenants.

One notable local peculiarity is the looser definition of a covenant: some Provençal covenants are spread over multiple locations. Indeed, in some cases all the magi live separately and only meet in council when necessary. *Castra Solis* is one example, where the Praeco and her filia are members of the covenant although they live at a distance near Mimizan and in Poitiers respectively. Another covenant, the *Coenobium*, has multiple sites scattered throughout the east of the Tribunal.

Residency

In order to be considered a resident of the Tribunal, magi must have attended one of the last three Tribunals, or be granted the status by a vote at their first Tribunal. Magi Gauntleted in the Tribunal are automatically considered residents until three Tribunals have passed with them absent from the Tribunal meeting. If immigrants establish a covenant between Tribunals, the magi must either register with both the Redcaps and Praeco or with their closest neighbor; if they want to register with a neighbor, a Redcap leads them if they do not know the closest neighbor's site.

Magi who have registered as resident in the Tribunal are considered residents until they claim residency in another Tribunal or attend and vote at another Tribunal's gathering. Magi claiming residency in a different Tribunal must register their departure from Provençal with either the Provençal Redcaps

or the Praeco prior to voting in another Tribunal's gathering, or they are found in violation of the Peripheral Code.

The Covenants of the Provençal Tribunal

The Provençal Tribunal has three main power centers. In the west, the Mercurian magi of *Aedes Mercurii* and the Mithraian magi of *Castra Solis* dispute the true legacy of Val Negra and House Flambeau. In the east, the chapterhouses that compose the multi-site *Coenobium* attempt to prevent new covenants from forming. Nevertheless, the Tribunal has many covenants, and some, like *Tolosa Paratge* and *Bellaquin*, are of considerable age and prestige. The Crusade, and disagreements over what the Order's response to it should be, have led to a deeply divided Tribunal.

Each of the more influential covenants in the Tribunal is briefly summarized below, along with any strong opinions that other covenants hold about them, and how their members are likely to react to new covenants established in the region.

AEDES MERCURII (18 VOTES)

This collection of pagan magi split off

from Val-Negra at the start of the Schism War, and is organized around a great temple to Mercury hidden deep in the Pyrenees (see Chapter 6: *Aedes Mercurii*). Contentious and rebellious, they loathe *Castra Solis*, the other great Flambeau stronghold in the Tribunal. The covenant aggressively opposes the establishment of new covenants in the region, unless newcomers join a political alliance with *Aedes Mercurii*. However, the covenant members are not unified on any topic but blocking *Castra Solis*, so new covenants can expect inconsistent, even contradictory responses. Outside the Pyrenees, they resent *Castra Solis*'s political dominance and hate the covenants which choose to work with the *domus magna*. *Aedes Mercurii* is really the difficult stepchild of the Tribunal; many consider them to be dangerous fanatics.

Ara Maxima Nova: Knowing the covenant's history and legacy, they wonder what secrets the magi of *Aedes Mercurii* may hide, or not even realize exist within their walls. To that extent, they are willing to discuss issues with the covenant and occasionally assist them.

Bellaquin: The magi here consider *Aedes Mercurii*'s mountain redoubt a life of crude isolation, bereft of the finer aspects of civilization. Certainly, they should carry on the fine traditions they believe they maintain, but *Aedes Mercurii* need not be so aggressive about it.

Castra Solis: Their public attitude toward *Aedes Mercurii* regards the Mercurians as somewhat misguided mystics confused about the legacy of House Flambeau. In private, they consider *Aedes Mercurii* an unfortunate liability, too large to be directly confronted, but one capable of sabotaging itself through internal bickering.

Coenobium: They believe *Aedes Mercurii* wastes a great deal of resources in what amounts to a meaningless legacy dispute—a contest with no prize worth winning. They consider their approach to the covenant on an issue-by-issue basis, with a selfish eye toward the consequences: does the Mercurians' proposal benefit the *Coenobium*? The position would require delicate negotiation, if the covenant weren't so large

and disorganized.

Ostal des Exiles: The House of Exiles believes Aedes Mercurii could be a potent force against the Crusaders, and yet feel contempt toward them for their fear of discovery. Nothing good comes without risk, and the Mercurians seem unwilling to take risks for something the Exiles would die for.

Stella Durus: Renaud would be interested in exploring the mysticism he sees here, but feels this might betray the relationship he has with Castra Solis, and so he counsels against supporting Aedes Mercurii on critical issues.

Tolosa Paratge: The magi of Tolosa Paratge think Aedes Mercurii expends great effort on something of truly minor significance. Both sides wish the Mercurians would drop their petty feud regarding 'who is the true heir to Val Negra' and become their own covenant.

ARA MAXIMA NOVA (4 VOTES)

This primarily Merinita-based covenant is focused on magic of vineyards and roads in the Perpignan region of Narbonnais (see Chapter 7), and the Dionysian mysteries of its founder Luc's Mystery cult. If the players establish a covenant with an emphasis on Faerie or Seeker investigations, then Ara Maxima Nova works to discredit, harass, or chase away magi with overlapping interests—unless those magi seem willing to join and help the cult. Otherwise, the covenant remains neutral toward new magi, as long as the new covenant doesn't prevent or interfere with the exploration or investigation of the Via Domitia and its route.

Aedes Mercurii: They sympathize regarding how a cult might be misunderstood, though they do not fully understand the ambitions of the covenant.

Castra Solis: They suspect the Merinita magi may be up to something, but don't believe them dangerous and mostly ignore them. Should the more religious members learn of Luc's cult, they might begin a covert campaign against the mystagogue's resources.

Coenobium: They find Ara Maxima Nova insular and rude, and especially despise their habit of regularly challenging

magi on the Via Domitia to certamen when friendly conversation might suffice. This attitude causes some friction, and they are predisposed to vote against suggestions from Ara Maxima Nova.

Ostal des Exiles: They believe the Merinitas' attitudes are cowardly, and hope they can be made more active participants in local defense.

Stella Durus: A close neighbor, they find the Merinita standoffish, but decent enough. In truth, they simply haven't interacted with the covenant enough to form an opinion.

BELLAQUIN (5 VOTES)

A Summer covenant which transitioned to Autumn by moving its location from the war-torn county of Toulouse to the sheltering Pyrenees (see Chapter 6: Bellaquin), Bellaquin delights in mundane affairs and remains strongly driven by the resident Jerbiton magi. Regarding new covenants, Bellaquin believes "the more, the merrier." With untaxed resources, they could easily double the membership of their covenant. To them, more magi in the region only increases its influence, perhaps contributing to the formation of a new Catalan Tribunal.

Aedes Mercurii: They consider Bellaquin to be kindred spirits—magi forced to pick up their homes, move, and start again. They support the Andorrans to generate sympathy for themselves.

Ara Maxima Nova: The magi of Perpignan interact little with Bellaquin, but send agents to the Andorrans' fairs.

Castra Solis: They find the magi's habit of indulging in mundane fealty and commerce tantamount to inviting further trouble with local lords, but feel the isolated nature of the Andorran countryside makes this an acceptable risk. They support Bellaquin when possible and send representatives to gather intelligence at its fairs.

Coenobium: They appreciate the economic progress the Andorrans have achieved and hope to learn from both the covenant's success and previous failure.

Ostal des Exiles: The Faidits try to stay on good terms with Bellaquin for economic reasons, but might attempt to strength-

en those ties should they realize the potential for intelligence gathering presented by the markets.

Stella Durus: Jean Marie sends his paradoxographia to Bellaquin, and corresponds with the magi here on a regular basis regarding gossip, distant affairs, and concepts of Courtly Love. While the two covenants are distant geographically, they are fairly close politically.

Tolosa Paratge: Before the division, the covenant found Bellaquin eccentric but tolerable. Now, with the threat of destruction hanging over their heads, they find Bellaquin's sense of entitlement infuriating.

CASTRAS SOLIS (17 VOTES, PLUS PRAECO & PRESIDING QAESITOR)

The domus magna of House Flambeau, Castra Solis is unquestionably one of the most influential covenants in the region. Situated in Gascony (see Chapter 5: Castra Solis), it is the stronghold of every sort of military magus the House produces, from soldierly Mithraians to knightly Milites. Yet it is still very northern in its outlook, and owes most of its overall direction to its primus, Garus. The covenant strongly advocates for the Crusades and the Church, with very Christian attitudes, and very political aims. New magi could find allies or enemies in Castra Solis, depending on how well their aims align. Typically very generous to those working with them, the magi strongly distrust Tytali, denying assistance to a new covenant with a large Tytalan presence.

Aedes Mercurii: The Mercurians hate and distrust Castra Solis, considering them bitter rivals. They oppose the covenant's activities in Tribunal whenever possible, and coordinate opposition via third parties in exchange for political support when practical.

Ara Maxima Nova: The magi of this fledgling cult want to avoid the eye of the Crusaders and so they tend to give Castra Solis no reason to look very closely. They either follow Castra Solis' lead regarding most issues or abstain from voting.

Bellaquin: They enjoy the attention the Flambeau pay to their gatherings and

like to consider *Castra Solis* staunch allies. They don't see that they need *Castra Solis* more than the *Flambeau* need them.

Coenobium: They actively support *Castra Solis*, which leads the two covenants to feel that as long as they stay allied, little can oppose them politically. However, they also realize the need for quorum, and know if they isolate the smaller covenants by always working with the *domus magna*, the Tribunal could descend into a situation where it is impossible to form a quorate Tribunal meeting.

Ostal des Exiles: They see *Castra Solis* as the problem, rather than the solution. The *Flambeau* have been too supportive of the crusaders and this has done serious damage to the Hermetic community in Provence. If it were possible to show *Castra Solis* how misguided the Exiles believe them to be, and have the revelation make an impact, the magi would pursue it wholeheartedly.

Stella Durus: Without a reason to oppose *Castra Solis*, *Stella Durus* historically supports the actions of *Renaud's domus magna*. They can often be swayed to pass measures offered by the covenant and only act against it if they feel that they really must.

Tolosa Paratge: The Black faction believes *Castra Solis* would come to its aid if Cyprian called, and rightly so. This affects the White faction's view, and they believe *Castra Solis* to be too close to their mundane allies.

COENOBIMUM (APPROXIMATELY 20 VOTES)

The Coenobium is a sprawling collection of chapter houses settled across the County of Provence (see Chapter 8: *Arelat*). They banded together under one covenant charter about two hundred years ago, and reside in the only part of the Provençal Tribunal to have remained within its borders since its establishment. The covenant is extremely political, populated mostly by cooperative magi of House *Jerbiton* and the Redcaps of the Tribunal's *Mercer House*. They take a dim view of magi attempting to establish a new covenant in their shadow, which makes the

process very difficult. The nearly two dozen members coordinate an enormous amount of magical and mundane resources to sabotage prospective rivals, unless those magi join as a chapterhouse. As a result, no new covenants have flourished in southern Provence for over a century. However, the Coenobium hasn't yet expanded its network beyond *Arelat*, and believes allied chapterhouses in the rest of the Tribunal would be very useful. The Coenobium's open offer to assist petitioners seeking aid is common knowledge, but such help comes with the implication of future annexation.

Aedes Mercurii: They cannot stand the tightly-bound relationship shared by the Coenobium and *Castra Solis*, and feel jilted that the covenant chose the upstarts over the true legacy of *Val Negra*. They discredit *Castra Solis* whenever possible and hope to eventually convince the Coenobium to shift alliances. *Ophilio* of *Mercere* seems to dislike the Chief Redcap especially, but is obsequiously considerate to the other *Merceres*, for whom he crafts *Longevity Rituals* and other enchanted devices.

Ara Maxima Nova: *Luc* views the Coenobium as a great bully which must be defied. He makes it a personal mission to subtly undermine their efforts whenever possible, but doesn't wish to draw too much attention to his efforts.

Bellaquin: They see an enormous market for the taking, and court the Coenobium whenever possible.

Castra Solis: They support the Coenobium, believing the strong central organization and management serves as an effective structure in the otherwise mundanely chaotic nature of the Tribunal. They understand they will not agree on all issues, but when the greater good demands, they know they must stand beside them.

Ostal des Exiles: So much potential, if only they weren't so self-involved. The Coenobium is too big to truly shift its attitudes, at least not without some sort of drastic action taken by the Crusaders against them.

Stella Durus: So long as they do not interfere with the covenant members' individual projects, the magi of *Narbonne*

are willing to allow the Coenobium to take the leadership role for as long as they like.

Tolosa Paratge: Both factions feel if they could just get the Coenobium to side with their cause, they would have the clout necessary to bring the other faction to the negotiating table rather than to the battlefield.

OSTAL DES EXILES (THE HOUSE OF EXILES) (6 VOTES)

The *Faidits* are made up of refugees from other covenants around *Toulouse* (see Chapter 4: *The Toulousain*) which failed or were abandoned because of the Crusade. This odd assortment of magi welcomes any new Spring covenant as allies, working hard to recruit new Tribunal members into their defense of *Toulouse* from the Northerners. Open-minded, they consider what every potential covenant might be able to contribute and how other allies could repay that assistance.

Aedes Mercurii: They feel the House of Exiles brings unwanted crusader attention to the region, and that a policy of quiet concealment is best. The Order should stick to Order business and worry less about the mundane.

Ara Maxima Nova: The *Merinita cult's* attitude is similar to *Aedes Mercurii*, but a more immediate threat to their covenant could quickly reverse their opinion. *Luc* is ultimately concerned with the survival of his cult and its goals and so would easily side with the *Faidits* if threatened by crusaders.

Bellaquin: The mostly *Jerbiton* *Bellaquin* finds a romantic quality to the House of Exiles and their struggles in the south of the Tribunal, but they cannot readily identify any real reason to support these magi.

Castra Solis: They respect the fighting spirit of the Exiles, and admire their willingness to fight the good fight, but believe their mission to be misguided. The *Flambeau* would prefer see the *Faidits* incorporated into local, less militant covenants where their experience might better protect the Tribunal.

Coenobium: They view the Exiles as a re-

source needing restraint. The Faidits could draw too much undue attention to the Order within Provence. The optimal solution might involve tempering the Exiles' zeal, or bringing them under the direction of the Coenobium—perhaps with a promise to aid them in their goal.

Stella Durus: While they understand the Exiles' desire to protect the area, they feel that Stella Durus has avoided notice so far and everything has been fine. Surely there's no need to keep worrying. The danger has passed, hasn't it?

Tolosa Paratge: Either faction believes the Exiles could be a resource to help their cause, if only they can find something to attract the covenant's support.

STELLA DURUS (5 VOTES)

This covenant is a small, cosmopolitan group of mixed Houses (including a Tytalan magus, Ducaru, of whom most of the Tribunal is very aware) on the outskirts of Narbonne (see Chapter 7: Stella Durus). They are generally too preoccupied with their own projects to interfere with those of others. So long as a new covenant does not impinge upon their resources and isn't established north of the Pyrenees or south of the Counties of Albi, Béziers, or Toulouse, the magi of this covenant remain neutral. They *are* hostile to those established within that zone, organizing to harass and bully the new covenant for at least one season a year.

Aedes Mercurii: They find the covenant's non-Flambeau members to be pleasant enough, but don't like their willingness to follow Renaud's lead on matters involving Castra Solis. They are considering the possibility of infiltrating its membership or finding some way to force Renaud to leave.

Ara Maxima Nova: Stella Durus understands and honors the cult's tacit claim to the Via Domitia, and so the two covenants behave like cordial but uninvolved neighbors.

Bellaquin: They find Jean Marie to be a very entertaining fellow and greatly enjoy his paradoxographia. This encourages mutual support between the two cov-

enants on less crucial matters.

Castra Solis: They find Renaud to be a good and decent magus, and believe he would not join a covenant of poor quality. As such, Castra Solis often supports Stella Durus and politely requests their political support when necessary.

Coenobium: They appreciate Jean Marie's management of the covenant, and have a great deal of sympathy for the magi there. They are inclined to support Stella Durus because they believe it might willingly join their covenant as a chapterhouse if the circumstances were right.

Ostal de Exiles: The Exiles view Stella Durus as potential resource and see Renaud as a veteran who could greatly aid their cause. They work to court the covenant, encouraging them to find a more regionally focused attitude, and one slightly less aligned with Castra Solis.

Tolosa Paratge: Through Cyprian's relationship with Renaud, these two covenants had begun developing closer ties. Should the conflict in Toulouse escalate, the Black faction would likely ask Stella Durus to join it. The White faction recognizes this, and might attempt to leverage Mariola's burgeoning relationship with Jean Marie to either keep the covenant neutral, or join their side.

TOLOSA PARATGE (9 VOTES DIVIDED)

Noble, cultured, highly structured, and at war with itself, Tolosa Paratge is a multi-House covenant hidden in a magical regio beside the great city of Toulouse (see Chapter 4: Toulouse: Tolosa Paratge). The covenant is split over the issue of Cathar heretics within the covenant, forming two factions, White (expel the heretics) and Black (protect them against the Crusade). How the magi respond to newcomers depends on the side with which the characters align themselves. If a new covenant simply ignores them, the factions continue with their struggle, unperturbed. If the characters become involved and support the wrong side, however, they might easily find themselves the target of a Wizard's War.

General opinion within the Tribunal

holds that Tolosa Paratge is self-destructing. From a sense of decorum, the other covenants have tacitly agreed to let them resolve their own issues and see who, or what, emerges from the aftermath. Certainly individual magi of various covenants have personal opinions, and may act on these beliefs indirectly, but no one currently intends to act openly. Renaud of Stella Durus has concern for his pater, and the magi of the Coenobium always admired Tolosa Paratge's style, but for now, the general attitude is to wait and watch.

Other Magi of Provence

A few other Hermetic groups and smaller covenants exist but seek to hide from the politics of the region.

FRAXINETUM REDUX (3 VOTES, UNUSED)

Fraxinetum, a group of magi in Arelat (see Chapter 8: Arelat: Fraxinetum), have never revealed themselves to the Tribunal. Currently unknown to the Tribunal at large, they won't oppose new covenants unless magi establish another maritime stronghold or occupy an island located off the southern coast.

MINIATA SOPHIA (4 VOTES)

A subterranean reflection of the Cave of Twisting Shadows, this Criamon clutch was established only recently, in the last 40 years. Focused on the nearby town, they teach and serve while seeking enlightenment. While they participate in Tribunal, they eschew politics and generally have no opinion on the activities of other magi, and few bother about them.

TRES' BAND (3 VOTES, UNUSED)

The infamous Rusticani magus Tres Ex Miscellanea (see Chapter 1: History) and his followers have gone to ground in the forests near Bazas in Gascony (see Chapter 5: Tres), living in what is essentially a roving covenant. They are generally op-

New Mercurian Rituals

SET THE STONES OF THE VIA

Greater non-Hermetic Ritual, ReTe(Cr)

R: Spec, D: Spec, T: Group

Ease Factor: 36

This powerful Mercurian ritual binds together a set of specially consecrated *milliaria magica* (Latin: "magic milestones") and one or more special smaller focus stones known as *lapides mercurii*. A separate milliarium magicum is required for every 10 Roman miles in length — the length of the Neo-Mercurian Road Magic Target: Road Network (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 116). All the stones to be enchanted and used in the via must be present at the casting of the spell.

When linked together, the *milliaria magica* form an interconnected series of related Arcane Connections, and when placed along a route, they bind the path into a new Via Mercuria, a mystical road treated as a single entity for the purposes of targeting and other magical effects. The unified path traverses bridges and even fords, unlike the Neo-Mercurian Road Magic Range: Road Network (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 116), and ignores Size calculation when treated as a target, remaining equivalent to the same level as Boundary for the purposes of spell level calculation. The *lapides mercurii* can be later installed within a building or similar structure, such as a Temple of Mercury, located within 1 Roman mile of the mystical path outlined by the milestones, linking it to the via.

This spell is believed to be one of the 37 great rituals codified at the Temple of Pompeii by Plentarch but lost to the later Mercurian magi upon the Cult's collapse. Through these vast mystical networks, the few Priests of Mercury gathered in distant temples connected together by Roman roads, and channeled powerful magical forces to aid the Roman military in remote parts of the Empire. Due to the extensive resources and centralized power required to construct a Roman road and then enchant the *milliaria*, the magic was quickly lost in the fragmented years following the fall of Rome, as the Cult rapidly splintered into mutually hostile traditions.

Aedes Mercurii possesses casting

notes and details of this ritual kept safely and reverently in their templum, and a copy of the full ritual may exist within the Library of Fenicil, deep within Magvillus. It is also believed Priamitus, one of the sons of Mercere and the founder of the Hermetic Cult of Mercury, may have left the original scroll from which the ritual was taken hidden somewhere inside the former covenant of Val Negra. A text containing this exceptionally rare Mercurian ritual acts as a source of Insight for the purposes of integrating True Mercurian Road Magic into Hermetic theory, and adds six to the Intelligence stress roll required (*Ancient Magic*, page 8). Every point the researcher has in the Arcane Ability associated with this ritual above 4 grants +1 to the Insight roll, to a maximum of +3.

(Special spell)

Design Note: Rules for similar non-Hermetic rituals are detailed in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 76–77. In short, this ritual is learned as a unique Arcane Ability, takes a whole season to enact, and requires at least 36 pawns of vis and 36 Mythic pounds of silver worth of expensive materials such as herbs for fumigation and inks for the inscription of pagan symbols within a magical circle. Magi with the Mercurian Magic Virtue require only half the amount of vis and special materials, but all magi participating must have the Virtue for the benefit to apply.

The Hermetic Architecture Mystery ritual Bind the Mystical Structure (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 98), may be a non-Hermetic fragment descended from this Mercurian ritual used to bind the *milliaria magica* into a via mercuria.

LINK THE RENT PATH

Lesser non-Hermetic Ritual, ReTe(Cr)

R: Spec, D: Spec, T: Group

Ease Factor: 18

This lesser Mercurian ritual is used to connect separate viae mercuriae created using the Mercurian Ritual Set the Stones of the Via, or existing networks of such roads, to each other to form a larger network. It is also used to firmly connect a new lapis mercurius to an existing network (for instance

one to be placed in a newly built Temple of Mercury) or to replace a single damaged or stolen milliarium magicum on a broken via. It cannot create new viae, nor can it repair magical roads that have more than one milliarium magicum missing.

A copy of this ritual is stored in the templum of Aedes Mercurii, although it has not been studied for several centuries; the old Roman roads of Mythic Europe have long fallen into great disrepair and their *milliaria magica* magically "desecrated" with crosses, or removed for use as building materials. Presumably other copies can be found at Durenmar and in Fenicil's Library at Magvillus. Any text containing this seemingly useless Mercurian ritual acts as a source of Insight for the purposes of integrating True Mercurian Road Magic into Hermetic theory and adds three to the Intelligence stress roll required (see *Ancient Magic*, page 8). Every point the researcher has in the Arcane Ability associated with this ritual above 4 grants +1 to the Insight roll, to a maximum of +3.

In the years following the end of the Schism War, a Mercurian priest of Janus named Petrarchus of Guernicus who lived at Aedes Mercurii reputedly attempted to organize a magical connecting of the great Way of St. James in Gascony to the Via Domitia in Narbonnais using a similar ritual, intending thus to create a massive road network would cover most of France, Iberia, and Italy. Unfortunately, Hermetic history and legend states his project failed because he failed to organize the various magi and Redcaps of his divisive covenant and the somewhat stereotypically rebellious region.

(Special spell)

Design Note: Rules for non-Hermetic rituals are detailed in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 76–77. In short, this ritual is learned as a unique Arcane Ability, takes three hours to cast, and requires 18 pawns of vis and 18 Mythic pounds of silver worth of expensive materials such as herbs for fumigation and inks for the inscription of pagan symbols within a magical circle. Magi with the Mercurian Magic Virtue require only half the amount of vis and special materials, but all magi participating must have the Virtue for the benefit to apply.

posed to anything the Order of Hermes does, and do not attend Tribunal. They remain initially aloof to newly established covenants, with their attitude shifting from indifference to hatred. This change occurs over many seasons, and depends on how the magi treat the mundane populations surrounding their base. To those magi who seek to establish themselves as a ruling class, Tres' band responds aggressively, approaching the covenant with the intention of dissuading them. They would hate to have to teach the lesson of Mistrudge again, but have no qualms about doing so. The Rusticani are an Ex Miscellanea tradition detailed in *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 130–133.

Cults & Factions of Provence

Mystery Cults are extremely important in the politics of the Provençal Tribunal. From the Mystery Houses, there are Bjornaer magi within the Coenobium (Chapter 8: Arelat), a clutch of Criamon magi and many Verditii magi in Narbonne (Chapter 7), another Verditius magus in Toulouse (Chapter 4), and two powerful Merinita with their own variations on their House's secrets: the Praeco Dama and Luc of the Perpignan. There is also a renegade tradition forced from House Criamon and accepted in to House Ex Miscellanea, the Gorgiastic Cathars. These groups' ambitions transcend covenants, and are part of the wider Hermetic Culture.

The Legion of Mithras

Most of the magi at Castra Solis staunchly support the Legion of Mithras (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 118–122) and it is known the covenant is one of their bases of power. Many high-ranking initiates within the Order think the rumored Great Temple lies somewhere in France, perhaps even the very Mithraic temple Castra Solis was built to protect (see Chapter 5: Gascony: Castra Solis). However, the Legion existed long before the construction of the now-famous covenant, so perhaps not.

The Mithraians in House Flambeau are in the main Christian (See *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 16–19 for a description of the Mithraic faction). A few may actually worship the ancient pagan deity, but they

New Mercurian Rituals cont'd

HERMETIC INTEGRATION OF THE VIA MERCURIA

Remaining accounts of the magical practices of the Mercurian priests are sketchy and only veiled accounts of the effects of their rituals can be inferred from the historical record. The largest collection of texts detailing the origins of the Order of Hermes and its precursor, the Cult of Mercury, are securely stored in the great library of Fenicil in the vaults of Magvillus, and access is restricted for all but the inner circle of Quaesitores. Seekers investigating the lost secrets of Roman Road Magic may petition the Quaesitors for a chance to study the Mercurian archives in the hope of gleaning a text capable of granting an Insight, but they are likely to be asked to perform a great service in return, even if they are members of House Guernicus.

One source of Insight is detailed here — discovery of the existence of the *Link the Rent Path* minor ritual may lead to the conclusion there must exist a greater Mercurian ritual capable of creating a new magical Roman road, and one of the surviving texts on early Mercurian lore may briefly mention a ritual, named *Set the Stones of the Via*, strongly meriting further investigation.

Hermetic investigation of ancient Mercurian relics such as milliarum magica, lapides mercurii or even an intact Via Mer-

curia from one of the major roads in the region may provide other sources of Insight into the secrets of True Mercurian Road Magic. Some Hermetic historians believe there was once a lapis mercurius in a Mercurian temple in the city of Saint Jean Pied-de-Port in the Pyrenees, now lost.

New Range: Via Mercuria

A magus may cast spells reaching anyone or anything on a road or path connected to him by an unbroken network of via mercuria consisting of a series of milliarum magica or lapides mercurii, provided he can sense the target somehow. Unlike the Neo-Mercurian Road Magic Range: Road Network (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 116), bridges and fords do not break a via mercuria. The roads still terminate in yards and such unless the building contains a linked lapis mercurius.

For purposes of spell level calculation, Via Mercuria is the same level as Arcane Connection, and requires Ritual magic.

New Duration: Via Mercuria

The spell continues for as long as the character journeys along a via mercuria or network. The travel must be by natural means available to the caster or target — usually by foot, horseback or in a drawn

wagon. A Bjornaer with a heartbeast capable of flight can travel in his animal form without canceling the spell, as can characters shapeshifted into similar forms, like the Redcaps of the Milvi Antiquiti. Any use of magical transportation such as magical flight granted by *Wings of the Soaring Wind* or the use of such spells as *Seven League Stride* or *Leap of Homecoming* cancels the spell.

The duration can be no longer than a year, and although resting at night within view of a milliarum magicum or lapis mercurius is allowed, the spell ends if the target abandons the via network. The spell also ends if the caster becomes lost, dies, or otherwise leaves the physical world through Twilight or regiones. It is equivalent in level to Moon, but requires Ritual magic.

New Target: Via Mercuria

This targets a network of viae mercuriae, and anyone or anything on it or within sight of its milliarum magica or lapides mercurii. Unlike the Neo-Mercurian Target: Road Network (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 116), bridges and fords do not break a via mercuria. The roads still terminate at yards unless the building contains a linked lapis mercurius.

For purposes of spell level calculation, Via Mercuria is the same level as Boundary, and requires Ritual magic.



tians, and some have been covertly fighting in the Reconquista in Iberia, no matter how great their respect for the Code of Hermes.

The Mithraians can often be individualistic, though many have joined the Milites and sworn the chivalric oath of service before Primus Garus (See *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 15–16). The Mithraians are divided in their attitude to the rise of the Milites, but united in their absolute contempt for the Flambeau of the Cult of Mercury and their quiet determination to thwart the pretensions of Aedes Mercurii to the title of domus magna, and to defeat the political ambitions of their pagan brethren in anyway possible.

The Cult of Mercury

Aedes Mercurii serves as the fractious and confused center of what now remains of the former Cult of Mercury (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates* pages 16–17) in the Provençal Tribunal. They possess many ancient magical secrets, left over and guarded jealously from the early history of the Cult before it divided and became the Neo-Mercurians of other Tribunals (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 114–117). It is possible that magi who show exceptional promise will be invited to join the Cult of Mercury, and to be initiated into its secrets.

The cult in Provence considers itself to be the true descendants of the ancient Mercurian Cult of Rome; they are antagonistic toward the Neo-Mercurian orders, whom they see as traitors and deluded fools. Within the Tribunal the priests (flamen) of the cult hold ceremonial positions by ancient tradition; despite their avowed paganism they perform rites that are largely uncontested because of the weight of tradition. At the start of each day of the Tribunal meeting they wear their elaborate masks and colorful robes of office. They are expected to speak for “the gods” in Hermetic ceremonies, reading signs and omens. Few magi take them seriously these days, and the official flamen at Tribunal is generally considered as irrelevant, an amusing piece of Hermetic tradition, or, to the more pious magi of Castra Solis, as blasphemous and worthy only of contempt. Yet the ancient tradition continues, and through the Cult the flamen

keep this secret well; the majority regard Mithras as an allegorical and magical symbol for Christ, with a very few practicing a form of Holy Magic. The Mithraian faction within House Flambeau are influential at the domus magna and throughout the Tribunal, and claim to be the true heirs to the legacy of Flambeau, opposing the Mercurian faction who are based at Aedes Mercurii and who trace their descent to Apomor and his rekindling of the Cult of Mercury and ancient Roman religion. The two cults despise

each other, with the Mithraians adopting an aggressively Christian stance, yet remaining willing to use force to resist the Crusade if needed, as opposed to the pagan Mercurians’ policy of strict non-intervention. While the Mercurians seek to keep their covenants hidden, the Mithraians favor a more proactive defense. Some have categorized the Mithraians as the “militant” Flambeau, and the Mercurians as the “spiritual” Flambeau, but that is unfair; many of the Mithraians are exceptionally pious and devoted Chris-

Consecration of Priamitus

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue: Mercurian Magic known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +18

Script Details: To initiate a follower into the virtue Mercurian Magic, the mystagogue must spend at least a full season traveling the paths of the ancient Roman roads with the Initiate (Mystagogue’s time, +3); arriving at an ancient Temple of the Cult of Mercury (such as Aedes Mercurii), and performing the following ceremony

on May 15th, the date of the ancient festival of Mercuralia (+3): the Initiate’s head is sprinkled with water won from the spirit guarding the ancient Mercurian well on a Quest into a shrouded Magical regio at the site Porta Capena on the Appian Way (+3); she forswears any allegiance to her former faith and dedicates herself to the old pagan gods of Rome, acquiring the Pagan Major Story Flaw (+9) (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 109).

wield considerable personal influence and secret power.

The revitalization of the Mercurian religion began in the mountains of the Pyrenees at Val Negra and was led by Priamitus of Mercere, supported by Apromor of Flambeau. The group had its heyday in the early 900s, and soon after trickles of its secret knowledge began to spread, and other newer Mystery cults with magic derived from theirs began to form. By the time of the Schism War, the Cult of Mercury had fractured into many smaller and more disparate groups, each with their own take on the former cult. They focus on recovering the 37 Great Rites used by the ancient Mercurian priesthood and keeping the old Roman ways alive within the Order of Hermes. A few of them also know how to cast non-Hermetic Mercurian rituals (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 76–77), and do so occasionally as part of their pagan religious traditions, though only the most fanatically loyal cult members are ever included in these ceremonies.

The Mercurians are rigorously isolationist with regards to mundane society, and have no desire to be involved with either Cathars or Church, holding that magi have no business interfering in mundane matters. They are arch-conservatives, and while they dream of a return of the glory that was Rome, they aim to keep the Order as disengaged from the mundane world as possible. They despise the Mithraian faction in House Flambeau, whom they see as falsely taking the title of domus magna for Castra Solis when Aedes Mercurii is clearly the true heir to the lost covenant of Val Negra.

The Knights of the Green Stone

A small chapter of these chivalrous magi (described in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 131–132) thrives among the Ostal des Exiles in the Toulousain, with members in other covenants. (Chapter 4: Toulouse, Ostal des Exiles) They are led by Gilbert of Flambeau and have strong links with Rhine and Normandy magi of the cult. If you are not using the Knights of the Green Stone in your saga, you can safely ignore them.

The Matres & Matrones

The origins of one of the most important Mystery cults of the region lie with the mater of the current Praeco, Dama of Merinita, in the late 800s. Not much is known about this maga, and Dama herself does not speak of her even to other members of the cult, but she is said to have come from the Thebes Tribunal. She lived in a covenant in the Médoc that she inherited (or stole) from Maugris of Diedne. She taught her magical secrets to her filii, Marie and Dama, and had strong ties to folk witches.

The cult is dedicated to the advancement of women, and gained most of its imagery and mystery from three sources: the many folk witches who live in southwestern France, the particular reverence for Mary Magdalene and other female saints in the region, especially through the

propagation of the peculiar Black Madonna image which subverts the male-dominated Church and culturally roots holy women as strange and almost alien; and thirdly the patronage of Eleanor of Aquitaine, who those associated with the cult believe to have been at least a staunch supporter if not herself also a magical practitioner. (There are some, including Dama's filia Marie of Poitiers, who say Eleanor was a folk witch who brought back her own secrets to the cult from her uncle's court in the Holy Land).

The cult includes some hedge wizards as well, and unGifted women who possess supernatural abilities and are thus granted ceremonial and organizational membership. The cult is not widely known, but can be uncovered with a cursory investigation; it is obscure, but not secret. Easily available information suggests that the Praeco Dama

New Virtues

These Virtues are Initiated by the cult of the Matres and Matrones, and are probably only found among their members or those descended from them.

THE FEMININE GIFT

This Minor Hermetic or Supernatural Virtue gives a normally-Gifted character the Gentle Gift with respect to female humans, the Blatant Gift with respect to male humans, and leaves the Gift unaffected for all others, including animals and any creature with supernatural Might. It takes men as long to get used to her as it takes them to get used to someone with the Blatant Gift.

FEMININE SYMPATHY

Feminine Sympathy is a Minor or Major Supernatural Virtue giving the initiate a Feminine Sympathy Trait with a score of +1 (minor) or +3 (major). As described in *Realms of Power: Faerie* pages 102–104, this Trait may be added to non-Supernatural Abilities as a specialty when it is applicable, in this case when the character directly affects another woman. For example, to determine what a character knows about a maga in the

Tribunal, a character with Feminine Sympathy +3 could add three to her Organization Lore roll in lieu of a specialty. All rolls using this Trait become uses of a faerie power, affected by auras and realm interaction penalties, and must use stress dice. Botches give a Warping Point for each 0 rolled. The Trait increases with experience like an Ability (though it cannot exceed the character's Warping Score), and also when the player rolls a 1 on the stress roll. It decreases when the player rolls a 0 when checking for a botch with this Trait.

DARK MAGIC

This Minor Supernatural Virtue allows the caster to benefit from Magic, Faerie, and Infernal auras, as if her powers were aligned to all three realms, and she is protected against gaining Warping Points from exposure to any of those auras. However, taking advantage of a foreign aura using this Virtue subtly taints the application of her magic, so that Divine and Infernal powers that sense holiness or unholiness recognize the character's dark influence as unholy. This Virtue is thought to be related to Chthonic Magic, and may have originally come to the Order and the cult from the Witches of Thessaly.

The Procrustean League

A short lived and controversial alliance led by the Cathar sympathizer, Tolomae of Bellaquin, this group advocated open war against the Church in order to prevent the loss of Hermetic holdings in Provençal. Considered extremely dangerous by the majority of magi and renounced by both the conservative Mercurians of Aedes Mercuriae and the pragmatists of the Coenobium, House Jerbiton expelled Tolomae and declared him *orbis* (no longer a member of the House) in 1216. Tolomae was a suspect in the murder of the papal leg-

ate, Pierre de Castelnau, but fled without answering the investigating Quaesitor's questions. He was Marched in early 1218 for repeatedly interfering with mundanes, and slain.

After his death, several of Tolomae's rumored supporters fled to other covenants or remain unaccounted for in the wake of the Albigenian crusade. They hide amongst the *faidits*, the dispossessed nobility of Langue d'Oc. Some magi wonder whether their cause will successfully resurface in the near future, honed to bitterness by the recent catastrophe.

Tres of Ex Miscellanea

Leader of a ragtag bunch of outcasts and opportunistic routiers from the northern armies, Tres is a *rusticarii* (a Craft magus, see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 130) who returned to the Tribunal of his birth seeking vengeance. He is described in Chapter 5: Gascony.

is involved and likely at the center of it. Alazais of Mercere, the Chief Redcap of the Tribunal and First Consul of the Coenobium in Arelat, is also rumored to be a member, as is Mariola of Tolosa Paratge, and Beatrice of Guernicus (who may well soon become Presiding Quaesitor) has suspected sympathies with it.

The three levels of Initiation into the Matres and Matrones each require a great deal of service to the cult and the community, as well as a deep understanding of the cult's lore, before the Initiate is allowed to progress. Few Initiates attain the highest rank, since the different tiers of Initiation are not only based on the worthiness of the Initiate but on other factors such as age and life experience, and advancing through the Mystery Cult is a saga-spanning journey. For most, the second level might be perceived as the highest level, as many of the cultists never choose to advance further.

Characters initiated into the first level are referred to privately as Sisters, and fo-

cus on interacting with the people of their communities, especially with non-magi. They must possess Organization Lore: Matres and Matrones 1, but there are no other requirements apart from the sacrifices inherent in the Initiation scripts. At this stage, women may be invited to initiate Venus's Blessing, The Feminine Gift (see New Virtues on page 29), or The Gentle Gift, and must take an oath to protect other women from harm.

Initiates into the second level are called Mothers (Matres) and take responsibility for the organization and spread of the cult and initiating new members. To qualify for this stage, the character must have a score of at least 3 in Organization Lore: Matres and Matrones, and have either given birth to a child or taken an apprentice. They may initiate Good Teacher or either the Minor or Major version of Feminine Sympathy (see sidebar), and tend to become as Driven as the cult's founder.

The recipients of the final level of initiation are the Matrons (Matrones), dedicated to advancing the cult's goals among magical organizations and with representatives of the supernatural realms. Any potential Matron must have a score of 6 in Organization Lore: Matres and Matrones, a Feminine Sympathy Trait of at least +3, must have raised a child or apprentice to maturity, and must be of an age to have undergone menopause. They learn either Intuition, Dark Magic (see sidebar), or Chthonic Magic (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 123–124).

An Ex Miscellanea Tradition: The Gorgiastic Cathars

The Cathars hold a wide spectrum of beliefs, and argue and fragment on doctrinal issues. On the whole most Cathars are very open about their beliefs — they are not gnostic, that is they do not claim that special knowledge is needed for salvation. Among the many differing interpretations of the Cathar faith preached, there is a small mystery cult of theurgists, whose teachings ultimately derive from the Teachings of Criamon the Founder. They identify themselves as members of the Cathar Church, observe the *Consolamentum*, and honor the Perfecti, yet are in fact heretics even as far as most Cathars are concerned. As they are a Mystery Initiatory tradition and associated with the Magic Realm not the Divine, they have remained largely undetected, and they choose not to enter theological disputes with their "less enlightened" coreligionists. As such few Cathars recognize them as anything but brethren.

The origin of the Gorgiastic Cathars lies in the tenth century, with a renegade Criamon of deep religious devotion named Anaïs of Toulouse. Exposed to the early Christian documents circulated by Cathar scholars, she reinterpreted the traditional mystery of House Criamon (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*). In her teachings the false creation of Lucifer has been molded by the intervention of the Divine toward harmony, but escaping to the *sphairos* remains the key to salvation. The path is not through the Enigma as understood by the House, however, to a Gorgiastic Cathar the hypostasis (Criamon's refuge outside time) is in fact a subtle trap, not part of the solution to escaping the cycles of time. Anaïs replaced the notion of reincarnation common among Criamon with that of transmigration, even at death, the soul does not escape the world and time, but is immediately reborn elsewhere. As such, the Criamon and Gorgiastic Cathars agree on the eternal recurrence of cycles of time, and of endless lives within time, but disagree on the escape route. To Anaïs nothing within time and space (immanent) can achieve escape (transcendence) without

Potential Parentes of the Provençal Tribunal

For players who want their characters to have completed their apprenticeship in the Tribunal, the following magi would make suitable parentes for the characters.

BJORNAER

Bubulcus and Elnoris One-Leg of the Coenobium

BONISAGUS

Marcella of Stella Durus
An unnamed Trianoman magus of the Coenobium

CRIAMON

Any of the four magi from Miniata Sophia

EX MISCELLANEA

Ainza of Aedes Mercurii, Hermetic haruspex
Any of the four Ex Miscellanea Sorginak eremites of the Pyrenees (although they cannot teach Folk Witch powers)
Lavendarius of the Coenobium, Pralician
Raimond of Tolosa Paratge, Gorgiastic Cathar
Rebecca of Mimizan or any fellow sorginak, folk witch (although they cannot teach the Hermetic Arts)

Tres, rustic magus, has two filii

FLAMBEAU

Any of the many Flambeau magi of Castra Solis or Aedes Mercurii
Cyprian of Tolosa Paratge
Gilbert of the Faidits (raised Jerbiton)
Renaud of Stella Durus (filius of Cyprian)
Robert Vasquez of Bellaquin
Unnamed magi of the Coenobium

GUERNICUS

Damocles of the Coenobium (Guernicus-raised, now Jerbiton)
Fraxinus of Portus Termini
Tibaut, the former Presiding Quaesitor, could have had an apprentice when he died in 1214, with the remaining years of his or her training finished by another.

JERBITON

Any of the many Jerbiton magi of the Coenobium, including Balthazar, Pola, or Romualdus
Jean Marie of Stella Durus
Mariola and Carolus St. Tropez of Tolosa Paratge
Valgravian, Constantine, and Antionette LeBarre of Bellaquin

MERCERE

Guillermo of Ara Maxima Nova
Ophilio of Aedes Mercurii

MERINITA

Jeanne of Ara Maxima Nova
Luc of Ara Maxima Nova
Etienne of Ara Maxima Nova
Marie de France, Poitiers chapter of Castra Solis

TREMERE

Protendus of Aedes Mercurii

TYTALUS

Aucassin the Eremite may have trained an apprentice prior to disappearing.
Ahmad ibn Nasr of Tytalus, Frainetum
Oxioun of Aedes Mercuriae

VERDITIUS

Ruberus of Verditiis, Head of Confraternity of Roland, from Aedes Mercurii.
Other Vulcan Cult Verditiis are mentioned at the covenant but not named
Rycas is not of the Tribunal, but often visits Adam Carpentiere of Tolosa Paratge

an external being's intervention. The only being who can allow salvation is therefore God, and only God can take the righteous to the sphairos. This was the purpose of the mission of Christ, and the path to apt action can be found in the teachings of the Gospels.

While other Christian Criamon may believe that the Dominion is in fact a force for harmony, extending time and therefore the chance to escape from the eternal cycles, Anaïs came to believe that the fall saw the corruption of the Dominion aura, which is associated with the false creator, Lucifer. She controversially asserted that the Dominion and Infernal were both flip sides of the same tarnished coin, and ar-

gued that the Magic Realm was the only way of reaching the true creator, God. As such her religious system is deeply theurgical, using magic as a religious practice to reach salvation.

Anaïs founded a lineage through her two apprentices, who shared her religious beliefs. While House Criamon never accepted the teachings, a number of primi were sympathetic, and some in the House still regards the Gorgiastic Cathars as kindred spirits seeking the Enigma in their own way, while others see them as dangerous and deceived individuals who are increasing strife and engaging in actions that are not apt. Anaïs was eventually expelled from House Criamon, and with her

followers entered House Ex Miscellanea in 975; today only a handful remain, the majority in the Provençal Tribunal. They do not practice Enigmatic Wisdom, but have their own Organization Lore: Gorgiastic Cathars which doubles as a Theology ability for their strange belief system.

Gorgiastic Cathars as an Ex Miscellanea Tradition receive the Major Hermetic Flaw: Twilight Prone, the General Major Virtue Ghostly Warder (referred to as their 'Genius', a tutelary spirit), and the Minor Hermetic Virtue: Quiet Magic.

The Tribunal of 1214

Remembered as one of the most discordant gatherings since the Schism War, the Tribunal held after the outbreak of the Crusade led to violent disagreements between Provençal magi. Originally scheduled to be held in Toulouse, the violence of the intervening years and the presence of de Montfort's army outside the city's walls required an alternative and the gathering shifted to Castra Solis, much to the chagrin of the Mercurian magi. Recent Hermetic responses to the crusade and charges of mundane interference against various magi who claimed to be defending their magical power in the face of the Crusade dominated discussion. Many accused magi from the Normandy Tribunal of clandestine interference, some Flambeau magi boldly claimed that their Tytalan rivals engineered the crusade.

The outspoken Tolomae of Jerbiton argued for a coordinated Hermetic response to the crusade, amounting to blatant magical interference in mundane and Church affairs. Although many sympathized, he was ejected from the discussion, vowing revenge upon the Mercurian conservatives and his peacemaking former covenant, the Coenobium. The magi of Aedes Mercurii threatened to withdraw from the meeting entirely, a move which risked invalidating the Tribunal, and anarchy was only averted by the actions of the late Presiding Quaesitor Tibaut, aided by skilled political maneuvering by the Chief Redcap Azalais, who threatened the suspension of all Redcap services.

During the Tribunal an attempt was made to bring charges against the magus Tres of Ex Miscellanea, who had armed a company of mercenaries with magical weapons claiming they were all his grogs,

and employed them to destroy the covenant of Mistridge, leveling the magically conjured tower with magical siege artillery. Despite the fact Tres' actions were deplored by many, they were part of a justly declared Wizard's War, and no ruling exists restricting the employment of grogs in the pursuit of such an action. The vote was narrowly in his favour, and Tres wisely fled in to hiding to escape the vengeance of the friends of Mistridge.

The Upcoming Tribunal of 1221

The next Tribunal meeting will take place, by agreement, in the ruins of Glanum (Chapter 8, Arelat: Glanum) in summer 1221. The Praeco Dama of Merinta, a maga of exceptional age and power, commands respect from many in the Tribunal, and is known to favor female magi. Despite her membership in Castra Solis, she lives apart in a small tower near Mimizan in Gascony, where she pursues her magical interests in seclusion. Perhaps for this reason she is regarded as acceptable by many Mercurians, and even Aedes Mercurii pay heed to her words if she chooses to speak.

Since the former Presiding Quaesitor Tibaut died last year, it is assumed his filia Beatrice will take the position, but this could be contested and will be the first order of business. (Normally the Presiding Quaesitor is appointed at the close of each Tribunal meeting, together with two advisers.) Beatrice has yet to establish any respect amongst the competing factions, as she is young for the role. Beatrice is nominally a member of Castra Solis, but she has taken to spending all her time in the Arelat of late,

reputedly because of a falling out with the Flambeau Primus, Garus.

Given the recent upheavals, it is likely that the dominating theme at council will remain interference with mundanes and the effects of the Albigensian crusade on the Tribunal. Those most affected by the crusade, the Hermetic faidits and refugees from other covenants affected by de Montfort's forces, will demand license to defend themselves or enforce what they see as their right to reclaim their magical power. They seek the approval and backing of Garus and the milites of Castra Solis, even overt magical aid against the crusaders. The aloof conservative faction, led by the Mercurians of Aedes Mercuriae and supported by those southern covenants removed from mundane society and thus unaffected by the crusade (Ara Maxima Nova, Stella Durus, Miniata Sophia) will argue for not interfering and waiting out the current struggle, relying on their isolation to ensure their safety. If the Tribunal decides to formally intervene against the crusaders and the Church, the Pyrenean led group may boycott any future discussions in 1227 and even attempt to secede from the Tribunal entirely. Meeting the requirement of four covenants, they may petition to declare themselves an independent new regional Tribunal at the next Grand Tribunal, scheduled for 1228.

An issue also in many senior magi's minds is the growing power of the Coenobium, long respected as a source of stability and a paragon of cooperation amongst magi. The Jerbiton-and-Mercere controlled collective has greatly increased its influence, unopposed in the turmoil created by the recent destruction of several covenants by the crusaders. Its increasingly expanding hegemony makes even former allies uneasy. Tolosa Paratge's internal war may also be raised, if any magi feel the situation should be resolved by the Tribunal and bring a case.

Chapter Four

The County of Toulouse

The County of Toulouse lies in the center of the Tribunal, situated in a shallow depression between the heights of the Pyrenees and the highlands of Provence. It is a land of castles, with the ranges of hills and rocky outcrops that rise above the plain topped by scattered fortifications. The towns and villages are built of either wattle, daub, and wood, or in the famous local brick that ranges in color from vivid pinks to bright reds. At dawn and sunset the "red towns" of the region glow with the sunlight's reflection on the brick houses, and the beauty of the scene is much remarked upon by northern visitors.

Toulouse is a dusty land of orchards, vineyards and farms, crisscrossed by wide drovers' trails (sometimes a mile across). Vast flocks of cattle, sheep, and goats are driven to their summer pastures in the Pyrenees in late spring, and back to the lowland pastures in early autumn.

The Counts of Toulouse

After the Merovingian conquest of the region, royal appointees were set over Toulouse to administer the district, taking the title of comte. During the Carolingian era the role became hereditary, passing through primogeniture on the male side, though in the absence of a suitable male heir a daughter could inherit. The dynasty produced the Countess Phillippa Maude, Duchess of Aquitaine, in the late eleventh century; the title may well pass to a woman in the future. The current heir is Raimond, son of Raimond VI, however, and his daughter Joan, born in 1220, will only become countess if he has no sons.

The counts soon adopted the ways and language of the region and were unwilling to honor their duties as vassals of the French king, remaining fiercely autonomous and placing the County of Toulouse outside of France. Raimond III in the early tenth century expanded the County to include all of former Septimania, and in the reign of Raimond IV (1093-1105) the count took possession of the marquise of Provence and the Narbonnais region, becoming overlord of almost all of what is today the Provençal Tribunal. His marriage to Elvira of Aragon provided him with influence over the southern regions under the rule of the Kingdom of Aragon; only Gascony remained outside his reach.

The reign of Raimond IV marked a high point in the power of the counts, and his successor Raimond V created the *capitouls* of Toulouse (see page 34), a ruling council with full legislative and judicial powers, who rule alongside the counts. In 1188 the capitouls seized more power, but Raimond VI (who has ruled since 1194) has made no attempt to reassert his authority. His easy-going tolerance, extension of tax exemptions, and distraction by the Crusade against his lands has allowed the creation of a prosperous "middle class" of non-noble merchants and landowners, many of whom owe no allegiance to any lord and whose wealth is often as great as or greater than that of the great nobles of the region. Likewise, many lords have long since cast off the chains of vassalage, just as the counts of Toulouse have long been independent of their nominal royal liege. More than in many regions of Mythic Europe, characters may stand independent of the feudal system, and avoid the oaths of allegiance that prove a stumbling block that many covenants in less fortunate regions must work around.

Since the Crusade began Raimond has been stripped of many titles, and following his loss of Toulouse in 1213 to Simon

de Montfort he was forced into a four year exile, much of which was spent with his son petitioning the pope for the restoration of his vast estates. In 1216 Simon de Montfort declared himself count of Toulouse, but following Raimond's return in 1217 and the active campaign to drive the crusaders from the region, Raimond has won back many of his former vassals.

In 1218 Simon de Montfort was killed besieging Toulouse, and while Raimond's claims to the title are currently maintained by military force, he still works assiduously to be once again recognized as the legitimate count of Toulouse (a title claimed by Simon's son, Amaury). Today, following the failure of the Royal Crusade of 1217, when Prince Louis' army was turned back outside the walls of Toulouse, Raimond is firmly in control of the city and holds parts of the county. Whether he can reach agreement with the French throne and papacy and pass his inheritance to his faithful son remains to be seen. Raimond has one rather surprising supporter: Arnaud Almaric, the papal legate who uttered the infamous words outside Béziers, "Kill them all; God will know his own." Unlike the bishop of Toulouse, Foulques de Marseilles, who remains an implacable enemy of the count, Amalric the legate, a long time supporter of the Crusade, switched sides after the death of de Montfort and made his peace with Raimond.

Toulouse Covenants

Current Covenants: Ostal des Exiles, Tolosa Paratge
Ruined, Abandoned, or Lost Covenants: Windgraven, Lariander

Toulouse

The regional capital, Toulouse is the most important city of the county and one of the largest, most cultured, and most prosperous cities in Mythic Europe. It forms the heart of the Languedoc; a former Roman and Visigothic capital, it is the city the whole region looks to, and regards itself as far more advanced economically and culturally than its northern rival, Paris. The inhabitants are ruled over by the counts, and an elected body, the *Capitole*, to whom the counts have abdicated much power. The only rival is the bishop who shares responsibility for justice within the city, a shared prerogative that leads to considerable turmoil and tension.

summer of 1211, though it opened its gates to him in 1215. After being expelled by the popular rising in the autumn of 1216, de Montfort unsuccessfully besieged the city from autumn 1217 until his death outside the walls in the summer of 1218. The summer of 1219 saw the Dauphin Louis unsuccessfully besiege the city once again, withdrawing as pestilence broke out in his army. The count's castle, the *Château Narbonnais*, stands on the western edge of Toulouse, within the city walls, and guards the western approaches to the city through a great gate. Simon de Montfort's wife Alice was forced to surrender the castle after holding out against the townsfolk on the return of Count Raimond in the autumn of 1217, but it usually forms a citadel if the walls of the city proper are breached.

Tribunal system. It was in return for unspecified favors from the Order of Hermes that Count Raimond IV in 1154 set up an elected chapter of magistrates to judge trade disputes and oversee legal cases on his behalf. (The law of the region is a magisterial system, based on Roman and Visigothic law, rather than the jury system of the north; *Lion and the Lily*, page 104). Originally consisting of four lawyers, two judges, and six prominent townsfolk known as sheriffs and appointed by the count, in 1188 the elected sheriffs expelled the judges and lawyers and took over their functions, and the *Capitole* took on the rights to control the guard, raise a militia, declare war, raise and set taxes, and regulate trade. Count Raimond V acquiesced, distracted by a conflict with Aragon and England, and since that time the twelve elected sheriffs, or capitouls, have effectively ruled Toulouse with the consent of the count.

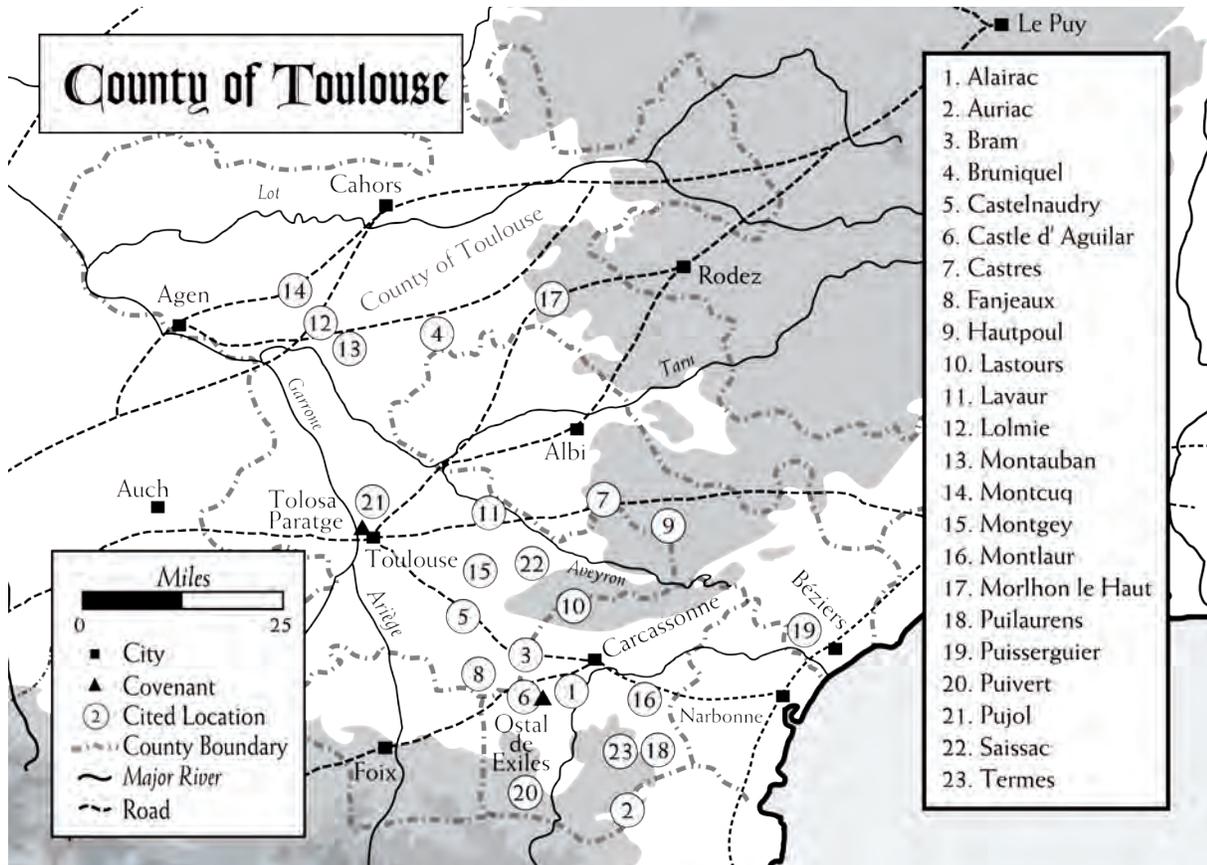
The capitouls are elected by the householders of Toulouse who are of good standing and meet a wealth qualification, and each of six districts returns two capitouls to the *Capitole* building. Elections are held ev-

The Walls

Toulouse has a strong city wall that has withstood repeated sieges. It was besieged unsuccessfully by Simon de Montfort in the

The Capitole

It is rare for Hermetic culture to influence mundane society, but the *Capitole* of Toulouse was influenced by the Hermetic



ery seven years or if required by the death of an incumbent. The term *capitole* applies not just to the building, but also to the 12 capitouls as a body.

The capitouls purchased a number of houses in 1190 that have been knocked together into the *Capitole* building, where citizens can petition the capitouls and where trade disputes, matters of taxation and guild laws, and justice are decided, and the capitouls work for the good of Toulouse. Considerable wealth, influence, or a story about the struggle to win them over will often be needed to get a favorable ruling. The capitouls are often split by their personal political agendas and those of the vested interests they represent, and a simple majority is needed to pass a law. Those who serve as capitouls are treated as at least minor nobility for the rest of their lives, regardless of actual birth status; they are treated with great respect and accorded the honorific title "sheriff" even after their term of office ends.

Two Churchmen

Two churchmen associated with Toulouse will help determine the fate of the region. Both of them have had dealings with the Order of Hermes in the past, and undoubtedly will again in the future, but both are extremely dangerous men who must be handled with great care if disaster is to be avoided.

FOULQUES DE MARSEILLES, BISHOP OF TOULOUSE

One of the most controversial figures in the region, and one of the most powerful, Foulques de Marseilles is the bishop of Toulouse. He is hated and vilified by the majority of its citizens, even those formerly loyal to the Church. In his youth he was a troubadour of considerable prowess and reputation; a vision experienced 25 years ago caused him to renounce his former wicked ways. Now he is moved to tears and stern penance whenever he hears one of his songs sung, horrified that his vices endure. Entering the Church, he became a strong opponent of the moral laxity and easy going ways of life in the region, and in particular

Toulouse, City of Towers

Toulouse's more prosperous citizens have long grown used to the occasional violence and turmoil of city life, and a number of minor noble families, capitouls, and wealthy citizens have invested in fortified towers within the city and a small guard, analogous to the Order's grogs. While de Montfort had the tow-

ers attached to the city wall razed after taking the city, there are still at least 20 towers within the city, and one is held by the "white" faction of the covenant of Tolosa Paratge. Acquiring or building a tower is a perfectly sensible option for magi or Wealthy companions who wish to maintain a presence in the city.

a vigorous foe of heresy. He has three main targets that rouse him to fury: heretics, troubadours, and moneylenders, and as many of the latter are Jewish he has developed a strong dislike for the Jews.

A firm supporter of Dominic and the Dominican mission of preaching to the heretics, his appointment as bishop of Toulouse to replace the former corrupt and religiously indifferent bishop was troubled, with the direct intervention of the pope needed to secure his cathedral. So hostile had the citizens of Toulouse become to the Church that he required an armed bodyguard at all times, and eventually he came to return that hostility. When the Crusade was declared he had long been unable to enter his diocese for his own safety, and joined the crusaders. While Count Raimond made some efforts to win him over, even giving him the Châteaux Narbonnais, the castle within the city, they soon became bitter enemies, and Foulques is currently to be found riding with the crusaders, and constantly urging that Toulouse be taken and the heretics be exterminated. He favors the idea of an Inquisition, a clerical group of investigators to seek out and try heresy, and execute the guilty. If your saga follows history this will emerge as a real force in the 1230s, and the Cathars will be destroyed within two decades.

As a young man Foulques entered Tolosa Paratge as an exceptionally talented troubadour, though his mind may have been subsequently magically modified or he may have simply dismissed the episode as a dream. He is aware of the Order of Hermes, and through his dealings with the Quaesitor Augustus, who had come to see the heretics as destroying the civilizations of the south through a mundane version of "bringing ruin upon their sodales," has considerable respect for them. He is unaware of the Cathar magi, but is aware that a

number of scholars reside within Toulouse and practice what he regards as Natural Magic (see *Art & Academe*, page 67). He has no inkling of the true power of the Order, and if his good impression were altered by meeting with evidence of heretic magi who oppose his beliefs, he would become terrible enemy of the Order and certainly add them to his list of targets for the crusade, unless the papacy ordered otherwise. As such he presents a terrible latent threat to the Hermetic community.

THE BROTHERHOODS

In 1209 Bishop Foulque created the White Brotherhood, a society of citizens willing to take up arms to destroy the poison of heresy and moneylenders, oppose Count Raimond, and support the crusade. While the White Brotherhood — so called because they donned white robes and masks or hoods for their midnight arrests and acts of terror — were fundamentally loyal to the Church and the bishop, they were also Toulouse loyalists. The Brotherhood suffered a fatal blow from the defection of the bishop and many churchmen who escaped when the city was besieged by Simon de Montfort. Fearing a repeat of Béziers, many of the brotherhood took up arms against the crusaders.

After the formation of the White Brotherhood, which was guilty of acts of murderous violence, lynching, and rioting in the streets, an opposing group — the Black Brotherhood — was formed. Whereas the White Brotherhood was mainly drawn from the city itself, the Black Brotherhood came largely from the suburbs and surrounding countryside. They fought on the streets protecting the Cathars and Jewish population from the White Brother-

Story Seed: Residence Requirement

A would-be *capitoul* approaches the companions asking for assistance in his election. He has acquired a residence in the Sainte Maria district, but the rather shabby house is infested with vermin, purportedly haunted, and plagued by vandals and local gangs of thugs supporting a rival candidate. By the law of Toulouse, he must

reside here for a month to be a candidate for the elections. Can the characters keep the candidate safe and comfortable in the flea-ridden house for the month's residence needed to qualify, and can they convince the other *capitouls* not to pass legislation extending the residence requirement to seven years before the election?

hood's terror, committing atrocities of their own. Since the siege of Toulouse ended, the Brotherhoods have weakened but still lurk in the streets at night.

Both groups are reduced to a small and violent fanatical core. Membership in either may constitute the Flaw: Dark Secret for any character still involved. The conflict has had two main results. Firstly, a strong strain of anti-semitism has emerged among the former Whites, and threatens the Jewish community. Secondly, usury (the sin of lending money at interest), long accepted as necessary for business in the city, has been outlawed and raising finance is now much harder. Cahors has replaced Toulouse as one of the few cities where moneylenders still openly practice their profession.

BISHOP ARNAUD AMALRIC, FRIEND TO THE SOUTH?

For the last twenty years, Bishop Arnaud Amalric has led the Church's campaign to win back the South from heresy. Arnaud has long been one of the most effective figures in the organization and pursuit of the Crusade, and traveled with de Montfort, presiding over the burning of Cathars and the massacres of the resisting population.

Yet in 1220 Arnaud has made peace with Count Raimond, finally convinced of the count's piety, and has realized that the culture of the region is under a real threat from the French crown. Never a supporter of French territorial claims, he remains sympathetic to Alice and Amaury de Montfort, but firmly resists the French advances into the region, and since his appointment as bishop of Narbonne in 1212 has defended the rights of the local Church from the imposition of Northerners.

Arnaud is a Cistercian monk and, while dedicated to the fight against heresy, a man of great education and considerable scholarship. He has, since de Montfort's death, befriended a young knight of Pujol, a castle not far from the city where he often resides. That knight is Carolus St.Tropez, and St.Tropez has influenced Arnaud significantly, hardening his heart against the French and re-awakening his Southern nationalist sympathies. Arnaud is not aware that St.Tropez is a member of the Order of Hermes, but he regards the Order as a loose confraternity of scholars and natural magicians and he is positively disposed to them, providing they pay heed to the doctrines of the Church. If he found the Order was sheltering heretics this opinion would rapidly change. He would use his influence at the papal curia to turn the Church against this new threat, unless the Order was willing to expel the heretics from its ranks.

JUSTICE IN TOULOUSE

The right to administer justice in Toulouse is, by ancient tradition, shared between the counts and the bishop of the city; both have their own court (though the count's court is now the *Capitole*), and on occasion, those convicted by one can appeal successfully to the other. While canon law is the bishop's domain, and most civil law the count's, both have encroached on each other's rights and now the secular law of the city is administered by both. Unlike France, which uses a system of common law (see *The Lion and the Lily*, p104), Toulouse employs the magisterial system of Roman law, represented by the Ability Civil and Canon Law.

Districts of Toulouse

The city is divided into six districts, each of which since 1189 has returned two delegates, called *capitouls*, to the ruling council in the *Capitole*. The 12 *capitouls* wear elaborate red robes with black fur trim over a suit of clothing in their district's colors.

SAINT-SERNIN

For centuries the most important pilgrimage site in the region, the great basilica of Saint-Sernin was, somewhat ironically in light of later events, dedicated by Pope Urban on his way to preach the First Crusade at Clermont. An Augustinian monastery, the impressive building of white stone and Toulouse brick with its great octagonal tower and spire towers over the surrounding houses. The colors of Saint Sernin are yellow and white. The abbot is Jordan Giordano, a compassionate man who presides over the college and hospice that treats the poor of the city. Many pilgrims flock here each summer to see the relics.

LA PIERRE

The parish of Saint-Pierre des Cuisines stands by the River Garonne, and is home to river-folk, a poorer district of the city with a reputation for vice and thievery. The local prostitutes are known as Magdalenes, after the legendary career of the biblical Mary of that place. The church itself is the oldest in the Tribunal, and was an early Christian place of worship, though the present structure is only two centuries old and is owned by the Benedictine monks of Moissac. It is by tradition the place where the courts of justice presided over by the counts are held, the promulgations of the *capitouls* are declared to the people, and where the counts make important announcements or sign important documents before the multitude. As such, it holds a peculiar status considering it is very much the ecclesiastical poor relation of Saint-Sernin and Our Lady of the Sea Bream. The color of this district and worn by its *capitouls* is a deep blue.

SANTA MARIA DEALBATA
(ST. MARY THE WHITE)

The Church takes its name from the distinctive lime whitewash used to paint it, and the district is home to many wealthy merchants, though smaller shops and craftspeople also ply their trade here. The artisans

of the district have a few wealthy members who resent the power of the merchants in the area, and an ambitious potential *capitoul* can attempt to bribe his way to power if he wishes to become embroiled in the disputes between craftsman and merchants. The color of the district's *capitouls'* clothing is carnation pink.

SAINT-ÉTIENNE

The wealthiest part of the city, Saint-Étienne is home to many nobles and prosperous citizens. In Toulouse, wealthy merchants and commoners can aspire to join the petty nobility, but the noble and commoner divide makes much less difference

The Mystery of the Regio

The regio containing the covenant is in some sense an echo of the ancient lake where the Tolosans offered sacrifices to ward off illness and maintain the prosperity of their city in the centuries before the Romans came to this region. It is known to be linked to the flow of the Garonne River, and this is the basis of Adam's experiments. What the magi of Toulouse do not realize is that it is also linked to the power and prosperity of the city itself – the recent catastrophic weakening of the aura and difficulty in reaching the regio was at least partially the result of the conquest by de Montfort, and the fall of Toulouse into internal conflict. The very magi reflect these tensions, and are driven in some mysterious way by these forces, as mirrored in the recent tragedies that have afflicted the covenant. Only if someone realizes that the city must be healed to save the covenant, and restores the pursuit of learning and culture, by perhaps founding a university within the city walls, or doing more to encourage Occitanian culture, will the regio survive. It is a by-product of the powerful genius loci of the city itself. Adam's experiment with La Garonne is simply a first step; it was the increased prosperity of the mills and shareholders, not the flow of water, that has positively effected the regio.

THE SPIRIT OF TOLOSA (GENIUS LOCI, AUTUMN)

Magic Might: 40 (Aquam)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +3, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0
Size: N/A
Confidence Score: 1 (3)
Virtues & Flaws: Magic Spirit, Ways of the Land (Toulouse); Entrancement; Affinity with Area Lore, Inoffensive to those of the Magic Realm*, Magic

Sensitivity, Puissant Area Lore; Dependent (citizens), Servant of the Land* (Toulouse); Anchored to the Land (Toulouse)*, Incomprehensible, Soft-Hearted, Susceptible to Infernal Power.

Magical Qualities: Greater Power, No Fatigue, Ritual Power x6; Gift of Speech, Improved Abilities, Improved Powers x10, Vis Mastery (Aquam).

Personality Traits: Soft-Hearted +3
Soak: 0

Fatigue Levels: N/A

Wound Penalties: N/A

Abilities: Area Lore: County of Toulouse 18+2 (city of Toulouse), Artes Liberales 1 (poetry), Awareness 1 (fires), Folk Ken 5 (Toulousain residents), Bargain 1 (Toulouse), Carouse 1 (poetry), Charm 3 (strangers), Civil & Canon Law 1 (Toulouse), Entrancement 2 (citizens), Living Language: Occitan 5 (Provençal/Languedoc), Magic Sensitivity 2 (regiones), Organization Lore: Tolosate 1 (lake sacrifices), Penetration 4 (Mentem)

Powers

Sturdy Walls of Toulouse, 8 points, Terram, Init +2. Heals breaches in the city walls, the missing stone magically repairing itself until sunset or sunrise when it suddenly collapses away leaving the holes. (-2 points for Improved Powers, +22 Init.)

The Silent Counsel, 4 points, Mentem, Init -2. Subtly influences a group of people, such as the bishop, or the *capitouls* in session, toward the best outcome for the city as a whole.

Human Shape, 1 point, Corpus, Init -1. Allows the spirit to physically manifest until the next sunrise or sunset as a nondescript member of the lower orders of Toulousain society. The penalties imposed by The Gift still apply; the spirit is somehow disturbing and

stands out, despite appearing very average in every way.

Grant Blessing of the City, 5 points, Vim, Init -19. The recipient of this power suddenly prospers, as everything turns to their favor, and gains the Virtue Ways of Toulouse until such a time as the spirit chooses to withdraw it. However the Might cost is not recovered by the spirit until it ends the effect. (Improved powers: Might cost: 5, Initiative +1)

Oath Swearing, 8 points, Vim, Init -9. This power is very unusual, in that it works only upon the steps of the church of Saint-Pierre des Cuisines, where by tradition the counts of Toulouse make oaths to the people, and where *capitouls* swear their vows to serve the city. (The steps have a tiny Magic aura of 1, a lacuna). If the power Penetrates, then the oath made before the people is binding. If it is broken, even inadvertently and secretly, then (mostly) false rumors about the individual concerned spring up among the citizens, and throughout the county of Toulouse, and he gains the Minor Flaw Infamous, even if the actual nature of their indiscretion remains unknown. (Improved Powers: cost: 2, Initiative +1)

Appearance: The genius loci of Toulouse usually manifests, if seen by Second Sight, as a damp mist, or a figure of indeterminate gender seemingly made out of water and pond reeds. It answers only to the name Tolosa, and the magi tend to avoid interfering with it, though they are aware it has weakened substantially in recent years. At night it can sometimes be found manifested in its human form, as a fisherman sitting on Adam Carpentiere's river barrage fishing, and is only too willing to chat to anyone. It rarely makes much sense though, at least to short-lived mortals.

The Magic Lake

In ancient times, the inhabitants of Toulouse propitiated a spirit in a lake on the Garonne in what is now this district of the city. When pestilence spread from the marshy regions around the lake, offerings of gold and silver were consecrated and sacrificed to the lake waters, and the disease died away. No one knows the name of the deity who dwelled in the lake, but in 106 BC the Roman governor Quintus Caepio Severus had the lake drained, and took the great treasure that had accumulated in the muddy bottom. Rumor has it that something else, something more potent, more disturbing, was recovered from the lake; no one knows what it was, but many stories are told to this day. No immediate harm befell Severus despite the warnings of the Tolosate priests, and he founded a temple to Apollo here on what was once the site of the mysterious lake.

The Tolosates, however, took the sacrilege badly, and rose for the first time in revolt against Rome. Within a year Severus was dead, killed in battle, and his treasure taken. Some say it is the

same as the mysterious treasure that the Cathars are said to hold, rumored to be kept at the mountain fortress of Montségur in the Pyrenees.

The Romans retook the city, and rebuilt the temple to Apollo. Later the temple was replaced with the church, with its mysterious Black Madonna. Yet the lake still exists; if one knows the right signs, or is simply lost in an evening mist amidst the twisting alleys of the waterfront, it is possible, though difficult, to enter a regio (Magic aura 3). Within the regio the houses and streets exist, now empty, and the streets become increasingly deep in water as one moves toward the river. Soon only the roofs of the houses project above a lake lost to the mundane world for well over a millennium, and swirling mists drift over the still black waters. Those who know the secret ways can pass from roof to roof to where the final house vanishes beneath the lapping waters, and a rowing boat waits to take visitors to the small island on which an octagonal tower and cluster of houses hold the labs and council chambers of the magi of Tolosa Paratge.

Notre-Dame Noire. The church, built on the foundations of an ancient Roman temple to Apollo, is attached to a Benedictine monastery. In early May each year a procession of flowers is brought here, the church decorated, and a public feast held. If your saga follows history then within ten years the Augustinian poetry contest held in the orchard of Saint-Sernin will be transferred here, and develop into the Festival of the Flowers, where gold and silver flowers are awarded to the finest Occitanian compositions. The area is both Toulouse-nationalist and loyal to the Church, with Cathars unwelcome here.



than even in other parts of the Provençal Tribunal. It is largely ignored in practice, much to the disgust of those of noble blood from elsewhere. Wealth, taste, culture, and political influence are far more important than good birth in the city. The cathedral of Saint-Etienne is built on the site of an ancient chapel founded by Saint Sernin himself, but perhaps because of the often rabid pronouncements and great unpopularity of Bishop Foulque, currently in self-imposed exile, it lacks the status of the other city churches. The Romanesque basilica is constantly being added to and improved, and is currently wreathed in scaffolding. The colors of the district are violet and white.

PONT-VIEUX

This is the area around the oldest bridge across the River Garonne, and its colors are amaranth (a maroon color) and white. Here a large wooden boom has recently been constructed that is designed to narrow the river, and increase the speed of the current

for the benefit of the many watermills used by the industry of the region. The Toulousain magus Adam Carpentiere has enchanted this huge device, using a number of small items built into the structure, to serve two purposes. Firstly and mundanely, it allows the safe regulation of the river flow, preventing flooding even when the melting snows swell the river. Secondly, in some manner not fully understood by most magi, the boom supports the continued existence of the regio in which Tolosa Paratge exists, which is bound to the flow of the river, and had been weakening in recent decades, as silting made it less navigable.

DARAUDE, THE DISTRICT OF THE SEA BREAM

This is the quarter closest to the River Garonne, and has the colors of green and white. It is the site of the church of Our Lady of the Sea Bream, a twelve-sided basilica with a fine dome and finer gold mosaics, which holds a Black Madonna statue,

Tolosa Paratge

Situated in a regio within the city of Toulouse, amidst the ghostly memory of a once holy lake, this cosmopolitan covenant is composed of nine magi from five Houses: Jerbiton, Flambeau, Criamon, Ex Miscellanea, and a single Verditius. As an ancient, long established covenant, they have weathered centuries of Hermetic politics, but recent crises in the mundane world threaten to tear them apart. They have fallen victim to internal dissent and something akin to civil war, with recent Wizard's Wars called between members of the covenant having claimed two magi, leaving the rest in fear. They guard the genius loci of the city, and see themselves as servants of the city; when the citizens turned against themselves, madness and death struck the covenant. Some favor the Cathar cause, while others remain loyal to the Church, and both the Black and

White Brotherhoods claimed the support of some of the magi. All of them share a passion to protect their Southern homeland against the Crusade, yet the religious question is tearing them apart. As madness drags them deeper into Winter, perhaps only a Quaesitor's intervention can prevent their self destruction.

The covenant is hopelessly divided into two factions. The magi who support Bishop Foulques are currently too fearful to enter the regio and have established laboratories in the city. The pro-Cathar magi have holed themselves up in the regio, fearing to leave, besieged by their former colleagues, and waiting for the inevitable outbreak of further Wizard's Wars. Both sides are acting in a manner that would scandalize most of the Order if it were more generally known.

History

Tolosa Paratge was founded in the first wave of the Order of Hermes, and was one of the four original covenants of the Val Negra Tribunal. A House Diedne covenant, it was unusual for its size, having six or more members for two centuries. Once a leading site for Diedne magical research, the magi were rumored, unusually for their House, to be specialists in spirit magic, and developed a slightly sinister reputation within the Tribunal. Their refusal to admit a deputation of Quaesitors following the mysterious death

of the senior Tremere maga in the Tribunal was one of the first incidents in the tragic events leading up to the Schism War.

During the Schism War the magi of the covenant were killed in a spectacular assault led by a group of Flambeau magi, and the site was garrisoned by them until the arrival of the Gorgiastic Cathar Anaïs. She led the reconstruction of the covenant as a multi-House site. As Toulouse expanded, so the regio became harder to access, but the covenant grew in power and prestige. Some Hermetic historians believe Anaïs' teachings, which proved influential among the grogs, may have been a factor in the development of Cathar doctrine; others believe the influence was entirely the other way. The covenant is home to the lineage of Gorgiastic Cathars, religious dualists practicing a theurgical faith.

Through a series of brilliant magi, Tolosa Paratge became known for its culture, cosmopolitan ways, and the subtle influence it has exerted on the development of many of Toulouse's intuitions, especially many believe the capitouls. There are also rumors of a legendary treasure concealed at the site, possibly the same treasure Quintus Caepio Severus tried to steal centuries before.

Recently, disaster has befallen the covenant. While all the magi resolutely supported the southern cause against the crusaders, following the destruction of Mistridge and Lariander there were increasing fears that very survival of the Order in the region was at stake. Historically the magi of the cov-

enant, proud of their city, have had strong links with many factions within the walls — the guilds, the bishop, the capitouls, the count, and so on. Magi have occasionally found themselves at cross purposes in their subtle influence of the political factions, but the greater good of Toulouse and the covenant had held them together. The covenant leader Augustus was a high ranking Quaesitor, and made sure no one looked too closely at issues of interfering with mundanes, providing there was no risk of harm to the covenant or Order.

The city has changed hands several times during the crusade, but the covenant has remained loyal to the city and refused to deal with a foreign master. However in the weeks before the death of de Montfort in 1218, Augustus was convinced by Bishop Foulques that the city would fall, as a result he asked the Gorgiastic Cathar magi to leave the covenant for their own safety. They refused, and one of them, Marc, bitterly accused the Quaesitor of betraying Tolosa Paratge and all it stood for. He called a Wizard's War against his covenant mate, something almost unknown in Hermetic society. It seems Augustus did not take this seriously; Marc was, after all, a Cathar pacifist. Marc however, convinced Augustus was under demonic influence, slew him in a rather confused argument in the tower.

A month later, St. Tropez declared Wizard's War on the unresisting Marc, and slew him in turn. Mariola was appointed the new Council Leader, but her inaction led to the



covenant rapidly dividing in two: one party, the Blacks, favoring the Cathar cause; the other White party favoring expelling the heretics for bringing ruin upon their sodales. The Blacks are stronger, and currently hold the covenant. The Whites wait in the city, plotting to retake it. Whether this happens by appeal to Tribunal in 1221 or by Wizard's War remains to be seen. The violence and madness of the times have infected even these covenant mates.

Setting and Description

The covenant stands within a regio on a small rocky island that rises sharply from the mist-shrouded lake (see the nearby insert, The Magic Lake). A narrow winding path leads up the steep cliffs to a selection of red brick townhouses huddled around a central tower, an octagonal structure of black stone eight stories high. A few of the coven folk live permanently on the island along with some of the magi, but many choose to reside within the city of Toulouse. A rowing boat is enchanted to sail to the jetty on the island or the last roof on the shore when someone calls out a short poem in the Occitanian tongue. The lake is haunted by things only glimpsed within the still black waters. Perhaps the inhabitants of Tolosa Paratge know what lurks therein, but if they do they are not saying.

The magi maintain an inn within the city, thirty dwelling houses, and have some eighty covenfolk, many of whom are artisans or laborers within the mundane city of Toulouse. Three of the houses have well stocked laboratories underneath despite being within the Dominion, and several magi maintain their sancta in the city, working in the labs on the island and returning to Toulouse to sleep.

Culture and Traditions

Tolosa Paratge is first and foremost a Hermetic covenant, a place of magical study, research, and experimentation. However, while its true purpose — to provide a home and laboratory space for magi — has never been eclipsed, it has also developed a

distinct culture well known throughout the Tribunal and beyond. The Tolosates, as the coven members are called, are known for their pride in their ancient heritage as one of the first covenants of the Order and Tribunal. Few dare remind them that a Diedne covenant stood here then.

The covenant is ruled by ancient traditions; new magi are welcomed, but must serve ten years before being admitted as full members, unless they were apprenticed and gauntleted within its hallowed walls. The Ability Organization Lore: Tolosa Paratge is used in place of Etiquette for any magus visiting, and by ancient custom guests must be invited before they cross the lake. There are hundreds of traditions; only the residents know them all, and they seem so normal to them that they often fail to advise newcomers, sometimes with embarrassing or even dangerous results.

"Paratge" means, roughly, gentility, and the urbane learned and cosmopolitan magi are immensely proud of their Occitanian language, culture and poetry. They have a reputation across the Order of Hermes as generous patrons of artists, poets, troubadours, and original thinkers. Many a great performer has been taken to the mysterious island in the impossible lake to give a recital, and afterward wondered whether they dreamed the whole thing, despite the generous bag of silver by their side when they awoke back in their room.

By tradition any magi apprenticed here may wear a small silver flower. Those who are current members wear a golden flower, and those who have both served their apprenticeship and now reside within the covenant wear a flower of gold and silver set with precious gems as a mark of their status.

Magi

The current magi of the covenant are divided between the factions, with the nominal leader unable to bring them together.

MARIOLA OF HOUSE JERBITON

Age: 96 (Apparent age: 80)
 Personality Traits: Proud +2, Indecisive +2,
 Withdrawn +2

The current leader of the covenant, Mariola is a woman with a problem. Apprenticed at the covenant, and fiercely proud of the magical heritage Tolosa Paratge represents, she has seen her sodales fall in the fierce civil war that has erupted, propelling her into a position of leadership she has little interest in. After the deaths of Augustus and Marc she was seen as the one person who could unite the White and Black factions. She has extensive contacts in all sections of the city, but especially with Count Raimond's and the bishop's factions; her trusted agents have, in the past, acted as intermediaries between the two. She holds less influence over the capitouls, and is unlikely to be able to influence their votes.

A potent Imaginem maga, she has more and more retreated from the impossible challenge she faces, and after she failed to insist on measures against St. Tropez after his slaying of Marc, the covenant has effectively disintegrated. Too proud and too inward looking to seek outside assistance, she is trapped in a spiral of self doubt and inaction, and is firmly locked in her sanctum, agonizing over what to do.

CAROLUS ST. TROPEZ OF HOUSE JERBITON, LEADER OF THE WHITE FACTION

Age: 54 (Apparent age: 42)
 Personality Traits: Vindictive +3, Determined +2, Pious +1

Carolus is a former apprentice of Mariola, and still genuinely fond of his parents. He assumes the guise of a minor southern noble, and indeed maintains a small castle and household at Chateaux Pujol, just outside the city. Like many lords in the region he recognizes no liege but holds the estate independently. When Marc slew Augustus a long term simmering resentment exploded into violence, and St. Tropez declared a Wizard's War on Marc. Surprisingly, Marc did not defend himself, but allowed the Perdo specialist to slay him. Fearing the vengeance of the other Gorgiastics, Carolus fled into the city, where he rallied many of the grogs and covenfolk to his white banner, swearing that the heretics would be removed from the covenant, and then the city. With his fellow "Whites" he is now at-

tempting to blockade the regio, though no Wizard's War has been declared.

St. Tropez's greatest achievement has been to win over Arnaud Almaric, the papal legate, to the southern cause, and to get that infamous churchman to denounce the French throne's ambitions in the region. St. Tropez believes that the Cathars have brought the judgment of God upon the land; only by their extermination can the regio be spared further horrors. No Tribunal has so far found him guilty of breaking the Code, and he may seek martyrdom in an attack on the hated Gorgiastics, his sodales, before he can be convicted.

**CYPRIAN OF HOUSE FLAMBEAU,
LEADER OF THE BLACK FACTION**

Age: 84 (Apparent age: 71)

Personality Traits: Dignified +3, Courageous +2, Foolhardy +2

In his time, Cyprian has been a troubadour knight and a passionate Seeker, questing for the lost magical secrets of the Tribunal, and he is the parens of Renaud of Stella Durus. Fiercely loyal to the covenant and to Mariola, his years posing as a knight errant and undisputed skill with weapons have led this Perdo Terram specialist to the leadership of the Black faction. A member of the Cult of Mercury, Cyprian is not himself a Cathar; to be honest he regards them as somewhat annoying in their pacifism and mystical beliefs, but he has long felt that Bishop Foulques has betrayed the Church and his honor, and St. Tropez's slaughter of the defenseless Marc and the subsequent descent into anarchy has made him more than willing to take up arms against his sodales, if only in defense of his home.

**ADAM CARPENTIERE, FOLLOWER
OF VERDITIUS, WHITE FACTION**

Age: 77 (Apparent age: 65)

Personality Traits: Industrious +3, Hubris +3, Avaricious +2

Adam has long maintained a sanctum and laboratory within the city, located in a waterfront lacuna with a Magic aura of 2. He is far more involved in city politics than

the politics of his home covenant. He has joined the White faction owing only to his deep seated anti-Semitism, for he owes a substantial sum to the Jewish moneylenders of Cahors, and therefore Bishop Foulque's anti-Semitic and anti-Cathar rhetoric appeals to him. His plans for the enchanted boom across the river to help maintain the regio were resisted by the Gorgiastics, who felt it might adversely effect the aura, and he has never forgotten. Following the Wizard's Wars he has therefore sided with St. Tropez, whom he regards as representing the best interests of the covenant. Adam is deeply immersed in the magic of Hermetic Architecture (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 97)

**RAIMOND OF HOUSE EX
MISCELLANEA, GORGIASTIC
CATHAR, BLACK FACTION**

Age: 41 (Apparent age: 39)

Personality Traits: Pacifist +3, Introspective +2, Serene +1

Raimond is a Cathar Good Man, and sworn to the faith, though his theurgical beliefs are far from the Divine faith of the majority of mundane Cathars. He believes he has lived many times before, and even lived exactly the same lives in many many cycles of the universe, being reincarnated endlessly. He aims one day to escape the cycle of rebirth by entering Final Twilight, and helping hold open the escape route from the horror of the cycle of eternal recurrence, the sanctuary outside of time. He therefore strives to impose his free will and to act in unexpected ways, hoping to break the pattern of previous lives, and seeks out

Twilight experiences, which he sees as a way to step outside of time and modify the endless repetition. He is not afraid to die fighting the White faction, for he is convinced that, should he fail now, in a future cycle he will triumph and help liberate humanity. Besides, Raimond knows that he is doomed to die by drowning in the River Garonne, and so is not frightened of offensive magics.

Covenfolk

The covenfolk of Tolosa Paratge are equally divided between the White and Black factions. Most reside within the mundane city, but given the current state of civil war between the magi some half dozen grogs and a dozen or so covenfolk are currently besieged in the regio. Some of their colleagues remain at large in the city and are attempting to formulate a rescue plan, and they may well approach magi from outside the city, or send Redcaps, to try to gain assistance for their faction. The covenfolk frequently engage in violence on the city streets, and many mundane citizens are caught up in these skirmishes, often becoming actively involved.

**The Rest
of the County**

While the city of Toulouse dominates its county, it is not the only inhabited location, nor the only place of importance.

Story Seed: The Borrowed Book

The situation at Tolosa Paratge has long since passed the normal limits imposed upon magi by the Code. Furthermore, both sides are clearly guilty of depriving each other of their magical resources. So far, however, the Quaesitors have not acted. This is due in part to the great respect held for the covenant, but is mainly because no one on either side has so far brought a case. Visitors to Toulouse

are treated with wary respect by both sides, but neither exactly encourage visits, being wrapped up in their own conflicts. When it becomes clear however that a valuable text was borrowed before the conflict started, and is now somewhere at Tolosa Paratge, the characters are sent to fetch it back. Can they help bring peace to the troubled covenant, or will they be drawn into the conflicts?

The Toulouse Hinterland **Albi**

The towns around Toulouse stand in golden fields of wheat, with rocky sheep pastures dotted with plants on low hills. Many of the towns have emulated Toulouse in casting off feudal duties and electing capitouls to pass laws and run the towns in the interest of the artisans and burghers. There are many small castles dotted around the region, some held by Crusaders, or those loyal to the Crusade, some by southern lords still sheltering Cathars and faidits (knights dispossessed by the crusade, and now landless and lord-less).

TERMES

One of the strongest castles taken by de Montfort, the news has arrived that the sons of its defender, Oliver and Bernard of Termes, are returning with their men in the spring of 1220. This is very much in the current pattern of the dispossessed southern lords taking back their former lands either through papal intervention or by military strength. Termes is considered one of the three great castles of the region in terms of the strength of its fortifications, along with Cabaret (Lastours) and Minerve.

PUJOL

This small castle and hamlet were home to Carolus St. Tropez, magus of Toulouosa Paratge, just three miles from the city. Captured by de Montfort, it was taken back by St. Tropez and handful of men in the summer of 1213. The three crusader knights defending it (who had been burning crops around Toulouse, and perhaps not coincidentally destroying vis sources as well) were taken prisoner, and the rest of the garrison massacred. However, a mob broke into the dungeon in Château Narbonnais where they were being held, mutilated the knights, dragged them behind horses through the streets, and strung up their remains on gallows outside the city walls. St. Tropez believes the knights were controlled by the Gorgiastic Cathar Marc of Toulouse. St. Tropez has since slain Marc in a Wizard's War.

The country south of Albi is notorious for its Cathar sympathies, so much so that the term "Albigensian" was applied to all the heretics, and to the Crusade to exterminate them. The area has many woodlands, and is haunted by the faerie White Ladies known as the Demesoilles. The local vineyards produce an unexceptional, cheap, but palatable wine drunk extensively throughout the whole of the Tribunal, and far beyond.

ALBI

A red brick town on the River Tarn, Albi was a traditional stronghold of the Cathars. When the papal legate Alberic of Ostia came here to preach against the heresy, he was met by the inhabitants beating drums, riding donkeys, and jeering and cat calling. However, Saint Bernard did manage to win over many of the inhabitants temporarily, but the heresy remains strong here even though Simon de Montfort established a garrison. The stone cathedral to Saint Cecilia is the most prominent building in the town, though few attend the mass.

CASTRES

Castres is a fortified city that developed around the Benedictine monastery of St. Benoît, and flanks the rivers Agout and Durrenque. The upper stories of houses are built out over the rivers. It is governed by consuls, who surrendered to the crusaders by sending a deputation to Simon de Montfort, and handing over two Cathars, in September 1209. They remain sympathetic to the crusade, and are generally seen as looking to France and the de Montfort family rather than Raimond II Trencavel, the heir of their former Trencavel lieges.

After their capture the two Good Men were tried, and one recanted and asked for mercy. These were to be the first Cathar victims of the crusade, and a discussion ensued. Eventually the assembled clergy decided he should be burned anyway, in case his repentance was not genuine, and that God could judge his soul. Both men were chained to a stake in the market place, and the fire lit, but even as the flames took the

Cathar, the iron chains fell from the repentant sinner, who stepped unharmed from the fire, and so was spared.

Algen

This region is the far north of the County of Toulouse. It is filled with low ranges of hills and woodlands and known for its sheep, more in keeping with the French landscape than the lands to the south. The area produces fine quality wool, and is prosperous, but the heretics are very strong here.

LAVAUUR

This small Trencavel town on the River Agout holds a cathedral dedicated to St. Alan of Lavaur, but is best known as the "citadel of Satan," being an infamous hotbed of the Cathar heresy. The Bishop of Clairvaux unsuccessfully besieged it in 1181, but in 1211 when the crusaders arrived it appeared impregnable. The town was flanked by high earthen ramparts and walls in a horseshoe, with the rear of the town nestled against a great rocky cliff. A number of faidits had taken refuge here, and the garrison was commanded by Aimery of Montreal and his sister Na Geraldina (Guirauda), an educated woman who presided over a convent for female believers, and was a patron of troubadours and scholars. After a six week siege the city fell, Aimery was hanged, but the gallows fell under his armor's weight and his throat was cut with the rest of the defending knights. His sister fared no better, being handed over to the common soldiery, and after much abuse she was hurled naked down a well and rocks dropped on her till she died. This act shocked and sickened even some of the crusaders. It did not prevent the burning of three or four hundred self-confessed Cathars on a great pyre in a meadow outside the city, where they went willingly to their fate. A number of knights of the Count of Toulouse were discovered within the walls, and his treachery in sending his men to defend Lavaur while also provisioning de Montfort was revealed, finally turning the crusaders irrevocably against him.

Lavaur is today a crusader stronghold,

held by Gui de Lucy. The meadow where the Cathars were burned has become a field of ashes, where no grass or wild flowers grow, and the atrocity has led to the growth of an Infernal aura of strength 6.

Cahors

The city of Cahors is notorious for its moneylenders, whose usury has brought condemnation from the Church. The Jewish quarter houses some of these great moneylenders, but by no means all. Twenty years ago, at the insistence of the Church, Toulouse outlawed the mortgage and loan agreements that had been common in the region for centuries, and Cahors has taken over as the place to go to raise money fast. The towns around Cahors are primarily dedicated to the production of the superb local "black wine" (actually a deep red), which is exported all over Mythic Europe. Vineyards can be found on almost every south facing slope, and many are surmounted by castles.

MONTCUQ AND LOLMIE

A stronghold of Catharism, the town of Montcuq has a small castle that fell to de Montfort in the summer of 1212, and was then granted to Count Raimond's brother Baudouin who had joined the crusaders, against his kin. Baudouin was captured at the nearby Château Lolmie in 1214 when his men betrayed him to two of Raimond's knights; he was abducted naked from his bedchamber and taken swiftly, slung on horseback, to Montcuq, which had returned to the Toulousain cause. He was hanged for treason as his brother watched approvingly a few days later at Montauban.

MORLHON LE HAUT

The Morlhon family had a history of crusading in the Holy Land, and it was while on crusade that Odo de Morlhon had a vision that told him to build a religious establishment dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre. On his return he did so, founding the monastery now under the rule of Cluny at the nearby town of Villeneuve. Despite this

the crusaders, on taking the castle, made the lord a *faidit*, and his titles are still held by the de Montfort family. When the crusaders captured the castle and town in 1214 they found seven Waldensians, and although the Waldensians were not to be declared heretics until the Fourth Lateran Council in

1215 the papal legate had all seven burned in the market place anyway. Orthodoxy was no protection during the crusade, as the Lord of Morlhon found when he was dispossessed by the agents of the Church his family had served so faithfully. Pons de Morlhon has become a companion of the

Story Seed: The Ghost of Na Geralda

Lavaur is still haunted by a well known ghost, that of the beautiful and learned noblewoman Na Geralda who was murdered by the crusaders. Her spirit can manifest physically, and is dressed in fashionable noble dress, with no obvious signs of the trauma that led to her horrific death. She attempts to seduce suitable candidates into a *fin amor*, only revealing her ghostly state some way into the courtship, and then pleading with her lover to give her bones a proper

burial. None so far have dared, and if refused she appears as a hideous mutilated corpse showing the horrible scars of her murder, and terrifies her unfaithful lover. The crusaders are aware that the death of Na Geralda was an atrocity, and wish her bones and memory to remain undisturbed so any who do try to lay the ghost to rest face the anger of Gui de Lucy and his men. The crusaders can not see the ghost (no one is sure why) and they do not believe the stories.

Story Seed: A Rare Vintage

Cahors Black is not just a very fine wine; a few flasks, when properly made, contain a potent source of Spell-like vis (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 121). A moneylender who runs the risk of being ruined by an unwise loan to a local noble offers the wine, which he has realized has extraordinary properties, to any person who can enforce his mortgage agreement and recover his money, or payments from

the noble. The noble lives in Toulouse, and claims that the payment agreement is illegal (as it now is in that city) and that the debt is canceled. In 1201 existing agreements were honored as the law abolished them, but this agreement was made after mortgages were made illegal. It may take a ruling of the capitouls or the bishop to resolve — is even this special vis really worth it?

Story Seed: The Traitors of Lolmie

The garrison at Lolmie saved their own lives by delivering Baudouin to the crusaders. With his dying breath he cursed his brother's bones to lie unburied forever, and cursed all the traitors of Lolmie to early graves. Many of the men have since died, in what appear to be inexplicable accidents, and the remainder are terrified and come to the covenant seeking help in lifting Baudouin's curse. Victims of the curse suffer an additional four botch dice until they seek forgiveness.

The curse is as a unique Invocation/Cursing effect of level 60, powered by

the dying man's fury at the betrayal and terrible curse and his death agonies. The Range is special, and effects those who had sworn fealty to Baudouin and subsequently betrayed him, the Duration is until the sin of treachery is confessed and forgiven, and the Target is Group plus an additional magnitude to effect all thirty members of the garrison. (Base 5, +4 as Communion, +4 as Forsaken, +2 Group; see *Realms of Power: the Divine Revised Edition*, pages 50 and 68, and *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 103) Whether the curse effect is actually Divine or Infernal is best decided by the storyguide.

Story Seed: St. John's Eve

Near Castle Puivert lies a tranquil lake. On the shore is a rock shaped like a throne, where the chatelaines of the castle were often serenaded by troubadour visitors. On Midsummer's night, if an original composition is sung in praise of a lady's beauty while she sits upon the throne, the lock of her hair she grants the troubadour contains four pawns of Rego vis. However the local faerie lady of the lake is known to become jealous

of such attentions, and sometimes floods the site, the waves stealing away the lady, her handmaidens, and the troubadour to an underwater regio where they are all forced to serve the faerie of the lake. When Lambert de Thury and his men return home one midsummer from a late hunt, they find the castle strangely empty, with no sign of his wife and staff. Can the characters solve the mystery, and get Lady de Thury back?

Ostal des Exiles covenant (see later), and is counseled by the angry ghosts of the seven Waldensian martyrs.

MONTAUBAN

Here Baudouin, Raimond's brother, was hanged for his treason from a walnut tree outside the city walls, while Raimond and the Count of Foix watched. The Knights Templar maintain a commandery at Villedieu-du-Temple, not far away, where Baudouin was buried, his body cut down from the gallows by a Templar knight. The Templars remain largely neutral in the struggles, but their sympathies lie with the crusaders.

PUIVERT

Castle Puivert stands in a verdant valley on a low hill in heavily wooded country. The site of a famous meeting of the Cathars in 1170, it is renowned for both its heresy and its warm welcome and generosity to troubadours. Formerly the possession of Bernard of Congost, it fell to de Montfort in 1210 and is now ruled by the crusader Lambert de Thury.

BRUNIQUÉL

Count Raimond was planning to destroy the castle here when he realized it was impossible to defend it against de Montfort, and was dissuaded by his brother Badouin, who took over the garrison. Badouin had, however, already defected to the Crusade, and promptly surrendered the castle. This

act of treachery was to cost him his life when he was captured by Raimond.

PUILAURENS

This is the site of a powerful castle, held by the King of Aragon since 1162 and a safe haven for faidits and Cathars fleeing persecution. As an Aragonese fief, the crusaders may not attack it.

MONTGEY

This village no longer exists, being just an ashen field. The inhabitants were hanged for their part in the murder of a party of crusaders nearby in 1211. As the crusaders marched to join the siege of Lavaur, the Count of Foix fell upon them with a party of knights and the villagers, and no mercy was shown. Some six hundred crusaders were slaughtered by the peasants. In return, de Montfort showed no mercy to the villagers when he had finished with Lavaur. Both the village site and the wood where the original massacre happened have developed Infernal auras of strength 6, and dark things are seen scurrying through the trees at night. Within the haunted woods here stood the Tremere covenant of Lariander, destroyed by the crusaders in the reprisals.

Carcassonne

The district around Carcassonne was historically part of the Trencavel domains, and they ruled from the city. Endless war-

ring with the counts of Toulouse has resulted in a landscape littered with castles. This is a hilly land, with forests of oak and beech, and the villages grow grain or vineyards depending upon the soil. Many pilgrims pass east through the region, en route to Santiago de Compostella in Iberia.

CARCASSONNE

Held by the Trencavel dynasty, Carcassonne is a major city that does not always pay fealty to its rulers. In 1107 and from 1120–1124 the Trencavels were expelled following riots and urban unrest, and the city has a reputation as ungovernable. Nevertheless, the citizens remained loyal to the viscount of Béziers, Raimond-Rogier Trencavel, who was taken prisoner during negotiations (and while under a supposed safe-conduct) during the siege of 1209, when the crusaders arrived at the city. Raimond-Rogier died of dysentery or poison — none can say which — in the dungeons of his own castle amid rumors of romantic betrayal; his son, Raimond II Trencavel, was dispossessed of his lands by Simon de Montfort who held the city till his death. It is still in the hands of the crusaders, though young Raimond II, now 17, is attempting to reassert his rights to the title.

The Cité de Carcassonne is in 1220 defended by a Visigothic single city wall, added to earlier Roman fortifications, and a stone castle built in the eleventh century. (If your saga follows history, the French kings in 1240 build the mighty fortress city known today.) During the time of Charlemagne, it was ably defended by Lady Carcas, whose husband had been the Saracen commander of the city. Ringed by armies, the inhabitants starving, she ordered that the last of the grain should be fed to the final pig, and it should be fired over the walls at the attackers. When the unfortunate animal landed and burst, the grain spilled out. Seeing this the besieging commander ordered an immediate withdrawal, what was the point of laying siege to a city so well provisioned they fed grain to the pigs? Hence the city is named Carcassonne, after the ingenious lady.

The siege of 1209 ended when a severe drought dried up the water supplies and Raimond Trencavel was taken by treach-

ery, leaving the city leaderless. The failure of the springs, cisterns, and castle well remains a mystery. They certainly dried up, and while the besiegers may hold this to be a miracle, the locals entertain darker suspicions of magic having been employed against them.

Almost all the population were expelled following the fall of the city, but most families soon returned and the city that served as the crusaders' base of operations has prospered, while resentment at the northern usurpers remains high. With so many knights quartered here resistance, however, would be futile.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. NAZAIRE

The cathedral holds the tomb of the city's conqueror, Simon de Montfort. It is in the Romanesque style, though some of the crusaders are considering renovating it as a Gothic church. The cathedral is beset with the problems facing the diocese — the northern lords prefer clergy who have come with them on the crusade over the local churchmen, resulting in many clergy losing their positions and siding with the Trencavel claimant. The bishop, Gui de Vaux-de-Cernay, was appointed in 1212 to replace Bishop Bernard Raimond de Roquefort, who was dismissed for his sympathy with the Cathars (who included his mother and brother), but Bernard still claims the diocese and contests the legality of Gui's appointment.

AURIAC

This is the site of ancient, long abandoned gold mines. Stories of strange creatures lurking in the ancient tunnels frighten locals. Nuggets of gold can still be found in the ancient shafts, but the supernatural horrors that must be defeated to recover them may outweigh the value of the Terram vis that can be recovered. Within the mines a Faerie aura of 4 is home to *follets*, stone-throwing fae who delight in collapsing tunnels upon intruders. Looking like the goblins of the north, they live in a feudal society under two rival counts, one in each of the mines, and fight a grim war with each other.

BRAM

A small walled town that held out for three days against de Montfort's forces. The priest of nearby Montreal, who had, after that village's capture, betrayed the crusaders, was brought here and defrocked by the Bishop of Carcassonne, Gui de Vaux-de-Cernay. The priest was then mutilated, dragged behind a horse through the streets, and hanged by the crusaders for his treachery. The defenders of Bram, one hundred in number, fared little better. Their eyes were gouged out, their ears, noses, and lips were cut off, and then they were freed. One man was allowed to retain an eye to lead the macabre procession of the horribly disfigured to Cabaret as a warning to others who might resist the crusaders. It is still possible to meet some of the horribly disfigured survivors, and some serve as grogs at Ostal des Exiles. The atrocity has led to a level 3 Infernal aura that still endures in the marketplace, where violence and acts of vengeance are now commonplace.

LASTOURS

Known for its firm support of the Cathar heresy, and the wealth of the iron mines nearby, Lastours is most famed for the three great stone towers (small castles) that guard the area. They are perched a few miles apart on a precipitous ridge above the Gresillon valley. Quertineux stands on a rock lower in the valley, Fleur Epine on the highest point of the rocky slopes, and Cabaret castle on an outcrop, surrounded on three sides by steep cliffs and the River Orbiel. All are believed to be impregnable, and the crusaders were forced to retreat in winter 1210 when Bouchard de Marly, a kinsman of de Mont-

fort, was taken prisoner and spent sixteen months chained in the dungeons. In 1211 Pierre-Roger de Cabaret was forced to surrender the castles, and de Marly freed, but de Cabaret, a well known supporter of the Cathars, and an exceptionally generous host to troubadours, was not captured. He continues to seek restoration of his lands and the fortifications, and may achieve this now the crusade has faltered.

At Fleur Epine, Jourdain de Cabaret, Lord of Pennautier and Pierre-Roger's brother, held court. His wife, Auda, was a famous beauty, and her daughters may well have inherited their mother's looks and cruelty to the hapless lovers who became entranced by her. Known as Na Loba, the She-Wolf, she may have suffered from the Curse of Venus, or Venus' Blessing, or some darker secret. The famous troubadour Pierre Vidal dressed in a wolf-skin and crept up to the castle to sing to the She-Wolf — sadly his romantic gesture went wrong when he was savaged by a peasant's mastiff who mistook him for an actual wolf. The now elderly Auda and her bewitching daughters are in exile, waiting for the de Cabaret family to be restored to their lands.

The lords of Lastours were firm supporters of the Trencavel, but Na Loba was blamed for the betrayal in 1209 of Raimond-Rogier Trencavel, Viscount of Carcassonne, that led to his imprisonment and death. She reputedly tried to seduce him but his attention was focused on her eldest daughter. She arranged his safe passage to the negotiations with de Montfort, but then withdrew her guards and allowed her liege lord to be captured for his rejection of her advances. He died in a dungeon, reportedly poisoned by de Montfort's men, one of the many victims of Na Loba's jealousy.

The castle at Cabaret is one of the three strongest fortifications of the region.

Story Seed: An Unrepentant Bishop?

On the feast of Saint Nazarius (June 12th) a great service is held in the cathedral. Before the sacrament is administered, a suddenly troubled Bishop Gui calls out to the congregation that he is a usurper, and demands that Bishop Raimond be brought to officiate, handing him his mitre and vestments. Imme-

diately after the Mass, Gui is bundled away by the crusaders and taken to the castle. At sunset he announces that he was bewitched and accuses Bishop Raimond of sorcery. Raimond flees and his friends call upon the characters to investigate and save him. Can they establish the truth?

Story Seed: The Daughters of Na Loba

While they await the return of Cabaret, Na Loba's three daughters still have a strong claim to the three castles of Lastours. Having effectively been freed of their Trencavel overlords, the daughters do not wait passively for husbands and suitors, but instead use their dark charms and seductive allure to attempt to entrap good husbands. Only the stupidest of

peasants believes the whispered stories that they are really werewolves. Anyone voicing the story soon vanishes, victim of the undoubted vindictiveness of the three heiresses and of Na Loba, who is still a formidable politician and mistress of intrigue. They are currently traveling around the country, seeking powerful allies to reclaim their birthright.

Story Seed: The Scrabbling Dead

It is said the garrison soldiers buried alive at Puisserguier still try to claw their way to the surface, and at night their corpses can be heard scratching at the loose earth and rock that holds them down. If they

were to emerge they would undoubtedly seek vengeance upon the living. Soon they will emerge, unless a way is found to bury them deeper, or to put their spirits at peace. The moat has a strength 4 Infernal aura.

and Raimond-Rogier, count of Foix, into an open battle. The plan worked and at St. Martin-Lalande nearby the reinforcements marching to the relief of de Montfort under Bouchard Marly were routed by the Foix-Toulousain army, in a mighty clash of knights. De Montfort sallied out of Castelnaudry with only fifty knights, rallied the disarrayed crusaders, and led them back to the battlefield where the southerners were looting the baggage train. Falling upon them ferociously, the crusaders turned defeat into victory, driving the Counts' men from the field, and inflicting huge losses on the southerners.

After the battle Savary de Mauleon, seneschal of Poitou and leader of a troupe of mercenary crossbowmen who had been hired by Raimond, kidnapped Raimond's son as he was still owed money for his services. The money was paid and the boy returned.

The battle was a disaster for the southerners, but did provoke a widespread revolt against the crusaders after Raymond claimed de Montfort had been killed in the fighting. De Montfort lived however, and suppressed the revolt with much brutality.

MONTLAUR

The villagers here bravely besieged the garrison left by de Montfort in the castle. He returned, and hanged all he could capture. Their ghosts can still be seen in the woods, a terrifying sight. The village was burned to the ground, and the sight of the atrocity now has an Infernal aura of 4.

the castle, resisting the claims of the dispossessed heirs. It is very likely that the heirs of Saissac will seek assistance in reclaiming their birthright, and they are certainly open to new ideas and may even welcome a new Hermetic covenant based within the citadel.

PUISSERGUIER

When a prominent northern knight slew a local lord who had joined the crusade in a quarrel, de Montfort decided that justice must prevail, and by the customary punishment of the south had the murderer buried alive, despite the protests of his fellow crusaders. It was not enough. Unsatisfied, the murdered southerner's nephew changed sides, and burned the castle of Puisserguier he had been entrusted with, having the garrison of fifty northern soldiers thrown in the dry moat then buried alive under rocks. The two knights were taken to Minerve, where they were blinded, their noses, lips and ears were cut off, and they were then turned out, one falling into a latrine and drowning, one reaching Carcassonne.

FANJEUX

Fanjeux is a hilltop town with a small castle, and was the center of Dominic's campaign of preaching against the Cathars while he lived here from 1206 to 1215. Dominic founded the nunnery of St. Marie in the village Prouille just below the town as a refuge for women converted from Catharism and young women seeking a Church vocation. Dominic's personal sanctity was respected even by the Cathars, all the more so after he drove off a demon here that appeared as an immense cat with flaming eyes and a long, prehensile tongue. Whether this corrupted beast (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 77) will ever return is unknown, but it may still lurk in the region. When the crusaders came here in 1209 the inhabitants fled, and now no one dares shelter Cathars within the town, once a stronghold of the heresy. Indeed Cathars approaching the town are met with violence and threats, and swiftly denounced to the Church and crusaders. Yet

HAUTPOUL

A powerful Visigothic fortress built upon a seemingly impregnable rocky crag, the castle fell to de Montfort in 1212 after four days of siege. Many of the defenders escaped in a dense fog which suddenly sprang up during the assault. The castle was destroyed, the settlement burnt, and the place is now an eerie ruin haunted by bats, with a ramshackle collection of wooden huts nearby housing the few survivors. An Infernal aura of strength 3 still settles upon the place, and eerie fogs blanket it.

SAISSAC

This castle was once a Cathar stronghold famous for the generosity it offered troubadours, but it was taken after the fall of Carcassonne and was granted to de Montfort's loyal friend Bouchard de Marly. He still holds

CASTELNAUDRY

Castelnaudry is a weak castle, and for this reason de Montfort went here in 1211, trying to draw Count Raymond

strangely many Perfecti do return to Fanjeaux, risking arrest and execution: what are they seeking to recover?

ALAIRAC

This was originally a powerful Visigothic fortress, but de Montfont took the mountaintop castle here in the teeth of a howling gale. No mercy was offered to the defenders. Today its shattered ruins are home only to bandits, and the eerie sound of the almost constant gale that whistles through its shattered towers. The captured defenders were hurled off the battlements and over the precipice to their death on the rocks thousands of feet below, where their ghosts seek burial for their shattered bones. An Infernal aura of strength 4 covers the bat-haunted ruins.

CASTLE D'AGUILAR

A castle stands here upon a great dome of rock, with six huge strong towers. De Montfort and his crusaders chose to pass it by, and the magnificent fortress continues to dominate the area, sheltering faidits and heretics. Here, deep in the caverns under the rocky hill, hide a small covenant of the dispossessed magi from covenants destroyed in the fighting. This is the House of the Exiles, the newest of the Provençal covenants.



Ostal des Exiles

Where do you go when your covenant is destroyed, your lab burnt down, your library in ashes? The Ostal des Exiles is one answer. Just as faidits make up a significant group in the politics of the region, so with the fall of great Hermetic covenants, it is unsurprising that some magi have found themselves similar dispossessed and become known as Hermetic faidits. Older, established magi have left for other Tribunals, yet for many younger magi this is unacceptable.

The Ostal des Exiles has come to exist as a new covenant, created since the Tribunal of 1214, whose members were shocked by the wanton destruction wrought upon Mistridge, Windgraven, and Lariander. Potentially an important new force in the Tribunal, dedicated to the defense of their homeland and Occitanian civilization, the

Ostal may welcome new Spring covenants as allies, and do all they can to recruit new members to their bold defense of the county of Toulouse from the northerners. Not just outcasts, but potentially outlaws, the faidits are willing to interfere with mundanes if that is what is required to stop the destruction of the south, even at the cost of being Marched. There are currently seven members of the covenant; four of the more influential are detailed here.

Whether the Ostal des Exiles would really go as far as to interfere with the Crusade remains to be seen, but one thing is certain. Should they do so in defense of their homeland, their chosen method will be subtle, designed not to bring "ruin upon their sodales." They have already experienced that.

History

Aguilar had its origins in a Roman fortress, later strengthened by the Visigoths, and the grotto underneath was well known to the Order of Hermes as the site of a mithraeum and vis source. One of the great fortresses of the region, and long home to a substantial Cathar population, Aguilar has more recently become a place of shelter for large number of dispossessed minor nobles and knights.

In the summer of 1211 a column of crusaders, mainly from the Rhineland, were



marching to join the siege of Lavaur when they were ambushed by peasants and some southern knights in the woods near Montgey and massacred. The few survivors told stories of seeing white ladies, the faerie demesoilles, using strange enchantments to devastate the column, and of the very trees attacking them. In fact all of this is true; Garsenda of Lariander, a self-styled outlaw, had helped inspire the villagers to rise up and attack the column in the hope of saving Lavaur.

She was to come to regret this; de Montfort's crusaders marched south, destroyed the village, and in the course of the assault burned the woodlands and slaughtered the confused magi of House Tremere, mistaking their black robes for Cathar perfecti. As far as she knows, Garsenda is the only survivor.

The destruction of Mistridge in a Wizard's War by Tres Ex Miscellanea added to the exiles, and it was Rixenda who first took shelter here at Aguilar. It was the charismatic Gilbert of Flambeau who united the Hermetic faidits however, and gave them a cause — resistance to the northerners, at any cost.

Setting and Description

Castle d'Aguilar was a Trencavel possession, taken by de Montfort in 1210. The de Termes family retreated to Termes, but the castle was retaken in 1213 and became a center of resistance to the crusade, with many faidits taking shelter within its walls and in the surrounding villages. The grottoes, a natural cave system that riddles the rocky mount on which the castle stands, are extensive and little known, but have a Magic aura of 3. Deep within the caves can be found a mithraeum (Magic aura 5), long used by members of House Flambeau pursuing mithraic mysteries. The Flambeau may soon discover the nascent covenant forming here, and be forced to decide how to react to the newcomers, though the mithraeum itself has been left untouched by the Hermetic faidits. It does, however, lie within the *Aegis of the Hearth* of the new covenant.

Culture and Traditions

The Hermetic faidits do not formally owe allegiance to the Lords of Termes, but their presence here is both known and tolerated. As a new covenant, as yet unrecognized by the Tribunal, the exiles act as a clearing house for any magi willing to work to fight the Crusade, and they are particularly keen to welcome any new members. The number of magi here fluctuates from the four magi who have established sanctums here, to sometimes eight or nine magi. If your saga includes the Knights of the Green Stone, an esoteric Mystery Cult detailed in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, then the Ostal des Exiles is an important center for the cult.

Magi

GILBERT OF FLAMBEAU

Age 95 (Apparent age 40)

Personality Traits: Aloof +3, Vengeful +2, Genteel +1

Born near Marseilles, Gilbert is unusual in that, while embracing the Apromor (Pardo) tradition of his House passionately, he is both Gently Gifted and of noble birth. Apprenticed late in life, he Gauntleted as a Jerbiton, having served his apprenticeship in the Coenobium. Gilbert spent years wandering the Tribunal, uninterested in the politics of the Order. His decision to renounce his House and enter House Flambeau has earned him the undying enmity of the Coenobium. He may well be a mystagogue in the Cult of the Green Stone if they exist in your saga, with a few scattered allies in that cult. He is a man of deep culture and well versed in etiquette, and while his guise as a knight and romantic troubadour are known throughout the region, few of the noble ladies who offer him patronage (and other favors) are aware of his magical abilities.

An outcast in the Order before the Crusade, he found new purpose in defending the Order that had shown so little affection for him when the crusaders destroyed Lariander, and began to affect the Tribunal. After Tres destroyed Mistridge in a Wizard's

War, it was clear to him that the Tribunal was falling apart under the impact of the Crusade. Now courtly love has been replaced in his affections with a love of battle, and he has found that in his years of solitude he gained the inner strength to be a leader. He has sworn to protect the Order from its enemies, and slay those who would try to prevent him. A charismatic, unstable individual, he has proudly boasted that even if the Grand Tribunal were to condemn him, he would be willing to fight a Second Schism War in defense of his homeland and the magi therein. Few want to risk discovering whether this is just hyperbole.

RIXENDA MISTRIDGE OF JERBITON

Age 40 (Apparent age 38)

Personality Traits: Forgiving +2, Optimistic +2

As Gilbert embodies the righteous anger of the wronged, Rixenda embodies the hope of rebirth, and reconstruction. After the destruction of Mistridge by Tres she was the first to settle in the ancient fortress at Aguilar, and she welcomed Gilbert and the others when they arrived as fellow exiles. A Mentem maga with a strong interest in dreams and nightmares, Rixenda wants acceptance from the Tribunal, and has no interest in vengeance. She believes that the future of the Order may lie in hiding from the mundane world, and her calming influence and good sense make her a strong rival to Gilbert's leadership.

She has a deep sympathy for the Cathars, but is not personally a Cathar. She corresponds with a group of learned Perfecta, but fails to understand why they accept such a misogynistic world-denying faith. Still, she has tried to bring the best female scholars under her subtle protection by using what influence she has in their favor. She was shocked when Marc the Gorgiastic Cathar declared Wizard's War on Augustus, and is deeply saddened by the events at Tolosa Paratge, being one of the few magi to have paid attention to the rapid disintegration of one of the Tribunal's oldest covenants. She does, however, understand; like most of the faidits, she has not forgiven Tres, and so she has entered into an alliance with Gilbert fully aware that she lives in dangerous times.

**GARSENDA OF LARIANDER,
HOUSE TREMERE**

Age 35 (Apparent age 35)

Personality Traits: Troubled +2, Brash +2,
Vengeful +1

Only a few years out of gauntlet when Lariander was destroyed, Garsenda fled into the forest, and somehow survived. Garsenda is a Seeker, dedicated to uncovering the magical secrets of antiquity, but in particular those of ancient Faerie powers that were worshipped as Gods. She may also be a member of the Cult of the Green Stone, and it was through an esoteric Mystery cult that she met Gilbert. She is currently interested in stories of the Drac, fabled draconic creatures that are said to haunt the rivers of the region, and is troubled by strange dreams. Religiously, Garsenda has much sympathy for the Cathars, but only because questioning authority is something that comes naturally to her. She is personally not religious in any way.

Garsenda dresses as an outlaw, eschewing the chivalric trappings favored by most of her cult. A specialist in *Imaginem*, she has a strong relationship with several local *demesoilles* and shares their passion for protecting the rights of the poor and

oppressed. She is currently suffering from a terrible guilt at her actions that brought about the ruin of her covenant, Lariander, and is frightened the Order may learn that she brought ruin upon her *sodales*. This makes her nervous and irritable around new *magi* she meets.

**POPILIA EX MISCELLANEA
(PHARMACOPOEIAN)**

Age 60 (Apparent age 51)

Personality Traits: Angry +3, Proud +2,
Protective +1

Popilia came to the Order late in life, after her village exiled her. A former midwife, she had a second trade as a herbalist. Her midwifery led her to a dispute with a Perfectus named Sicart of Lavaur. Condemning bringing a child into the world as the greatest of sins, and denouncing sex, procreation and child rearing in the strongest of terms, he personally attacked Popilia, who fled at him with a knife. Expelled from her village for the assault, she broods over the incident still, and has developed a passionate hatred for the Cathars, while retaining an equally passionate determination to resist the northerners. However, the Crusade has

only hardened her hatred of the heretics, whom she believes brought this horror upon the south. She has three children, two of whom are now adults, and the youngest of whom, Jacquemart, is only 15. Her loathing of the Cathars extends to the Gorgiasitic Cathars of House Ex Miscellanea. The Pharmacopoeian tradition is described in *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 123.

Covenfolk

The covenfolk of the *Ostal des Exiles* are largely seasoned fighters. Unlike many covenants, the proportion of women and children is low, and if the covenant is to survive, this gender imbalance must be addressed. While many refugees have fled to the shelter of the castle, a large number of the womenfolk are celibate Cathars. This has led to an unusually masculine feel to the grogs, few of whom reside within the dark caverns, preferring to live in the surrounding villages. The *turb trains* for combat constantly, and is supported by the companions, mainly *faidits*, minor lords and knights, and serjeants, well mounted, armed, and armored, and willing to risk all in defense of their homeland.

Chapter Five

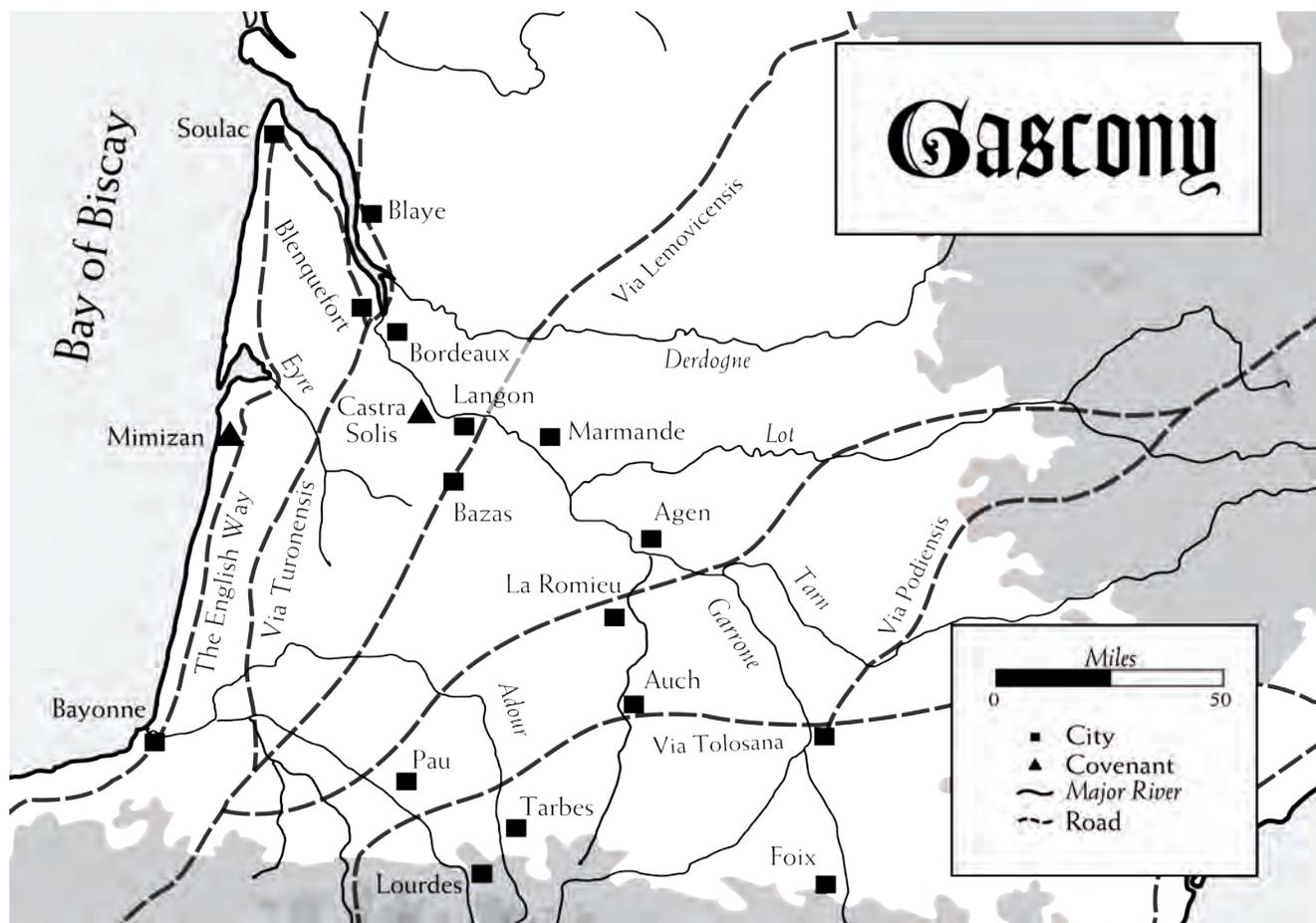
Gascony

In 1220, the western part of the Provençal Tribunal is a great wedge-shaped chunk of wilderness called the province of Guyenne and Gascony, or simply Gascony, and considered a part of the Duchy of Aquitaine. The territory extends south and east from Bordeaux along the Garonne river until it reaches Charlemagne's Cross near Roncevaux in the Pyrenees, and includes all of the western coast as far as Bayonne. Gascony comprises three civilized regions corresponding to the three major cities: the northern area surrounding Bor-

deaux, the higher ground and bishopric at Auch near Toulouse and the southeastern border, and the southwestern edges near Bayonne where Gascony meets the Basque lands. The English crown has firmly held this land since Richard the Lionhearted made his home in Bayonne and crushed the local lords. The current king of England, Henry III, enjoys visiting his mother, who lives nearby. Traditionally, the dukes of Aquitaine established themselves in Bordeaux and ignored the rest of the region unless necessity demanded action. They

make occasional, brief forays down the Garonne River in demonstrations of power.

The Way of St. James, the third most popular pilgrimage in Mythic Europe — after Rome and Jerusalem — passes through much of the duchy. The Way offers a well-maintained series of roads for pilgrims traveling to Iberia through Gascony, with five different paths, including the less commonly used route along the coast, known as "The English Way." However, the interior of the country contains little more than uncultivated land, forests, and marshes. Several orders of



knights have created commanderies from donated lands, building small communities to protect travelers and generate revenue for the crusaders in the Holy Land.

The Way of St. James

Pilgrims have traveled to the shrine of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, established by Charlemagne as he marched to Zaragoza, from beyond the Pyrenees for centuries. By the beginning of the 1100s, the well-organized trip enjoyed acclaim across Europe, popularized by Aymeric Picard's *Liber Peregrinationis*, a gift to Pope Callixtus. Five separate routes wind across France and Provence, marked with wayposts bearing the ancient sign of the scalloped shell, symbolizing not only the journey, but those walking its path. Travelers wear a scallop shell on their hat or as a pin, and are called "palmeres," like pilgrims to the Holy Land. A dedicated support structure exists along the Way, beginning all over western Europe, converging just before the passage over the Pyrenees to Puente la Reina in Navarra, and then continuing across northern Iberia before terminating at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

The devout living alongside the Way of St. James established hospitals to feed and tend pilgrims. Many offer as much food as the wanderer can take in a single scoop of the shell. Their churches are celebrated stops where praying travelers view relics. Their merchants maintain hostels, boarding houses, and a support industry generating rich revenue. The five popular routes through Provence are:

The **English Way**, following the coast of Gascony through Bordeaux and Bayonne.

The **Via Turonensis**, from Paris, through Turonem, or Tours.

The **Via Lemovicensis**, beginning in the town of Vézelay, through Lemovicum, or Limoges.

The **Via Podiensis**, which starts in Le Puy-en-Velay. Those who begin in Geneva call this the *Via Gebennensis*.

The **Via Tolosana**, originating in Arles and passing through Toulouse.

The first four paths funnel to Roncevaux Pass by the town of Ostabat. Ostabat has two hotels, two hospitals, and over two dozen hostels, and over five thousand palmeres a week pass through on their journey to the raw stone tunnel leading into Iberia. Constructed inside the tunnel, an inn operating in the pass provides a shelter from storms and snows while offering a place to rest mounts before continuing onward. Only the *Via Tolosana* uses a different pass; Italian wayfarers favor this one. Regardless of their road, pilgrims keep journals documenting their stops and the notable sites visited. In almost every town, one finds lodgings catering to pilgrims, bearing the Way's signature shell icon.

See *The Church*, page 16, for more information about creating pilgrimage stories.

Infernal Influences

In 1208, Pope Innocent III placed all of England under interdict to encourage King John's reconciliation with the Church. As part of his holdings, many of Gascony's churches closed and refused to celebrate mass for six years. In the relatively wild lands of southwestern France, a region with little traffic off the pilgrimage routes, a group of demons gained a foothold (see *Six Deadly Spirits*, nearby), and Infernal auras remain quite common, even in cities and villages where the Dominion holds sway during the day. At night, the Infernal often regains control. The interdict affected the Divine auras of the region in strange ways, leaving many weaker or altered from what one might expect, and no Divine aura less than seven is older than six years.

Story Seed: The Way of Secrets

Once a pagan mystery path, the route to Santiago de Compostela reflected a trip to the end of the world, where the sun died and the scallop became the symbol for rebirth from the sea. This original purpose was incorporated into stories of St. James rescuing a knight from the ocean. The pre-Roman path may offer insights into *Diedne* magic or links to Atlantis.

Book Five of the *Liber Peregrinationis* offers advice for pilgrims, detailing recommended stopping places, relics for veneration, sanctuaries to visit, and the scams and bad food to avoid. While providing valuable insights into a pilgrim's life and describing Santiago de Compostela and

its cathedral, the text acts as a mystery script, possibly providing the path for Initiation into fertility magic secrets, or a method for amplifying a Hermetic longevity ritual's efficacy. At the time, the text's author remains unclear, and it demonstrates a great deal of Basque influence. Perhaps the authoring magus still lives in secrecy or hermitage—in the Pyrenees of either Provence or Iberia. He must be found to decipher the Initiation encoded within the manuscript. For most, a complete copy of the five books of the *Liber Peregrinationis* serves as a tractatus of Area Lore: Iberia, Area Lore: Provence, Artes Liberales (Music), Divine Lore, and Theology with a quality of 8.

Story Seed: Six Deadly Spirits

These demons arrived during the interdict of 1208 and linger in the wild lands of interior Gascony. A demon generally descends upon a community, possessing its more prominent members. Through their victims, they encourage the rest of the village to sin, eventually enveloping the town in an Infernal aura. Each demon favors a particular deadly sin (two, in the case of *Cenodoxus Superbia*), and if it can ensure its host dies unrepentant, the victim returns as a minor demonic creature or

ghost. Three demons remain active in the area, while the demon of Greed has moved to the bridge of St. Thibery. The demons of Gluttony and Wrath travel amid the Crusaders in Narbonnais and Toulousain, spreading their vices among the Crusaders and defenders alike. What happens when these demons take notice of the covenant and attempt to corrupt companions or magi? If one escapes, will all six descend upon the covenant, possessing grogs and covenfolk to infiltrate it?

Cenodoxus Superbia, Lord of Pride and Envy

Order: Lord of the Vessels of Iniquity

Infernal Might: 40 (Vim)

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

Size: +0

Confidence: 2 (7)

Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics, Self-Confident, Overconfident

Personality Traits: Depraved +6, Hatful +6, Subtle +5, Cunning +4, Deceptive +4, Vessel of Iniquity Demon +3

Reputation: Subtle & Effective 5 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 5

Combat:

Fist: Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +3

Dagger: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +6

Soak: +4

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

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

Abilities: Bargain 7 (setting rates for assistance), Brawl 4 (dagger), Charm 7 (first encounters), Folk Ken 7 (humans), Guile 7 (craftsmen), Intrigue 7 (subtly spreading gossip)

Powers:

Form of Wickedness, 4 points, Init 0, Mentem. This Power is a special variant of the Coagulation Power, and it replaces that Power for this order of demons. The demon assumes a physical form with no shape, dimension, or other accidents of form, while composed of matter, it is pure sin made visible to mankind. Indescribable, this form provokes an extreme response in viewers who indulge in the sin of envy until they drop from exhaustion. (See *Realms of Power: Infernal*, page 39)

Form of Man, 0 point, Init 0, Corpus. After taking physical form, the demon may shapeshift into any human form, which it may dissolve at will.

Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim. The demon can impose the Obsession Trait of Pride or Envy. (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 31-32)

Contagious Obsession, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem. Any person who succumbs to the Obsession (Envy) Power of a Vessel of Iniquity becomes a carrier of that Power, and can pass it on to anyone who becomes a victim of their sin.

Obsession is resolved in the usual way, except that if the target fails his personality roll, he becomes contagious. Any other person who suffers as a result of his new personality trait must himself make a resistance roll against the initial Obsession Personality Trait or succumb and become a carrier. The total number of people potentially affected is limited by the number of Might points the demon expended to fuel the power.

Grant the Master's Potential, 10 points, Init -17, Vim. Cenodoxus grants the equivalent of the Great Characteristic virtue to the target, raising the appropriate Characteristic associated with the target's chosen craft to +3, or by +1, whichever is better (See *ArM5*, page 30). The demon usually grants the Virtue temporarily, subtracting the cost from its Might Pool. It can choose to bestow the Virtue permanently, which reduces the demon's Might Score as well. If temporary, the Might points are only restored when the Virtue is withdrawn. The demon may do this at anytime by simply choosing to, but it also often occurs when a prohibition placed at the time of the gifting is broken. The prohibition is often just a time limit, like a year and a day or "until this project is complete." Targets receiving the Virtue permanently also gain the Flaw Tainted with Evil. No Hermetic equivalent. R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Individual, Ritual

Grant the Master's Insight, 5 points, Init -7, Vim. The Lord of Pride and Envy grants the equivalent of the Puissant (Ability) Virtue to the target, providing a bonus to the appropriate craft ability of 2 (see *ArM5*, page 48). This power provides its bonus in addition to any bonus the target may have from other Virtues, including Puissant (Ability). (For example, a smith with Craft: Smithing) 3, Puissant Craft: Smithing and this benefit would have a total of 3+2+2.) The demon usually grants the Virtue temporarily, subtracting the cost from its Might Pool. It can choose to bestow the Virtue permanently, which reduces the demon's Might Score as well. If temporary, the Might points are only restored when the Virtue is withdrawn. The demon may do this at anytime by simply choosing to, but it also often occurs

when a prohibition placed at the time of the gifting is broken. The prohibition is often just a time limit, like a year and a day or "until this project is complete." Targets receiving the Virtue permanently also gain the Flaw Tainted with Evil. No Hermetic equivalent. R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Individual, Ritual

Shroud the Stench of the Pit, variable points, Init +3, Vim. The demon can conceal the Infernal nature of any other supernatural power or aura, making it appear to be Magical or Faerie instead. It may also be used to remove all stench of the supernatural, making things appear wholly mundane. This power can shield a creature or effect from the Sense Holiness/Unholiness ability. This Power costs Might Points equal to the original cost of the Power being concealed, or Might Points equal to the magnitude of the Infernal effect if it does not cost Might Points. This Power lasts for as long as the Power it is masking.

Weakness: Protected Group (meek people)

Vis: There are eight pawns of Vim vis in the demon's tongue and eyes.

Appearance: Cenodoxus manifests as a handsome and well, but appropriately, dressed man or woman, depending on whom he targets. He always has a dagger adorning his outfit, and carries quality tools associated with his target's chosen craft or profession.

Cenodoxus delights in acting as the advisor or muse, demanding the victim create ever better works while backhandedly stoking the craftsman's ego and enticing him into a state of sinful pride. Then, he socializes with those surrounding or associating with the craftsman, noting the victim's success, his innate skill, his brilliant vision — asking others what they wouldn't give to achieve similar results, infecting them with contagious envy. These tactics help the demon corrupt whole guilds with hubris and jealousy, sometimes shifting its own allegiance simply to evoke envy in the victim he first uplifted. Cenodoxus sometimes leaves his dagger lying out and "misplaced," when both tempers and passions flare, enabling murders of convenience. He would gleefully join a Verditi's forge companions, and his higher Might means he can bypass many covenants' Aegis.

Bordeaux

Since Eleanor of Aquitaine's annulled marriage to Prince Philip, Bordeaux has served as the stronghold of English interests in the region. The port does brisk trade in tin and lead with southern England as the gateway for the metal to the rest of France and beyond. The city is a major stop along the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella, and important churches include the Basilica of St. Seurin and the Basilica of St. Michel, which stands outside the city walls. Consecrated by Pope Urban II in 1096, Bordeaux's cathedral is the seat of the archbishopric. Archbishops often act as conspicuous agents of English policy and the current archbishop, Guillaume Amanieu, is no different. King Henry III of England favors him with the title of Seneschal and Guardian of all his lands beyond the sea. No meek academic, Guillaume participated in both the Reconquista and the Albigensian Crusade. He regularly clashes with the archbishop of Bourges, Simon de Sully.

Beneath the south side of town, in a natural cavern, is a Mithraeum, an ancient temple dedicated to the god Mithras and built by the Roman soldiers once stationed here. It has remained buried and hidden for centuries, its whereabouts known only to Kaeso of Flambeau (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 13). Fearing its discovery by the invading barbarians occupying Bordeaux, he kept it secret from the rest of the Order and built a different temple further east, on the site of what became Castra Solis.

Further south of the city, on the banks of the river Leyre, stands the small hamlet of Belin. It supports a keep and a church, and is the purported birthplace of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The town enjoys a generous charter which draws many craftsmen. King Henry III is fond of the castle and prefers to make it his residence when visiting. The church is the resting place of Olivier de Viennes, Ogier the Dane, and several other of the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne. Ogier's famed sword, Cortana, forged of the same steel as Roland's mighty Durendal and formerly the weapon of King Arthur's knight Tristan, is missing from the crypt. The church grounds have a Divine aura of 4, and the air is laden with a very sweet perfume. On anniversary of Ogier's death, this blessed aroma can cure a sick penitent. On the anniversary of the Battle of Roncevaux, the scented air is laden with 5 pawns of Divine-tempered Creo vis.

Bazas

Situated on the edge of the Gascony Moors, at the confluence of the Garonne and Brion rivers, the walled city of Bazas serves as the seat of the bishopric. It is a regular stop on the Way of St. James starting from Limoges. Popular locations within the city include the Templar hospital established to serve travelers and the cathedral of St. John the Baptist, where pilgrims come to pray before continuing on to the Basque town of Ostabat. St. Veronica built the cathedral's oratory and the altar holds a relic of St. John's blood certified as authentic by Pope Urban in 1092, who returned to Bazas to preach the Crusade in 1096. It has a Divine aura of 5, which rises to 6 on August 29th, the feast day of the Baptist's beheading.

The countryside to the southwest is mostly marshland with a few respectable stands of pine and oak only casually harvested by the locals. Shepherds tend to their flocks, watching from stilts to stay above the fens. The shepherds claim a brilliant white creature lives on the edges

Gascony Covenants

Current Covenants: Castra Solis (including Mimizan)

Ruined, Abandoned, or Lost Covenants: Bachlach's Hermitage, Nemetannais, Two Diedne sites, their names lost to the Schism War.

of those small forests, a unicorn gazing out from the trees for a few moments before returning to the woods. They believe such sightings to be an omen promising three days of safety for the flock.

The rustic magus, Tres, his band of two other magi, and their custodes, use the rough and unforgiving landscape to hide and operate unmolested when not resting at their sancta. The many pilgrims traveling in the area mean few pay any attention to groups on the roads or camping outdoors, and moors help dissuade all but the most insistent visitors.



Adrian, the Voice of Safety

Order: Spirit of Deceit
Infernal Might: 30 (Vim)
Characteristics: Int +0, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +2, Str +4, Sta +4, Dex +2, Qik +2
Size: +0
Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Charm, Puissant Guile, Weak-willed
Personality Traits: Deceptive +6, Acedia +3, Persuasive +3, Spirit of Deceit Demon +3, Trustworthy -5
Reputation: The Convincing Silver Tongue of Doubt 4 (Infernal)
Hierarchy: 4
Combat:
Dodge: Init +2, Attack -, Defense +8, Damage -
Fist: Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +4
Soak: +4
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Brawl 5 (Dodge), Carouse 4 (appearing drunk), Charm 5+2 (first encounters), Etiquette 5 (nobles), Folk Ken 5 (humans), Guile 7+2 (convincing others), Perform 5 (guitarra latina), Theology 4 (duty)
Powers:
Change Form, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus. Can take on the form of a human between Size -2 and Size +2. He often chooses the form of a troubadour with a guitar.
Trust of the Innocent, 1 point, Init -1, Men-

tem. The target of this effect loses all judgment and believes a specific lie (as long as it is passable) until presented with evidence to the contrary. An Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is allowed to resist the effect.

Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim. The demon can impose the Obsession Trait of Acedia or Sloth. (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 31-32)

Coagulation, 3 points, Init -1, Corpus. May take on a physical body in 30 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.

Forked Tongue of the Serpent, 3 points, Init -1, Mentem. The target believes any lie, no matter how preposterous, until he relates the lie to someone else. He then realizes how ridiculous the falsehood sounds, and the demonic Power is broken. An Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 9 also reveals the lie's veracity, with the first roll allowed an hour after the effect was used, and further rolls permitted every subsequent hour.

The Serpent's Oracle, 2 points, Init -3, Vim. The demon duplicates the effect of any non-ritual Intellego spell for the cost of 2 Might Points. It may also gain a morsel of future knowledge, understanding the most immediate consequences of any one future action.

Strangle the Noble Endeavor, 5 points, Init 0, Mentem. This power allows the demon to create a perfectly convincing moral, theological, and scriptural ar-

gument for whatever point he is trying to prove, generally demonstrating how participating in a Crusade brings ruin on a person's loved ones. After reasoned consideration a Intelligence + Theology against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals the reasoning to be false, with the first roll allowed a day after the effect was used, and further rolls permitted every subsequent month. Someone else may explain the error to the victim, effectively making the roll on the victim's behalf.

Weakness: Protected Group (Crusaders)

Vis: There are 6 pawns of Vim vis in the demon's hands.

Appearance: Adrian appears as a handsome troubadour or beautiful trobairitz traveling the countryside, spreading news, and performing for both common folk and nobility through song and music.

Wherever the demon goes, it warns of the terrible atrocities being performed in Narbonnais or across the sea "in the name of faith," and how people shouldn't imagine either going to join the Crusade or even join the defense of the nearby Crusade's targets, the Cathars. He infects people with the emotion of acedia, the sloth of inaction, convincing them they have no place participating in a fight that doesn't involve them, and that such an endeavor would not only lead to folly and misery for the target's family, but also serves uncaring nobles seeking to line their pockets.

Blaye

An ancient town established before Caesar's arrival in Gaul, Blaye served as an important part of Charlemagne's defense against the Saracens. The ancient king of Aquitaine, Charibert, and Charlemagne's greatest paladin, Roland, lie in white marble sarcophagi, buried beneath the Basilica of Saint-Romain in a crypt. Overlooking the estuary, the basilica is a popular stop for pilgrims traveling the Way of St. James; they pray at the crypt or the altar before crossing the Gironde river by ferry. The basilica has a Divine aura of 4, which increases to 5 on the 15th of August, the anniversary of Roland's death, and on the

24th of November, St. Romain's feast day. A hospice dedicated to Saint Nicolas operates here, specifically to offer care to pilgrims traveling the route.

While the count of Angoulême rules Blaye, a local lord governs the prosperous port from the citadel, Castle Rudel, which adjoins the basilica. Although the same family has served in this castellan role for generations, they serve at the pleasure of the counts of Angoulême. The current lord, Geoffrey I, was recently confirmed by Hugh X of Lusignan, the count of Angoulême by marriage to Isabella of Angoulême, in Aquitaine (See *The Lion and the Lily*, page 68).

The Médoc

The triangular area of land west and north of Bordeaux encompassing the coast and the mouth of the Gironde Estuary is mostly marshy wetlands. In antiquity, a Roman military post was set up in the area, to ensure the security of the road which traveled the coast. In the ninth century, the first medieval fortification was built on the Roman ruins using white limestone, giving it the name Blanquefort. The castle guards two roads: the first is called Levade, and links Bordeaux to Soulac in the northern part of the Médoc, and the second road is known as the Channel Soulac, which goes south to Bayonne. This road was a main artery of the Way of Soulac, or "Eng-

Julian/Julia, the Tempter of the Way of St. James

Order: Tempters (Incubi/Succubi)
Infernal Might: 15 (Vim)
Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre +3, Com +2, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +2
Size: +0
Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics x2, Puissant Charm, Puissant Guile, Weak-willed
Personality Traits: Selfish +5, Deceptive +4, Lustful +4, Tempter Demon +3, Cowardly +2
Hierarchy: 3
Reputation: The Despoiler of the Pious 3 (Infernal), Clever 1 (Pilgrimage Hostels)
Combat:
Club: Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +6, Damage +5
Fist: Init +2, Attack +4, Defense +4, Damage +2
Soak: +3
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Awareness 3 (humans), Brawl 2 (club), Charm 7+2 (first encounters), Concentration 3 (maintaining concentration), Folk Ken 7 (humans), Guile 7+2 (seduction), Penetration 3 (Hag Ride)
Powers:
Coagulation, 2 point, Init -1, Corpus. The demon can obtain a material form, which it may dissolve at will.
Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim. The demon can impose the Obsession Trait of Betraying Lust. (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 31-32)

Harness the Wind, 1 point, Init 0, Corpus. This Power allows the demon to fly from one place to any other. The Power lasts until the journey's end, or dawn. Most demons do not bother to do this, they instead disincorporate and generate a fresh body at the new location. Sexual demons can do this, instead of using this Power, but lose their cargo when they do.

Hag Ride, 1 point, Init 0, Corpus. The demon may "ride" a victim for an evening. This Power causes the victim to lie, fully conscious but unable to struggle, while assaulted by the demon. If the demon is in spiritual form, the victim can see ghost-like glimpses of his assailant. Being ridden by these demons causes the loss of a long-term Fatigue level, and prevents the recovery of any other Fatigue levels during the night. Sometimes a victim is ridden on consecutive evenings, and loses additional Fatigue level each evening. Some powerful sexual demons can cause wounds or can kill with a single ride. Others ride victims in their dreams. The target regains the power to move at dawn.

Mutable Gender, 0 point, Init 0, Corpus. The demon can change the shape of its manifestation at will, to whatever male or female human form it desires. Julian almost always takes the mien of a raven-haired roguish man in his early twenties wearing pilgrim's garb, unless another form would be more appropriate to the situation.

Weakness: Protected Group (people who

have already lost love once)

Vis: Three pawns of Vim vis reside in the demon's belt buckle.

Appearance: Appearing as a vibrant and cheerful man or woman in his or her early 20s, the demon tempter is always finely, but suggestively, dressed. He favors rich blues and deep brown colors, and appears greatly interested in the victim's insights and experiences.

Julian often asks a target to walk and tell him more about a topic the individual feels passionate about, drawing her aside from prying eyes before attempting to seduce the target with his powers. Then he arranges future trysts, even traveling along with the victim's entourage. When possible, he escalates the liaisons, adding elements of risk while catering to every whim until the pair is "accidentally" caught in the act of carnal sin in the most damaging manner.

Due to their nature, both Cenodoxus and Julian prefer to keep their activities to more populated sites, like Bordeaux, Bayonne or the ferry crossing at Blaye. Cenodoxus requires an audience to achieve his full effect, and so restricts himself to larger settlements. Julian finds settlements to be fertile ground for spreading his particular sin, and regularly preys upon pilgrims using the Way of St. James, fiendishly delighting in their spiritual corruption. Adrian wanders from town to village to city, performing at inns and taverns every night, carousing with the inhabitants to better widely spread his obsession.

lish Way" of St. James, which began on the coast in Soulac, stretching south to the town of St. Jean Pied-de-Port. There, the Soulac Way joined the other four major routes of the pilgrimage before crossing over the Pyrenees at Roncevaux.

BLANQUEFORT

The village of Blanquefort supports the keep overseeing the road, and has a white limestone church dedicated to St. Martin. A large marble sarcophagus occupies the church's crypt, a possible rest-

ing place of one of the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne. The Lord of Blanquefort is charged with collecting the toll from travelers on the road.

SOULAC

This small town serves as the starting point for many English pilgrims seeking to walk the Way of St. James to Compostella. The Knights Hospitaller maintain a hospice here, and the Basilica of Our Lady of the End of the Earth boasts a number of relics. These include a candle from the nativity of the Lord, palm leaves

which fanned in Jesus as he entered Jerusalem, and most importantly, several drops of milk from the Virgin Mary. It has a Divine aura of 4. To the northwest of Soulac, a small group of Benedictine monks maintain the first monastery in the region, a chapter of the powerful abbey of Sainte-Croix de Bordeaux.

DOLMENS

Hundreds of dolmens litter the fens and marshes of the Médoc, each with a Faerie aura of 1 to 5. Most of them serve as homes for the faeries that call the region

Story Seed: The Hero's True Panopoly

Notably absent from the crypt in Blaye are both Roland's legendary relic-laden sword, Durendal, and Roland's fabled Olifant, a signal horn carved from the horn of a unicorn and sundered by the force of Roland's dying act of sounding it. The fate of these objects is a mystery. The horn purportedly rests across the estuary in Bordeaux, in the basilica of Saint Seurin. Durendal's resting place is much more uncertain.

Stories claim the sword's golden hilt holds a tooth of Saint Peter, the blood of Saint Basil, a lock of hair of Saint Denis, and a piece of the raiment of the Blessed Virgin Mary, making it a puissant weapon against demons and powerful protection against harmful magics. The Confraternity

of Roland claims Wayland Smith and Verditius forged the blade, which might make it a breakthrough of Divine and Magical synthesis. The tale of Roland claims the dying knight used it to cut La Brèche de Roland in the Pyrenees while trying to break the blade in order to deny it to the Basques overrunning his host (even though Roland's Breach is nearly 100 miles to the east!) When the weapon remained unharmed, he flung it away, and it was found stuck in a cliff wall beneath the abbey in Rocamadour, 200 miles away—perhaps drawn to the many relics contained within the abbey, including a wooden Black Madonna carved by Saint Amadour.

Although a sword remains in the cliff in 1220, it is also said that Charlemagne

claimed Durendal in the aftermath of the battle, and that the Verditius magus Roscius later stole it away to Verdi. Roland is thought to have received church burial, but if he did not and his ghost was somehow summoned, he could confirm the provenance of the weapon wedged in the rock face or answer questions regarding its origins.

The ghost Pyrene's (see Chapter 6, The Pyrenees) close association to the mountains means she likely witnessed the battle where Roland fell. If she can be convinced to travel to Rocamadour, or if the alleged sword is brought to her, she could validate its authenticity. If the weapon in the cliff is Durendal, then what has the Confraternity of Roland brought inside Verdi?

The Helen of Gaul

First married at the age of 12, Isabella of Angoulême was once the Queen of England, the widow of King John and the mother of both fourteen year-old King Henry III and eleven year-old Richard, High Sheriff of Berkshire and future Holy Roman Emperor. Eleanor of Aquitaine approved of her, and the English people called her "Messalina," "The Helen of Gaul," and a "siren," although her beauty infatuated them. She married Hugh without waiting to receive the consent of the king's council in England, a required procedure for a former queen of England. Traditionally, the council not only chose the queen dowager's second husband, but decided whether she should be allowed to marry at all. Isabella's defi-

ance caused the council to confiscate her dower lands and stop the payment of her pension. Isabella and her husband retaliated by threatening to keep the ten year-old Princess Joan, King Henry's sister and the promised wife of King Alexander II of Scotland, in France—perhaps hidden away in Castle Rudel under the watchful eye of the Lord of Blaye. Isabella will have another nine children with Hugh over the next fourteen years, and her notorious beauty never fades. Does faerie blood run in her veins, or has Isabella struck a bargain with Oriande la Fée, and if so, at what price? Does she conspire with Ducaru of Stella Durus (see Chapter 7: Narbonnais) to secure her legacy and bloodline with his machinations?

ern shore near the tip of the peninsula. It appears as a fairy-tale castle with narrow towers, fluttering banners, and smooth cut stone set in a paradise of flora and fauna, in stark contrast to the muddy and wind-swept lands of the mundane level. The aura of this place ranges from 2 at the lowest point, to 7 at the heart of the castle. The faerie inhabitants are nude most of the time, though they dress in gossamer finery appropriate to a noble court when their queen entertains guests. The lady Oriande la Fée rules over the faeries of the region, claiming suzerainty from the northern-most bank of the Gironde south to the foot of the Pyrenees and east to the Camargue. The faeries of the region all recognize her, though many pay only the smallest amount of lip service to her rulership — that is, until she arrives in person. In the mundane world, the outline of the small temple sanctuary where the Gauls worshipped her as an aspect of the Goddess Sirona, patron of healing and springs, is still visible. A highly-cognizant gift-giver and sustainer, she changed her role into that of a challenger along the remnant Roman roads and later the Way of St. James. Her constant interaction provided the Vitality to reenvision herself as the region changed, but her origins lie in the muddy square of stones.

home and serve the Queen of Rosefleur as she torments travelers on the pilgrimage. More powerful creatures lair at sites with stronger auras.

Collectively called Dames Blanchés, these faeries include the courtly fae, nymphs, and sirens common through the area, along with a few trolls and fauns. They often try to lure pilgrims from their journey and either eat them (in the case of the trolls), or encourage them to live in the wilderness, where the victims often (unintentionally) die of exposure. Others simply

request assistance in some small task or a few moments of dancing in order to allow travelers to pass unmolested, tormenting those who refuse. These faeries take forms ubiquitous and commonly known throughout Mythic Europe, making their stories familiar to pilgrims of any nation.

ROSEFLEUR

The castle of Rosefleur resides within a Faerie region of six levels on the west-

Oriande la Fée

Faerie Might: 50 (60 in her demesne)
(Herbam)

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

Size: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3 points)

Virtues and Flaws: Focus Power x2,
Great Characteristics x3, Greater
Power x3; Fae Sight, Fae Speech,
Humanoid, Highly Cognizant, Im-
proved Characteristics x6, Increased
Might x9, Improved Powers x2,
Lesser Power, Personal Power x3,
Place of Power (Médoc), Preten-
tious; Monstrous Appearance, Vul-
nerable to Iron; Poor Combatant,
Restricted Might (Storm), Suscep-
tible to Deprivation, Traditional
Ward: Divine.

Personality Traits: Curious +4, Aloof
+3, Faerie Queen +3, Meddling +3

Reputations: Cruel 3 (local), Meddle-
some 3 (Knights), Observant 3 (re-
gion)

Combat:

Fist: Init 0, Attack +3, Defense +1,
Damage +1

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Un-
conscious

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Provence 6 (Gascony), Animal Handling 6 (woodland creatures), Artes Liberales 3 (Astronomy), Athletics 3 (dance), Awareness 2 (within court), Bargain 7 (setting favorable terms), Brawl 1 (dodge), Carouse 6 (appearing intoxicated), Charm 6 (knights), Concentration 3 (remaining focused), Etiquette 7 (inciting insult), Fae Speech 6, Finesse 6 (Rego), Folk Ken 2 (men), Guile 3 (entendres), Intrigue 5 (confounding conversation), Leadership 6 (directing fae), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 4 (Merinita), Penetration 6 (Rego), Profession: Storyteller 4 (history), Survival 4 (fens)

Powers:

Call of the Kept, 0 points, Init 0, Non-Hermetic. Oriande may call forth a Faerie ally, providing it with the cue

to manifest and act as she directs. **R:** Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Ind

Caress of the Leibe, 4 points, Init -4, Mentem. The person touched by Oriande forgets his mortal life until he sees a particular object, or class of object, associated with his home. **R:** Touch, **D:** Until, **T:** Ind

Dream's Undeniable Invitation, 1 point, Init -1, Corpus. Oriande causes a human within Voice Range to fall asleep. **R:** Voice, **D:** Sun, **T:** Ind

Enthralling Sound, 3 points, Init -3, Mentem. Through her storytelling Oriande creates a particular emotion in any group of people who hear her speak. This power also increases the intensity of an existing emotion. A stress roll with an appropriate Personality trait against an Ease Factor of 9 allows a victim to overcome this power's effect. **R:** Voice, **D:** Sun, **T:** Group

Extended Glamour, 0 points, constant, Mentem. This power allows the Queen to take control of a mundane area, making it an extension of her Faerie kingdom.

Focus Power (Plants within her realm), up to 10 points, Init 0, Herbam. Oriande may create Herbam effects up to 10th magnitude. (10 Intricacy points spent on Initiative)

On the Breath of the Wind, 5 points, Init -5, Herbam. Oriande transforms into a swirling breeze of leaves appropriate to the season until she decides to resume her regular form. **R:** Per, **D:** Until, **T:** Ind

The Price of Impertinence, 5 points, Init -5, Animal. A human within range of Oriande's voice is turned into a woodland creature, such as a squirrel, a hare, a fawn, a hedgehog or polecat, until a condition set by the Fae Queen is met. **R:** Voice, **D:** Until, **T:** Ind

Equipment: Oriande carries a dagger with a blade of glass, which she can gift for use within her lands as part of her Extended Glamour. When she does so, it becomes a weapon of the wielder's choice.

Vis: 10 pawns of Herbam vis in her antlers.

Appearance: A beautiful woman with faintly olive skin and a pair of moss-covered wooden antlers protruding up from her wild yet luxuriant hair, which is shot through with small flowers. Oriande's amber eyes are the color of frozen sap, revealing the callous and arrogant visage of a noble who exercises power absolutely and despises being thwarted. Her dress is made of leaves and lacy spider webs, and she walks trailing a cloud of fireflies or soft snow flurries, depending on the season. Where she steps, the natural environment seems to become more perfect—new shoots and bulbs burst forth in Spring, lush grass and leaves unfurl in Summer, vibrant colors emerge in Autumn, crisp frost forms and dried leaves swirl in Winter, only to fade slightly when she departs.

Oriande delights in tormenting wandering knights and pilgrims, causing them to forget their journeys and remain with her for as long as they entertain her. She draws vitality through the creation of conflicts, such as by kidnapping people and holding them hostage or stealing items and demanding tasks or ransoms in exchange for their return, and forcing the knights and pilgrims of the area to resolve those stories, either by rescuing what was taken or dying in the process. In these tales, she plays the capricious Faerie regent, exercising power at her whim. Particularly intriguing knights have been gifted her dagger, which has transformed into a blade of glass at their desire. It may not be particularly effective against mundane opponents, but faeries of the region immediately recognize it as her token—though some may seek to claim it for their own!

Once the playthings of this faerie queen become faeries themselves, she generally loses interest in them. She has hosted many magi in her court as refugees, vassals or allies, including Maugris and Dama. Dama, in particular, spent a long period there while pursuing the mysteries of Story Magic.

Knighly Matters

Many orders of knights operate in Occitania, but the greatest concentration protects pilgrims traveling the Way of St. James in addition to other various duties. The most significant orders are described here.

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Spread throughout Europe, the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, Order of the Temple, or Knights Templar are the largest knightly order of the era. They operate under a Papal Bull, exempting them from local laws, permitting them to freely cross borders and pay no taxes. The Templars' primary mission is the liberation of the Holy Land, and they realize that such an endeavor demands resources and manpower. In order to accomplish this task, they establish outpost sites, usually donated lands, which they cultivate and use as recruiting stations. Called "Temple commanderies" or "Temple preceptories," Templar sites consist of a house for the commander, a dwelling for the monks and other members, a place for pilgrims to stay, a farm, a mill, a chapel and a cemetery. Each site requires water and generally has easy access to a stream or well. Some have hospitals for the sick or dungeons to keep prisoners and all are surrounded by a boundary wall. (For more on Templar history and structure as well as other orders of knights, see *The Church*, page 102.)

There are one hundred commanderies

of the Knights Templar in Languedoc, with 27 in Arelat, 20 in Gascony, 14 in Narbonnais, and 29 in the Toulousain. Of the 17 commanderies in Clermont-Auvergne region (See *The Lion and the Lily*, page 70), ten are considered within the Provençal Tribunal. There are no commanderies in Andorra or the Pyrenees. The commanderies in Gascony and Toulousain (as well as the nearest civilian settlement, unless the commandery is established in a town) are charged with protecting the Way of St. James, in addition to supporting Templars participating in both the current Fifth Crusade and the Reconquista.

Depending on a facility's nature—whether it watches over pilgrims, generates revenue, or both—anywhere from six to fifty brother-knights, an equal number of brother-sergeants and at least one chaplain priest form the garrison. Many of these warriors have participated in campaigns in France and Iberia, as well as crusades, and the commander is selected from among them by a vote of the members. One commander, called a tutor, is selected from local commanders to oversee operations within a country. The leader of the Templars claims the title of grand master. The current grand master is Peter de Montaigu, a native of Auvergne. His brother, Guerrin de Montaigu, is the grand master of the Knights Hospitaller. There are normally three Templar masters in the Tribunal. Giraud Brochard is the master of Aquitaine and Guillaume d'Ailly, the Master of Provence and Spain. The Master of the Province and Balliwick of Provence died in 1219. Historically, the

Story Seed: Ill-Met By Moonlight

Oriande is an archetypal Faerie Queen, and may fulfill such a role in many different stories set in the area. For example, Oberon (see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 72) may consort with her, or perhaps quarrel with her over a child from the covenant. The Boar King (see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 119) might seek her hand and deem the magi or their companions as appropriate challenges to demonstrate his devotion. Alternatively, she might choose to meddle with a knight on a quest, waylaying and tempting him much like the faeries in Arthurian legends. She might manufacture

problems for nearby settlements, or take hostages whom she vows to release if certain items are returned to her or certain activities completed. She claims to have Ogier the Dane's sword, Cortana, in her possession as a result of just such trickery. A favorite tactic is to direct a lesser faerie to provoke a group of travelers into hostilities, then appear in the aftermath and demand missives be delivered to other faerie nobility in the region as reparations for the harm inflicted upon her subjects. She then shadows these messengers, manufacturing challenges along the way to gain vitality.

post remained vacant until 1229.

Commanderies often operate in the same manner as abbeys and monasteries. For example, Montsaunès Commandery, fifty miles southwest of Toulouse, supervises dependencies and satellites throughout the Toulouse area. The Commandery of St. Marcet and the Boudrac Commandery are both dependents and the knight commander also oversees smaller posts including those of Escanecrabe, Figarol, Lestelle de Saint-Martory, Mazeret-sur-Salat, and Saint-Jean Plante. The Templars at Montsaunès also manage possessions in the towns of Arbon, Guau, Laffite-Toupière, Salies-du-Sala, St. Martory, Saint-Gaudens, Soueich, and Valentine.

The Templars refused to support the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars. Peter de Montaigne declared only one true Crusade existed — the Crusade against the Saracens. Bertrand de Blanchefort, fourth

Grand Master of the Templars from 1153 to 1170, had Cathar heritage, and his descendants in Razas fought on the side of the Cathars against the Albigensian Crusade. Because of their independent standing, commanderies with close ties to Cathar communities occasionally hid *perfecti* for short periods.

For more information on playing Templar characters or designing Templar commanderies, see *The Church*, page 102.

KNIGHTS HOSPITALLER

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem, or the Knights Hospitaller, also have a strong presence in Provence. They focus on supporting pilgrims along the Way of St. James and generating revenues to support operations in the Levant, much like the Knights Templar. The primary preceptory is in

Saint-Gilles, near Nimes, and administers fifty-three of the eighty-one holdings across Arelat, Gascony, Narbonnais, and Toulousain. The preceptory in Toulouse administers the other twenty-eight. Additional information on the Hospitallers can be found in *Tales of Mythic Europe*, page 70.

KNIGHTS OF ST. JAMES OF THE SWORD

Founded and based in Iberia, the Knights of St. James of the Sword, or Order of Santiago, possesses only a few holdings in Provence, the most significant of which is the Bessaut Commandery and hospital of Our Lady Mary Magdalene. All of the Order's commanderies in the region are established along the Way of St. James, and primarily in Gascony. They serve solely to defend and assist pilgrims. A sizeable dona-

Unicorn

Perhaps because it was an emblem of Jesus' Incarnation or because it was believed to represent the fearsome passions of nature, the unicorn did not widely appear in early heraldry.

Divine Might: 20 (Animal)
Characteristics: Cun -2, Per +2, Pre +2, Com -2, Str +6, Sta +3, Dex +1, Qik -1
Size: +3
Season: Summer
Confidence Score: 2 (5)
Virtues and Flaws: Divine Animal; Divine Master, Greater Purifying Touch (poison); Improved Characteristics, Longwinded, Sense Holiness/Unholiness, Unaffected by the Gift; Mute, No Hands; Baneful Circumstances (virgin women), Compassionate, Reclusive, Weakness (virgin women). (Divine Animal and Divine Master are as Magical Animal and Magical Master, but aligned to the Divine Realm)
Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power (Righteous Fury), Improved Abilities, Improved Confidence, Improved Initiative (alicorn), Improved Might (x3), Improved Power (x1, Righteous Fury, x2, Sense Virginity), Improved Recovery, Lesser Power (Sense Virginity), Minor Virtue [Improved Characteristics] (x3), No

Fatigue (The Unicorn instead uses Confidence points for its Greater Purifying Touch)
Personality Traits: Brave +3, Pure +3, Unicorn +3, Cautious +2
Reputations: Reclusive Beast of the Woods 3 (local), Symbol of Romantic Love 2 (Languedoc)
Combat:
Hooves: Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +7
Alicorn: Init +4, Attack +9, Defense +6, Damage +9
Soak: +3
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incap. (25-32), Dead (33+)
Abilities: Area Lore: Local Region 1 (hidden places), Athletics 5 (galloping), Awareness 3 (humans), Brawl 4 (alicorn), Concentration 2 (Sense Virginity), Folk Ken 3 (humans), Penetration 4 (Sense Virginity), Sense Holiness/Unholiness 4 (women), Stealth 5 (remaining unseen), Survival 4 (forests)
Natural Weapons: Alicorn: Init +2, Atk +3, Def +2, Dam +3
Powers:
Righteous Fury, 4 points, Init 0, Animal. **R:** Per, **D:** Sun, **T:** Ind. Surrounded with

a nimbus of soft white light, the unicorn's hooves and alicorn become razor sharp, infused with the power of the Lord as it gains a +5 bonus to all Attack and Damage rolls. **MuAn 40** (Base 25, +2 sun, +1 size): Greater Power (40 levels, +10xp Penetration), Improved Power (Initiative x5)
Sense Virginity, 3 point, Init +3, Corpus. **R:** Eye, **D:** Conc, **T:** Individual. By gazing into the eyes of an individual, the unicorn can determine whether the target is a virgin. **InCo 15** (Base 5, +1 eye, +1 Conc): Lesser Power (15 levels, +5xp Concentration, +5xp Penetration), Improved Powers x2 (initiative)
Encumbrance: 0 (0)
Vis: There are four pawns of Divinely-aligned Animal in the unicorn's horn, or alicorn as it is also called.
Appearance: Equal to a mighty charger fit for a king, this creature appears as a horse with a goat's cloven hooves and beard, a lion's tail, and a slender, spiral horn on its forehead.
Design Note: This creature was created using the rules from *Realms of Power: Magic*, but with substitutions appropriate for a Divine creature.



tion from Guilhem de Mazerolles in 1219 funded the new hospital's construction at the Bessaut Commandery. A host of eight knights, their households and two score of men-at-arms operate from the compound, which is not associated with any nearby settlement. The Knight Commander is Juan Marcos Correa, a seasoned veteran of the Reconquista with a pleasant demeanor. He enjoys good relations with the other surrounding commanderies of other Orders, and his brother is also a member of the Order of Santiago in Iberia. The current grand master in Castile is Martín Peláez Barragán.

Langon

Established on the left bank of the Gironde river, Langon functions as a trading port and a stop on the Way of St. James before continuing south to Bazas. It is also notable for the nearby Roquetaillade Castle — the first castle built by Charlemagne and now the home of the baron de La Motte. Each Lord de La Motte has improved upon the citadel to create the current structure, an imposing square castle with four towers. A group of faerie stoneworkers who live in the nearby caves make this continued expansion feasible. They have made a pact to serve the de La Motte family and so complete a construction project for each new lord. The details of this bargain are kept secret, and only passed from father to son at the old lord's deathbed.

Marmande

Founded by Richard the Lionheart around 1195 on the banks of the Garonne, the walled town of Marmande was, by 1209, the property of the Count of Toulouse. It was taken in 1212 by the forces of de Montfort, and then, after rebelling, again in 1213. In 1214 an English army approached, and the castle and town went over to King John's banner, but when the English retreated after the disaster at Bouvines the crusaders were unwilling to give the inhabitants another chance for treachery.

In the winter of 1218, just after Christmas, crusaders loyal to Prince Louis arrived,

commanded by count Centule d'Astarac. After a nine month siege, the garrison surrendered and was allowed to march out with the terms faithfully observed. Then the crusaders, commanded by Amaury de Montfort at the direction of the Bishop of Saintes, systematically massacred all five thousand citizens of the town, sparing neither women nor children, and even slaughtering the livestock — claiming the act was necessary to secure continued blessings for their arms. Once they completed their bloodshed, they set fire to the whole town and leveled all that they could. Many say twenty-four year-old de Montfort ordered the killings in revenge for the death of his father at Toulouse in 1217.

In 1220, the area is a great field of rubble and ashes where the charred bones of the five thousand victims of events of a year ago lie unburied. A strong Infernal aura of 6 remains here, rising to 7 on September 26th, the anniversary of the horrible event. On that night, those with Second Sight see the ground covered in the gruesome blood-soaked handiwork of Prince Louis' men, as if the carnage had "rained down from the heavens." Ghosts are common here, as are Infernally corrupted crows which fed upon the abandoned carrion.

Auch

Auch is situated on the river Gers, and ruled by the count of Armagnac, Pierre-Gerald. Auch has been the seat of an archdiocese since 879, when it was moved from nearby Eauze. However, the cathedral burned down in 1170 and its reconstruction has not proceeded beyond clearing the site of most of the rubble and raising a few portions of the outer walls. It has no Divine aura. Located in the approximate center of town, the old cathedral was built over the site of several *mithraea*. Hidden within the catacombs are six complete tauroctony altars crafted of white marble. Mithraeans performed purification rituals and mystery initiations at these altars. The structure immediately surrounding and including the altars has a Magic aura of 3. If your saga follows history, no further attempts to reconstruct this cathedral

happen until 1310, when only the ribs and vaults are completed, leaving a rough skeleton to be demolished in a conflict of the 15th century. The relics of the cathedral, once dedicated to St. Thomas, remain with the archbishop's retinue and he normally travels with Prince Louis' crusaders. Garsie de Lhort became archbishop in 1214 and was present at the massacre of Marmande.

The count does not like the archbishop, and this enmity has existed for some time, with its roots in the Albigensian Crusade. His father, the previous count, was known for his correspondence with the trobairitz, Lombarda. The two met in Toulouse and maintained an unrequited relationship throughout the Albigensian Crusade. The conflict kept them from reuniting before the count's death in 1219, and the current count feels the archbishop's support of the Crusade prevented his father's happiness.

Agen

This otherwise unremarkable town on the Way of St. James is home to a small sect of Christians descended from a Diedne magus who successfully hid from the Order by renouncing his magic and becoming a hermit several years before the Schism War. The magus was a devout follower of St. Valerie of Limoges, purported to have personally known Valerie before her death and canonization. Ev-

ery year, on the summer solstice, his followers make the short pilgrimage to Limoges and the Benedictine abbey of Chambon-sur-Voueize to visit her bones after lighting candles at the church of Saint Caprasius of Agen.

In truth, Estebe, formerly Bachlach of Diedne, was a pagan warrior-magus who desired a saintly woman named Valerie, and cut off her head when she refused to marry him. She then miraculously stood and carried her head to Limoges, presenting it to the archbishop. Humbled, Bachlach immediately converted to Christianity, changed his name, and returned to his covenant as a hermit. His followers now form an unusual cult, living apart from society in the wilds of Gascony and seeking overt manifestations of the Divine in nature. They are particularly interested in stories of the unicorns seen near Bazas. The remnant structures of the covenant-turned hermitage have a Divine aura of 2, which fades and becomes a Magic aura of 2 on the night of the summer solstice. Bachlach's research and journals are still here, kept in an old ossuary next to the magus' crypt, and could provide insights regarding Diedne magic and rituals from the dawn of the Order. They are just as likely to reopen old wounds of the Schism War best left alone.

While their initiations are cryptic and secretive, and some claim they involve a ritual reenactment of St. Valerie's beheading, the Agen Valerenes have demonstrated powers of Intervention and Purity, as well as the virtues of Saint's Aid and Wilderness

Sense. The group in Gascony is associated with the larger Valerene cult in Limoges, and the two often assist one another in larger initiations, but both struggle independently to acquire a special ring possessed by the bishop of Limoges. In 1172, during the investiture ceremony of Richard I as princeps of Aquitaine, it was called "the ring of Valerie" and proclaimed to ensure "he may be fortunate in deed, abundant in faith, and finally come to glory with the Lord of Lords." This relic, Valerie's proposed wedding ring, was returned to the bishop when Richard went on Crusade.

La Romieu

This small village is roughly a mile from the site of a fairly prominent former Diedne covenant called Nemetannais. The covenant was founded in the mid-900s as a southern extension of Branugurix, but since the Schism War, the only distinctive characteristic of the area has been its unusual number of feral, magical cats, or matagots, considered descendants of the familiars kept by the magi, and who bear many distinctive qualities of the lineage of Diedne the Founder's familiar.

The former covenant site was near a series of caves and six small, pyramidal monuments of garluche sandstone associated with declarations of "safe haven," called sauvete. However, these 12-to-15-foot monuments stretch back to time immemorial, and mark the boundaries of a Magic aura of level 3, which includes the cave complex. The caves, however, are of questionable stability, given how the covenant was destroyed by Flambeau magi.

Story Seed: Scourge of the Way

Drakes and worms have begun plaguing the pilgrims attempting to travel the Way of St. James. They are particularly terrible near Ostabat. The knightly orders of the region can handle an occasional small "dragon," but these numbers threaten to overwhelm them. They seek out the

covenant and ask to establish a temporary relationship while "crusading" against the creatures. A group of questing Verditius and vacationing Jerbiton both agree to the knights' terms as well, and suggest an amicable competition and friendly wager between the hunting parties.

New Virtue: Saint's Aid

Major, Supernatural

This Virtue grants the Ability Saint's Aid at a score of 1. By beseeching St. Valerie (or another saint with a particular interest in the character) for help when performing Divine Powers and Methods

or Holy Magic, the character may ignore the necessary Fatigue or Confidence cost. This blessing may be used a number of times between confessions equal to the character's score in Saint's Aid. This Virtue is always associated with the Divine realm.

Bayonne

Rebuilt in the mid-tenth century by Basques and Viking settlers, Bayonne is a major shipbuilding port and whaling center in Aquitaine. Construction of its great cathedral of St. Mary of Bayonne began in 1213 and still continues, while the completed crypts now house the relics of the city's patron saint, Leon de Carentan, beheaded

Matagot

"At first I thought it no different from other cats, perhaps oddly colored, but the creature has a definite taste for food and a vindictive nature. The gold was useful, I admit, but I can do without the temper of such a damnable, cruel beast."

—From the Journal of Acumenis Ex Miscellanea

Magic Might: 15 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -4, Str -7, Sta 0, Dex +3, Qik +4

Size: -3

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Luck, Perfect Balance, Puissant Awareness, Sharp Ears, Unaffected by the Gift; Magic Friend, Nocturnal, Proud, Tainted with Evil, Vow (serve the individual who first feeds it food until the person dies or releases it from service)

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Ritual Power (Quid Pro Quo) x2; Improved Abilities, Improved Power (Quid Pro Quo), Improved Recovery, Improved Soak, Lesser Power (Wages of Greed), Minor Virtue (Shapeshifter), Minor Virtue (Tough); Susceptible to Deprivation

Qualities: Ambush Predator, Crafty, Good

Jumper, Skilled Climber, Thick Fur
Personality Traits: Cat +3*, Curious +4, Cruel +3, Deceptive +3, Vindictive +3, Independent +2

Reputations: Evil 3 (local), Strange and double-edged creatures 2 (regional)

Combat:

Claws: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +12, Damage -5

Teeth: Init +4, Attack +10, Defense +9, Damage -6

Soak: +6

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Local 2 (villages), Athletics 3 (chase), Awareness 4+2 (humans), Brawl 4 (claws), Guile 2 (playing dead), Hunt 4 (birds), Occitan 4 (conversational), Shapeshifter 4 (human), Stealth 5 (remaining unseen), Survival 3 (home)

Powers:

Quid Pro Quo, 1 points, Init -10, Terram.

This power creates a cache of gold coins worth approximately 20 Mythic Pounds. The matagot creates this horde in a hidden place, such as under a house or in a foundation, but prefers

an isolated location. It parcels out the coins when its adopted family acts appropriately, as determined by the matagot. The coins resemble a local coin, if the matagot has one, but otherwise have a strange, unidentifiable design. **CrTe 35 R:** Touch, **D:** Mom, **T:** Ind (Base 15, +1 Touch, +2 Group, +1 finesse); **Ritual Power** (35 levels, -3 reduced cost; Note that this power reduces the matagot's Might Score until it either spends a season in a Magic Aura of 3, or consumes 15 pawns of Animal vis), Improved Power (-3 reduced cost)

Wages of Greed, 5 points, Init -6, Corpus

The matagot often reserves this power for those who refuse to release it. This power causes miserable pain which hampers them from regular activities without actually injuring them. **PeCo 25 R:** Voice, **D:** Sun, **T:** Ind (Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Sun); Lesser Power (25 levels)

Vis: There are three pawns of Animal vis in the Matagot's tail.

Appearance: A large, dark calico cat flecked with gold, but with tufted ears and dark eyes with a vicious look. Note that the matagot is a specific sort of magical creature, and not a magic cat lineage.

Story Seed: Feed Me

The Sorginak know of the Lou Carcolh (see opposite page) which lives the hills near Bayonne, at the edge of the mountains, and they avoid the creature. It does not seem to roam too far from its cavern lair and attacks mostly pilgrims when it does. This steady stream of easy meals might be enough to placate the creature for now, but the witches are aware of the

threat and closely monitor the situation. Occasionally, troublesome knights, interfering magi, or foolish bandits are led to the cave by one of the folk witches, both to supplement the monstrous beast's appetite and to eliminate problems. It just so happens the characters have arrived asking too many questions... questions with answers held in the Lou Carcolh's cave.

a population of roughly fifteen folk witches, or Sorginak (singular: "sorgina," See Chapter 6: Pyrenees) scattered amongst the various villages and townships of Gascony, and the Basque Country of the Pyrenees.

Although far more mundane than the coven of folk witches, the whalers of Bayonne are also a sophisticated and well-organized community. Excellent shipbuilders and sailors, they watch the coastal waters from high towers, called "vigias," and launch a flotilla of small boats into the water at the first signs of local whales, or "sarda." Then, armed with harpoons and throwing spears, they pursue the animals. After driving one to the shallows, they harvest it for meat and natural products. They have honed this deadly craft for nearly 200 years, and are considered second to none. The bones of Whales of Virtue hold Animal vis, while the baleen (a long series of thin plates in the whale's mouth) contains Aquam vis.

by Vikings in the ninth century. The incomplete cathedral has a Divine aura of 2, which rises to 3 on the saint's feast day of March 1st.

Bayonne gained a charter from King John in 1215, granting it a mayor, jurors, councilors, and advisors. This freed it from feudal obligations to the count of Labourd. The count has lived about ten miles east, in Ustaritz, ever since Richard the Lionhearted

crushed the local lords in 1177 for participating in a rebellion against King Henry and then remained to occupy Bayonne until 1199.

Regardless of who ruled them, the Basque people have lived in this region since before the Romans arrived. Their traditions and culture form the very core and personality of the land. They are expert whalers and capable warriors, and even have



Lou Carcolh

It was a vast creature, lumbering and vicious. Oblivious to us as we hid, its head was like a dragon with a beard of tentacles, a mouth of sword-like fangs. Its neck became that of a snail and its body disappeared within an enormous shell. It left a trail of thick slime in its wake, rolling over the broken wagons as if they were nothing. The mule, however, was not so fortunate, and its cries were quickly silenced after the tentacles shot forth and pulled it bleating into that ravenous maw. I can only hope the monster wasn't an immature beast.

— From the Journal of Acumenis, Ex Miscellanea

Magic Might: 25 (An)

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -5, Str +10, Sta +7, Dex +1, Qik -3

Size: +5

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal, Magical Monster; Greater Immunity (Deprivation); Ferocity (trying to eat people), Homing Instinct (cavern home), Improved Characteristics, Puissant Brawl, Tough; Mute, No Hands, Compulsion (eat people)

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power (Grasping Tentacles), Greater Power (Viscous Travel), Improved Defense (tentacle), Improved Initiative (x2, tentacle), Improved Stamina (x2), Improved Might (x5), Improved Power (x3, Grasping Tentacles) Improved Soak, Lesser Power (Sense the Quivering Prey)

Personality Traits: Lou Carcolh +3, Rav-

enous +2, Uncaring +2

Reputations: The Terrible Monster which Eats Travelers 4 (Local Area); Strange Beast of Legend 2 (Local)

Combat:

Fangs: Init -3, Attack +12, Defense +6, Damage +15

Tentacle: Init +3, Attack +14, Defense +11, Damage +14

Grapple: Init -3, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Soak: +11

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Local Region 3 (trade routes), Athletics 4 (moving), Awareness 5 (humans), Brawl 5+2 (tentacle), Concentration 2 (Sense the Quivering Prey), Hunt 3 (people), Penetration 3 (Grasping Tentacles), Stealth 4 (remaining unseen), Survival 4 (finding prey)

Natural Weapons:

Fangs: (Init 0, Atk +4, Def +2, Dmg +5)

Tentacle: (Init 0, Atk +5, Def +3, Dmg +4)

Powers:

Viscous Travel, 2 points, Init -6, Animal. The lou carcolh slithers over any terrain, unhindered by brambles, debris or any other rubble of lesser size than itself. **ReAn 30 R:** Per, D: Conc, T: Ind (Base 15, +1 Conc, +2 size): Greater Power (30 levels, +5xp Concentration, +10xp Penetration, -1 might cost)

Grasping Tentacles, 2 points, Init +2, Animal. The lou carcolh has the ability to extrude its many tentacles to attack up to 100 paces away. Each tentacle requires another invocation of this power. The lou carcolh suffers no penalties to attacks made at this distance. **MuAn 45 R:** Pers, D: Diam, T: Part (Base 25, +1 Diameter, +1 Part, +2 size): Greater Power (45 MuAn, +5xp Penetration), Improved Powers, (+10 initiative, reduce Might cost -3, +10xp Concentration)

Sense the Quivering Prey, 2 points, Init -4, Imaginem. The lou carcolh can sense the presence of creatures by "feeling" the boundaries of the air with its tentacles. This doesn't permit fine discriminations, and cannot discern between live and dead bodies. **InIm 10 R:** Per, D: Conc, T: Touch (Base 4, +1 Conc, +1 Touch): Lesser Power (10 levels, +15xp Penetration)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: There are five pawns of Animal vis in the lou carcolh's tentacles

Appearance: This strange creature appears to be an enormous, dragon-headed snail, with a beard of nearly a score of tentacles extending implausibly far to grasp prey and pull it toward a maw filled with forearm-sized teeth. A thick shell covered in lumps the size of a man's head forms its carapace, while its pebbly hide easily turns most weapons.

Mimizan

Just outside Mimizan is the residence of Dama of Merinita, the current Praeco of the Tribunal. On the swampy coast on the north side of the lake there is a squat building about three stories high, which the Redcaps call Mimizan covenant, though at Tribunal it is technically considered part of Castra Solis. It was founded in the century following the Schism War by the Praeco and she has maintained it ever since. It is located near the ruins of a Gaulish shrine where ancient priests performed many sacrifices. The site is also very near Dama's birthplace. After her apprentice achieved her Gauntlet and fled Oleron (where they were living at the time, see *The Lion & The Lily*), Dama investigated the site while looking for a suitable familiar. She discovered Maju and decided the location would make an excellent covenant. After an extensive discourse with the faerie, they came to a mutual agreement and she later bound it to her using the special spell known to her house (*Faerie Chains of the Familiar Slave, Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 90). Under Maju's counsel she has become more paranoid, more secretive, and more ambitious, and does not like visitors, setting up her covenant to keep most people out.

The highest level of the tower is taken up with Dama's living quarters and laboratory, the second is divided into guest quarters for those who come to see her, and the first is where her servants live and work. The solid block of stone forming the tower includes a basement, but this lowest level is rarely used for anything besides storage.

The site has a moderate Faerie aura of 4, centered on a muddy black rock almost entirely buried at the lake's edge. Besides a surprisingly powerful *Aegis of the Hearth* (Level 50, cast using *Wizard's Communion* and a casting tablet), the site is also protected from curious visitors with a *Rego Mentem* spell causing anyone without Magic Resistance who steps on the game trail surrounding the site and leading out to the main road to experience a terrifying vision and an irresistible compulsion to flee. For this reason, most of the locals fear the marsh and refuse to go down the small trail leading to it; many ghost stories circulate about the creatures living down that trail. The wild coast and other marshy lands surrounding

her tower often have pockets of Faerie aura.

There is a cove of scrub trees inland from Mimizan covenant, on the northern side of the lake, where twelve members of the Basque folk witch community and some Ex Miscellanea members of the Order of Hermes meet every year to help Dama and discuss their machinations in the coming months. This area has a Faerie aura of 3. Dama leads these gatherings, initiating many into the mysteries of the Maters and Matrones cult (see Chapter 3: Hermetic Culture, Cults & Factions of Provence). Almost all of them view her as a granddame worthy of great respect, and a few revere her as a saint. One, Rebecca, a folk witch *sorgina* member of the Order, lives with Dama at her tower.

Magi of Mimizan

Dama and Rebecca are the only residents of Mimizan.

DAMA OF MERINITA

Born in 993, Dama's early memories are a jumble of fragments shattered by Twilight. Perhaps she was the daughter of a Basque folk witch and one of Gascony's invading Vikings. Her mater was a Greek Merinita (and former Witch of Thessaly) trained as a Hoplite at Val-Negra and Castra Solis, and specialized in the symbolic and sympathetic mysteries of her House. At turn of the millennium, in 1001, just before the Schism War's outbreak, Dama became her apprentice and the pair hid as guests of the court of the Faerie Queen Oriande la Fée (see Rosefleur, earlier in this chapter). After passing her Gauntlet in 1016, Dama initiated the full path of the Folk Story Magic, and ill-advisedly joined Oriande's court.

By 1061, Dama had taken such risks that she fell into Twilight. Nineteen years later, what returned looked like Dama, and a Quaesitor confirmed that it was Dama, but truthfully it was more a husk of a human born of her hazy patchwork memories, driving ambitions, and deep desires. She vaguely resembled the popular depiction of the Virgin Mary, like an iridescent demigoddess with auburn hair, and ruddy skin. While she

remained Dama, or at least everything left of Dama, this Twilight event did more than leave a scar: it completely altered Dama's life.

Upon her homecoming, she received an unusual windfall. She, like many others at the faerie's court, had sworn to serve Queen Oriande for the rest of her natural life, and according to faerie prophesy, she would be seventy years old when death came for her. Thus, she had been presumed dead, which meant she returned liberated from her oath of fealty. Furthermore, a very elderly man, claiming to be a childhood friend, pressed her to accept a farewell gift, charging her to carry it far away from the faerie's castle and keep it safe from she who greedily desired it. He called the small, green-black stone, roughly the size and shape of a hen's egg, a *baetylus*. While he claimed it would gift Dama with vigor, Oriande would use it as an Orphic Egg, allowing her to complete an apotheosis of great power. While displeased with these developments, Oriande la Fée could not prevent them.

Reacting to her brush with the infinity of Twilight and the opportunity for a fresh start with her life, Dama refocused her ambitions. She swore to create a legacy, but she decided make it her own, rather than one for her House. She embarked on four major projects: she trained an apprentice, Marie of Castra Solis; established a covenant at Mimizan; bound Maju as a familiar; and founded a Mystery Cult, the Maters and the Matrones.

REBECCA EX MISCELLANEA

Rebecca has never given up hope she might still find a husband, and constantly watches for a young magus of proper breeding and personality. Open to the idea of a whirlwind romance and swift marriage, she wants to become with child as soon as possible. She might settle for a mundane knight or ship captain, but Rebecca's upbringing included high standards; her growing powers and proud nature exacerbate this desire. In the meantime, she has taken an apprentice to teach at Mimizan. Young Alexa assists Dama when Rebecca is away. Once Alexa's training is complete, she intends to Initiate Intuition upon admission to Dama's cult.

For additional details about Rebecca, refer to the insert.

Rebecca Ex Miscellanea and Sorgina

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

Size: -1

Age: 32 (32)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 1 (7)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus, Wealthy; Feminine Gift*, Good Teacher*, Improved Characteristics, Personal Vis Source, Privileged Upbringing, Venus' Blessing*, Well Trained Folk Witch, Proud**, Waster of Vis; Cabal Legacy, Close Family Ties, Flawed Folk Witch Gift Opening (Animal Ken), Flawed Parma Magica (Animal), Optimistic, Small Frame, Susceptible to the Divine.

* Mystery Initiation through Cabal Legacy

** Mystery Initiations

Personality Traits: Optimistic +2.

Reputations: Pragmatic +3, Well-informed +2

Combat:

Fist: Init +1, Attack +1, Defense +2, Damage -2

Dagger: Init +2, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage 0

Soak: +2

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

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

Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (birds), Area Lore: Gascony 3 (vis sites), Artes Liberales 1 (astronomy), Athletics 1 (hiking), Awareness 2 (Observation), Brawl 1 (dodge), Carouse 1 (staying sober), Charm 2 (men),

Concentration 2 (flight), Craft: Weaving 2 (wool), Cursing 3 (men), Dead Language: Latin 4 (Hermetic Terms), Dowsing 3 (in bog), Flight 3 (at night), Folk Ken 2 (men), Folk Witch Magic Theory 3 (vis extraction), Guile 2 (men), Healing 3 (sword wounds), Living Language: Euskara 5 (description), Living Language: Occitan 4 (conversation), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 1 (Tribunal members), Organization Lore: Folk Witches 3 (Sorginak covens), Organization Lore: Maters and Matrones Cult 3 (Initiations), Parma Magica 3 (Mentem), Penetration 3 (Cursing), Second Sight 1 (seeing invisible creatures), Shapeshifting 5 (birds), Stealth 2 (remaining hidden), Survival 2 (Gascony), Teaching 1 (folk witches)

Witch Moon Scars: Gained 5 experience points in Cursing

Equipment: bear fetish, clothing, dagger, hare fetish, pots and equipment for brewing potions, raven fetish, stag fetish, wolf fetish.

Vis: 15 pawns of Corpus vis kept in a string of animal skulls.

Appearance: A mature and attractive Basque woman who wears a number of animal fetishes and generally keeps her hair pulled back and under a shawl. Rebecca dresses as a traditional Basque wise woman, in a dark woolen dress with a wide, bright scarf tied around her waist.

Voting Sigil: Rebecca has a wolf fetish which she uses as her voting sigil. Claimed in combat, it once belonged to a rival sorgina.

Design Notes: Rebecca was designed using the Folk Witch rules presented in *Hedge Magic* as a member of Ex Miscellanea Sorgina.

Raised in a Basque village, Rebecca's father discovered a cache of Roman gold and kept it hidden. He used the wealth to provide Rebecca with a comfortable youth and an education. He'd hoped for her to marry one of the minor knights who lived in the region and groomed her for just such a pairing. Unfortunately, Dama's coven discovered her and encouraged several of the area's potential suitors to depart on Crusade. The young girl then joined the coven, becoming the primary aide to Dama at Mimizan after her apprenticeship.

Rebecca regularly acts as an emissary, messenger, or spy for Dama, utilizing her flight and shapeshifting powers to move quickly and remain hidden. She often travels back to her home village, where she spends time assisting the local whalers by secretly flying overhead. The hunters believe the appearance of her albatross form to be a good omen and cheerfully sail where she indicates. Rebecca also helps young mothers recover from childbirth through potions, but she demands the afterbirth as payment. The folk witch harvests 5 pawns of Corpus vis, her personal vis source, by rendering this material at an ancient hillside shrine on the Spring Equinox. Bordering on pagan, Rebecca has no qualms regarding the Maters and Matrones cult, feeling it is good and just to provide such empowerment to women; after all, doesn't mortal life spring from women?

Pau

Established in the eleventh century by the count of Béarn to defend the fjord of the Gave de Pau river (which begins near the Breach of Roland), it occupies the northern bank, overlooking the crossing with two large, square towers. Many regional shepherds have used this fjord for bringing their flocks into or out of the same mountain pastures since antiquity. Bits of wool collected from brambles along this route generate 4

pawns of Creo vis on the spring equinox and 4 pawns of Muto vis on the autumn equinox.

Set at the foot of the Pyrenees, Pau and the county of Béarn are often torn between the politics of the crown of Aragon and the ongoing conflict of the Albigensian Crusade at its doorstep. While it is not a Cathar stronghold, the previous count of Béarn aided Toulouse and Foix on several occasions and its knights hold no love for the Crusaders. Notably, William Raymond is more active in Aragonese matters, while his son William favors the English in Aquitaine. If your saga

follows history, William shifts his focus to the Aragonese when his father dies in 1223 and he attempts to take over the county of Cerdagne. (See Chapter 6: The Pyrenees.)

Tarbes

Tarbes is the capital of the county of Bigorre, and nominally ruled by Guy de Montfort by marriage to Petronilla de Bigorre. Tarbes currently sees very little noble

Sarda Whale

"...dangerous business catching a whale. Better for me to go on the river than to go hunting whales on the open sea... I prefer a fish I can kill, rather than a fish which could kill not only me but also my fellows with a single blow."

— From the Journal of Jean-Michel, Former Companion of Castra Solis

Characteristics: Cun -3, Per -2, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +19, Sta +5, Dex +2, Qik -4
Size: +9

Confidence Score: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Improved Characteristics, Reserves of Strength, Tough; Poor Eyesight.

Qualities: Aquatic, Defensive Fighter, Hardy, Imposing Appearance (x3), Tireless, Tough Hide, Vocal.

Personality Traits: Patient +3, Cruel +2, Hungry +2

Reputations: Creature which drowns sailors 3 (coastlines)

Combat:

Tail: Init -4, Attack +10 Defense +2, Damage +24

Soak: +10

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-14), -3 (15-28), -5 (29-42), Incapacitated (43-56), Dead (57+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (food), Brawl 4 (dodge), Music 3 (bellowing), Survival 5 (coastlines), Swim 5 (coastlines)

Natural Weapons: Tail (Init 0, Atk +4, Def +2, Dmg +5)

Appearance: Most consider this enormous fish to be quite strange, with a sweet scent evident from its vast mouth and a thick, pebbly hide rather than scales. Strangely, its tail lies flat, instead of vertically. Bad tempered, they are known to smash or overturn boats when harassed by fishermen.

Story Seed: Time is Short

The current count, William Raymond, is an old man who rules from Tarbes while his son William administers Pau. The count's rights to Pau are contested because his brother's widow, Petronilla de Bigorre, married Guy de Montfort—Simon de Montfort's son. If your saga follows history, this conflict finds resolution in April of 1220, when Guy de Montfort is killed in a Crusade-related skirmish with the forces of the count of Toulouse near Castelnaudary, a market town in the Toulousain. If the characters forge an agreement with the younger

William and engineer or even execute this skirmish, they might find a way to establish a covenant in the towers overlooking the river fjord. In exchange for guarding the crossing, maintaining the village, and collecting reasonable tolls, William would ignore their curious behavior and could focus on supporting his father's politics. However, this relationship is dangerously close to serving as a court wizards, and might prove troublesome if charges are brought against them at Tribunal.

total of 30 and at least a season of research to decipher. Intellego magics reveal that the ring contains four pawns of Mentem vis. It acts as an arcane connection to the spirit of Tharbis for those with the proper magics. Knowledge of the ring's power was lost when one of the bishops gave it to his successor on his deathbed, telling him to never forget its power.

Lourdes

Lourdes sits on the banks of the Gave de Pau river, with numerous caves and quarries pocking the surrounding countryside. Boasting a large, square tower, the fortress stands to the east of the walled town, on a rocky promontory. It served as the ancestral home of the counts of Bigorre with foundations dating back to the Roman era. Those fighting in the Albigensian Crusade consider it a vital defensive structure in the region, key to controlling the salt mines of the local valleys and strategically more important than Tarbes.

The castle was the site of a miraculous conversion and victory against the Moors. In 778, Charlemagne besieged the Moorish commander, Mirat, for months. An airborne eagle unexpectedly dropped an enormous trout at the feet of the Moorish general, who then flung the fish down to the attackers. Charlemagne thought this meant the defenders had enough food to survive far longer and broke his siege. Turpin, the bishop of Puy, left Charlemagne's camp to speak with Mirat. He convinced Mirat that the bird and Charlemagne's departure were miracles from the Virgin Mary, miracles worthy of submission. Mirat agreed and visited the Black Virgin of Puy to offer gifts. Inspired by the beauty there, the general surrendered the castle and converted to Christianity. On the day of his baptism and in honor of the virgin roses at the shrine, Mirat took on the name of Louerda (the rose in Arabic), which was then given to the town. On the anniversary of this baptism a Divine aura of 2 exists at the top of the castle tower.

The Romans valued the local towns, such as Bagnères-de-Bigorre, for their invigorating natural baths. Lourdes has one such spring, located in a bend of the river, said to have healing properties. Collecting

supervision while Guy pursues the Albigensian Crusade and Petronilla lives in Poitiers to avoid reprisals. With no established seneschal, the municipalities maintain order as best they can with the assistance of the bishop and local clergy. The city spreads across the left bank of the Adour river as six walled villages surrounding the bishop's palace and cathedral.

Legends state that the Queen of Ethiopia, Tharbis, a Cushite woman Moses spurned, founded Tharbes. While the oldest ruins are Roman, an ancient ring and a polished walking staff of African Moringa

wood have been passed down from bishop to bishop. The staff currently rests in the offices of the bishop, a curiosity he doesn't use but keeps nearby. The ring is a simple loop of gold set with amber and kept in a small soapstone box. When someone gifts the ring and tells the recipient to think of a subject, the ring causes the recipient to slowly forget that subject. Intelligence checks are made every full moon against an Ease Factor of 7 (+1 per failed check). After five failed checks, the ring's wearer forgets the subject matter. This is a non-Hermetic effect, requiring an Intellego Mentem lab

the waters of the first spring melt yields 4 pawns of *Creo vis*.

South of Lourdes is the village of Saint-Savin. It hosts an abbey and convent, and is notable for the fact that Roland, one of the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne, once stayed there while Charlemagne's army besieged Lourdes. In exchange for the hospitality, Roland fought and killed two giants. Much to the monks' dismay, the giants Passamont and Alabaster lived close to their priory, preying on their flocks. These faerie giants did not die, however, as their essence was concentrated in the skull fetishes Roland left behind. They now live deeper in the Pyrenees, giving rise to tales of mountain pastures and passes hunted by a tribe of vicious brutes.



Castra Solis

Symbol: A flaming yellow sun

When the Christian wizard known only as Kaeso joined House Flambeau in 809, his base of power was an ancient underground temple to Mithras in the hills along the river Garonne. He and many of his followers lived nearby throughout the early years of Hermetic history, though Kaeso attended Tribunal as a member of Val-Negra, and spent most of his time after joining the Order of Hermes in the Pyrenees with his master Apromor and the Founder Flambeau. There, under their guidance, Kaeso established an elite group of soldier-magi known as the Hoplites, originally named for their simple tactic of casting *Pilum of Fire* from be-

hind a mighty *Parma Magica*.

Kaeso and his Hoplites sharpened their spears fighting against the sahiris of Iberia, joining others to take over for the Founder in 820. However, perhaps because of the creation of House Ex Miscellanea in the intervening years, this next generation of Flambeau warriors popularized the phrase "Join or Die," with emphasis on "Join." The First Hoplite, the merciful Kaeso, brought many former enemies over into House Flambeau. At some point during these years, Kaeso initiated into the inner circle of the Legion of Mithras, and so most of the other Hoplites and many of his new followers also joined the cult.

Between 840 and 850, attacks on local villages increased, and certain isolated magi living in the interior of Gascony complained at Tribunal. By 850, the Flambeau magi of the region incorrectly believed that the so-called Order of Odin had reignited a war through the sudden series of raids on the western coast. They mistook the individual vitkir supporting their clans and relatives for members of a larger organization, all sharing an aggressive and unified vision, finding an enemy where there were merely raiders. Wrongly convinced of the scope of this danger, Kaeso returned to Bordeaux to fortify his temple with the full support of House Flambeau and his Hoplites. He established this new military base as a covenant called *Castra Solis*, or "encampment of the sun," adopting as its symbol the image of the sun quartered into four parts.

With little time for the Hermetic cohort to do more than prepare quick magical fortifications and throw together hurried structures, Bordeaux fell to the northern pagans two years later, and they now held the city. For the next five years, the Hoplites tried to decisively end the war with sheer force. However, in those early days of the Order, the limits of the Oath in regards to meddling with mundanes had not been thoroughly tested. The Flambeau were wary of attacking anyone but the rival magicians and those of their followers who were clearly their enemies. Setting fire to the occupied city, for example, was out of the question. Unfortunately, the wily rune wizards amongst the vikings were very accomplished at setting traps and ambushing the magi, killing many Hoplites in early snares, including Kaeso.

In 855, the remaining Flambeau magi decided that a counterstrike against the invaders required a more secure base. Bordeaux's proximity to the front lines demanded that they establish a fortified covenant further north in Anjou, known as *Sinapis*. *Castra Solis* remained a mobile collection of tents, from which the Flambeau magi could strike quickly, but *Sinapis* became a more traditional Hermetic stronghold. To outsiders, *Castra Solis* appeared to be an extension of *Sinapis*, rather than the other way around.

The supposed war of magi versus vitkir in southern France smoldered more than 120 years, although the mundanes chronicled it as a series of raids, rather than an established occupying force. At the Grand Tribunal of 997, the Hoplites announced the eradication of the vikings from the Tribunal. In summary, they reported that the rune wizards and their Danish troops established three significant settlements on the coast, and all three were burned to the ground. Meanwhile, the Hoplites established many outposts for seeking out the rune wizards, where they cast an *Aegis of the Hearth* to create a safe place from which to fight. Some of these redoubts later became full-fledged covenants, although their wartime origins left them considered extensions of *Castra Solis*. One such example is the tower at *Mimizan*.

The idea of Hoplites as elite fighting magi specialized in dealing with other wizards became widespread during these battles, and they soon spread outside of the West Frankish and Iberian Tribunals. They also ceased to be primarily associated with the veneration of Mithras, although many of them continued to be. These many years of battle brought magi from several other Houses into the ranks of the Hoplites, so they were no longer exclusively considered a division of House Flambeau. Many of these recruits were powerful magi from Houses Tremere and Guernicus, but also included a few outliers such as a particularly influential Greek maga of House Merinita. Although they were especially affected by the attacks, and in fact lost several of their members in raids by the invaders, the magi of House Diedne did not participate in the war. The growing piety of the Mithraeans at *Castra Solis* during the many years of fighting "the pagans," as the invaders were

called, caused the Diedne to feel they could not join without betraying their religious strictures. This probably increased the suspicion prominent Hoplites harbored for the Diedne; regardless, the Schism War began only a few years later.

In the opening salvo of hostilities, Diedne saboteurs compromised Val-Negra after capturing the Mercere Portal network at Harco, beginning a fearsome assault. The Flambeau Primus, himself a Hoplite of some distinction during the previous war, returned to Castra Solis to command the House's efforts, seemingly abandoning Val-Negra. Even many years after its foundation, Castra Solis was still more military camp than covenant, and a perfect location from which to coordinate strikes against the many covenants they had spent the last century defending. Most of the Gascon Diedne fled, abandoning their sites and in many cases setting them afire before they could be taken by their former sodales.

For the first time since the founding of the Order, Castra Solis experienced a period of rest and recovery after the Diedne's defeat. The new Primus of House Flambeau continued to live there, and began improvements. When the Normandy Tribunal divided in 1103, Castra Solis led the faction joining the newly-expanded Provençal Tribunal. Along with them came the magi of Sinapis, who abandoned their previous site to join the domus magna, as well as other smaller covenants in the area, including Mimizan. Since then, Castra Solis has remained stable and a powerful political force in Gascony and the Provençal Tribunal.

The Magi

Home to seventeen magi, most magi of Castra Solis belong to House Flambeau. They range in age from newly gauntleted magi to elderly, frail magi like Garus, the Primus. In the last twenty years, two older magi living at the covenant have died, both of them members of House Guernicus (and the Chief Quaesitor of the Tribunal at the time), and both of them younger than Garus — but everyone is reasonably certain he is next, including him. Beatrice, the acting Chief Quaesitor, is nominally a member of this covenant, but has been spending her time in Arelat, at the Coenobium.

GARUS OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 135 (Apparent age: 80)
Personality Traits: Political +3, Steadfast +2, Mentoring +1

Garus has always been very interested in the politics of the region, and his time as Primus of House Flambeau has brought about a great change in its focus and direction. Born and apprenticed in England, he came to Gascony in 1155, immediately after Henry's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine. When Vancasium, the previous Primus, disappeared in the latter years of the twelfth century, Garus won the primacy due largely to the support of the milites, the Flambeau Hoplites who continued to live at Castra Solis after each of the wars. Under Garus's influence, they began to think of themselves more as knights in service to their liege.

MARCUS MINOR OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 119 (Apparent age: 60)
Personality Traits: Pious +3, Charismatic +3, Crafty +2

The next most senior magus is Marcus Minor of Flambeau (so named because at one time there was an elder Marcus living here, who went by Marcus Major). Charismatic and pious, he is the primary Mystagogue of the Legion of Mithras cult at Castra Solis. Insiders know that Marcus and his followers are the true leaders of the covenant. Garus is not even part of the inner circle of the Legion; he has devoted too much of his life to the Provençal political landscape and supporting his milites. Marcus has continued to support the Legion's traditional Christian focus, and because of his influence the warrior magi at Castra Solis have come to feel something like members of a holy order of knights.

TROYA OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 53 (Apparent age: 40)
Personality Traits: Bold +3, Considerate of horses +3, Proud +2, Curious +1

Another established magus of note is Troya of Flambeau, who has devoted her life at Castra Solis to the study of magical

mounts, particularly horses. She keeps a stable of equine beasts specially bred and trained to tolerate Gifted riders, using techniques she has discussed with other like-minded magi in Hibernia via correspondence. The horses learn maneuvers particularly useful for magi in battle, such as charges and leaps, allowing the rider to cast Touch range spells on a target or grab hair to be used as an Arcane Connection and then retreat quickly. Many of her spells transform both horse and rider into another shape simultaneously. Tradition holds that most of her animals descend from the same stock as Bayard, the magical horse given to Renaud de Montebaun by his cousin Maugris the enchanter, four hundred years before.

MARIE OF MERINITA

Age: 113 (45)
Personality Traits: Unaging +3, Political +3, Artistic +2

Marie of Merinita, Filia Dama, lives in Poitiers in a manor house officially considered part of Castra Solis, even though it is within the lands typically considered part of the Normandy Tribunal. She attends Tribunal in Provence, and is actively seeking to extend the border of the Provençal Tribunal by spreading the culture and language of southern France throughout Aquitaine.

Dama trained Marie as her single apprentice about a hundred years ago. In 1220, she is quite a famous figure within House Merinita. Marie of Merinita, who sometimes calls herself Marie of France, is a headstrong and independent maga who has managed to avoid being fully coopted by her mater, mostly because she became enamored of Eleanor of Aquitaine. She idolized the former queen, seeing herself as a twin sister or Hermetic analogue, despite the possibility the queen never even knew who she was. Marie claims to have accompanied Eleanor on the Second Crusade, participating in her bare-breasted Amazonian procession, serving as her magical bodyguard and protecting the queen with her Parma Magica. She also claims she accompanied the young queen on the journey back to Aquitaine after the annulment of her marriage to Louis. She believes she traveled to England once Eleanor married King Henry and attended her court, and even wrote many romances and fables to entertain the nobles while there.

However, it is possible none of this actually happened; Marie may have followed a faerie queen in Arcadia who resembled Eleanor and harvests vitality from the many stories about her. When Eleanor died, Marie returned to Poitou and now grieves her loss. She turned to Hermetic politics and dedicated herself to bringing the rest of Aquitaine into the Provençal Tribunal. Marie has Faerie Blood and achieved the second level of initiation of the Maters and Matrones before departing. This enables her to initiate others and perform ceremonies, though she rarely does. She has trained several apprentices, who have since gone abroad into Mythic Europe. Dama wants her to become a matron, and strives to convince her to take the next step, but Marie remains mostly a disappointment to Dama. For Marie, Dama was her harsh instructor and taskmistress, and the relationship is cold. She has a greater respect for Eleanor than she ever will for Dama.

BEATRICE OF GUERNICUS, (PRESUMED) CHIEF QUAESITOR

A troubled woman, Beatrice is genuinely determined to do right, but with the crusade and all the deep hostility in the Tribunal, it is not clear any more what that is. Her pater was the previous Chief Quaesitor, Tibaut, and it is assumed that she will take over for him. She is young for Chief Quaesitor, since her predecessor died of old age just last year (as did his predecessor five years before, though he was even older than her pater), and would probably like to pass her authority to another member of her House if a better candidate appears. She is registered as part of the covenant of Castra Solis, but she has taken to spending all her time in the Arelat of late, possibly because of a falling out with the Primus of House Flambeau or the leaders of one of the Hermetic organizations based there.

The Covenant

Since the Schism War, the covenant has been made to resemble a wealthy manor house or Roman villa, perched in the lime-

stone hills located about halfway between Bordeaux and La Reole along the River Garonne. Many vineyards and fields surround the site, but these do not produce wine or wheat, and instead serve as tourney fields for the many events House Flambeau sponsors. The Magic aura surrounding the covenant only has a strength of 3. Castra Solis does not have a Mercere Portal, as the Primus never felt it needed one. It has a fine library with a focus on military subjects, and many enchanted devices available to defend the House when necessary. (For more information about the library or some of these devices, see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 13–14.)

At the base of the cliffs below the covenant is a riverside network of caves, protected by its Aegis and also warded against intruders. These oyster-encrusted arches lead upwards a short way to a large underground temple, Kaeso's mithraeum. Or rather, it is the cave most Flambeau believe to be his ancient Roman temple to Mithras. In fact, the true temple actually sits directly beneath the city of Bordeaux (see Bordeaux, earlier in this chapter). This replica was built when Bordeaux fell into enemy hands, and the other remained secret to ensure its power endured undiminished.

Influence of the Christian milites and other pious magi living at Castra Solis over the years has given the Mithraic temple beneath the covenant a Divine aura of 4. Essentially a church, the services conducted here for the younger initiates of the Legion are very similar to the sacraments, including baptism, communion, and last rites. Hidden stairs lead from the covenant's library to the chambers behind the temple. A series of tombs, where the bodies of fallen milites rest honorably in the holy ground, also occupies the caves. Former Flambeau Primus Entisimon is buried there, though Kaeso is not.

The Serpent's Venom

As described earlier, the Praeco Dama seems to be a skilled elder maga who has accomplished many of her goals. However, in truth, she placed herself in the thrall of her familiar, Maju, a powerful supernatural being

who twisted her ambition and sympathies to its service. The faerie Maju bound her spirit to itself as surely as it was bound to her and through that connection it subtly corrupted all of her accomplishments.

Maju was originally worshipped as Teutates, and the Gauls sacrificed captives to the faerie by drowning them at the muddy rock in the lake at Mimizan, creating a Faerie aura of 3 there. An inscription still exists, buried in the muck. Some tossed silver rings into the waters as votive offerings and Maju granted them gifts of wisdom and prowess. After the Romans left the area, the highly cognizant Maju shifted its mask, taking the aspect of Sugaar and seeking out Basques to the south to satisfy its desires for Vitality and its unwillingness to surrender mortal worship. When Christianity became more widespread, and pilgrims began to cross the Gascony wilderness en route for Compostella, Maju returned to its old territory to play a part in Oriande Le Fee's tortuous games and faerie court politics. Dama first saw Maju there, and later sought it out as a familiar.

Maju's history and counsel led Dama first into sin and blasphemy and then skirted the edge of infernalism as it encouraged her to incorporate the chthonic Sorginak into the foundation of her cult, dressing it in the subversion of the Black Madonna. Dama drove Marie away when she prioritized the cult over her filia and refused to incorporate the aspects Marie claimed Eleanor taught her on Crusade. Dama made Mimizan a frightening and ill-favored place on Maju's advice, claiming the enchantment serves to protect the covenant grounds from Crusaders; only a small game trail from the southwest remains unaffected. Redcaps know to approach using this trail. The Maters and Matrones have become (at least at the upper echelon) a coven of tainted witches, subverting the Christian faith, and teetering dangerously close to demonic corruption.

And yet, Dama truly is a friend to all women; it is her weakness. She gives freely and generously to all members of her cult, and she has never murdered a woman. The fact the acting (and likely new) Chief Quaesitor is a woman worries her slightly. However, she doesn't think Beatrice will pursue the investigations of her pater, and believes she has convinced the young Guernicus to join the cult, with the hopes her disappointed ideals will make the Maters and Matrones more ap-

The Guide

Characteristics: Int +3, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +1, Str -2 (1 aging point), Sta +1 (1 lost to Decrepitude), Dex -2, Qik -1 (1 lost to Decrepitude)

Size: 0

Age: 193 (60; Longevity Ritual Modifier total: 23; +15 Ritual, +5 Baetylus, +3 Living Conditions; -19 Age Penalty)

Decrepitude: 1 (8)

Warping Score: 8 (9)

Confidence Score: 1 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Charm Magic**, Cthonic Magic, Feminine Ceremony (major), Feminine Gift#, Major Magical Focus (controlling human beings)**, Story Magic**, Sympathetic Magic**, Affinity with Rego, Arcane Lore, Dark Magic#, Faerie Magic*, Skilled Parens, Venus' Blessing#, Driven (establish a legacy)**, Evil Destiny, Favors (Oriande le Fee)**, Proud, Twilight Prone; Fear (spiders)**; Oath (protect women)**, Weakness (women in need)

Twilight Virtue

* House Virtue

** Mystery Initiations and Ordeals

Personality Traits: Driven +4, Proud +3, Optimistic +2

Reputations: Ambitious 3, Ancient 3, Pagan 2, Reclusive 2, Secretive 2, Possible Diedne Maga or Sympathizer 1 (Order of Hermes)

Combat:

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +2, Damage -2

Dagger: Init +0, Attack +2, Defense +2,

Damage +1

Soak: +5

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Provence 4 (vis sites), Area Lore: Pyrenees 3 (vis sites), Artes Liberales 3 (astronomy), Athletics 1 (hiking), Awareness 3 (observation), Bargain 3 (faeries), Brawl 2 (dodge), Carouse 1 (recovery), Charm 4 (women), Code of Hermes 4 (Tribunal procedure), Concentration 6 (comprehending Twilight), Craft: Weaving 2 (wool), Cthonic Magic 5 (using Infernal vis), Dead Language: Latin 5 (Hermetic terms), Divine Lore 1 (female beings), Etiquette 3 (faeries), Faerie Lore 4 (female beings), Faerie Magic 7 (experimentation), Feminine Ceremony 4 (group casting), Finesse 5 (Rego), Folk Ken 3 (women), Guile 3 (women), Infernal Lore 3 (female beings), Intrigue 4 (long-term plans), Leadership 4 (inspiration), Living Language: Basque 4 (conversation), Living Language: Danish 5 (descriptions), Living Language: French 4 (conversation), Living Language: Greek 4 (conversation), Living Language: Occitan 4 (conversation), Magic Lore 3 (female beings), Magic Theory 10 (experimentation), Organization Lore: Folk

Witches 3 (Basque Covens), Organization Lore: Maters and Matrones Cult Lore 8 (initiations), Organization Lore: Merinita Cult 5 (initiations), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 4 (Tribunal members), Parma Magica 7 (Mentem), Penetration 3 (Vim), Philosophiae 2 (ceremonial magic), Stealth 1 (remaining hidden), Survival 1 (Gascony), Swim 1 (rivers), Teaching 3 (single student)

Arts: Cr 21, In 14, Mu 14, Pe 16, Re 20, An 13, Aq 15, Au 13, Co 20, He 15, Ig 12, Im 13, Me 17, Te 11, Vi 17

Twilight Scars: As the result of three comprehended Twilight experiences prior to her long disappearance, she gained Feminine Gift, Venus's Blessing, and Dark Magic. Her Twilight experience of 19 years destroyed most of her personal memories, leaving her with a raw patchwork of events prior to 1001 and almost no distinct details. Two later Twilight experiences, one for six years and one for nine years, left her resembling the popular depiction of the Virgin Mary, glowing with a faint, unnatural aura and with auburn hair and ruddy skin.

Vis: She carries 15 pawns of Faerie Vim vis in three gold rings. She can easily acquire 25 more within a week through her contacts in her mystery cult.

Equipment: Courtier's finery, dagger, gold rings (4), stone pendant, good boots, walking stick (club)

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

pealing. The fact Dama created the Longevity Ritual for Alazais' mundane companion has served her well, securing the Praeco the political support necessary to sidetrack official investigations thus far.

While Dama constantly meddles with the Basque Sorginak, she hasn't taken any more apprentices, as Maju thinks it is too risky. However, she is always available to initiate new cultists, as the mysterious aspects of being a Mystagogue suit her perfectly. She is very good at it, and while she does it without revealing her identity, Initiates strongly suspect who she is. She is also openly pagan, not Christian, which makes the magi of Castra Solis less sure of her, and gives the magi of Aedes Mercurii hope she is at least somewhat impartial.

Fruit and Seeds

Player characters could become involved in Maju's plotting through investigating Dama's past actions, or be caught up in her future plans.

SINS OF THE PAST

Discovering what happened to the last two Chief Quaesitors lies at the heart of a saga focused on Dama and her cult. For storyguides who wish to make the Praeco and her ambitious machinations a serious storyline, it's important to know the details of

this tangled web. By 1210, Dama's cult had come to the attention of the Chief Quaesitor, Senex; whether this was out of fear of a potential conflict between the Black Madonna Cult (and by extension, the Order) and the Church at a time when the Albigensian Crusade still burned Cathars, or from a personal desire to become the Praeco himself, is unclear. Senex simply disappeared. He supposedly went into a village to investigate something, and never returned. In truth, he waited until Dama departed for akelarre with the Sorginak and infiltrated Mimizan. However, Dama returned unexpectedly, discovering him within her sanctum— either searching for details regarding the cult, or planting damning evidence. The hampering power of

The Guide, cont'd

Spells Known:

Mighty Torrent of Water (CrAq 20/ +36)
Circling Winds of Protection (CrAu 20/ +34)
Incantation of Lightning (CrAu 35/ +34)
True Sight of the Air (InAu 15/ +27)
Purification of the Festering Wounds (CrCo 20/ +41)
Restoration of the Defiled Body (CrCo 25/ +41)
Cheating the Reaper (CrCo 30/ +41)
Curse of the Unruly Tongue (ReCo 5/ +60)
Lifting the Dangling Puppet (ReCo 15/ +60)
Seven-League Stride (ReCo 30/ +60)
Leap of Homecoming (ReCo 35/ +60)
Trap of Entwining Vines (CrHe 15/ +36)
Repel the Wooden Shafts (ReHe 10/ +35)
Pilum of Fire (CrIg 20/ +33)
Ward Against Heat and Flames (ReIg 25/ +32)
Veil of Invisibility (PelM 20/ +29)
Image from the Wizard Torn (ReIm 30/ +33)
Wizard's Sidestep (ReIm 10/ +33)
Weight of a Thousand Hells (CrMe 25/ +38)
Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie (InMe 20/ +31)
Coerce the Spirits of the Night (ReMe 25/ +37)
Veil of Haunting Terror (ReMe 35/ +54)
Wall of Protecting Stone (CrTe 25/ +32)
Earth Split Asunder (ReTe 30/ +31)
Piercing the Faerie Veil (InVi 20/ +31)
Enigma's Caress (CrVi 20/ +38): As "Enigma's Gift," (ArM5, page 157) but inflicts two Warping points instead of one.
Sight of Active Magics (InVi 40/ +31)
Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 10/ +33)
Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 15/ +33, mastered with Multicasting)
Faerie Scourged from Memory (PeVi 15/ +33, mastered with Multicasting): As "Demon's Eternal Oblivion," but affects Faerie-

aligned creatures.

Revoke the Protection of Bonisagus (PeVi 20/ +33, mastered with Magic Resistance)
Gather the Essence of the Beast (ReVi 15/ +37)
Circular Ward Against Faeries (ReVi 20/ +37)
Aegis of the Hearth (ReVi 35/ +37, mastered with Magic Resistance)
Familiar Chains of the Faerie Slave (ReVi 45/ +37)

New Spells:

Revoke the Protection of Bonisagus, **PeVi 20**;
R: Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Individual:
 Destroys the Parma Magica of the target if 30 + stress die exceeds the targets Ability score x5,. Must Penetrate to take effect. (Base 10 (Dispel effects of a specific type, level +4 Magnitudes), +2 Voice)

Veil of Haunting Terror, **ReMe 35**; **R:** Road, **D:** Moon, **T:** Group: Shifts the targets' mental state to an unnatural desire for fearful flight from the road. The target simply wants to run away in terror. As a cosmetic effect, each affected person sees their own worst fear manifesting along the road. The fear fades naturally. (Base 4, +2 Road, +3 Moon, +2 Group) At Mimizan, Dama walks a game trail surrounding the grounds and leading out to the main thoroughfare to define this road.

Appearance: An older, attractive Basque woman who wears rich, contemporary garb that would not be out of place in a royal court. She generally keeps her hair pulled back in a

bun and under a traditional Basque shawl. Her face is lightly lined and her healthy skin is complemented by her silver hair still showing a tinge of the auburn locks she had in her youth. She wears a finely wrought dagger, a hen's-egg-sized green-black stone on a gold chain, and several gold rings, and leans on a walking stick. Her Twilight scars of a faint, amber nimbus and ruddy complexion are more apparent in the evening, when she almost seems transparent and ghostlike.

Casting Sigil: The faint scent of lilies is present when Dama casts spells.

Voting Sigil: Dama has an ivory carving of a dragon's head gilded in red gold which she uses as her voting sigil. It was a gift from her father, the only thing she possesses from before her apprenticeship.

Design Notes: Dama has (45 + 75 + 45 + 240 + 60 + 50 + 5100 =) 5615 experience points. She has spent 2250 in skills, 50 in mystery initiations, 50 in five seasons crafting a talisman she later sacrificed, three Longevity Rituals (30), one season spent developing a Longevity Ritual for Alazais' lover, three seasons gathering vis (30), 150 spent developing Mimizan, 150 spent training her apprentice, and 150 spent crafting Initiations. She has 1960 spent in Arts and 795 in spells.

the Aegis, combined with *Revoke the Protection of Bonisagus* and Maju's viper-form poison, spelled the doom of the Guernicus. Dama stripped him of goods, and Maju shifted form into a drake and consumed the body. Certainly, Senex had forfeited immunity by entering her sanctum uninvited, making the legality of his death with regards to the Code of Hermes unquestionable. However, Dama felt the Maters and Matrones cult could not risk the attention an investigation would bring, and told no one.

When Senex failed to attend the 1214 Tribunal, Tibaut became acting Chief Quaesitor, a position confirmed when Senex remained absent for two years. He investi-

gated *Castra Solis* and learned Senex told no one his destination before he last departed. Tibaut entered Senex's sanctum and discovered the first threads of the cult investigation in laboratory notes. After another season of research, he knew a cult was the focus of his predecessor's last investigation, but he didn't know which one, or why. He became convinced that Senex was dead, and he shared this suspicion with Beatrice, his filia. In 1217 he began investigating cults within the Tribunal, though he was hampered by the events of the Albigensian Crusade. Tibaut considered the members of the Hermetic mystery cults, the Cathars, possibly the *Sorginak*, as suspects. He sent

sealed correspondence to Beatrice via an Iberian Redcap, attempting to leave a secure trail. Ambushed by Crusader camp followers, the Redcap perished from his injuries in the wilderness along the *Via Domitia*, the letter remains in his satchel.

Tibaut continued his investigation, but an offhand comment from Luc of *Ara Maxima Nova* alerted Dama to his intentions. The fellow *Merinita* complained about the *Quaesitor's* pressing questions regarding incidents with any members of the clergy or pilgrims using the *Via Domitia*. Luc and Tibaut fought a *Certamen* over the answers. While Luc lost, he provided the most cursory replies and later told Dama what arts to

The Serpent

Order: Duke of False Gods
Infernal Might: 45 (Vim)
Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +4, Sta +5, Dex +4, Qik +4
Size: -2
Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Charm, Puissant Guile, Overconfident
Personality Traits: Deceptive +6, Proud +6, Clever +3, Persuasive +3, False God Demon +3, Trustworthy -5
Reputation: Duke of Hell 7 (Infernal)
Hierarchy: 7
Combat:
Fist: Init +4, Attack +9, Defense +9, Damage +4
 Or as appropriate for physical form.
Soak: +5
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)
Abilities: Artes Liberales 7 (astronomy), Awareness 5 (identifying magi), Bargain 7 (pacts), Brawl 5 (Dodge), Carouse 5 (appearing drunk), Ceremony 3 (summoning), Charm 5+2 (first encounters), Dominion Lore 5 (angels), Etiquette 5 (magi), Faerie Lore 5 (mannerisms), Faerie Magic 3 (experimentation), Folk Ken 4 (humans), Guile 7+2 (appearing mundane), Magic Theory 4 (learning spells), Music 6 (guitar), Infernal Lore 6 (demons), Intrigue 6 (long-term plans), Philosophiae 5 (ceremonial magic), Teaching 4 (magic), Theology 3 (contradictions)
Powers:
Change Form, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: Can take on the form of a humanoid be-

tween Size -2 and Size +2. He often chooses the form of a troubadour with a guitar or a small, winged sprite.

Shapeshifter, 0 points, Init 0, Animal. Can take on the form of animals (even fantastic creatures, such as a griffon or a drake) between Size -2 and Size +2. He often chooses the form of a dove, a hare, or a snake depending on the circumstances, but he is not limited to those forms.

A Pretty Cloak to Wrap it Within, up to 9 points, Init 0, Imaginem. Maju may create Imaginem effects up to 9th magnitude.

Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim. Cruelty, Greed, Pride.

Coagulation, 5 points, Init -1, Corpus. May take on a physical body in 45 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.

Lend Senses, 1 point, Init 0, Mentem. While in physical contact with another being, the demon can lend that being either its hearing or sight. This lasts indefinitely, but if the eavesdroppers witness a display of religious sentiment, it is immediately terminated.

Shroud the Stench of the Pit, variable points, Init +3, Vim. The demon can conceal the Infernal nature of any other supernatural power or aura, making it appear to be Magical or Faerie instead. It may also be used to remove all stench of the supernatural, making things appear wholly mundane. This power can shield a creature or effect from the Sense Holiness/Unholiness ability. This Power costs Might Points equal to the original cost of the Power being concealed, or Might

avoid when challenging Tibaut to Certamen. Realizing the route Tibaut likely traveled, she gathered Maju and prepared an ambush as the Guernicus neared the road to Foix. The attack occurred within an abandoned house; feigning an emergency, she lured him inside where Maju waited in a viper form. The Praeco shattered Tibaut's Parma Magica with *Revoke the Protection of Bonisagus*, but Maju's poison failed to quickly incapacitate the Quaesitor. He burst from the house and into the road before collapsing. The pair attempted to re-

trieve him, but fate intervened. A large group of Crusader knights witnessed the man's collapse and rode to aid him.

Divinely Blessed and resistant to Dama's magics, they carried the dying Tibaut to the nearby Abbey of Saint Hilaire, thinking him to be a monk. The monks said that Tibaut was not one of theirs, but took him in anyway. In their care, he succumbed to the poison. As they thought about events afterwards, the Crusaders formed the belief that Tibaut had been a Cathar, and returned to raid the abbey

The Serpent, cont'd

Points equal to the magnitude of the Infernal effect if it does not cost Might Points. This Power lasts for as long as the Power it is masking. This means Maju normally has 42 Might Points to spend, as it regularly cloaks the Infernal aura at Mimizan to conceal its past.

Wealth of Nations, 3 points, Init 0, Terram.

The demon can summon riches; each use of this Power can create wealth equivalent to up to 45 pounds of gold. This wealth can be of any form—gold, gems, rich tapestries, ivory, etc—but it always has intrinsic value, rather than being valuable because of its utility (a roomful of grain, for example). This wealth is not created, it is instead summoned from somewhere else, chosen by the demon usually for the greatest corrupting effect. This might be a royal treasury on the other side of Europe or the purse of the man standing nearby.

His Master's Voice, variable points, Init +1, Vim. The demon can summon other demons or corrupt beasts to its current location. This costs one Might Point for every point of Infernal Might of the being summoned, so is used sparingly. The demon has no control over the demon he has summoned.

The Serpent's Oracle, 2 points, Init -3, Vim.

The demon can duplicate the effect of any non-ritual Intellego spell for the cost of 2 Might Points. It may also gain a morsel of future knowledge, understanding the most immediate consequences of any one future action.

Weakness: Protected Group (Those who have given alms that day)

Vis: There are 9 pawns of Vim vis in the demon's eyes.

Appearance: As Dama's familiar, Maju often appears as a small, winged faerie sprite, though he is also capable of shifting forms between a hare, a snake, or a dove, as most appropriate to the situation. In private, he prefers the shape of the snake as it allows him to wrap around Dama and tantalizingly threaten her with strangulation.

Maju has played a very long game with Dama. It started as part of the pagan religion of the Gauls, then subverted the pagan religion of the Basques in the region (Maju often takes the form of a snake and has Dama call it Sugaar when dealing with Basques, and many of the folk witches who serve Dama believe they are the god and goddess of their faith). Eventually, the sins the creature perpetuates will taint it so deeply that it will transform into an infernal being. Until then, Maju is trying to corrupt both Christianity and the Order of Hermes. It does this by setting up conflict between men and women, making women think they have a special, purer version of their faith than the men's. Through Dama's cult the creature has taken aim at the Virgin Mary. To Maju, the Black Madonna represents a dark feminine goddess in perfect opposition to the masculine God of the Dominion, who is different and more exalted. It seeks to make women desire glory beyond their place in the Christian hierarchy, to want to teach and preach, and to worship Mary (or multiple Marys) instead of Christ. To do this, it teaches great power to those who serve it. Like the serpent of Genesis, it corrupts mankind through Eve with forbidden fruit.

in retribution for the monks' activities. The monks of St. Hilaire have occasional contact with some of the Tribunal's Redcaps, trading various goods in exchange for bookmaking materials or blank quires. Through this route, the news of the death eventually traveled back to Castra Solis, which attempted to make arrangements to recover the man's effects. They met with no success as his body already lay buried in the Abbey's cemetery and the monks remained in a state of disarray after the Crusaders' attack. Tibaut's belong-

ings sit locked in a chest in the abbot's office, as the Albigenian Crusade remains particularly active in the region. When he failed to meet Beatrice at their agreed upon time, she approached Dama with her suspicions regarding Tibaut's possible demise. Maintaining her composure, the Praeco suggested Beatrice fulfill his office until the matter could be discussed at Tribunal in 1221. Honored by this suggestion, Beatrice accepted the post and Dama informed the Redcaps.

SCHEMES OF THE PRESENT

This leaves Beatrice as the temporary Chief Quaesitor until her confirmation at the next Tribunal, and Dama extremely paranoid about her cult's activities. She doesn't know who else is aware of the investigations, but she secured the tacit political support of Alazais and the Coenobium when she secretly provided a Longevity Ritual to the Chief Redcap's close mundane companion. Dama believes the covenant's clout will easily derail any motion she needs buried at least once, and she stores this influence against need. She does not know if Tibaut managed to confide in the knights or the monks of the abbey before dying. She wants to grow her cult, and cement its gains, but worries about whom to initiate. Maju pushes her to bring more Sorginak into the fold, looking to corrupt their beliefs in Mari and Sugaar while syncretizing them with the followers of the Black Madonna in small coastal villages, and subverting the male domination of the Church. The faerie points out her failing Longevity Ritual; these last few years took their toll and that she no longer looks as young as she once did. It needles her about her estranged relationship with her filia, Marie, and about the small, isolated nature of Mimizan in the shadow of Oriande Le Fee's Rosefleur. "Time is running out," it hisses and Dama may leave no legacy behind if she cannot increase cult membership to a self-sustaining level. Aggressive recruitment may alert the Church to her activities, involve a player character folk witch in the conspiracy, or drive the Sorginak to seek out political allies or Trianoma magi willing to thwart or distract the Praeco.

There are many ways to bring player characters into the story. Protendus of Tremere's investigations may uncover Dama's machinations where he thought to find Tytalan intrigue, causing him to enlist Tremere characters to aid him in exchange for their sigil. The characters may discover the remains of the dead Redcap while traveling, allowing Beatrice to finally receive her pater's correspondence, indicating his suspicions, but not before Dama invites her to join—thereby making her complicit. Dama may inadvertently reveal her connection to Senex's death by attempting to engage a newly arrived Verditius character to render

The Stone

No ordinary stone, the *baetylus* contains a shard of the very beginning of Creation, possibly a fragment of Sol Invictus, maybe the essence of Cronus, and because of this primeval nature, it has several miraculous properties. Firstly, it infuses the bearer with life — as long as she is touching it, Dama gains a +5 to any aging roll, and does not suffer aging crises. Secondly, it constantly purifies Dama and everything she touches or consumes, much as if she possessed the Greater Purifying Touch Virtue, so she suffers no ill effects from poison. Thirdly, it gives Dama Visions (like the Supernatural Flaw), usually associated with her own impending danger or danger to the stone. For Dama, this has unfortunately only heightened her sense of paranoia.

The path of the fabled stone to Dama's possession is very murky. While Maju may know some details, and Oriande even more, differing tales recount the stone's history. According to the one Dama believes, the stone plummeted through the sky and fell into the lake of Toulouse,

where it sank to the bottom and glowed with a magical shimmer sometimes visible on moonless nights, inspiring stories of a golden treasure hidden below the waters. Later, local pagan wizards of antiquity, many of whom eventually became Hermetic magi of House Diedne, brought it to the surface. One of their number — perhaps the famous Maugris, wizard-advisor to Charlemagne, unnaturally long-lived due to the stone's effects — kept the stone when the Schism War broke out, and hid in Oriande's court. Sworn to serve the faerie queen as long as he lived, he grew weary of life in hiding and came to desire more than anything to pass on and join his brothers and sisters in the next life. But he also knew Oriande would gain the stone if he ever let it out of his control, and he did not believe Oriande deserved such power — in fact, he had visions she would surely become evil and corrupt if it passed into her inhuman hands. Entrusting the stone to Dama allowed him to escape, in more ways than one.

hedge tradition members or through other means, such as attempting to lure them into the Lou Carcohl's lair, or sending them into the heart of the Crusader army to question the knights who rescued Tibaut while Sorginak use their spirit walking powers to alert the camp followers.

Left to her own devices, Dama may just create an enduring but ultimately subdued Black Madonna movement which quietly spreads through France, to the Balkans, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and even Malta, but ultimately forgets its founder in devotion to the Virgin Mary and leaves her control as she strives to gain more time in this life. While the *Baetylus* protects her from Aging Crises (see the nearby insert), she visibly ages five years over the next ten years, making her more desperate. Knowing she must renew her Longevity Ritual before 1232 if she is to have any hope of success, she might largely ignore her Praeco duties and strive to increase her Magic Theory to 11 (an increase of 1), and her Faerie Magic to 10 (an increase of 3). Increases in her Creo and Corpus Arts are absolutely required. She might decide to sacrifice Maju to power her own Longevity Ritual, requiring its Faerie vis in order to ensure sufficient supply, and possesses the spells to do so. Her expansive knowledge of mystery initiations may cause her to revisit her Merinita roots, exchanging the secrets of Story Magic to player characters for gifts of Faerie vis. News from the Theban Tribunal might drive her to gain the Blood of Medusa to augment her ritual (*The Sundered Eagle*, page 62).

All of this rests precariously on the tipping point of the role the storyguide wishes Dama to play in the saga—she may be the tragic maga who left a long series of nearly great but merely adequate accomplishments in her wake, whose only real legacy lies in her amazing long life, or she may become the exemplar of a maga consumed by ambition, who disregarded the costs of her endeavors and ultimately left only a tarnished name and dire warning to those who failed to consider the consequences of their actions. And if, by chance, she manages to defeat the player characters, Maju transforms into a demon intent on carrying her soul to Hell, the Sorginak are sundered and retreat from Hermetic culture, and the Provençal Tribunal suffers another disheartening blow to the culture already ravaged by the Crusaders marching across the landscape.

the vis from several lesser enchanted items, or by trying to sell those items abroad for vis to power the new Longevity Ritual she will need within the next 12 years. Rumors at Beatrice's confirmation during the 1221 Tribunal suggest, with Tibaut's death, that Senex did not simply disappear, but suffered from foul play. A player character Quaesitor may have been apprenticed to Senex, or mentored by either Quaesitor, and come to Provençal to discover the truth behind their mentor's death from the lab notes in Tibaut's sanctum. The inner circle of Dama's cult meets within the confines of the Médoc, the realm of a capricious faerie queen; Oriande Le Fee may offer hints and leads to characters willing to play her games. Merinita or Bonisagus characters who seek out Dama as a mystagogue might be subjected to curious interrogations and unrelated tests as she satisfies her paranoia about their intentions—actions which may unintentionally drive them to begin their own investigations. All the while, Maju presses Dama, whispers intrigue and power to the other Sorginak of the cult, encouraging their corruption while losing bits of its faerie nature until it is dis-

covered at the core of the plot—at which time it becomes the demon listed in its statistics section. (If statistics for Maju are required prior to this point, use the presented statistics but drop the obviously Infernal powers, such as Obsession, Coagulation, Shroud the Stench of the Pit, Wealth of Nations, or His Master's Voice.)

If the characters decide to seek out and challenge Dama's conspiracy, many options exist. Dama can be brought to salvation by showing her the rotten, befouling nature of her familiar. She might provide the connections allowing the characters to defeat Maju. Deep down, Dama is obsessed with leaving her legacy, and currently convinced that her every attempt has failed, or is failing. Despite her experience, her power, and her position in the Tribunal, she feels her goals are unattained. This belief must be reversed if there is any hope of her redemption. If characters bungle and reveal their investigations, crippling Dama's ambitions, Maju murders Dama and seizes control of the cult, or even convinces her to turn the cult against the player characters—possibly engaging them in a shadowy and unannounced magical war with the cult's

Chapter Six

The Pyrenees and the Hispanic March

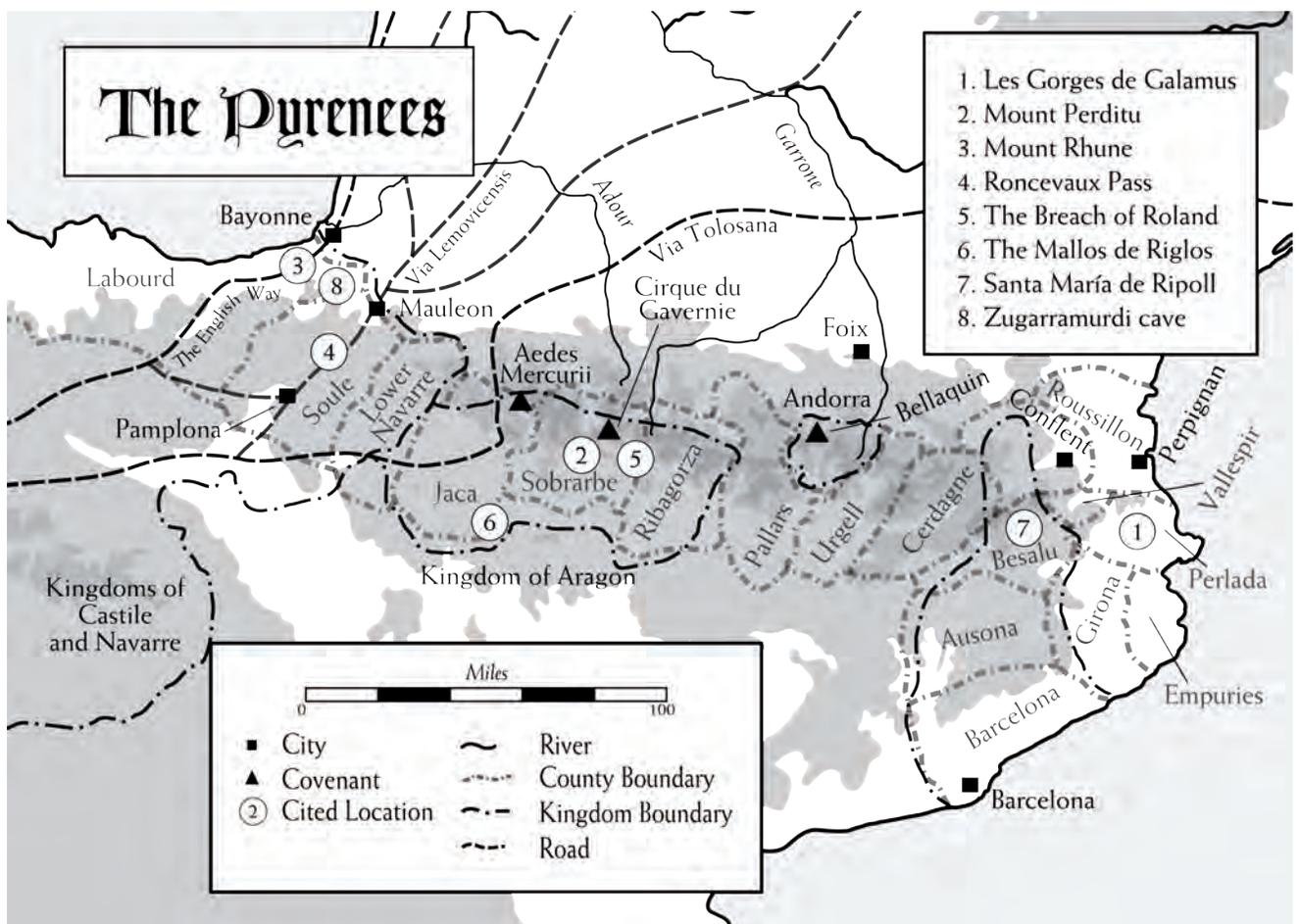
While the Hispanic March might be considered part of Iberia, portions of the kingdom of Castile and Navarre, as well as the kingdom of Aragon and the county of Barcelona stretch up into the Pyrenees to brush up against Provence. Lonely metal crosses planted on mountainsides and places where the spring melt flows north or south demarcate the border.

Much like the patchwork of Narbonnais, these domains and their peoples are intimately tied not only to

each other, but also their immediate neighbors with relationships stretching back generations. Noble ladies of the region married the king of England and the counts of Burgundy and Toulouse, while King Pedro II of Aragon wedded Marie of Montpellier. The rulers of these lands participated in the Reconquista as much as the Albigensian Crusade, and cared deeply about both outcomes.

Domains of the Hispanic March

The Marca Hispanica consists of two primary regions, both divided into two portions. In the west, the kingdoms of Castile and Navarre hold the border. In the central foothills and the east, the crown of Aragon rules over the kingdom of Aragon and the county of Barcelona. Nestled within the bo-



som of the Pyrenees lies the tiny realm of Andorra, the last true marcher county established by Charlemagne. These are busy, complicated realms, and this material only touches upon the portions which share the border of the Pyrenees with Provence. It is intended to provide additional context for mundane and political interactions and should not be considered a complete resource.

Kingdoms of Castile and Navarre

Ferdinand III, the son of the current king of Leon, rules the kingdom of Castile and claims suzerainty over Sancho VII, king of Navarre, through an elaborate chain of events. Ferdi-

nand inherited Castile from his mother in 1217. She surrendered it to him after the death of her younger brother, Henry I of Castile. Henry was thirteen years old and died after being struck by a tile falling from a rooftop. Henry's father was Alphonso VIII, a great contributor to the Reconquista and founder of the Order of the Knights of St. James of the Sword. Dissatisfied with Sancho VI's oath of fealty to his father, Alphonso VIII united much of Castile and Navarre by force, seizing his cousin's provinces of Álava, Guipúzcoa, and Biscay while Sancho VII campaigned in Africa, attempting to secure the support of the Almohads against Castile. Afterwards, Navarre reaffirmed its vassalage to Castile and pledged alliance to Ferdinand III of Castile, Sancho of Barcelona and regent of Aragon and Alphonso II of Portugal against the remaining Almohads in Iberia.

Located on the right bank of the Arga river, Pamplona enjoys a rich income provided by the influx of pilgrims traveling through its lands on the Way of St. James. The routes from the Tunnel Way and Roncevaux Pass continue through the lands of Pamplona. People take pride in facilitating the journey of the devout to Compostella. Heavily fortified after hundreds of years of conflict, Pamplona has a reputation as "a bit of a fortress," a city with high walls where people speak slowly and keep to their own business. A large number of ethnic Basques and Occitan immigrants make their home in Pamplona and the Provençal style of wandering *trobairitz* is quite popular. Despite its status as the capital of Navarre, most local authority comes from the bishop, the king's brother Ramiro, as Sancho VII retired to the monastery of Tudela after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. Ramiro's sister, the Regent Blanca of Navarre, normally focuses her attention on military affairs to the south.

Tangled Ties

Sancho VII of Navarre was brother-in-law of Richard the Lionheart, who married his sister, Berengaria, the only queen of England never to set foot in England. He considered Richard I a close ally and maintained good terms with John, the following king of England. His parents were Sancho VI of Navarre and Sancha of Castile, sister of Sancho III of Castile.

Alphonso VIII of Castile, Sancho VII of Navarre's regional contemporary and rival, married the daughter of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, El-

eanor of England—Richard I and John's sister. Eleanor died of grief 28 days after Alphonso, in 1214. Alphonso's parents were Sancho III of Castile and Blanca of Navarre, sister of Sancho VI of Navarre, and Sancho VII's aunt.

This made Sancho VII and Aphonso VIII cousins by blood, brothers-in-law by marriage, and alternately foes and allies on the battlefield—fully displaying the kind of complicated political-familial relationships common to the region in this era.

COUNTY OF LABOURD

From the shores of the Bay of Biscay to the peak of Mount Rhune at the eastern edge of Lower Navarre, Labourd is considered the cultural center of the Basque people. Many unGifted folk witches, or *sorginak*, live in the numerous towns and villages and frequently travel to Rhune to hold the witches' sabbat of *akelarre* (see the section on *sorginak* later in this chapter) in or around the stone circles, dolmens, and ancient burial mounds that litter its slopes. The seven-headed, flying, fire-breathing dragon *Lehen Sugea* supposedly sleeps deep within the mountain, which has a Magic aura of 4. At least one coven of *sorginak* operates around the capital of Ustariz and travels to Rhune for their Friday *akelarre* in the form of ravens.

The count of Labourd lost his rights to Bayonne, historically a part of the domain, after participating in the revolt against King Henry II. Richard the Lionheart crushed the count's forces, occupied Bayonne for thirty years, and granted it a charter which King John then reaffirmed. Given Bayonne's strong trade relationships with Cornwall and Aquitaine, there is little chance the count will recover those rights.

Story Seed: A Timeless Monk

Near Pamplona, the Cistercian monastery of San Salvador of Leyre is famous for its former abbot, St. Virila. The abbot sat entranced for 300 years listening to the song of a nightingale in order to better contemplate eternity.

Renowned as early as 920, he awoke unaged and unaware of the passage of time. Was he possibly a forerunner of the pious magi, and do his relics—entombed beneath the monastery—hold any secrets?

Story Seed: The Bitter Lord

Frustrated at what he considers the theft of his ancestral birthright, the count of Labourd entertains the idea of turning to the *sorginak* for revenge. He plans to buy their services, using them

to curse, intimidate, and blackmail the officials of Bayonne into submission. Then, when the situation becomes unbearable, he will offer to intercede on their behalf, in exchange for their fealty.

LOWER NAVARRE

This collection of valleys and hills has changed fealty between Gascony and Navarre many times in the last two hundred years. It currently pledges allegiance to Navarre but has no noble ruler. A sheriff oversees the towns and hamlets, collecting taxes and enforcing the king's law.

The people of Lower Navarre remain very involved in the industry surrounding the Way of St. James, which passes through the fabled Roncevaux Pass after leaving the popular mustering point of Ostabat. The region is also known for its pink sandstone, rare wild ponies known as pottok, and Irouleguy wines—produced by the monks of the Abbey of Roncevaux. Numerous dolmens dotting the countryside suggest that the ancient race of giants known as jentilak once occupied these hills.

VISCOUNTY OF SOULE

Soule shares the Oloron river as its northern border with the county of Béarn in Gascony. Its capital is Mauléon, governed by Ramon Guillem IV, who became the viscount in 1217. Lower Navarre forms its western boundary, and the valleys of Barétous and Salazar form its eastern and southern borders. Its primarily Basque population rarely speaks anything but Euskara and occasionally Occitan. Riddled with sinkholes and caves, the limestone hills of Soule serve as lairs for a few drakes and worms, said to be the progeny of Sugaar, and for countless lamia, who purportedly teach their mystic secrets to the Basque folk witches.

Kingdom of Aragon and the County of Barcelona

The kingdom of Aragon and the county of Barcelona belong to the crown of Aragon and the region is collectively called Catalonia. Once ruled by Pedro II the Catholic, Simon de Montfort's forces killed the king at the Battle of Muret in 1213. His 12 year-old son, James I, currently resides in the political heart of Aragon, the city of Zaragoza. Nobles loyal to him plot to secure his ascension to power with a marriage to Eleanor, daughter of Alphonso VIII of Castile. Planned for

the prince's 13th birthday in 1221, the marriage is intended to strengthen Aragon until James reaches majority in 1223. Sancho of Barcelona, James' uncle and the count of Roussillon and Cerdagne, as well as Sancho's son, Nuno Sanche, lord of Roussillon, Vallespir, Conflent and Cerdagne, act as regents of Aragon. They are further discussed in Chapter 7: Narbonnais.

Obviously, several of these counties lie in Narbonnais and their lords are also lords of Aragon, further demonstrating the entangled relationships between the nobles of the region.

COUNTY OF BESALU

The county of Besalu joined the lands of the county of Barcelona in the early 12th century. Many important monasteries operate here, including the all-female monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses, and the monasteries of Santa María de Ripoll, Bañolas, Camprodón, and Sant Pau de Fenollet. Several castles watch its northern border, including Tautavel, Vingrau, Queribus, and Aguilar. All are fairly remote and guard routes through the Pyrenees; many currently house groups of Cathar refugees.

Santa María de Ripoll is considered the religious heart of Catalonia and hosts the mausoleums for the counts of Barcelona and the counts of Besalu, stretching back to the ninth century. A renowned center for learning with over 400 manuscripts, it controls the abbeys of Martin-du-Canigou and Monserrat—both in nearby Conflent. Santa María de Ripoll's beautifully sculpted portal has seven bands showing God seated in Heaven, telling the stories of Cain and Abel, Jonah, David and Solomon, and Moses. The monastery has a Divine aura of 4.

COUNTY OF CONFLENT

A holding of Nuno Sanche, Charlemagne established Conflent to include the Tét river valley and some surrounding lands. Over time, Conflent broke away from the Franks to become a familial holding, passing into the count of Barcelona's possession in the early 12th century. Many castles stand here, including the formidable structures in Castellano and Turres Betses. Villefranche-

Covenants of the Pyrenees

Current Covenants: Aedes Mercurii, Bellaquin, Miniata Sophia

Ruined, Abandoned, or Lost Covenants: Chapterhouse of Val-Negra near Girona, Mistridge, Outpost of Aedes Mercurii in the city of Saint Jean Pied-de-Port, Val-Negra, Windgraven

de-Conflent, established in the 11th century at the confluence of the Tét and Cady rivers, is the region's administrative center and a heavily fortified town.

Mount Canigou dominates the northern horizon, and the abbeys of Martin-du-Canigou and Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa stand high on its slopes.

COUNTY OF CERDAGNE

Nuno Sanche also rules Cerdagne, or what remains after Raymond Roger I of Foix invaded in 1195. The count attacked while attempting to claim his rights to Andorra from the Bishop of Urgell, whose parishes extend through Cerdagne, Pallars, and Urgell. Foix destroyed a number of churches and attacked several monasteries, rampaging throughout Cerdagne and Urgell until his eventual defeat in 1203. The Albigensian Crusade interrupted a short recovery and further stressed the region, ensuring most of the devastation remains. In the absence of rebuilding, most existing Divine auras here are nothing but slowly fading remnants. With his distributed holdings, the politics of the Aragonese regency, and the Crusade in Provence, the count pays little attention to reconstruction in the aftermath. Fortunately, the Segre river valley, which comprises Cerdagne, is the only regional valley running from east to west. This alignment provides it with ample sunlight and results in bountiful harvests allowing it to weather the recent hardships.

COUNTY OF PALLARS

Nestled deep in the mountains of the Pyrenees, many remote villages in this

quiet county become completely isolated after winter storms close the routes beyond their valleys. Its ruler is Roger I de Pallars, the brother of the count of Comminges. He married the countess in 1217, but she is distant and uninterested in matters of rulership, preferring to study scripture. Roger I is an active participant in the Albigensian Crusade, fighting against the Cathars. He pays little attention to Pallars, and there is nearly no noble oversight of the land.

COUNTIES OF JACA, SOBRARBE AND RIBAGORZA

All three counties are a part of the lands claimed by the Crown of Aragon, and governed by the regency of James I until he reaches majority.

Alternatively known as the county of Aragon, Jaca was once a part of Navarre, until its count shifted his loyalties. Since the early part of the 12th century, Jaca has belonged to a confederation of domains which included Sobrarbe and Ribagorza, eventually forming the nucleus of what grew into the kingdom of Aragon.

Considered a combined territory since the tenth century, when the marriage of the two families created a unified land, Sobrarbe and Ribagorza claim a large Basque population, and a remnant Muslim population. Both live peacefully alongside the Christian majority. A very mountainous region, the highest peaks of the Pyrenees are located in Ribagorza.

COUNTY OF URGELL

The count of Urgell, Ermengol VIII, died in 1208. He successfully defended the region against the incursions of Raymond Roger I, the count of Foix, starting in 1195. The count eventually captured Raymond Roger I in 1203 and turned him over to the bishop, who in turn gave him to Pedro II of Aragon. The king released the count of Foix in anticipation of the coming conflict of the Albigensian Crusade and actually added to Foix's lands to ensure Raymond Roger's loyalty.

Elvira, the count's widow, continues to rule from La Seu d'Urgell since Ermengol's death, but her poor health means she is

not expected to survive beyond the winter of 1220. She is desperately grooming their daughter, Aurembiaix, to succeed her. The countess married Aurembiaix to Álvaro Pérez de Castro, a Castilian noble, in 1212, in an attempt to strengthen Aurembiaix's position.

Andorra

The last survivor of the Pyrenees Marches established by Charlemagne, tiny Andorra consists of five united parishes: Canillo, Encamp, Ordino, La Masana, and Sant Julia de Loria. No lord lives in Andorra; they supposedly possess a charter granting them sovereignty over their lands, a reward from Charlemagne for their military service during his battles against the Moors. The Bishop of Urgell and Raymond Roger, count of Foix, both assert rights to Andorra. However, neither has successfully enforced their privilege, and the Andorrans largely ignore them or play the two against each other. The greatest tribute ever demanded from Andorra in recent memory was a gift of several hams and other samples of regional produce.

Though tiny, Andorra prospers and manages to export goods to both sides of the Pyrenees. Livestock and wool remain the primary industries, but it also produces an exceptional mountain wine. The rivers of Andorra also serve as a minor trade pass between Toulouse and the lands of Catalonia. Despite its light traffic, the pass ensures that Andorra is independent and insulated, but not isolated. The natural beauty attracts many visitors, often wealthy pilgrims who linger before continuing west.

Each of the five Andorran parishes contains a handful of tiny mountain villages. In 1220, the entire population numbers roughly three thousand people. Representatives of these parishes meet annually in the town of Andorra la Vella to discuss issues concerning regional rule and administration. However, native Andorrans possess neither lordship nor vassalage within their lands. Each one, from rich landowner to wage earning servant, considers himself an individual sovereign within Andorra.

Geographic Locations

Many places of both history and magic in the Pyrenees have importance outside of their local area.

Zugarramurdi Cave

A sorginak akelarre site (or folk witch gathering place) since antiquity, the enormous gallery of Zugarramurdi cave opens into a large meadow. A small stream runs through the cave and sorginak from Normandy, Iberia and Provence meet here every three years on the summer solstice, in a great gathering. Strange rituals and initiations take place while sorginak barter for vis and secrets. It has a Magic aura of 4, but vis extracted here is vis Infesta (*Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 18).

Roncevaux Pass

Part of the Way of St. James and the site of the great defeat of Charlemagne's army, Roncevaux pass hosts a church, the Chapel of Puerto de Ibañeta, a hostel for travelers and pilgrims, and a marker indicating where Roland fell in battle. The actual battlefield is in the nearby Valcarlos; the site is often visited by Verditi as part of their mystery rites. (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 121)

King Sancho VII of Navarre donated a portion of his spoils from the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa to the church, including the great emerald that once adorned the turban of the sultan Miramamolín. The church also contains the statue of Our Lady of Roncevaux, a cedar and silver statue supposedly revealed to the priests by a deer. The whole area has a Divine aura of 3, which increases to 4 on the anniversary of the battle.

Mount Perditu

Covered in pine forests and icy glaciers, Mount Perditu is the tallest moun-

tain in the Pyrenees and draws its name from its remote nature: it is "lost" from the rest of civilization. It is part of the same area as the Breach of Roland, and its trio of peaks are said to have been formed by three sisters, transformed by their faith and grief after their village was destroyed by Visigoths. The Ghost of Pyrene sometimes lingers near its base or at the Breach of Roland.

Breach of Roland

The Breach of Roland is a gap 40 paces wide with 100 pace-high cliffs, located in the opening above the circus of Gavarnie. Supposedly cut by Roland in an attempt to destroy his fabled sword Durendal as he bled to death from a terrible wound, the Breach is actually over 100 miles from Roncevaux. Inexplicably, the Breach has an aura of 2 which is randomly Magic or Divine, suggesting something very unusual.

The Mallos de Riglos

Located in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the nearly vertical pillars of the Mallos de Riglos are sedimentary stone, some rising 300 paces into the air.

Roughly six miles to the east, on a limestone bluff, stands the mighty fortress of Castle Loarre. Built in the 11th century, it has been expanded several times, most recently by Pedro II, who built the outer walls and towers. A small village surrounds the castle, also called Loarre. An order of Augustine canons from Montearagón operates within the castle, and has done so since Pedro I granted them the privilege.

Les Gorges de Galamus

Two days south of Perpignan, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, is the Gorges de Galamus with high, stark walls and a narrow passage of the Agly river. Clinging to the canyon walls is the hermitage of St. Anthony, dating back to least the seventh century. A curious place with a Divine aura

Story Seed: Who Watches the Watchtower?

A partially ruined tower sits atop Mount Urkulu, offering an excellent view to the north and south, and of the route through the Roncevaux Pass. Built by the Romans, many claim it is a Mercurian site, and it serves as a watchtower, allowing the sheriff's garrison to protect travelers. Men stationed there quickly depart on Fridays, however, as an active coven of sorginak hold akelarre within its walls—often summoning a wild aker for instruction or service or using their ecstatic magic (see Sorginak, later in this chapter) to answer questions or avenge slights.

Story Seed: Looking for a Lord

A covenant established in one of Pal-lars' many valleys or ruined keeps would have little concern regarding mundane interference both for their remote nature and for the limited governance—at least for a while. This situation remains unchanged until Roger II succeeds as count in 1234, becoming much more involved in regional politics and potentially taking an interest in any pet administrators or pretenders. In the interim, however, the covenant might see some competition for vis sites from the Basque sorginak or Dama's cult.

Story Seed: Contested County

The count of Ager, Urgell's cousin, claims Aurembiaix cannot inherit the county and threatens to take control of the county by force upon the countess' death. If your saga follows history, Guerau IV de Cabrera seizes Urgell in the winter of 1220 and Aurembiaix flees into exile, attempting to find a way to recover her birthright. She might become a Companion within a covenant, or act as a potential patron. In 1228, James I took an interest in her and had her marriage annulled on grounds of consanguinity. She then became James' concubine and he confirmed her rights of inheritance in exchange for the town of Lleida.

Story Seed: A Giant Witch

The locals in Loarre claim a jentilak sorgina (a Basque giant, see the section on Basque Mythology and Magic later in this chapter) resides amongst the columns of the Mallos de Riglos, and once served as the folk witch of a village named Foz de E scalettes. As her gigantic nature became more apparent, the villagers fled. She used magic to pull more rock up from the earth in order to hide and live in seclusion. Magic auras and vis sites are common there.

of 2, it has a pool deep within a cave fed by a spring dedicated to Mary Magdalene. The pool has a Magic aura of 3 and is reputed to have healing powers. An ancient stone set at the hermitage entrance is carved with a magic square reading "SATOR – AREPO – TENET – OPERA – ROTAS" which some claim imperfectly translates as "he who guides the plough sows the seed" and others believe means "to extinguish fire without water."

Cave Systems

Caves riddle the Pyrenees, and any of the numerous large subterranean systems might be potential covenant sites. The caves of Betharram (on the Toulousain side of the Pyrenees) are one possibility. The caves extend nearly three kilometers under the surface while boasting several large galleries and a flowing underground river. Many of

Story Seed & Vis Site: The Cairn of Pyrene

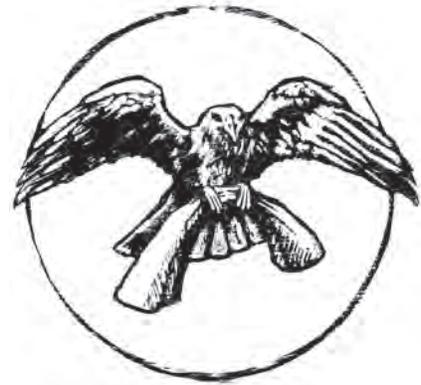
In a drunken indiscretion, Heracles seduced the nymph, Pyrene, while he enjoyed the hospitality of her father's court. He then continued on his task to steal Geryon's cattle. Pyrene bore a serpent as a result of the union and ran into the forest to tell her story to the trees. Drawn by her sobbing, wild animals tore her apart. When he returned, Heracles found her dismembered body. Overwhelmed with grief, he gathered her body and built a cairn of stones, demanding that the surrounding area preserve her name.

The very hillsides responded, piling stones upon stones and thus creating the Pyrenees Mountains. Somewhere, deep in the range, lies the secret tomb of Pyrene.

Several magical animals supposedly lurk in the vicinity and her ghost haunts the region. On the night of her death, the spectre appears before the cairn, weeping until sunrise. Dew collects a shallow depression of the large boulder where the spirit sits, and the liquid contains 4 pawns of Mentem vis. This place has a Magic aura of 4 and links to a larger regio network stretching throughout the mountains.

What does the tortured ghost of Pyrene know of Heracles? What happened to the serpent she bore? Is it a *voivre* (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 101)? Can characters convince Pyrene to reveal and share the regio network created with the Pyrenees' birth?

the tunnels and grottos in the Pyrenees are home to drakes or worms, as well as the occasional wyvern, and so establishing a covenant in one of the mountain cave systems may mean evicting the current occupant.



Pyrene the Spectre

Magic Might: 14 (Mentem)

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

Size: -1

Season: Autumn

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit, Magic Monster, Good Teacher, 2x Great Presence, Homing Instinct (Boulder marking vis site), Inoffensive to Animals, 2x Lesser Power, Mountain Regio Network, Master of Magic Creatures, Voice of the Mountains, Curse of Venus, Magical Air, Baneful Circumstances (day), Proud, Small Frame, Soft-hearted

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Presence, 2x Improved Abilities, 4x Improved Might, Improved Power

Personality Traits: Grieving +3, Reclusive +3, Proud +2

Reputations: Weeping woman of the hills 3 (local)

Combat:

Fist: Init +1, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage -2

Soak: +4

Fatigue Levels: None.

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

Abilities: Animal Ken 4 (pacifying), Area

Lore: Pyrenees 5 (passes), Athletics 2 (sprinting), Awareness 5 (the living), Brawl 2 (dodge), Charm 5 (apologies), Dead Language: Gothic 4 (commands), Dead Language: Latin 4 (commands), Etiquette 4 (nobles), Folk Ken 3 (discerning motivation), Intrigue 2 (spotting conspiracy), Leadership 2 (maintaining a household), Living Language: Euskara 5 (conversation), Living Language: Occitan 4 (commands), Magic Lore 5 (creatures), Stealth 3 (keeping hidden)

Powers:

Invisibility, 0 points, Init -1, Imaginem.

Pyrene becomes invisible when she wishes, but can still be seen by Second Sight. **PeLm 15 R:** Touch, D: Conc, T: Ind. (Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +1 moving image): Lesser Power (25 levels, -2 Might cost)

Donning the Corporeal Veil, 0 points, Init -2, Corpus: Pyrene can assume material form. Lesser Power; Improved Power (-5 Might cost)

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: There are three pawns of Mentem in Pyrene's dress.

Appearance: Pyrene manifests as a ghostly pale, yet breathtakingly beautiful, raven-haired woman with mangled lower legs, bloodied feet and a tear-streaked face. She wears only a ragged linen dress.

Bellaquin

Symbol: A red plumed hawk clutching a scroll, inside a gold circle

Located in the Andorran parish of Ordino, the renewed covenant of Bellaquin is paradoxically isolated yet deeply involved in mundane and Hermetic affairs. A mere generation ago, they enjoyed the peak of Summer from the Chateau d'Penne in Tarn, perched high above the Aveyron river, a day's march north northeast from Toulouse. A legend amongst magi and mundanes, they wielded great influence in the Order and among nobles. Undone by their own decadence and intrigues, a combination of mundane forces — possibly orchestrated by other magi — resulted in the destruction of their original location. However, taking the advice of certain archmagi, Bellaquin had prepared for such a disaster. With hidden emergency reserves and a secured, alternate location, the attack's survivors took what they could, destroyed what they could not, and abandoned the site to their mundane proxies.

Now, twenty years later and located in Andorra, Bellaquin has reached an even greater peak than before, but on a different scale. However, it is greatly transformed and many consider it a different covenant. They

say that the original Bellaquin fell to an early Winter, and this second Bellaquin achieved a quick Spring and early Summer. Bellaquin magi believe their history to be unbroken, with a rough transition from Summer to Autumn. They have not changed their charter, only their location.

History

Established in the waning times of the Schism War, magi originally built Bellaquin in the ruins of an abandoned castle restored with magic. Its Flambeau members intended it as a stronghold during the Schism War, but the conflict ended shortly thereafter and Bellaquin never participated. The Flambeau magi departed and gave Bellaquin to the Jerbiton who have presided over it ever since.

Celebrated throughout Mythic Europe, the original site enjoyed a reputation as one of the most beautiful and magnificent edifices in the Order. Following the departure of the Flambeau magi, Bellaquin became thoroughly enmeshed in mundane affairs. The restored castle attracted peasants to resettle the land, forcing the magi into the role of land management. This unintentional stewardship eventually involved the covenant in aristocratic politics, and led the magi to consider themselves as lords over a private fiefdom. They took on other lands as vassals, granting portions to friends and companions as puppet domains.

Despite becoming an extreme example of mundane involvement, Bellaquin's skillful management allowed Quaesitors to permit them a wide discretion, as they never brought "ruin on my sodales." Jealous neighbors twice charged them of violating their Oaths, but each time the Tribunal found Bellaquin had not brought ruin upon the accusers or the Order, and the covenant endured. Their success at preventing "ruin" allowed them to function within the Code, but barely. The covenant served as a vital link between mundane and Hermetic society; one considered, at the time, essential to the prosperity of the Tribunal.

Entangled in feudal alliances, Bellaquin soon overextended itself, becoming caught between conflicting obligations to warring



allies. Supporting one side preferentially would be a flagrant Code violation. Refusing to support either would undoubtedly draw the nobles' wrath for failing their feudal obligations, serving only to increase the breadth of their potential Code violations. In a failed compromise, they assisted both sides through peaceful means, paying scutage and providing curative elixirs. Supported by senior Church officials seeking to eliminate Bellaquin, the warring nobles concluded that the magi had secretly instigated and fueled their conflict for personal gain. They turned their forces upon Bellaquin, destroying the castle in a surprise assault, abetted by a traitorous companion. The attack killed several magi and the lucky escapees evacuated to Andorra. With the damage limited to Bellaquin, no one pressed charges against the survivors.

Setting and Description

Originally founded in 1016, Bellaquin's current location was established in

1202. Now functioning as a large house built within a lacunae in the village and region of Ordino in Andorra, they endeavor to create a different sort of covenant, one more subtle but still engaged in mundane affairs.

Enjoying a Magic aura of 3 and maintaining an 8th magnitude *Aegis of the Hearth*, Bellaquin enjoys a local reputation as a helpful group of wealthy outsiders who frequently bring trade from distant merchants. Amongst the Order, they encourage a reputation for casual indifference and occasionally unhealthy, stubborn tendencies.

Every magus at Bellaquin has customized his laboratory to some degree, and a vacant lab currently serves as storage space. Vis-rich, Bellaquin holds nearly 100 pawns, and their vis sources supply an average of 30 pawns per year. They keep a fortified manor on the outskirts of town, at the beginning of a road leading up the mountain which overlooks most of Andorra. Their grogs participate in local militia patrols and volunteer in the village's defense.

Culture and Traditions

Still deeply involved in mundane affairs, Bellaquin now employs far more subtle tactics. Instead of conspicuously consorting with powerful nobility, Bellaquin works through mercantile channels, utilizing an influential network on both sides of the Pyrenees and ranging as far as Germany and Italy. No actual trade occurs on the covenant grounds, but it lies at the heart of a financial machine. Bellaquin offers banking services to both mundanes and magi. They do not engage in money lending as the Italian bankers do, but provide the service of transferring funds between distant locations, similar to the Templars. Using Hermetic magic, they can easily transport funds or other resources to a prearranged location at established times, and with some extra effort to nearly any location.

Magi

Bellaquin has five members, though only one member remains from the original location and one other is the filia of an old member. The rest of the current members joined after the relocation. Of the other members from the first site, three died in the attack which ended the old covenant, two departed the Tribunal afterwards, and three others have died or passed into Twilight since the transition.

Bellaquin is strong and self-sufficient with five members, but it has room and resources to take on a few more. They would welcome prospective young magi with promise who petitioned for membership, such as player characters.

ARCHMAGE VALGRAVIAN OF JERBITON

Age: 114 (Apparent age: 77)

Personality Traits: Dedicated to the prosperity of Bellaquin +3, Compassion for old friends +1

Reputations: Archmage 4 (Hermetic), Canny 3 (Hermetic), Capable Musician 3 (Local)

Archmage Valgravian is the oldest magus of the covenant, an immigrant from

the Rhine Tribunal. He created the contingency plan which saved the covenant, and his leadership guided Bellaquin through the transition. He maintains indirect contact with a few of his old noble friends, but he is far more cautious about his involvement in their affairs. He limits himself to advice and Longevity Rituals for the two or three closest to him. For the most part, he remains dedicated to the smooth management of the covenant. Other Bellaquin magi sometimes find him annoying, since he regularly talks to them about their covenant tasks. However, he gives members wide discretion in their offices and responsibilities. He rather seeks to exchange advice and knowledge about project execution, playing a fraternal role with the older members and a paternal role with the younger ones.

Valgravian is old friends with Constantine, and has known Antoinette since she was born. Beyond those relationships, he doesn't know the other member magi very well, and sometimes he feels like a stranger in his own home. He remembers a time when Bellaquin was a covenant of poets and musicians, and laments the lack of troubadours in the area. New members mean new interests and ideas, and although Bellaquin remains a patron of the arts, it is so to a much lesser degree than previously.

The archmage concentrated his magical endeavors in the musical arts, having a Minor Magic Focus in music. He created various spells to create or enhance music, and fashioned an enchanted necklace which "captures" and memorizes the musical performance of the person wearing it, reproducing it later. His archmage contest demands a musical performance which moves him to tears.

His sigil is a faint fanfare of horns.

CONSTANTINE OF JERBITON

Age: 67 (Apparent age: 49)

Personality Traits: Avarice +3, Gluttony +2, Jovial +1, Serious +1

Constantine is a merchant deeply invested in banking, and he is a master of his craft, utilizing a network of trusted contacts gained through travel and Imaginem magics to coordinate business and transfers. An old friend of Valgravian, he facilitated the

liquidation and transfer of old Bellaquin's assets, transforming Bellaquin into a wealthy landowner in Andorra. While he envisioned the current incarnation of the covenant, he leaves management to Valgravian, focusing on financial matters.

He is uninterested in the affairs of other members, and younger magi often find him intimidating. Strict and serious most of the time, he grows lighthearted and jovial amongst friends and family. Respectful of his fellow magi at Bellaquin, Constantine gladly provides them with whatever assistance he can, but he expects a favor to be repaid for a favor. He is an avid collector of coins, and especially seeks ones from distant or ancient lands.

His sigil is a light dusting of gold appearing on the target or in the air around Constantine.

ROBERT VASQUEZ OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 59 (Apparent age: 42)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Protective of children +3, Honorable +2, Overconfident +1

Valgravian invited Robert to be the covenant's champion. Chosen for his prestigious reputation as a skilled combatant and an honorable magus, he is a Flambeau with the Gentle Gift, which fit in with Valgravian's vision. However, Robert insisted that Bellaquin invite the Blatantly Gifted Artemis as a member to assist him. Robert also brought his two children. His son, Michael, has become Captain of the covenant's guards, transforming them into a disciplined and effective force. His daughter, Carmen, completed her apprenticeship at Bellaquin, passed her Gauntlet five years ago, and left the Tribunal. He is a widower, as his wife died from complications during childbirth.

His sigil is a faint taste of ashes in the air.

ARTEMIS OF TREMERE

Age: 49 (Apparent age: 33)

Personality Traits: Disciplined +3, Loyal to Order of Hermes +3

Robert insisted upon Artemis' invitation to Bellaquin based on her reputation for

dedication and discipline. Given the role of Guardian, she oversees covenant security. She works closely with Captain Michael, and the two have developed an attraction for one another, yet refuse to acknowledge it due to their dedication to duty and sense of propriety.

Strong with Corpus magic, Artemis' sigil is a dull aching of the teeth felt by those targeted or those near her during casting.

ANTOINETTE OF JERBITON

Age: 26

Personality Traits: Expressive +2,
Creative +2

Just a child of eight when the original covenant fell, she has truly only ever known the Andorra location. It is where she completed her apprenticeship. She has the Gentle Gift and nurtures a secret, unrequited love for Captain Michael—having watched him grow into the bold, capable man he is today. Antoinette has considered expressing her feelings for Michael, knowing she could give him children and her father, Constantine, grandchildren, but fears the repercussions with Artemis. She also fears Michael might learn of a dalliance with a certain Carolus of the Rhine Tribunal, an indiscretion from a Jerbiton fosterage at Oculus Sepentrionalis. She is willing to seek out a Verditiis who might help arm Michael's soldiers, or a certamen specialist able to teach her techniques to counter Artemis or discover the Tremere's weak Arts.

A budding Imaginem specialist, Antoinette's sigil is the sound of barely audible whispers.

Covenfolk

Three groups inhabit the covenant, and some rivalry exists between them. During covenant relocation, Robert of Flambeau was invited to become a member and oversee security. One of his first actions was to hire a band of Almogavars to serve as custodes. He knew their captain and had his unGifted son, Michael, serve as the captain's secretary and protégé. The second group, the original covenfolk, were mildly

resentful, but they had grown few in numbers and many were too old or uninterested in martial service. The third and largest group of covenfolk consists of Andorrans native to Ordino. They fill many miscellaneous roles as wage-earning employees, and a few fulfill specialist roles. Several miscellaneous minor groups also exist, as newer magi brought their own personal shield grogs. Artemis of Tremere is always accompanied by two wiry, leather-clad personal guards specially trained at Coeris, whom she calls "the Danior." Whispered rumors claim these two men are actually homunculi, secretly fashioned constructs less susceptible to Mentem magics, easily repaired, and possessing a bloodthirsty tendency to twist Artemis' orders. Trying to impress Michael and surpass the Tremere, Antoinette brought a quartet of Scandinavian warrior women back from an Itinerarium to serve as sanctum guards.

THE ANDORRA COMPANY

Robert of Flambeau recruited his band of elite Almogavars from Iberia and France. Bringing them together at Bellaquin, they formed the Andorra Company and took over the role of the covenant's turb. There are roughly 18 soldiers in the Andorra Company, including two sergeants. Since the old captain was eaten by a mountain drake three years ago on a vis hunting expedition, Robert's 30-year-old son Michael has held the rank of captain. The troops consider Robert to be the overall commander and Artemis serves as a second in command.

Robert intends to equip each of these soldiers with at least one lesser enchanted device, providing them with added protection, increased stamina, or heightened senses, but he has only just begun this task.



Aedes Mercurii

Symbol: A fiery dragon eating its own tail

Just before the Schism War broke out, many of the Flambeau magi at Val-Negra left the domus magna, based on a vision one experienced, to form a separate covenant, and took a number of magi from other Houses with them. They seized control of a nearby outpost and the smaller halls scattered throughout the Pyrenees which once belonged to Val-Negra, including the great temple to Mercury from which they took the covenant's name. After the Schism War, to help establish their legitimacy, they spread the idea that Val-Negra covenant itself was no more, and that Aedes Mercurii had inherited its legacy. The brutal and prominent losses suffered by the covenant during hostilities only reinforced this idea. Thus, the covenant is now considered to be one of the most powerful regional covenants, although it doesn't match Val-Negra's former glory.

Setting and Description

Aedes Mercurii has two locations. The first consists of a series of low utilitarian buildings surrounding a majestic stone edifice located in the center of the Cirque du Gavernie, about two miles north of Val-Negra. The main building is called the Temple of Mercury, and seems to predate the birth of Christ. Some tales claim members of the original Order of Mercury constructed it, others say Priamitus and other founders of the Cult of Mercury designed it to appear ancient. It stands three hundred feet long, surrounded by carved columns, with an elegant and beautiful interior and ancient altars on every side before the holy of holies at the eastern end. Usually called "the Temple" (*Templum*) by those at the covenant, this site is accessed from the other part via a large Mercere Portal built into an archway between two courtyards. The Magic aura throughout the Cirque and the outer buildings is 4, increasing to 8 inside the temple proper.

The second location is the more well-known site, built into the top of the distinc-



tive Pic du Midi d'Ossau, which on a clear day is visible from Pau. Only 90 kilometers to the northwest of Val-Negra, Aedes Mercurii was originally established as a garrison for Val-Negra's forces during the final conflicts in the early 900s, but it has been continually improved since. Pic du Midi d'Ossau is now an immense fortress, with many towers, domes, and rotundas carved out of the mountain's interior. The exterior is grim and forbidding, especially when viewed from the narrow and winding path leading along the chasms of the Pyrenees to the entrance. Inside, the labyrinthine halls are a riot of conflicting styles, both grandiose and eclectic. It is enormous, even the magi who now live there do not know everything it contains, as new members usually add on to the existing structure. Many rooms once claimed by magi as labs and sanctums have remained undisturbed since their owners entered Twilight or died. The whole mountain has a pervasive Magic aura of 5. Since the main temple is typically accessed from here, this site is often referred to as "the back" of the temple (*Dorsum*).

Various other sites have also been considered part of the covenant, though none as significant as these two. Until recently, there was a large outpost at the city of Saint Jean Pied-de-Port, but, disastrously, the covenfolk who lived there came under suspicion of witchcraft from the local citizenry and the house became a casualty of a war when Richard the Lionheart razed the city in 1177. At one time there was another

portal and entrance to the complex at the eastern edge of the Pyrenees, near Barcelona and north of Girona, though that too was abandoned, along with the portal to Val-Negra proper, at the beginning of the Schism War.

The Magi

Approximately 18 magi compose Aedes Mercurii, with 11 living at the Dorsum site, and the other 7 living remotely at the Templum. The covenfolk divide in more or less the same proportion. While the two settlements are part of the same covenant, over the years since the Schism War tensions have escalated between them. Though they still present a united front to outsiders, the magi living at the Templum and those living at the Dorsum have very different outlooks. Generally speaking, the Templum magi remain loyal to what they envision as the pagan and historical traditions of the Order of Mercury, while the only consistent quality of the Dorsum magi is their bitter opposition to *Castra Solis* and their perceived status as the inheritors of Val-Negra's legacy.

As part of their belief that they are the last uninterrupted magical descendants of the Order of Mercury, the magi of Aedes Mercurii consider themselves to be priests of the Temple, or *Flamen*, each associated with a Roman god or goddess appropriate to their focus of magic. In most cases, es-

pecially that of the Tremere members, this is purely ceremonial and secular, declaring their patron god is like naming a spell after that god. Very few of those living at the covenant are actually pagan, worshipping their gods as anything more than high concepts, and those are generally seen as unusual. The most powerful faction at the covenant are the priests of Mars, who are almost exclusively House Flambeau, and the priests of Pluto, who are mostly House Tremere and thus have a good deal of political clout. House Verditiis maintains a small and not-very-influential priesthood to Vulcan.

FLAMMARCUS OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 121 (Apparent age 75)

Personality Traits: Passionate +2,
Ruthless +2

Flammarcus of Flambeau considers himself the leader of the covenant, and he calls himself the Pontifex Maximus. He is a priest of Mars, though like many who live at the Dorsum he is actually Christian and views the Mercurian priesthood as purely ceremonial. He idolizes Flambeau the Founder, and believes the magi of *Castra Solis* corrupted and revised the Founder's history. According to his research, Flambeau was not a Mithraian, but a Mercurian, possessor of some of the lost rituals of the Order. His findings paint a very different picture from the commonly accepted history, though

most other magi believe him overzealous, and do not understand his fervor. He is passionately driven to become Primus as soon as Garus dies, and it seems he might be willing to do anything to achieve this goal.

PROTENDUS OF TREMERE

Age: 112 (Apparent age: 83)
Personality Traits: Reclusive +2, Secretive +2

Protendus of Tremere is the most senior magus of House Tremere in the Tribunal. He answers (somewhat reluctantly) to the Iberian exarch, whom he believes resents the fact that the House does not have a significant presence in the Tribunal. He has trained several apprentices, and encourages young Tremeres to distinguish themselves, but the House's last enterprise twenty years ago (Lariander) failed for mysterious reasons, and he suspects that crusaders and the Merinita magi associated with Castra Solis were behind their disappearance. He is a member of the Vexillation of the Golden Thread, a secretive Tremere group dedicated to thwarting the twisty wiles of magi of House Tylalus, and he serves on the Aedes council as the priest of Pluto. He is also reputed to be a necromancer of unparalleled skill. For the most part, he remains aloof from Tribunal politics despite holding six sigils, often abstaining unless a decision impacts his House or a fellow Tremere advises him of important potential consequences. He prefers to act as a sort of unofficial, although tacitly sanctioned, Quaesitor. This unadvertised Quaesitor status and his Tremere rank allow him to better conduct unobtrusive investigations requiring discretion. Protendus keeps this secret by oaths enforced by certamen when necessary. He focuses on preventing the northern magi of House Tylalus from gaining a foothold in the region through unofficial channels and through methods Quaesitors might not usually use. So far he has been successful, though he suspects that the Tylali are now simply using the Mithraian members of House Flambeau and Castra Solis as their cat's-paws.

OPHILIO OF MERCERE

Age: 172 (Apparent age: 85)
Personality Traits: Gregarious +2, Opinionated +2

Ophilio of Mercere lives at the *Templum*. He is generally respected by the other magi, though they tread carefully around him and he rarely shows his face at council, preferring to spend his time with the covenantfolk. If he exerted authority over the covenant it would be grudgingly respected, as he was the High Priest of Mercury for many years, though he has since retired. Gifted, Ophilio is one of House Mercere's longevity specialists.

MIDIUS OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 94 (Apparent age: 50)
Personality Traits: Loyal +2, Submissive +2

Midius of Flambeau is the current High Priest of Mercury, caretaker of the *Templum* and flamen for the Provençal Tribunal. He still thinks of himself as Ophilio's subordinate, from his many years of serving beneath him in the temple, and is as ever desperate to impress the old magus. He attends Tribunal on Ophilio's behalf.

PILA OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 103 (Apparent age: 79)
Personality Traits: Courageous +2, Dedicated +2

Pila of Flambeau is a priest of Mars and responsible for the covenant's defenses, duties she takes very seriously, and some would say fanatically. She is a staunch supporter of Flammarcus and his revised version of the Founder's history. She also considers herself a true "Hoplite" as the term was once used in the Order and dresses like a Greek infantry soldier when going into battle. She looks surprisingly unassuming and mild otherwise. She resides at the *Dorsum*.

MALFORTIS OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 87 (Apparent age: 44)
Personality Traits: Engaging +2, Expressive +2

Malfortis of Flambeau is another priest of Mars, though he is not particularly militant. He is an exceptional teacher and a strong writer, and has written a great many books in the covenant's library. He fulsomely corresponds with anyone who writes to him, though he is generally not particularly friendly in his replies. He is also a staunch supporter of Flammarcus and his beliefs regarding the Founder. Unusually for a Flambeau, he fights barehanded and specializes in Corpus magic.

RICARDUS OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 82 (Apparent age: 42)
Personality Traits: Disturbing +2, Sensual +2

Ricardus of Flambeau is a priest of Bacchus, openly homosexual, and rumored to have lustful proclivities. Most of the other magi at the *Dorsum* find his company and interests distasteful, especially when they involve the many tractatus he writes. However, he is very social and tends to get involved in covenant business; few activities pass by the council without his input, and so he is often uncomfortably supported at Tribunal. He is said to be accomplished in the Arts of Creo and Mentem.

AINTZA EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 87 (Apparent age: 59)
Personality Traits: Combative +2, Mysterious +2

Aintza Ex Miscellanea is one of the few priestesses at Aedes, and the leader of the Janus priesthood. She is a Hermetic Haruspex, one of a small group of oracular magi supposedly invited to join House Flambeau but who spurned the invitation and joined House Ex Miscellanea. She does not care about distinctions of sex, and certainly does not favor women over men; she believes that her lower status at the covenant is because she is House Ex Miscellanea, not because she is female. She is pagan, the primary Mystagogue for the Aedes branch of the Neo-Mercurians, and lives at the *Templum* with the other Haruspexes. She has a magical cat as her

familiar, named Elias, whom she believes is possessed by an aspect of the god Janus due to its strangely disfigured face. The cat has two mouths, two noses and three eyes. Azinta makes a special point of including him in all of her magic.

RUBERUS OF VERDITIUS

Age: 99 (Apparent age: 41)

Personality Traits: Conciliatory +2,
Relaxed +2

Ruberus of Verditius is the leader of the Confraternity of Roland, a group of Verditius magi dedicated to the construction of magical swords (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 121). One of the few magi at Aedes Mercurii with no complaint with Castra Solis, Ruberus admires and respects Garus, the Flambeau Primus. However, deep within the mountain of the *Dorsum*, one of the forges of Hephaestus smoulders, and as the priest of Vulcan he is also the caretaker of this important site. This requires that he maintain cordial relations with his covenant-mates and conceal his friendship with Garus. He also greatly admires and even secretly loves Dama, the Praeco, and would do almost anything to protect her.

BEREZI THE REDCAP

Age: 48 (Apparent age: 35)

Personality Traits: Prone to Wanderlust +2,
Proud +2

One of the resident Redcaps at the *Dorsum* goes by the name of Berezi, and is a descendent of one of the Milvi Antiquiti (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 98), often spending her two seasons of service traveling between Aedes Mercurii and her mother's home covenant in the Roman Tribunal to obtain and deliver books for the magi of western Provençal. She possesses a magical device that allows her to transform herself and anything she carries into the shape of a bird.



Miniata Sophia

Symbol: A white hand, fingers pointed up and spread apart, on an ochre circle

This Spring clutch of Criamon magi live within the Niaux cave, roughly a day's ride south of Foix. Hidden in the Vicdosos valley, a short journey north from Castle Miglos and the village of Niaux, they maintain a fairly isolationist attitude, rarely traveling beyond their home and the surrounding hills. However, the group has attended Tribunal for the last four gatherings, always voting and participating knowledgeably in discussion and debate. They have shown no clear preferences and have entered into no political alliances. They vote for options on issues that they deem the most morally apt, or they abstain.

History

Founded by an eremite Criamon roughly 40 years ago, Miniata Sophia has begun interacting with the rest of the Tribunal only relatively recently. They announced themselves at the Tribunal gathering in 1193, registering their site with the Redcaps as the village of Niaux.

Setting and Description

Miniata Sophia stretches throughout the Niaux cave system—a subterranean labyrinth winding through 3 kilometers

of galleries, formations, grottos, and most importantly, antediluvian wall art. The main gallery has dozens of paintings of horses, oxen, bison, antelope, and handprints, but samples are scattered throughout the tunnels. The ancient depictions are what drew the covenant's founder, Leonarda, to the site. Here, they have created a working relationship with the covenfolk in the village while pursuing an aspect of the Criamon philosophy, a variant of the Path of Walking Backwards (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 70). The cave has a Magical aura of 4, and the main gallery has an aura of 5.

Culture and Traditions

Established within the cavern system, Miniata Sophia believes in a self-sufficient existence with little impact on the surrounding community. They sustain a very small collection of covenfolk in an unusual manner. The magi each take turns spending a season living as a guest amongst the villagers, sharing their Parma with a town "ambassador" and assisting with tasks necessary for the continued operation of the town. They avoid practicing magic in front of covenfolk, and try to ensure that the most helpful spells are cast under the cover of darkness. They do not perform lab work during this season, wearing the robes of a leper to both hide any Enigmatic Stigmata and discourage outsiders from approaching them. It also helps foster the cover story, which explains the magi as hermits, seeking enlightenment within the cave. Every three days, the magus in Niaux brings supplies to the mouth of the cavern, where another member meets them and takes the transfer of goods. The period is considered a necessary aspect of The Avenue of Surrender and the Station of the Service to Harmony for newcomers and a regular reminder of the lesson's importance.

The rest of the time, the magi study their Arts, the texts they trade via correspondence, and the cave paintings, attempting to decipher their secrets and the hidden magic traced within the pigments. Leonarda believes them to be an expression of the Enigma, and has incor-

porated them into the later initiations of The Avenue of Healing and the Station of Rice and Honey, The Avenue of Adulation and the Station of Expression, and The Avenue of a Thousand Beautiful Faces and the Station of Exaltation. She has not yet reached the Avenue of Silencing Discordant Whispers and the Threshold of Repose, nor does she yet know how she would incorporate the art of Miniata Sophia into the initiation.

The Magi

Four magi live at Miniata Sophia; Leonarda, Tumbarius, and Hans are detailed below. There is one other member of Miniata Sophia, a Criamon adherent to the Path of Walking Backwards.

LEONARDA, FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

Age: 89 (Apparent age: 57)

Personality Traits: Pious +3, Calm +2, Nurturing +2, Patient +2

Leonarda is from Aragon, on the far side of the Pyrenees, but learned of the many caves and their paintings from a fellow Criamon during a visit to the Cave of Twisting Shadows shortly after her Gauntlet. Deciding she wanted to seek a new route for her path, and believing there was ancient wisdom to be found within the first homes of mankind, she set out to establish a sanctum in one of these caves. After wandering for some time, she found Niaux, and began her research. Over time, she established a relationship with the villagers, and they were happy to receive her help on many occasions. Leonarda's specialties are Creo, Rego, Corpus, and Vim, and she used these talents to create the relationships which have kept the covenant so well-informed. In exchange for twice-annual visits, Leonarda performed a Longevity Ritual and provided the Redcap Embeth with a pair of boots which allow her to perform a Leap of Homecoming. Embeth occasionally points interested Criamon to Niaux, but only after interviewing them and conferring with Leonarda.

Story Seeds for Miniata Sophia

A number of issues could draw player characters into interacting with Miniata Sophia.

MULTIPLICITY OF WISDOM

A magus seeking the mysteries of Fertility magic (*Ancient Magic*, page 54) might try to discover the location of Miniata Sophia after interacting with members at Tribunal. The Criamon value their privacy, however, and require a very close and trusting relationship before they permit an outsider to visit even the covenfolk in Niaux. A fellow member of the Order arriving by chance, however, would not be turned away—simply asked to make a promise never to reveal the site's location. It is possible that Louis VII may attempt to seize the town as a strategic resource in 1226–1227, when the count of Foix challenges Louis' attempt to enforce the king's royal rights on the area. The royal French forces may include inquisitors seeking out Cathar heretics, especially since the count of Foix is married to a Cathar.

Once a magus does visit the cave, investigation reveals a regio exists. Easily accessible via magic on the new moon, equinoxes, and solstices, it leads into a very ancient magical version of the cave, where antediluvian shamans dance and

drum while painting further pictographs on the walls. The only "accidental" method of entry is to be drumming or painting on the cavern walls by firelight on a solstice. The Criamon sometimes visit this regio to perform the final initiation into The Avenue of Adulation and the Station of Expression.

APTLY PUT

An issue involving the resources of the covenant is slated for the coming Tribunal, and it looks like defending the characters' position requires the backing of Miniata Sophia. The magi must find a way to convince the Criamon of the morally apt nature of their position — or reveal the immoral basis of their opposition. Doing so means digging up the dirt and investigating the motivations of their opponents through the sort of social interaction only possible in a place where all the magi are present — the Tribunal itself! Can the magi discover what they need to gain the support of Leonarda and her fellow Criamon before the matter is brought to vote? Do they have the legal acumen and debating skills necessary to delay the Tribunal proceedings or bring about a stalemate?

TUMBARIUS, FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

Age: 40 (Apparent age: 40)

Personality Traits: Open-minded +3, Inquisitive +2, Ruthlessly dedicated +2

A magus from Northumbria, Tumbarius is a Mentem specialist, focusing on ghosts and spirits. Although nominally Christian, he actively seeks epiphanies from ancient philosophers, apocrypha, Judaism, or Islamic scholars. He has recently begun corresponding with a number of the kabbalists in Arles, attempting to work the shape of the Tree of Life, or Etz haChayim, into his labyrinthine meditations. He suffers from serious arthritis, which bothers him most in the winter months when he serves in Niaux. He has a callous attitude toward spirits, feeling they simply have another chance in the next Cycle.

HANS, FOLLOWER OF CRIAMON

Age: 54 (Apparent age: 40)

Personality Traits: Cheerful +3, Sociable +2, Curious +2

The second son of merchant from Aachen, Hans was initially enrolled in a seminary as a youth. A visiting Criamon with a sensitivity for The Gift recognized his aptitude and offered him a chance at another life. Insatiably curious, and a student of languages, Hans loves his time in the village of Niaux and the children there call him "Grandfather Hans." His Gentle Gift allows him to interact quite amicably with the populace, and he is the favored ambassador with the town. He feels that while he seeks the answer to the Enigma, he should also enjoy his time in this life to its fullest while living as aptly

as possible. He is in no rush to find his way down the Path. His specialties are in Rego, Imaginem, and Terram.

Covenfolk

Quite unusually, there are no dedicated grogs at Miniata Sophia. The Criamon feel they do not need them. The village itself is under the protection of Arnaud de Miglos, the local viscount and vassal of Foix, who keeps a garrison within his castle. The villagers of Niaux, who (mostly indirectly) supply the covenfolk, have always paid their taxes on time and adequately, and in doing so have never drawn undue attention. A few of the covenfolk are the sort of hunting specialists who could serve as grogs, if absolutely necessary, but they primarily help augment the covenfolks' diet and serve as sentries only by virtue of their wide-ranging duties. There are a couple of better trained, widely-traveled covenfolk who occasionally venture abroad for items desired by the magi, but more often than not, this insular community continues to operate in quiet seclusion, regularly delivering small quantities of iron mined from the hills and processed into ingots or rod stock.

The Basques

The Basque Country covers much of the Pyrenees, especially in the west and along the Bay of Biscay. This overlaps portions of the Iberian and Provençal Tribunals, including both Upper and Lower Navarre and Gascony. The Basques form an independent ethnic and linguistic group, but one without a national identity. The Basque term "*Euskaldun*" translates as "one who speaks the Basque Language." Although casually used to refer to themselves as a people, the definition includes other people who learn to speak Basque and excludes Basques who don't speak the language. Basques currently share the region with Franks and Spaniards. They have also partially assimilated other cultures through intermarriage, but remain a distinct and separate people, resisting any attempts to dislodge or assimilate them.

Basque Country

The region considered "Basque Country" has shifted over the centuries, growing, shrinking, and fragmenting several times. However, it has always centered on the Pyrenees, mainly in the west but having stretched further east in the past. The seven provinces considered Basque Country fall within the domain of the kingdoms of France, Navarre, and Castile in 1220. However, they retain a great deal of autonomy within their communities, maintaining their language and traditions and often ownership of their land. The provinces of Álva, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa are part of Castile, which also contains a few Basque settlements in other regions. Labour, Lower Navarre, and Soule are part of France. Upper Navarre, dominated by Castile, is the province with the largest concentration of Basques, but they are the most assimilated into the culture and nobility of the Spaniards.

Language

Euskara is the ancient language of the Basque people. Unrelated to any other tongue, it shares influences with those languages it encounters. Dialects vary by region, and Basques often speak other regional languages. In fact, for some Basques, Euskara may be a second tongue, with Occitan or another language as their native speech. Medieval Euskara uses the Latin alphabet, but in the distant past it utilized Ancient Iberian. The Basques maintain a unique system of numbering, which takes the form of strange and seemingly arcane shaped symbols representing numbers from 1 to 100 and most fractions.

History

Basque mythology claims they inhabited the land after seizing it from the giants (*Jentilak*) and other beings. Early Basques made use of the mysterious Iberian alphabet, and likely interacted with the Iberians, the Celts, and Gauls. The historian Strabo records the Vascones tribe inhabiting the region now called Basque Country. Roman contact extends back to the 1st century AD, when Julius Cae-

sar mentions the Basques. The Romans never significantly developed the region, other than forming alliances with local people and establishing a garrison in Pompaelo (Pamplona). Many Basques joined their legions, deploying to distant places like Hadrian's Wall and Byzantium.

In the fifth century, Basque legions commanded by Romans defeated barbarian invaders such as the Alans, Suevi, and Vandals. Despite their efforts, Germanic tribes eventually crossed the Pyrenees and brought the fall of Imperial rule. The Visigoths and the Franks pressured the Basques, who persevered and established the independent Duchy of Vasconia in the sixth century. This demense eventually submitted to the Franks with the Moorish invasions and Charlemagne's rise. Basque resistance persisted, however, with the most famous example being the Battle of Roncevaux Pass.

From the ninth and into the tenth century, the southern Basque provinces made up the Kingdom of Pamplona. Under King Sancho III, their power extended into Castile, Aragon, and Gascony. After his death, Pamplona was partitioned between Castile and Aragon, with Gascony being absorbed again by the Franks. Garcia Rameriez briefly restored the kingdom in the mid-twelfth century, but this was eventually subsumed by Castile. The Castilians annexed western Basque Country, forming the provinces of Álva, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa. By comparison, Upper Navarre is cut off from the rest of Iberia, trapped between Castile and the Pyrenees, with Lower Navarre and the other Basque provinces under French control on the other side.

Nevertheless, Basques still enjoy a great amount of autonomy in their lands. They are intermarried and integrated with the aristocracy and form a majority of the population. However, northern (Navarre) Basques more strongly identify with Occitan language and culture than Euskara. The southern (Castilian) provinces retain self government through fueros, charters granted by the Aragonese king guaranteeing their rights. The French provinces retain no special privileges, but the people are not often harassed. Medieval Basques lack a sense of unified national identity, and retain private ownership of their lands, rather than serving as the peasants of ruling nobles, so they are content with the current state of affairs.

Culture

The Euskara language forms the primary feature of Basque culture. It embodies most aspects of their society and beliefs. For instance, family names derive from descriptions of geographic features or birthplaces, such as *Errekondo* (next to the stream), *Goikoetxea* (the house above), and others meaning "by the rock," "the old house," "on the mountain," or "by the ocean." This custom demonstrates the Basques' strong attachment to family and home.

Compared to their neighbors, Basque women enjoy increased influence and equality in society, but their culture is undoubtedly a patriarchy. Men hold most of the dominant positions and control the majority of property. Usually only a few elder women aggressively participate in community leadership. The father acts as head of the household and inheritance favors sons. However, daughters do receive inheritance from mothers, women own and control property, hold official positions, and voice their opinions in household and community affairs. In pagan times, Basque women participated in ecstatic magical ceremonies forbidden to most men.

Basques adopted Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries. There are bishoprics in both Pamplona and Urgell. However, weak participation in early Synods and a paucity of Christian grave markers suggests a protracted conversion where Christian traditions slowly replaced pagan beliefs. By 1220, the overwhelming majority of Basques are Christian, and the persistence of old customs is the same as for other medieval cultures. Still, they quietly allow a small pagan minority to practice their beliefs, so long as no one menaces the community. Basques even permit Jews and Muslims who intermarry or learn their language to dwell alongside them. Historically, Basques had little or no conflict with heretical groups, and heretic characters in your saga might seek similar tolerance amongst them.

Known as a vigorous mountain people, Basques foster a strong tradition as hardy sailors engaging in whaling and cod fishing. They use longboats or larger vessels launched from shore, and recently began using an innovation known as the rudder. Basque sailors work on merchant and naval ships from the Atlantic and Mediterranean, to the Channel, the North Sea, and beyond.

The Song of Roland

In 778, Charlemagne crossed the Pyrenees, attempting to repel the Moors. He initially liberated Barcelona, but the stalled siege of Zaragoza forced his return to Gaul. The great emperor's forces were attacked three times in their retreat. First, the Moors ambushed him en route to Navarre. Then the rebellious Basques of Pamplona led an attack. Finally, when the main forces had crossed through the pass at Roncevaux, the true attack came. Basques claim guerillas ambushed the rear guard, equipped with only spears and short swords, and wearing no armor. In truth, a monumental force of 400,000 Saracens, employing Basque guides and Jentilak mercenaries, attacked Roland. In a savage battle stretching across the valley, they defeat-

ed the Franks and plundered the baggage train while killing Charlemagne's nephew Roland, the force's commander. Another ten years passed before Charlemagne permanently liberated Barcelona and established the Pyrenees Marcher Kingdoms.

The popular *chanson de geste* known as the *Song of Roland* tells how Roland fought valiantly against the 400,000 Saracens, but ultimately fell.

Other stories, popular among the Basques, tell of the Basque guerillas. Faeries thrive on human myths, and when they desire chosen mortals to relive and interact with this tale, depending on who they attempt to deceive or manipulate, Roland alternately battles either the Moors or a small group of clever and bold Basques.

Mythology and Magic

Considered a chthonic religion, Basque paganism focuses on the veneration of earth-bound deities and natural forces and contains various "unclean" ecstatic rituals. Mari, an earth-mother goddess who capriciously

brings fortune or calamity to the land, dominates the mythology. In legends, she rides a chariot of thunderclouds drawn by massive goats, or meets with Sugaar, her consort, to mate—both activities create further storms or droughts while sowing the both the seeds of good and ill fortune upon the people as

Common Basque Names

FEMALE NAMES

The following are common female Basque names followed by their significance in Euskara or English equivalent.

Abene ("pillar"), Aintza ("glory"), Alaia ("joyful, happy"), Alazne ("miracle"), Amaia ("the end"), Berezi ("special"), Bihotz ("heart"), Elixabete (Elizabeth), Erlea ("a bee"), Eskarne ("mercy"), Esti ("sweet, honey"), Euria ("rain"), Garbi ("clean, pure"), Goizane ("morning"), Haizea ("wind"), Hilargi ("moon"), Hirune ("trinity"), Ihintza ("dew"), Itsaso ("ocean"), Itzaro ("hope"), Izar ("star"), Kattalin (Katherine), Kistiñe (Christina), Lore ("flower"), Maia (Maria), Maialene (Magdalene), Maite ("lovable"), Nahia ("desire"), Nekane ("sorrows"), Nere ("mine"), Oihana ("forest"), Osane ("cure, remedy"), Udane ("summer"), Usoa ("dove"), Zuriñe ("white")

MALE NAMES

The following are common male Basque names followed by their significance in Euskara or English equivalent.

Amets ("dream"), Argi ("light"), Arkaitz ("rock"), Bakar ("alone"), Eder ("handsome, beautiful"), Edur ("snow"), Eguzki ("sun"), Ekaitz ("storm"), Endika (Henry), Erlantz ("glow, shine"), Erramun (Raymond), Frantzisko (Francis), Ganix (John), Garaile ("victor"), Gorka (George), Gotzon ("angel"), Hodei ("cloud"), Igon ("ascension"), Itzal ("shadow"), Izotz ("ice"), Joseba (Joseph), Kermen ("courage, vigor"), Marko (Mark), Matia (Matthew), Mitzel (Michael), Oroitz ("memory"), Patxi (Francis), Peio (Peter), Sendoa ("strong"), Txomin (Dominic), Unai ("cowherd"), Xanti (Santiago), Zeru ("sky"), Zorion ("happiness"), Zuzen ("just, fair")

The White Lord

Jaun Zuria was a Basque noble born in the village of Mundak sometime in the 10th century (during the Kingdom of Pamplona). His mother was a Scottish princess and wife of Lemor MacMorna, an Irish knight in service to King Lekobide of Euskadi. Lemor died in battle, but his bride claimed he had visited her that night and sired a child, whom she named Jaun. It was an imposter; the dragon Sugaar in human form was the true father of Jaun Zuria. Jaun grew to be bold and adventurous, the king's favorite knight, eventually falling in love with and marrying his daughter Luz. He led the fight

against Leon at the Battle of Arrigorriaga, slaying King Ordone and leading Pamplona to victory. As a result, he ruled over Biscay and received the title *Zuria*, Euskara for "White Lord."

Kingdoms shatter, borders change, and allegiances shift. Pamplona faded, becoming Navarre, and Castile annexed Biscay along with Alva and Guipuzcoa in 1200. However, the blood of the dragon persists as Mythic Blood, Magic Blood, or Blood of Heroes. Diego Lopez, current Lord of Biscay, led the vanguard during the victory at Las Navas eight years ago. He claims this lineage, as do his relatives and descendants.

of the dragon from his father, and has special powers concerning storms and male virility. Another scion, Atxular, was sired by a pious man seduced by Mari. Wicked and malicious in youth, he practiced black magic taught to him by a corrupt priest. After discovering his mentor's demonic nature, Atxular repented, embracing Christianity and thereafter reluctantly using his powers to protect innocents from dark forces. A popular folk hero, Atxular symbolizes the conversion of the Basques and embodies hope of salvation. He also provides justification for Christian Basques who continue to practice *sorginak* magic; they protect the community from pagan demons. Jaun Zuria, the White Lord, was the son of Sugaar and a Scottish princess he visited in human guise; later he became the first Lord of Biscay.

it pleases them. Mari dwells in a remote mountain cave, the exact location changing depending on the teller of the tale.

Sugaar is the legendary Great Dragon of the Pyrenees, and the genius loci of the mountain range. He claims power over storms and the fates of both heroes and villains. He commonly manifests as an enormous serpent up to seven hundred feet long, varying with the Might of the Aspect. Other forms include a large black ram, a tremendous thunderstorm, a great dragon, and even a human warrior. Sugaar purportedly fought a battle against the Archangel Michael. Michael feared the dragon, and relied upon his faith for courage. Victorious, Michael bound Sugaar to the Pyrenees as an earthly spirit (a genius loci). Indeed, be-

cause of this earthly nature, Mari and Sugaar truly are chthonic; *sorginak* rituals may contain hedonistic components, and their deities dwell in the underworld.

Mari and Sugaar spawned many offspring in addition to storms. Their children include drakes, wyrms, multi-headed dragons known as *herensuge*, and the venomous dragons known as *vibria*, *vouivre* or *wyverns* (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 74 & 75 for examples). Mari has taken many human lovers over the centuries, and many powerful women claim descent from her or one of her daughters. *Mikelatz*, the son of Mari and Sugaar, is a fearsome, wild spirit who can take the form of a huge warrior, a raging red bull, or a large thunderstorm. He inherited the powers of a *sorgin* from his mother, the ferocity

Other prominent figures in Basque myth are the *jentilak*, giants who ruled the land before the arrival of humans. The *jentilak* created the enormous stone monuments and other ancient structures scattered through the land. They taught the Basques tool use, agriculture, and metallurgy. They invented a game involving tossing large rocks back and forth, which still exists as a sport amongst the Basque people. According to one legend, *jentilak* fought alongside the Basques at the Battle of Roncevaux, helping defeat Roland's forces by hurling boulders at them. However advanced, they eventually retreated to mountaintops, where they have slowly faded away. Nearly extinct, a few *jentilak* remain as magical creatures or masquerading faeries dwelling deep in the mountains. For example, *Olentzero* is a *jentil* who visits

Estranged Relatives

Basque tolerance and the sense of unity based upon a shared language do not apply to a subgroup within their own community—"the *Crestias*," a people treated as outcasts (Consider the Outcast or Social Handicap flaws). They share the same language and many of the same cultural traits as other Basques, but have some distinctly different physical features and some dissimilar customs. They cannot own armaments, horses, or dogs, can only marry among themselves, and live segregated within the community, permitted only the poorer portions of the land. They have a separate entrance

at church with segregated pews, and a screen often obscures their view of the altar and consecration.

No one remembers why the *Crestias* are outcast. Other than appearance, the differences are subtle. Most *Crestias* are Christian, though they have a larger pagan minority and cling to more old superstitions compared to other Basques. Euskara slang refers to them as "not (of the) people." This could mean they are not truly Basque, or they are the unassimilated remnants of one or more of the many people that have tried to dislodge or subdue the Basques like the Visigoths, Vikings,

Suevi, Celts, Iberians, or even the mysterious Tartessians. An ominous double meaning might imply the *Crestias* are not fully human, descended from some mysterious supernatural heritage.

Among *sorginak* at *akelarre* (a folk witch gathering discussed later in this section), reverence replaces the disdain held by mundanes (a *Crestia* who regularly participates might have the Temporal Influence virtue). *Crestias* among the *sorginak* are allegedly more skilled with powerful, dark forces. Perhaps they possess a proclivity for such magic, or perhaps it is part of the stereotype.

near Christmas leaving toys and treats for children. While reclusive and shy, the giants actually thrive with companionship based on a begrudging yet deep friendship. An ancient race, they adopt a mentor role in relationships. Exceptional blacksmiths and farmers, they refuse to learn more advanced crafts or Academic Abilities. A jentil would make an interesting option for a Faerie Friend, Supernatural Warder, or in an extreme example a Faerie Familiar. The cyclops-like tartalo, which also hunt in the Pyrenees, are sometimes thought to be degenerate jentilak with bestial temperament and man-eating habits.

The laminak (singular: lamia) are the river fae of the Pyrenees. Consummate builders and craftsmen, they combine many of the traits of brownies and tritons. Known for their textile-spinning skills and building acumen, laminak reputedly instruct sorginak and build bridges, churches and homes for those who agree to their bargains. These deals often involve meals, marriage, even a student's soul. However, stories claim if a petitioner steals a lamia's golden comb, the lamia has no choice but to serve.

Aker are goatmen who lurk near the meadows pocketing the hills and valleys of the Pyrenees. Sorginak often summon them to harass enemies or teach the secrets of the weather and land or the healing properties of local plants, or even to celebrate akelarre alongside a coven. Demons occasionally masquerade as Aker, attempting to corrupt sorginak by offering to teach Infernal abilities. (See *Guardians of the Forests*, page 50, and use statistics for the bockman.)

New & Modified Virtues & Flaws

The following Virtues & Flaws are presented with Basque characters in mind, but may apply to characters in different sagas. Those applicable only to sorginak hedge-witches are presented elsewhere.

FAERIE BLOOD: JENTIL

Minor or Major Supernatural Virtue

You claim descent from the race of giants who once ruled the lands of the Basque Country. Though now defeated and virtually ex-



tinct, your ancestors created enormous stone monuments, and invented both metallurgy and agriculture. Their legacy lives in you. As a Minor Virtue, this grants you a +1 bonus to resist aging, a +1 bonus to recovery rolls, and a +1 increase in Strength, to a maximum of +3. This Virtue is compatible with Large and Giant's Blood. As a Major Virtue, it grants Second Sight, replaces the bonus to recovery with a +1 increase in Size, and increases the bonus to resist aging to +3 while disregarding aging rolls until age 50. The Major virtue marks you with a distinctive appearance indicating your ancestry, such as oversized hands and feet or exaggerated facial features.

FAERIE BLOOD: LAMINAK

Minor Supernatural Virtue

Descended from the river fae of the Basque Country, you favor either their hard-working or beautiful nature. You may add +1 to either your Stamina or Presence, but not to more than +3. Many mortals find you intriguing, but don't understand why. Characters with this Virtue have webbed toes.

The Sorginak

The sorginak (singular: sorgina, male: sorgin) are Basque folk witches descended from (and some still serving as) the priestesses of Mari. An unGifted sorgina can live a quiet existence in a Basque settlement, dispensing wisdom and minor magical assistance to those who know of her abilities (mainly women). The Gifted sorginak live on the fringes of settlements as reclusive outcasts. Some are trained as folk witches (*Hedge Magic*, page 31). Others are trained Hermetically, and with greater power and the negative effects of the Gift, they tend to bully their weaker sisters while vying with each other for dominance.

An uncertain number of Gifted sorginak reside in the Tribunal. About nine sorginak live either in or near Bayonne in the county of Labourd, and one, Rebecca, with the Praeco in Mimizan. They are trained as folk witches. Others are spread between the county of Béarn, near Pau, the county of Soule and several villages in the Pyrenees. In 1220, there are at least 61 un-

Story Seed: Claim the Comb

A magus, seeking a pagan wife, might try to steal the golden comb of a lamia. Laminak are forbidden to tread on sacred ground, making the fae an excellent choice for a wizard living in a covenant

set far from civilization and one likely to produce a faerie-blooded heir. She may resent the theft, however, and conspire to escape along with any of her children

Story Seed: Power, Unorganized

The many sorginak do not attend Tribunal, and most are recognized as eremites within the Tribunal. A Tytalus or Trianoma seeking to break the larger

covenants' political chokehold might attempt to seek out and befriend the sorginak, explaining the value of a united front at Tribunal gatherings.

Gifted sorginak spread between 13 covens located in the western Provençal Tribunal and the northwest corner of Iberia. Most possess only two or three Supernatural Abilities of little significance. They communicate frequently, trading information, favors, apprentices, and vis to each other in a very tightly knit network of hedge magi. Only the Gifted sorginak (who have all taken the Oath) are considered members of the Order of Hermes, and most Gifted and unGifted sorginak defer to Dama in Mimizan. Three Gifted and Hermetically trained sorginak do not participate in Dama's cult of personality, each living alone but forming their own distinct faction from the other covens. Otherwise, all sorginak prefer to meet only with members of their tradition, finding little in common with most Hermetic magi.

Sorginak gather together in meetings called "akelarre," where the folk witches venerate their goddess, cast rituals, air grievances, and discuss current events. Akelarre are held in caves and stone circles on mountain clearings. These meetings, held on Friday nights, once drew many more women to participate in ecstatic ceremonies, but these witches still meet more frequently and in larger covens than others of their ilk from different lands. Far more of their peers live over the Pyrenees in northern Iberia, and periodically there are great conclaves of sorginak in the Zugarramurdi cave. Despite their pagan roots, not all sorginak are heathens. Many unGifted sorginak dwelling amongst Christian

Basques either converted or formed a dual system of belief. Without The Gift, they cannot learn the full range of Preferred Abilities of a sorgina, but disdain many as unclean or unnatural magic.

Sorginak History

The power, presence and influence of the sorginak has faded since Charlemagne marched south. Many Basque women participated then, either as witches or as acolytes assisting in ceremonies. Gifted witches commanded a combination of respect and fear, and unGifted witches participated in many Initiations under their guidance. Three factors combined to weaken their power: the introduction of Christianity, attacks by other hedge wizards, and the rise of the Order of Hermes.

Christianity's arrival coincided with a growing dissatisfaction by the Basques concerning the pagan religion and its dark magic. Many sorginak were considered unclean or suspected of heinous sins. Communities shunned and ostracized sorginak, only tolerating those who quietly practiced beneficial magic, and then only if they did not suffer the negative effects of The Gift. Invading barbarians and Moors forced the sorginak to defend their magic auras and vis resources from Suevi sorcerers, Visigoth artificers, Moorish Sahirs, and others, suffering many casualties.

Battered and weakened, the sorginak

easily came under the dominance of Hermetic magi. Magi apprenticed many male Basques with The Gift, whom the sorginak generally rejected. Primus Apromor of Flambeau was Basque, and House Flambeau and Tytalus absorbed others. These men became full Hermetic magi, completely severed from sorginak traditions. The Diedne, however, assimilated sorginak magic into their own traditions and accepted female and male sorginak within their House. This generated some discord and other sorginak often banned Diedne sorginak from akelarre.

The unGifted, Initiated folk witches remained beneath the notice of most magi, and the more powerful held the Order in suspicion because of their Diedne rivals. A few sorginak eventually joined House Ex Miscellanea, but not until 955. Their tradition suffered a weak start, resented by their hedge sisters and cautious to create a perceived distance from the Diedne. During the Schism War, several Ex Miscellanea sorginak defected to other Houses such as Tytalus and Merinita in order to prove their loyalty. Others hid, regaining the trust of their non-Hermetic sisters by sharing (but not teaching) their Parma Magica and protecting them through the conflict from opportunists looking to settle grudges or claim sources of vis.

The Order of Hermes has accepted a few sorginak into House Ex Miscellanea over the years, but almost without exception they are Gifted rather than Initiated. Gifted sorginak in the Order tend to follow the Folk Witch tradition, rather than use standard Hermetic Arts. The Order has some influence in most covens, if only through intimidation, but a few remain reclusive and several Gifted sorginak shun the Order, living unaffiliated. Any covenant in Basque Country will have some sort of interaction with a sorginak coven, perhaps cordially neutral, but usually some sort of alliance or enmity (as per the Hedge Tradition Boon or Hook).

Akelarre

Akelarre is the Basque term for the sabbat of the sorginak, but also refers to the location where these meetings take place.

The sorginak meet more frequently than most other folk witch traditions, gathering at least one Friday a month for most covens and every Friday for the most active ones. A special akelarre is held a few times periodically throughout the year, drawing sorginak from multiple covens to a single location for a sort of Grand Sabbat. UnGifted and very pious sorginak try to avoid these meetings, but they are often bullied by their Gifted pagan sisters in animal form, and pressured into making periodic appearances. Mundane women are sometimes harassed into attendance, both for the appearance of swelled numbers and to assist in ceremonies.

Sorginak Magic

In game terms, the sorginak are a folk witch tradition, as described in chapter 3 of *Hedge Magic*. Some covens involve darker elements in their magic, like the manipulation of spirits. The primary difference is that the Cursing ability may be replaced by a variation of Hex, and sorginak may Initiate certain new Virtues.

Favored Abilities

The seven Favored Abilities of a sorgina are Animal Ken, Dowsing, Flight, Healing, Hex (or Cursing), Second Sight, and Shapeshifter. UnGifted sorginak must purchase these as separate Virtues, and obviously cannot begin with them all. A Gifted sorgina begins with all seven of these Abilities, with variations depending upon the nature of her coven and lineage. Some aspects of these abilities are considered sinister, and pious sorginak and those who do not wish to be tainted avoid them. Hex is considered unclean, and Shapeshifter is considered unnatural. Many sorginak have the Skinchanger Virtue in place of Shapeshifter, which is considered acceptable, and some have Wilderness Sense replacing Hex or another ability. A few have Premonitions balanced by Visions at no extra cost.

Initiations

The sorginak reputedly practice wicked initiations and unclean magic. Most sorginak Initiation Scripts contain pagan elements, but there exist a few "clean" variations for many of the basic Favored Abilities. The Inner Mysteries have their basis in a more sinister nature, and no effort has been made to revise them as they are kept secret from non-sorginak. These include the Goetic Arts of Summoning and Command, Ecstatic Magic, a modified version of Chthonic Magic, and their own version of Ceremony. Details of these Virtues and Arts are discussed below. Initiations take place at an akelarre, and follow the usual rules.

New & Modified Virtues & Flaws

The following new Virtues and Flaws are available for sorginak characters, some during character creation and others only from Initiations (see Initiations, above). These can be used as ideas for other witches as well.

CHTHONIC SORGINAK MAGIC

Major, Supernatural

This grants a variant of the Supernatural Ability of Chthonic Magic beginning at a score of 1. Similar to the Hermetic Virtue, this magic, said to spring from instruction by Mari, grants the sorgina the ability to tap into sinister powers. The sorgina is attuned to both the Magic and Infernal realms. She gains botch dice from neither, and enjoys the benefits of both. She can use Infernal vis without penalty, and adds her Chthonic

Magic to her Folk Witch Magic Theory when determining how many pawns of Infernal vis she can use in a season. Neither Faerie nor Magic-aligned detection can sense this tainted Infernal alignment, but Divine and Infernal powers can.

Finally, if she incorporates a knowingly blasphemous action in her magic, the sorgina gains a +6 bonus to the roll or total in question, and she may optionally incorporate Casting Items to also add their Shape & Material bonuses (up to her Folk Witch Magic Theory score). She does not gain the additional Ranges, Targets or Durations ordinarily associated with Chthonic Magic, such as Crossroads, Cursed, or Passion. See *Realms of Power: Infernal*, page 123 for additional details.

ECSTATIC MAGIC

Minor Supernatural Virtue

The sorgina gains the ability Ecstatic Magic at 1 and she may stray from her body in an intangible spirit form for one hour during akelarre with a successful Stamina + Ecstatic Magic + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 12. For every 3 by which the roll exceeds the Ease Factor, the sorgina may stray for an additional hour. While straying, she may move with a Stamina + Athletics roll (Ease Factor 3) to visit places she sees daily. For every 3 the roll exceeds the ease factor, she may travel to places she has seen in the last week (Ease Factor 6), the last year (Ease Factor 9), not been in the last year (Ease Factor 12), and places she has never been but possesses an associated arcane connection (Ease Factor 15). While straying, she has the Second Sight ability equal to her Ecstatic Magic ability. The character manifests any carried accoutrements and may harm spirits in

Male Sorginak

Uncommon, but slightly more prevalent than those found in other folk witch traditions, male sorginak are perceived as inept or effeminate by mundane society, and receive less training with their magic than their female counterparts. The Minor Flaws of Social Handicap and Poorly Trained Folk Witch are recommended, as well as one

or more Flaws in their use of magic. A sorgin skilled with his magic or perceived as effective and masculine is rare. To possess both these qualities is very rare, and those who do are thought to be descended from Mikelatz, the son of Mari and Sugaar, lord of the raging storm. A sorgin still transforms into a lamia with sufficient Warping.

The Many Faces of Mari

Mari takes many forms and has many names, and is represented in multiple Realms. Mari is essentially a Primal Spirit (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 109), a **Kosmokrator**, an earth-mother goddess governing weather and fortune, and a protector of the ruling class. As such, Mari is also a Daimon that can manifest in multiple different aspects. As a being of magic, Mari has no need of human interaction and cares little for their activities. Indeed, she is often portrayed as shallow and capricious. Faerie manifestations of

Mari exist, craving adoration and manipulating the fates of humanity in her role as a mistress of fortune. These versions of Mari derive power from their worship, communing with sorginak priestesses at ake-larre. Demons likely impersonate Mari, or she may be Infernally tainted. This would explain the darker chthonic aspects of her worship and the magic of the sorginak. The truth is hard to discern. A magical Mari wouldn't care about the existence or activities of imposters, the deceptions of a demonic Mari could not be penetrated,

and the Pretenses of a Faerie could account for any of these details.

Regardless of the Realm association of a particular manifestation, Mari's facets remain the same. She usually appears as a lovely young woman wearing a flowing red gown, but can also manifest as a woman radiating fire, a woman-shaped tree, or a thunderbolt. As a shapeshifter, she favors animals with red hides, like a cow, a mare, or ewe, but also a black male goat, which suggests an Infernal aspect or the presence of a demonic imposter.

intangible form; spirits may also harm her. She may become tangible with a Stamina + Concentration roll (Ease Factor 12), and may be harmed normally when tangible. She must make an additional roll to remain tangible if wounded; wound penalties apply to the roll.

SORGINA

Free Social Status Virtue

The character is a member of the folk witch tradition of the Pyrenees, with members in Provence and Iberia. Basque villagers respect or fear the character, but members of the Church might persecute a sorgina for heretical behavior. This Virtue is equivalent with the Folk Witch Social Status (See *Hedge Magic*, page 34) and may be taken in addition to the Hermetic Magus Social Status Virtue. It is also compatible with many other Social Status Virtues and Flaws, and with Wealthy and Poor. The character has been trained as a sorgina. She may perform folk witch laboratory activities such as brewing potions, she uses sorgina casting methods with her Supernatural Virtues and gains the associated magical defenses, and she is a member of a coven who attends ake-larre meetings. As she is not supported by a covenant, like a magus is, she must spend two seasons each year supporting herself—normally by performing magical services for the local community. She may not take Virtues and Flaws associated with Witch's Moon. (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 42)

EXISTING VIRTUES & FLAWS

Hermetic Virtues & Flaws suggested for Folk Witches are listed on page 36 of *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*. The Folk Witch Virtues & Flaws detailed in that chapter also apply to the sorginak. Further suggestions follow. Note that since Folk Witch powers are based on a single Ability, a Magic Focus would not be appropriate. Instead, use Potent Magic, granting a bonus to Casting Scores and Lab Totals to magic within a specified field (+3 Minor, +6 Major), and allowing her to incorporate Casting Items into powers that require preparation time.

Major Hermetic Virtues: Major Potent Magic, Mythic Blood

Minor Hermetic Virtues: Minor Potent Magic

Other Minor Virtues: Intuition, Wise One

Sorginak Powers

The magic of a sorgina is much the same as any other folk witch (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 3). The complexities of that system are too numerous to summarize here. Troupes lacking access to the book are encouraged to improvise by substituting similar spell-like effects. This section explains the few ways that the sorginak powers are different from other Folk Witches.

CASTING METHODS

Sorginak use the same Casting Methods as other folk witches, with a few slight changes.

Potions: Sorginak brew drinkable potions, but are also create alternative applications such as herbal salves or incense. Potions can be used with Animal Ken, Dowsing, Ecstatic Magic, Flight, Healing, Premonitions/Visions, Second Sight, Shapeshifter, and Wilderness Sense.

Incantations: Sorginak incantations use the Euskara language. Incantations can be used for any sorginak Ability except Ecstatic Magic. This is a greater range than other Folk Witches.

Fetish: Sorginak use Fetishes the same ways as other Folk Witches. They are employed for Dowsing, Flight, Hex, Shapeshifter, and Wilderness Sense. Skinchanger is not an Ability, but Fetish is still the Method used.

HEX

Characteristic: Communication

Form: Vim

Method: Incantations, Fetish

Magical Defense: Accelerated Expiry; Defense against effects that target her by Voice or Arcane Connection.

Sorginak cast hexes to cause misfortune to others, similar to the way other Folk Witches use Cursing, but calling upon malicious darker forces. This is the same

power described in *Realms of Power: Infernal*, affiliated with the Magic Realm and modified as described. Hexes are still Infernally Tainted, a detail imperceptible to Magic or Faerie investigation but readily apparent to Infernal or Divine power.

If using Incantations to hex someone, the sorgina must make eye contact with or touch the target, and the target must be able to hear her incanting the rhymes alluding to the ill fortune that awaits him. Alternatively, using a Fetish requires incorporating an Arcane Connection to the specified target and a Season of preparation. The fetish may be used once and the hex specified when it is prepared, but it can be retained and invoked at any later time the sorgina chooses, from any distance (as long as she holds the fetish). If she uses a prepared fetish in addition to incantations (within Eye/Touch range), she gains a +1 bonus to her Penetration Multiplier.

The sorgina must specify a time-frame within which the hex takes effect, anywhere from immediately to a lifetime. Hexes are more difficult if they manifest quickly, and longer delayed hexes are easier. The Ease Factor is based on Severity, modified for Duration and Delay.

HEX CASTING TOTAL:
Communication + Hex + Aura + Stress Die
vs Ease Factor
(Severity + Duration + Delay)

Hex Ease Factors

| BASE | SEVERITY | EXAMPLES |
|------|----------|--|
| 6 | Minor | Ensure Failure, Cause Minor Misfortune, Bestow Minor Flaw for duration, Manipulate target for duration |
| 12 | Serious | Cripple Sense or Limb for duration, Transform Target for duration |
| 18 | Major | Inflict Major Disease, Cause Major Misfortune, Bestow Major Flaw for duration |
| 24 | Critical | Cripple or Incapacitate someone, Cause Aging Crisis |
| 30 | Terminal | Death or Ruination |

| MOD | DURATION |
|-----|--|
| +0 | Momentary |
| +3 | Hour/Simple Condition (any common superstitious cure) |
| +6 | Day/Minor Condition (a simple specific task) |
| +9 | Moon/Moderate Condition (a demanding or complex task) |
| +12 | Season/Major Condition (a difficult and challenging task) |
| +15 | Year/Ultimate Condition (a vague or impossible task) |

| MOD | DELAY |
|-----|------------|
| +12 | Moment |
| +9 | Hour |
| +6 | Day |
| +3 | Week |
| 0 | Month |
| -3 | Season |
| -6 | Year |
| -9 | Generation |
| -12 | Lifetime |

PREMONITIONS/VISIONS

Characteristic: Perception
Form: Imaginem
Method: Potion or Incantations
Magical Defense: Fluctuating Fortune (*Art & Academe*, page 134), Defense in situations where she could avoid effects with a roll, such as Defense, Soak, Personality Traits, and so on.
 See *ArM5*, page 67 and page 60.

For a sorgina, the Premonitions Virtue is

always linked with the Visions Flaw. Sorginak use Premonitions normally, activating them through the invocation of a daily prayer, and Visions come to characters in dreams.

WILDERNESS SENSE

Characteristic: Perception
Form: Animal, Auram, Herbam, Terram
Method: Potion, Incantation, or Fetish
Magical Defense: Magical Fortitude, Defense against wilderness and weather related effects
 See *ArM5*, page 67.

SUMMONING

Characteristic: Presence
Form: Vim
Method: Incantation
Magical Defense: Immovable Object, Defense against effects that try to move or conjure her
 See *Realms of Power: Infernal*, page 114.

COMMANDING

Characteristic: Communication
Form: Vim
Method: Incantation
Magical Defense: Immovable Object, Defense against effects that try to control or manipulate her.
 See *Realms of Power: Infernal*, page 117.

Example Hexes

The Warty Prince
Ease Factor: 21, Duration: Simple Condition, Delay: 1 Day
 The target is transformed into a toad at sunrise the next day; receiving a kiss breaks the hex.
 (Serious transformation 12 + Simple Condition 3 + One Day Delay +6)

Silence the Mighty Knight
Ease Factor: 21, Duration: Moon, Delay: 1 Day
 The target wakes tomorrow with the

Incomprehensible flaw for the next Moon.
 (Minor Flaw 6 + Duration: Moon 9 + Delay: Day +6)

A Sleeping Scion for Stolen Lands
Ease Factor: 18+, Duration: Simple Condition, Delay: Generation
 The target's first child falls asleep on reaching the age of majority until the sorgina's land is returned.
 (Incapacitate 24 + Simple Condition 3 + Generation Delay -9)

Potent Magic

Minor or Major Hermetic Virtue

The maga's magic is particularly attuned to a narrow field, much as in a Magical Focus. The benefits of Potent Magic are compatible with a Magical Focus; unlike a Magical Focus, a magus may have more than one area of Potent Magic, though only one Potent Magic Virtue applies to any single activity.

Potent Magic provides the maga with a bonus in her field of magic, and permits her to devise Potent spells which gain a casting bonus from the sympathetic magic in shapes and materials.

Potent Magic can be taught as an alternative to a Magical Focus. For sorginak, it may be taken during character creation.

DESCRIPTION

Minor Potent Magic covers the same narrow fields as a Minor Magical Focus, granting a +3 bonus to Lab Totals and Casting Score.

Major Potent Magic covers the same, wider, fields as a Major Magical Focus, granting a +6 bonus to Lab Totals and Casting Score.

A maga with Potent Magic may also invent new Potent Spells (see below) within the field of her Potent Magic, and may vary spells she knows.

POTENT SPELLS

A Potent Spell has a bonus known as its Potency, which derives from combining one or more Casting Items into the design of the spell. Casting Items use the

factors given in the Shape & Material Bonus table: each Casting Item provides one bonus. (If more than one bonus is possible, the spell design states which one is used.)

POTENCY:

sum of bonus from each casting item

Any magus can learn a Potent spell from a Lab Text or Teacher, and apply Potency to his Casting Score. Potency is always limited by your Magic Theory score. If a spell's Potency exceeds your Magic Theory score, you cannot learn or devise such a spell.

Potency is part of the spell design; a Lab Text for a Potent Spell includes the specified Casting Items and Potency score. A Magus teaching a Potent Spell teaches the formula they know, including the Casting Items and Potency score.

To cast a Potent Spell, the caster must touch the specified Casting Items. The items need not be large: they may be small and symbolic (for example, a shield-shaped brooch is still symbolically a shield).

Example: a Wand provides several bonuses including +2 "repel things" and +4 "control things at a distance." A Potent version of Disguise of the Putrid Aroma could use either bonus in its Potency. Combined with Magnetite (+3 Animal) allows a design with either Potency 5 (requires Magic Theory 5) or Potency 7 (requires Magic Theory 7). The caster must hold a wand and piece of magnetite (or a wand set with magnetite), and adds Potency to Casting Score.

Potency applies only to formulaic spells — spontaneous magic allows Ceremonial Casting to produce similar results,

and enchanted devices use Shape & Material bonuses during enchantment.

POTENT MAGIC AND POTENT SPELLS

A magus with Potent Magic may create new Potent spells or alter Potent spells to vary the Casting Items.

When inventing a spell within the field of his Potent Magic (including from a Lab Text), the magus simply chooses Casting Items for the design, and then invents the spell as normal. Each chosen Casting Item (up to the limit of Magic Theory) adds a single Shape or Material bonus to Potency. (If more than one bonus might apply to the spell, choose one and note it in the design). The total Potency may not exceed Magic Theory.

A Lab Text written for this spell includes the Casting Items and Potency, and is usable by any other magus.

In addition, a magus who knows a spell within the field of their Potent Magic may invent a variant spell with different Casting Items. If the only difference is a change in Casting Items, they may invent the variant in a single season. A magus cannot learn a Potent Spell if Potency exceeds their Magic Theory, so some of these spells are powerful but very difficult to learn.

DESIGNING COVENANT LIBRARIES

When creating a Covenant and choosing Lab Texts for the library, add Potency (if any) to spell level when counting Build Points, and record the casting-items required.

ECSTATIC MAGIC

Characteristic: Stamina

Form: Mentem

Method: Potion

Magical Defense: Accelerated Expiry, Defense against effects that try to affect her mind or control her body.

This ability is similar to the ability of Nightwalkers, as described in *Hedge Magic*

Revised Edition, page 104.

Unlike a nightwalker, a sorgina may not take anyone with her, may only stray during akelarre, may not take alternate forms while intangible, and may not affect dreamers. While intangible, she has all the limitations of a straying nightwalker, including: appearing dead while straying, having the Magical Air Flaw

while intangible, suffering any injuries on her physical form inflicted on her intangible form, vulnerable to harm from any spells that affect spirits or ghosts while intangible, and vulnerable to harm while tangible from anything that would harm their mundane physical form. A straying sorgina must Penetrate an *Aegis of the Hearth*, or any ward against people or spirits, to pass through it.

Warping

Certain lineages of sorginak do not experience the Witch's Moon. While part of their lore, their magic changed (or was corrupted), and these covens instead experience Ecstatic Catharsis. Similar to the Trollsyrir (as experienced by gruagachan), the process gradually physically transforms the sorgina into one of the laminak. Ecstatic Magic makes resisting Catharsis more difficult, but increases the chances to benefit from it. Some call these witches "True Sorginak."

Whenever a sorgina receives two or more Warping Points from a magical botch or other event, she may undergo Catharsis. While experiencing Catharsis, the sorgina suffers a sort of seizure, falling to the ground and convulsing in ecstasy, as the magics affect her body. The sorgina has one opportunity to avoid the experience.

CATHARSIS AVOIDANCE TOTAL:
Stamina + Concentration
 + Premonitions + stress die
 vs. **Warping Score + Number of**
Warping Points Gained
 + Ecstatic Magic + local aura

If successful, she spends a few minutes bringing her ecstasy under control.

AVOIDANCE TIME:
40 Rounds minus
(Avoidance Success + Second Sight)

If she fails, she undergoes Catharsis. If she botches, she cannot Assimilate Catharsis and suffers Debasement. A sorgina may choose not to resist Catharsis, instead embracing it willingly, attempting to quickly Assimilate it. Regardless, the sorgina now attempts Assimilation.

CATHARSIS ASSIMILATION TOTAL:
Intelligence + Ecstatic Magic + stress
die
 vs **Warping Score + stress die**

TIME SPENT IN ECSTASY:
One hour per point of Warping Score

REDUCING TIME SPENT IN ECSTASY:
Cost: 1 Confidence Point

TIME SPENT BECOMES:
Warping – (Stress Die + Perception +



Tradition Ex Miscellanea: Hermetic Sorginak

Occasionally, a sorgina will be trained Hermetically by one of the few magi belonging to the descendants of the coven which managed the Hermetic integration of sorgina powers. They tend to aggressively protect their secrets and look down upon other sorginak, knowing they are far more powerful than their sisters. This creates jealous rivalries which occasionally erupt with fatal results. When such a feud involves only sorginak, neither party tends to involve Quasitors or Redcaps; they feel it is "sorginak business."

The first sorginak joined the Order of Hermes in the 10th century, inducted by members of House Flambeau searching for resources to turn against the Moorish invaders of Iberia. The sorginak provided limited assistance through their traditional Folk Witch powers, and in the end, turned inward to care for the Basque communities where they lived. However, one coven continued working with a pair of Bonisagus brothers on sorginak

integration with Hermetic Theory. They succeeded, but most were killed shortly afterwards (and before widespread publication of their findings) by drakes lured to their covenant by Moorish Sahirs. By 1220, the tradition remains very small, as most members or descendents of the original coven perished before training a successor.

KEY FACTS

Favored Tribunals: Provençal, Iberia, a very few in Normandy

Major Non-Hermetic Virtue: One Major Sorginak Ability (Healing, Hex, Shapeshifter, or Summoning)

Major Hermetic Flaw: Necessary Condition (Potions, Euskara Incantations, and Fetishes)

Minor Hermetic Virtue: Exotic Casting

Second Sight) hours, see later.

If successful, the sorgina Assimilates Catharsis, achieving Epiphany. Unsuccessful Assimilation results in Debasement. Either way, Catharsis is accompanied by an ecstatic reaction. The sorgina is incapacitated with intense sensation and cannot comprehend the world around her. This leaves her vulnerable until she manages to control her ecstasy. The time necessary to control the sensations is not based upon Assimilation success or failure. Rather, ecstasy lasts one hour per point of her Warping Score. She may attempt to gather her wits by force of will, by spending a point of Confidence and using Second Sight to discern reality. Rolling a Stress Die + Perception + Second Sight, subtract that many hours from the recovery time. If the result is 0 or less, the sorgina regains control instantly. She is not confused, and is not forced to make any Concentration rolls. If the attempt botches, multiply the time by (1 + the number of botches). Cathartic Ecstasy lasting extremely long periods of time can have detrimental effects, such as Long-Term Fatigue and deprivation.

Once the sorgina reaches a Warping Score of 10, she becomes one of the laminak and is no longer human. Laminak are river fae who live near the edge of settlements, unable to step on hallowed ground, but performing tasks such as plowing and bridge building in the night. Seven sorginak laminak supposedly directly serve Mari. Once fully transformed into laminak, the storyguide assumes control of the character. Suggestions for Epiphany and Debasement are as follows.

EPIPHANY

Increased Knowledge: The sorgina gains experience points in a pre-existing Su-

pernatural Ability, equal to (the character's Warping Score + a simple die).

Sorginak Virtue: The sorgina gains a new sorginak Ability, Mystery, or other Virtue.

Lamia Virtue: The sorgina gains a Virtue appropriate for laminak. Examples include: Entrancements, Faerie Blood (laminak), Great Presence, Puissant Charm, and Venus' Blessing.

DEBASEMENT

Lost Knowledge: The sorgina loses experience points in a pre-existing Supernatural Ability, equal to (the character's Warping Score + a simple die).

Sorginak Flaw: The sorgina gains a new Supernatural or Hermetic Flaw.

Lamia Flaw: The sorgina gains a Flaw appropriate for laminak. Examples include: Curse of Venus, Delusion, Disfigured (chicken, goat, or webbed feet), Envious, Lecherous, Obsessed (obtain and keep a gold personal comb), Offensive to Animals, Tainted with Evil, Weakness (personal comb).

Hermetic Considerations

Relative to other traditions, the sorginak comprise a relatively large and well organized community of hedge wizards. However, they are concentrated in a small area dominated by a more powerful magical tradition, the Order of Hermes. In several situations, sorginak have come into conflict with Hermetic magi, and rivalries still occur occasionally. However, these are minor affairs, and most sorginak covens cooperate with the Order or try to avoid it. Basque magic has been of interest to several magi in the past, and some aspects have been incorporated as new Virtues. There is also a small Ex Miscellanea tradition of sorginak, but most Basque magi are actually of a tra-

ditional Latin House.

There are also Gifted Basques who have pursued other forms of Hermetic magic, the most famous being Apromor, the filius of Flambeau and first Primus to lead that House. Many Basque magi, and especially those of House Ex Miscellanea, possess the Minor Hermetic Virtue of Exotic Casting.

EXOTIC CASTING

Minor, Hermetic

The magus uses non-Hermetic methods to cast Hermetic spells. While he still needs to employ obvious ritual actions, these are not the same words and gestures taught as part of Magic Theory within the Order, and other magi who are unfamiliar with the magus' tradition find it very hard to recognize which spell he is casting. Any attempt to determine the Form of his magical effect (**ArM5**, page 83) is made against an Ease Factor of 15, without the magnitude of the effect being subtracted from this Ease Factor as normal. If the character has any Supernatural Abilities, then he uses the same methods to cast his Hermetic magic as he does to use his non-Hermetic magic. The magus cannot choose to use the standard Hermetic methods instead of those of his native tradition, but can choose to reduce or forgo words and gestures in the usual fashion (**ArM5**, page 83).

Chapter Seven

Narbonnais

The region once known as "Gallia Narbonensis," or "Septimania," and now locally called Narbonnais, has been settled by the remnants of the Roman Empire for over a thousand years, witnessing many conflicts, and watching the intrigues of countless nobles. This is where Hannibal marched on Rome, where the Imperial legions began their conquest of Gaul, and where Charlemagne halted the advance of the Moorish armies into Europe. In the thirteenth century, Narbonnais plays host to the struggles of the count of Toulouse, the ascension of the king of Aragon, the interests of the king of France, and the atrocities of the Albigenian Crusade. Two active covenants operate in Narbonnais, Ara Maxima Nova and Stella Durus.

Local Nobility

Two men shape the mundane politics of the Narbonnais: Raimond VI, count of Toulouse, and James, king of Aragon. Until his death in 1218, Simon de Montfort was also a major player, and the impact of the Crusade is yet to fully play out.

Covenants of Narbonnais

Current Covenants: Ara Maxima Nova, Stella Durus

Ruined, Abandoned, or Lost Covenants: Himinis' Forge, Uxellodunum, Two Diedne covenants in the Massif Central whose names and locations are lost.

Territory of Raimond VI

The counts of Toulouse administered the city of Toulouse for the Merovingians and the Carolingians, and this became a hereditary title supposedly owing fealty to the King of France but in truth existing as an independent realm commonly called Toulousain. It is covered in greater detail in Chapter 4. The counts have interests beyond that region, however, making them major players in Narbonnais as well.

County of Lodeve

Part of the Aude river district, Lodeve is dominated by vineyards and herds of sheep. The region's Corbieres Mountains are the first foothills of the Pyrenees. The primary settlement in the county is the town of Lodeve, a popular stop on the Way of St. James to Compostela. The Knights Templar maintain a fortified, walled town a day's ride to the north of Lodeve.

The cathedral is dedicated to Saint

Genesius, a third century clerk from Arles who was martyred in 303, a victim of the persecution of Diocletian. Saint Genesius' beheading is represented on the keystone of the apse. He is the patron saint of clerks and notaries. The preserved body of Fulcran, the former bishop, is buried within the cathedral's catacombs. Fulcran died in 1006 and is also considered a saint for his purity. The cathedral has a Divine aura of 5.

The Grandmontine Order, which follows the Rule of St. Steven, maintains a priory a few miles outside Lodeve. Overlooking the countryside from atop a tall hill in the middle of an oak forest filled with dolmens and Roman ruins, the Priory of St Michel de Grandmont hosts pilgrims traveling the Way of St. James. It has a Divine aura of 4, and on the night of the summer solstice there is a Faerie aura of 4 around the largest dolmen on the grounds.

ST. THIBERY

A 450 ft. segmented arch bridge crosses the Hérault River in the town of St. Thibery as part of the Via Domitia. Its Roman origins are questionable as the spans are inconsistent with other imperial construction. Is this the handiwork of a faerie or a demon?

Vis Site: The Ancient Wine Press

Cut into the living stone near a vineyard, this large rectangular trough produces 4 pawns of Herbam in the pomace of the must—the solid portion of seeds, skins, and stems—if the grapes of the first harvest are stomped barefoot. Repeating the process with the last harvest yields 6 pawns of vis, but they are vis Infesta. In centuries past, an angry mob

believed they discovered a pagan ritual being performed, and killed the young women thought to be participating. In truth, the women had been working on the last batch of grapes when fauns seduced them. The maids were caught just after lying with the faeries. Unconvinced by their pleas, the crowd stoned the girls to death.

Old Man of the Bridge: The Tempter of St. Thibery

Order: Tempters (tenetores)

Infernal Might: 15 (Vim)

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

Size: +0

Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Charm, Puissant Guile; Weak-willed

Personality Traits: Greedy +5, Selfish +5, Deceptive +3, Tricky +3, Tempter Demon +3, Cowardly +2

Hierarchy: 0

Combat:

Fist: Init +3, Attack +3, Defense +5, Damage +3

Walking Stick (club): Init +4, Attack +6, Defense +7, Damage +6

Soak: +2

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

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

Abilities: Awareness 3 (humans), Brawl 2 (club), Charm 4+2 (first encounters), Concentration 3 (maintaining concentration), Folk Ken 3 (humans), Guile 5+2 (reducing risks), Penetration 1 (Rushing Wages of Greed)

Powers:

Coagulation, 2 points, Init -1, Corpus. The demon can obtain a material form, which it may dissolve at will.

Obsession, 1-3 points, Init -5, Vim. The demon can impose the Obsession Trait of Greed. (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 31-32)

Envisioning, 1/5 points, Init +0, Mentem.

The demon may appear in the dreams of a sleeping target (which costs 1 point), or make the target experience a waking dream or vision (in which case it costs 5 points). The demon twists the dream, causing the target to imagine life in terrible poverty with extreme needs. This causes the victim to make a Brave Personality roll against an Ease Factor of 9, or suffer natural abject terror and lose a long term Fatigue level.

Change Form, 0 point, Init 0, Corpus. The demon can change the shape of its manifestation at will, to whatever human or animal form it desires. The Old Man of the Bridge may shift into a raven or cause his bundle of firewood to disappear.

Trove Just Beyond Reach, 4 points, Init +1, Imaginem. The Old Man creates a phantasm of a cracked strongbox spilling silver and gold coins into the riverbed and lying in plain view of the bridge. The waters around it look deep enough to leap into safely, but clear and very calm. **CrIm 20 R:**

Sight, D: Sun, T: Individual. (Base 3, +3 Sight, +2 Sun)

Rushing Wages of Greed, 8 points, Init -1, Aquam. The Old Man creates an area of swiftly flowing, churning water with a strong undertow. Escaping the area requires Swim rolls with a -6 penalty, or the swimmer suffers deprivation from drowning (**ArM5**, page 180). **ReAq 40 R:** Sight, D: Conc, T: Part. (Base 5, +3 Sight, +1 Conc +1 Part +2 Size)

Weakness: Compulsive (The demon can do nothing until it has finished counting coins thrown on the ground and placing them in its purse)

Vis: There are three pawns of Vim vis, in the demon's money purse.

Appearance: The demon manifests as a wizened old man in peasant's garb, carrying a large bundle of firewood sticks tied to its back. It moves with the assistance of a cane and carries a lantern. It attempts to convince travelers to dive into the river while it watches their possessions—asking for half of what the victim recovers and using its powers to amplify greedy feelings. As the dupe leaps into the river, the demon uses Rushing Wages of Greed, possibly drowning the individual.

Vassals of Toulouse

The counts of Toulouse have many vassals whose holdings are found in this region.

County of Béziers

The country of Béziers has been a holding of the counts of Carcassonne since 1034. From 1194 to 1209, Béziers was ruled by Raimond-Rogier Roger Trencavel, who was also the count of Carcassonne, the count of Albi, and the count of Razès, he owed fealty to both Peter II of Aragon and Raimond VI of Toulouse. He died a prisoner of the crusaders in 1209; see "Carcassonne" in Chap-

ter 4: Toulousain. Like much of Provence, Béziers is a land of temperate climate with forested rolling hills.

BÉZIERES

Built as a colony for Roman veterans during Augustus Caesar's reign, Béziers exports white wine. Its walls were built with stones from the old amphitheatre, and the River Orb borders its ruins on three sides. Trencavel relied heavily on the Jews of the city to administer daily operations.

As a stronghold of the Cathars, the city suffered greatly during the Albigensian Crusade. It was nearly burned to the ground, and while reconstruction began in 1215, there is still a long way to go. The new cathedral's construction utilizes the foundations of the old structure, which had stood since 1130. The tall limestone church of the Madeleine

that served as the viscount's chapel is one of the city's few remaining structures. It was from the steps of this building that Arnaud Amaury uttered the infamous order "Kill them all; God will know his own." The other surviving house of God, the church of Saint Aphrodise, who Christianized the city, is built over a 3rd century necropolis. After the butchery committed by the crusaders, the entire city suffered under an Infernal aura of 7, which rises to 8 on the anniversary of the massacre (July 22nd) and drops to nothing during Advent and Lent.

Duchy of Narbonne

This used to be a hereditary office of the count of Toulouse referring to the rulership of the region, but Raimond VI was dispossessed of the duchy during the Albigensian

Crusade. Since Simon de Montfort's death in 1218, the title of duke of Narbonne has belonged to Arnould Amaury, the current archbishop of Narbonne and papal legate. The title of viscount of Narbonne, which refers to the secular ruler of the city of Narbonne, is separate from the ducal title. A famous viscountess of Narbonne was Ermengarde, who ruled from 1132 to 1194. Five "judgements of love," as detailed in the authority on courtly love, the treatise *De Arte Honeste Amandi* by André le Chapelain, are attributed to her. She corresponded with and encouraged many troubadours, creating a strong artistic tradition in Narbonne that has survived despite the Crusade.

NARBONNE

Known for its tolerant attitudes, in its time Narbonne has both acted as the capital of Visigothic Septimania and belonged to the Emirate of Cordoba. The city boasts both a vital port and fishing community on

the Aude River and serves as a cultural center for the troubadours. A well-known population of Jewish scholars operates several schools at this crossroads of the Via Domitia and the Via Aquitania.

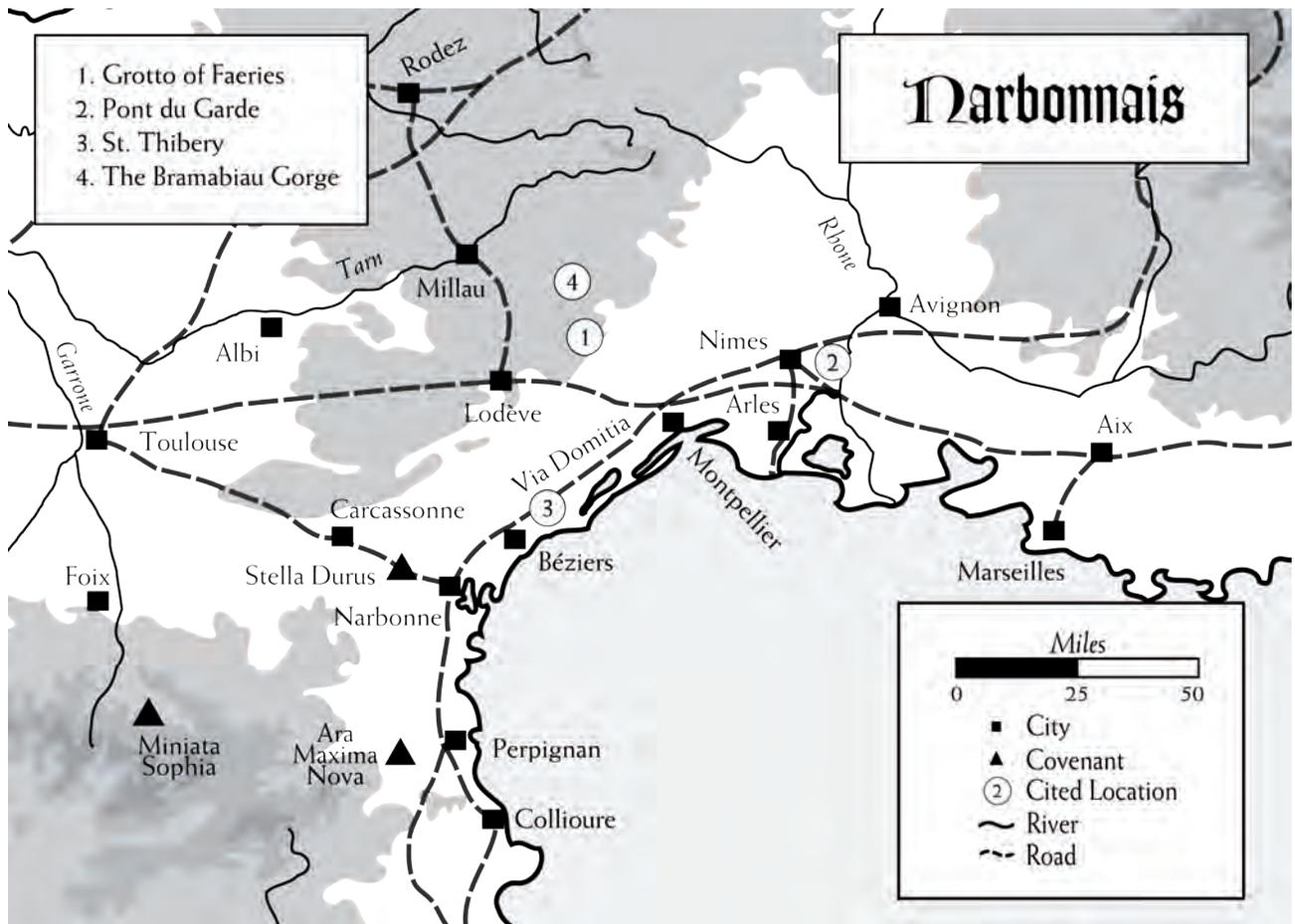
The cathedral of Saint-Just-et-Saint-Pasteur de Narbonne currently lies in a ruined state from neglect. The viscount of Narbonne and the Archbishop feuded over control of the city for decades in the 1100s. Currently, the Archbishop controls the western half, and the viscount oversees the eastern portion and the commune, or bourg. This conflict has led to the neglect of many churches, including the cathedral. This has left the city with a weak Divine aura of 2, which rises to 3 on the feast days of its patron saints. The basilica of St. Paul-Serge, which is built on the site of a 4th-century cemetery established by Constantine, retains a Divine aura of 5 at all times.

The Abbey of St Mary of Lagrasse, which lies about two days' ride west of the city, is still influential in the region. The abbot of Narbonne, Nimphridius, estab-

lished the monastic community in the 7th century according to the Benedictine rule. It was elevated to the rank of abbey in 779 and enriched quickly thanks to the sponsorship of Charlemagne and donations from neighboring lords. It acquired lands, castles, priories and other assets. For example, in 1115, one of the viscounts of Narbonne, Aimery II, donated the village of Le Lac to the abbey to resolve a conflict with the archbishop. During the 12th century it ruled over a large territory spread through the dioceses of Toulouse and Béziers and the county of Urgell, but the Crusade has caused its decline.

County of Nimes

A hereditary holding of Toulouse since the ninth century, the county of Nimes is the eastern march of the count's lands. Full of rolling hills, streams, and forested regions with a pleasant Mediterranean climate, it



has a rich abundance of natural resources like cork, grapes and olives. The city of Nîmes is known for its textile industry.

NÎMES

Some claim this city was founded by Heracles' son, Nemausios, around a healing spring. The administration of Nîmes occupies the old Roman amphitheatre, an enormous structure capable of holding 16,000 people, which also acts as a refuge in times of danger. An order of the viscount's knights — the Knights of the Arena — and the bishop's palace complex are also housed within the structure's apartments. Legends suggest the tunnels beneath the arena connect to the amphitheatre in Arles, which has also been converted into a fortress. The arena enjoys a Divine aura of 3.

Two other major Roman edifices still dominate Nîmes. The first stands nearly 20 paces high and overlooks the city from its highest point: the Tour Magne is an eight-sided, three-story tower which incorporates the last remnants of the Roman walls. The second, the Maison Carree, was originally a temple dedicated to Apollo where judges would gather, and now serves as offices for the four consuls who represent the city. It sits on a podium with six columns supporting a portico on either end, a perfect example of a Roman temple. Nestled within a lacuna, there is a lingering Faerie aura of 1 here, which increases to 3 on February 9th, the ancient date of the Festival of Apollo.

THE BRAMABIAU GORGE

In hills between Millau and Nîmes, the river Bonheur plunges into a large cave in a cliff-face. After traveling along a subterranean gorge which includes six waterfalls, it reemerges from another large cave opening as the Bramabiau (Occitan for "Roaring Ox"), and continues down a box canyon toward the coast. Entering from the lower cavern, one can delve into the various passages. In a side tunnel, just past a waterfall, there are fetishes and gallery paintings which might be studied for Insight into cultic Fertility Magic (*Ancient Magic*, page 54). This passage has a Magic aura of 3, and 4 on nights of the full moon.

GROTTO OF FAERIES

South of the Bramabiau Gorge, but still tucked into the hills between Millau and Nîmes, an underground river also flows through the back of this deep cavern. Several large galleries, called "cathedrals" by the locals, sink nearly 200 paces down into the rock and require a difficult climb down to the floor. A group of lesser nymphs (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 71) dance and sing to the genius loci spirit of the river. They are the source of the sounds of flowing water often emanating from the mouth of the cave. The entire cave system has a Faerie aura of 3.

THE NEMAUSIAN SPRING

This spring near Nîmes is said to have been established as a shrine dedicated to the son of Heracles by Gauls before the conquest of Julius Caesar. Others claim it to be the ancient altar once consecrated to the local magic spirit known as Volcae, a being venerated by the indigenous tribes until the Romans' arrival. A spirit still resides here, though greatly weakened by the spread of the Dominion and nearby seat of the bishopric in the converted Arena of Nîmes. It produces three pawns of Creo or Aquam vis in the form of very clear, very small pools of steaming water which well up every summer solstice.

March of Provence

The March is ruled by Raymond Berenguer IV, who is also the count of Provence. This forces the count of Provence to owe fealty to both Aragon and Toulouse.

AVIGNON

The city of Avignon stands in the March of Provence, rising up behind the tall ramparts of a double wall and overlooking an impressive bridge across the Rhone river, which flows along the northern urban border. The castle stands on the remains of a Roman castrum and the town center hosts a thriving community of craftsmen and tradesmen's guilds. As of 1200, the consuls declared independence from Toulouse and

the Holy Roman Empire, establishing a republic. It is described in greater detail in Chapter 8: Arelat.

County of Rodez

The county of Rodez was created from part of the old county of Rouergue, and was initially an appanage of Toulouse, until it was seized by the ancestor of the viscount in 1112. The House of Millau ruled Rodez in unbroken succession through the 13th century. The current count's father, Hugh II, sponsored the abbey of Bonnetcombe. The current count of Rodez, Henry I, plans to take the cross and leave on Crusade. His son, Hugh, is only eight years old, and his father plans to leave him here, under the case of his mother is Algayette, heiress of Guy, lord of Scorailles. The House of Millau is a great supporter of the troubadour movement and Rodez is considered its heart. Hugh II and Henry I are both known as patrons of multiple troubadours. (Henry was preceded as count by two short-lived half brothers, Hugh and William.)

The Knights Templar kept five separate towns within Rodez, sold to them in order to fund the count of Toulouse's participation in the First Crusade. The fortified villages of La Cavalerie, La Couvertoirade, and Saint-Jean d'Alcas, and the commanderies in Saint-Eulalie de Cernon and Viala du Pas de Jaux all support Templar operations in the area, and have since the mid-12th century. Guillaume de Saunhac is tutor to the current commander of Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon. He becomes the Master of the Knights Templar in 1245.

RODEZ

Known for the contentious relationships between the bishops of Rodez and the count, large double walls divide this agricultural trade center into sectors of authority. It is located at the confluence of the Aveyron and Auterne rivers on the Plateau de Segala. Constructed of red sandstone in 1000, the western wall of the Rodez Cathedral is part of the city's external defenses and boasts two towers. It has a Divine aura of 5. Other notable buildings include the Bishop's Palace

with its tall tower, and the church of Saint Amand; its choir holds sixth century tapestries representing the miracles of Amand, the patron saint of all who brew beer. St. Amand's church enjoys a Divine aura of 4.

Territory of James of Aragon

The king of Aragon also holds a great deal of land in this region.

County of Gévaudan

Held by the crown of Aragon since 1112, this domain was previously part of the diocese of Mende, and the bishop of Mende attempted to retake control of it repeatedly in the 12th century. It has eight barons who resisted the bishop's rule, despite the fact that King Louis VII granted the clergyman temporal power over the area with the Golden Bull of Gévaudan. These barons are sworn to James.

The northern portion of this realm includes some of the more rugged parts of the Massif Central. Sparsely populated, it is renowned for its vicious and cunning wolves.

MONTPELLIER

This city was established by the counts of Toulouse in 985 after pirate raids drove the population further inland, and grew in prominence through the 12th century as a spice trading center with a rich tradition of tolerance for Cathars, Jews, and Muslims. It is built on two hills — Montpellier and Montpellieret, with frequently steep streets connecting them. A wall, the Tour de la Babote, surrounds the city, and a castle overlooks it.

William VII of Montpellier established the school which was recognized in 1220 as the University of Montpellier, famous for its studies in medicine (and detailed further in *Art & Academe*, page 109). Marie of Montpel-

lier, the city's hereditary ruler, married Peter II of Aragon in 1204 and gave birth to James there in 1208. This alliance confirmed Marie's claim to rulership and allowed the city to claim a charter which included a tradition of annually selecting twelve governing consuls.

County of Millau

Millau became a part of the crown of Aragon through the same marriage that incorporated Gévaudan in the early 12th century. Later, Alphonso II granted the town of Millau a consular charter, allowing consuls to levy taxes and enforce laws. Located at the confluence of the Tarn and Dourbie rivers, Millau has a 17-span Roman-era bridge crossing the Tarn—one of the biggest such bridges in Mythic Europe. Its presence places the town on a significant trading route.

The region was a major source of pottery in the Roman Empire and still has a thriving industry in 1220. The Roman ruins, however, are primarily on the opposite shore of the Tarn, and are mostly forgotten despite a Magic aura of 3. Local craftsmen are also renowned for excellent leatherworking and for exporting the Roquefort cheese they make in caves dotting the surrounding hills.

Countless enormous, ancient stone tables and standing stones, called dolmens and menhirs, are scattered across this area, attesting to its pagan roots. They are largely ignored by the locals, believed to be the homes and gathering places of faerie creatures. Faerie auras of 2 to 4 can be found at these sites, with stronger creatures lairing at more powerful auras.

The Eglise Notre-Dame-de-l'Espinasse, the church of Millau, supposedly keeps a fragment of the Crown of Thorns as its relic. It has a Divine aura of 4.

County of Roussillon

Roussillon derived its name from Rus-cino, a small fortified place where Gaulish chieftains met to consider Hannibal's request for a conference. Although a very agricultural region, it is known for its vineyards and woad production. Woad is processed to create a light blue indigo dye used in clothing. The viscount even has a few small iron mines at the foot of the Pyrenees, and a small gold mine near Saint-Jean-Pla-de-Corts, but it does not produce much. When Viscount Gerard II died without heirs in 1172, rulership passed to Alphonso II of Aragon by a prior agreement with Gerard II and his nobles. Alphonso then made his brother Sancho the viscount. Sancho, supported by his son, Nuno, acts as regent for and occasionally conspires against James, who currently lives in Zaragoza.

As this is part of the border with Catalan, many fortifications have been built throughout the region. Controlling the head of the Tet valley, the Castle Rodes sits on a high granite spur. The southern port town of Collioure serves as a departure point for many crusaders, including the Knights Templar, who built a castle overlooking the bay in 1207.

PERPIGNAN

The capital of the county, Perpignan was founded in the ninth century and became a partially self-governing commune in 1197. The traditional industries are wine, olive oil, cork, wool, leather, and iron. It is built along the banks of the Tet river, the largest waterway in Roussillon. High, thick walls surround the city, and the viscount maintains a compound including a chapel, hospital and castle, the Chateau de Rous-

Story Seed: The Wolves of the Massif Central

The wolves hunting in the wilds of the Massif Central are not mere beasts, but a small tribe of shapeshifting werewolves who prey on unfortunate travelers. They make their home in an ancient, Gaulish cave shrine with a Magic aura of 3. Can the

hunters be tamed and their lair transformed into a covenant? The lack of neighbors means such a community could develop in seclusion from the bloody Albigensian Crusade, but may face difficulties acquiring necessary specialists and rarer supplies.

Crown of Thorns Fragment Relic

The Crown of Thorns relic is a fragment of the larger crown in Constantinople and kept in a small, wire-mesh cage made of gold on a fine golden chain. The relic consists of a portion of the rush with three pairs of thorns. It acts as a regular relic (ArM5, page 48), with a Faith Score of 3

and the saintly power to Cure Blindness (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised*, page 52). However, it is rarely drawn from its reliquary as the church priest has no desire to risk damaging it. The relic is paraded before the congregation as a part of the celebration of Lent.

Vis Site: The Abandoned Mine

While quarrying stone or collecting tailings from a small abandoned mine, covenfolk discover a vein of iron or gold, perhaps with a pawn of vis evident. More surprising, every hundredth cartload of ore removed from the mine by hand has 2 pawns of Terram vis. The vis isn't present if the ore is removed magically. It isn't apparent how deep the vein runs, or whether

the process of mining, rather than the ore itself, invests the vis in the site. Will the conditions of the mine prove dangerous to covenfolk unaccustomed to working underground? Will the vis run out if the ore vein is exhausted? The natural resources might be a welcome addition to the covenant's coffers, but will the new mining activity draw the attention of the local lord?

sillon. The castle's 20 pace round tower dominates the site, and the hospital and chapel are both dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The hospital's mission is to serve the urban poor of Perpignan. The Order of Poor Sisters, or Poor Clares, operates in the city, working to establish a convent and living by Franciscan tenets.

Vassals of Aragon

James of Aragon controls some part of the region through his vassals.

County of Foix

The counts of Foix served the counts of Toulouse in the 11th and 12th centuries, but Raymond Roger I, the fifth Count of Foix, a troubadour and a relative of Raimond VI of Toulouse, was imprisoned by the Bishop of Urgell for a time in 1203, before being

freed by Peter II of Aragon and swearing fealty to him. Raymond Roger I is famed for his generalship, chivalry, fidelity, and affection for haute couture. He is not just a patron of troubadours, but an author of verse himself. Although he is not a Cathar, Raymond Roger I married one and fought against Simon de Montfort in the Albigensian Crusade.

Charlemagne established the town of Foix. The Chateau de Foix, a castle built upon a seventh century fortification, served as a refuge for persecuted Cathars during the Crusade. It overlooks the town with its large, round tower. The castle withstood several crusader assaults and the rock beneath it is rumored to be honeycombed with caves. Technically a part of the Pyrenees Marches, Foix is quite active in the lands of Toulousain and Narbonnais.

The monastery of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, which was established in 1104, houses the skeletal relics of St. Volusien, the patron saint of Foix who was kidnapped and tortured to death by Visigoths. A substantial structure, it is built with red sandstone and includes a church with three naves. The monastery serves as the spiritual and social center of Foix, and enjoys a Divine aura of 4.

County of Provence

Raymond Berenguer IV rules the county of Provence in 1220, having escaped Templar captivity, married Beatrice of Savoy, and consolidated his inheritance. The land has seen Italian, Arabic, Frankish and now Catalan rulers. The river Durance acts as its border with the lands of Toulouse. Throughout this region, cathedrals and abbeys built in the 12th century often have fortress-like qualities to serve as protection for residents from pirate raids. The area is detailed further in Chapter 8: Arelat.

Local Flavor

These groups, places, and professions represent aspects of life common within Narbonnais.

Moorish Raiders

Beginning with the Umayyad conquest of Iberia in the eighth century, through the 12th century and to the present day, Moorish pirates have roamed the waters between the Straits of Gibraltar and Sicily like wolves. Primarily based in the Maghreb, from cities like Algiers, Marrakech, or Tangier, they plunder Christian Iberia, southern France, in particular Narbonnais, Italy and Sicily. They also operate out of the nearby Balearic Islands, with a brief cessation in 1115 after the Balearic Crusade, only to resume in the following year. Recently, the Italian city-states, the Norman Sicilians, and the Spanish kingdoms of Aragon and Castile have increased their grip on the Western Mediterranean, but they have not eliminated the pirate threat. One cannot journey from the Catalan Sea into the Ligurian or Sea of Sardinia without threat of attack and fear of slavery, which encourages travel in collected flotillas of vessels for added safety. As discussed in *City and Guild* (page 87), this area can be passed by Moorish vessels, magical assistance, or with a story.



Jewish Scholars

Arles, Montpellier, and Narbonne hold yeshivas, or Jewish religious schools, as described in *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* (pages 129–130), interpreting and recording Talmudic thought. Several respected rabbinical authorities and kabbalist mystics studied in Narbonne, including Moses ha-Darshan in the 11th century and Moses ben Joseph ben Merwan ha-Levi, who many considered one of the foremost Jewish mystics of his age, in the 12th. Referred to

as Hachmei Provence, or “the wise of Provence,” these yeshivas helped establish the literary styles and pedigree which still endure as a scholastic standard within the Jewish religious community.

Knights of the Order of Aubrac

A small group of knights dedicated to guarding pilgrims traveling southwest along the Way of St. James to Compostela, and

southeast toward Rome, was established in Aubrac at the Dôme d’Aubrac in the 11th century and adopted the rule of St. Augustine in 1162. It maintains a number of satellite hospitals, called “commanderies,” in the communes of Bozouls, Millau, Nazac, and Rodez. The Order of Aubrac maintains a competitive rivalry with the Hospitallers, who would like to absorb them, but have been unsuccessful thus far.

Traveling Troubadours

While discussed regionally in Chapter 2, the local focus of troubadour activity is the county of Rodez, a fiefdom of the county of Toulouse. The viscount of Rodez, Henry I, is an established troubadour and he is encouraging his children to maintain his interest.

Early troubadours came from the nobility, but over time, troubadours sprang from every walk of life. Fulk of Toulouse began his career as a troubadour, going on to repent and enter the clergy, eventually becoming the bishop of Toulouse in 1205 and involving himself in the Albigensian Crusade.

Story Seed: A Pirate’s Life

A particularly brutal corsair has taken to raiding along the coast. Not content to simply attack trading vessels, he lands with groups of reavers to attack caravans and pilgrims. In one of these raids, he captures covenfolk out on business, possibly a companion or associate bound for the covenant with correspondence. In order to avoid a life of slavery, the hostage explains to the pirates that the covenant

will pay a ransom, and so the slavers send a message to the covenant. However, the ship’s captain has fueled the crew’s recent successes by striking a bargain with a jinn known as “Howling Knife of the Dunes.” The jinn knows of the Order and promises the kidnapers wealth beyond measure if they can capture one magus in particular. It seems the jinn has a second master—who have the characters angered?

Story Seed: The Rampaging Golem

Servants of skilled kabbalists, Divinely blessed golems rarely act beyond the scope of their direction. However, when the grandson of the mystic who created it is unjustly lynched by a mob for a crime he did not commit (perhaps the handiwork of

a nearby demon, infernally tainted Jinn, or faerie looking to stir up trouble), the golem is overwhelmed and begins to rampage. Seeking vengeance for the terrible wrong, it refuses to stop beating its way through the populace until it finds the true culprit.

Via Domitia

Ancient even when the Romans paved and regularized its route, locals believe Heracles walked the path of the Via Domitia when he traveled through the region to

complete his 12 labors. Hannibal took this route on his march through Hispania toward Rome. The covenant of Ara Maxima Nova is very protective of the Via Domitia, using it in a number of their initiations and rituals. They often challenge magi to certain men if they believe the visitor is investigating something arcane, rather than simply using the road to travel.

The road begins after crossing the Pyrenees near Perthus and passes through Perpignan, going on to Narbonne across a seven-arched bridge, then through Béziers, Montpellier, and Nîmes before entering into the Kingdom of Arelat. It turns north at Cereste and continues into the Piedmont, crossing the Alps at the Col de Montgenevre — the lowest primary pass between France and Italy. In antiquity, “mansiones” were spaced a day’s journey apart, where travelers could rest, eat and continue their trip.



Covenant of Stella Durus

Symbol: A shining five-pointed star

Sited on the outskirts of Narbonne, this cosmopolitan covenant consists of Bonisagi, Flambeau, Jerbiton, and one particularly ambitious and long-sighted Tylalus interested in the chess games of noble alliances and marriages. Their interests include research on the magical spirits and ancient ruins throughout the countryside. An Autumn covenant, their personal goals often distract them from uniting as a cohesive force in

politics, Hermetic or mundane, and they only want to remain unnoticed as the Albigensian Crusade progresses.

History

Stella Durus began as a small estate on the left bank of the Aude, outside of Narbonne proper, maintaining an old manor farm. The magi here quietly worked alongside their neighbors, supporting the growth of the urban environment through the 11th and 12th centuries while recovering from the long-past founding members’ participation in the Schism War and some forays against the Muslim occupation of Iberia. The current senior members of the covenant are the elder Bonisagus, Marcella, who is focused on uncovering a way to identify and harness the powers of a magical spirit—the spirit of the Aude river; and Jean Marie, a follower of Jerbiton who was looking for someplace pleasant to put down roots. Marcella’s spirit of exploration combined with Jean Marie’s bucolic attitude attracted Renaud and his current fascination with the regional Mithraic sites and the troubadours appearing across the countryside.

Setting and Description

The old Roman villa has been modified, added to, and rebuilt several times over since its initial construction. Always reclusive, the covenant members are often considered odd neighbors the other local residents ignore unless circumstances demand otherwise — the servants of an oft-traveling merchant or very minor lord on Crusade. The defenses are nearly nonexistent, the structure is nothing remarkable. The covenant seems to have taken a policy of hiding in plain sight. There is a Magic aura of 2 in the basements, where a Roman mithraem once stood.

Culture and Traditions

Stella Durus has one overarching tenet: they are individuals banded together for the sake of mutual protection and shar-

ing resources. In fact, that attitude was the reasoning behind the selection of their covenant name, referring to the stars that guide many explorers and playing on the multiple interpretations of the word “durus” as committed, rough, and enduring. These magi all have a loose interest in maintaining their home, but no uniting force to drive their covenant. Members regularly skip meetings, bicker over the distribution of maintenance tasks and try to find ways to keep their time their own. They like the proximity of Narbonne, but find the river does an excellent job of providing some measure of isolation.

The Magi

Five magi make their home at Stella Durus.

MARCELLA OF BONISAGUS

Age: 92 (Apparent age: 63)

Personality Traits: Focused +2, Nurturing +2, Oblivious +2

A long way from her native Lancaster, Marcella convinced her filia, Giacomina, to return to Stella Durus and assist her for seven years in exchange for the elder Bonisagus’ help with a difficult situation Giacomina created. Her filia’s indiscretions disappoint her, and she secretly worries that one day she may not be able to help or shield her former apprentice. For now, Marcella contented herself with attempting to unravel her current project. She believes that a symbiotic relationship can exist between a genius loci or a Daimon and a nearby settlement, where the population center influences the strength of the spirit and allows for the extraction of regularly generated vis which might otherwise be too trivial to hunt for. She can be obsessive in her research, keeping odd hours or working deep into the night, following seemingly unrelated avenues of inquiry, and traveling wherever leads or experts can be found. She enjoys the social aspects of her research, discussing Hermetic theory with anyone willing to talk. Marcella actually has a reputation of taking virtual prisoners at Tribunal gatherings, talking about strange trivia until

The Jinn Corsair, Howling Knife of the Dunes

Faerie Might: 20 (Vim)

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

Size: +0

Virtues and Flaws: Narrowly Cognizant, Passes for Human, External Vis (scimitar, grants Puissant Single Weapon), Greater Power, Increased Faerie Might (Major); Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Feast of the Fae, Improved Characteristics x3, Infiltrator (Branded Criminal), Lesser Power x3, Positive Folktales, Pretentious, Puissant Single Weapon; Fury (failure in chosen mission), Sovereign Ward (person it has agreed to serve); Overconfident, Pious (Islam), Role Requires Suffering, Traditional Ward (Name: Howling Knife of the Dunes)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Jinn +3, Bargaining +2

Reputations: Capable Bodyguard 3 (Sahir), Creature for Hire 2 (Maghreb Pirates)

Combat:

Scimitar: Init +3, Attack +12, Defense +9, Damage +8

Fist: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +6, Damage +2

Soak: +6

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

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

Pretenses: Area Lore: Mediterranean Coasts 3 (places to come ashore),

Artes Liberales 1 (astronomy), Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 5 (identifying threats), Bargaining 3 (establishing terms), Brawl 4 (fist), Faerie Speech 5 (issuing threats), Folk Ken 3 (humans), Leadership 2 (pirates), Profession: Navigator 1 (staying on course), Profession: Sailor 4 (pirate), Single Weapon 5+2 (scimitar), Survival 1 (desert)

Powers:

Sirocco's Form, 5 points, Init -4, Auram. The Jinn Corsair transforms into a swirling cyclone of gritty desert wind. He may carry one person inside this wind. **CrAu 50 R:** Per, D: Until, T: Ind, (Base 30, +4 Until): Greater Power (50 levels)

Sense the Living Treasure, 3 points, Init -7, Corpus. The Jinn Corsair concentrates and senses the location of the person linked to an arcane connection in his possession. The longer he concentrates, the better he knows the distance and direction to the target. **InCo 20 R:** Arc, D: Conc, T: Ind. (Base 3, +4 Arc, +1 Conc): Lesser Power (20 levels, 1 intricacy point on cost.)

Scimitar of Blazing Fury, 3 points, Init -8, Ignem. The Jinn Corsair coats his weapon in searing white flame, adding +10 damage to attacks made with the weapon. **CrIg 20 R:** Touch, D: Diam, T: Ind. (Base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Diam): Lesser Power (20 levels, 1 intricacy point spent on cost.)

Conceal the Precious Charge, 3 points, Init

-5, Imaginem. The Jinn Corsair can make a target he touches undetectable by normal sight, regardless of what it does. However, the target still casts a shadow. **PelM 15 R:** Touch, D: Diam, T: Ind. (Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Diam, +1 changing image): Lesser Power (15 levels, 2 intricacy points spent on initiative)

Equipment: Scimitar, clothes, any reasonable equipment necessary for his current activities.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: There is one pawn each of Auram, Corpus, Ignem and Imaginem vis in the Jinn's scimitar, for four total pawns. The scimitar has no encumbrance and its possessor gains the Puissant Single Weapon Minor Virtue.

Appearance: Dressed like a male Maghrebi pirate with a grinning and handsome countenance, the Jinn has a branded scar on his left cheek. His clothing is made of rich fabrics and he bears a well crafted scimitar. Turned in the morning light, this blade seems to be fashioned of glass.

The Jinn Corsair often barter with mortals who seek him for a term of protective service. He takes this duty seriously; his success is a matter of some pride, and he has only lost a charge twice. Once to a dragon, and once at the hands of a Hermetic magus—perhaps it was one of the magi from the covenant?

some more pressing matter surfaces. She's more than content to allow Jean Marie to handle what she considers the necessary evils of the covenant, allowing her to focus on research. As long as there are funds for supplies when she needs them, she doesn't care how the Jerbiton manages Stella Durus or how he spends his days.

GIACOMA OF BONISAGUS FILIUS MARCELLA

Age: 28 (Apparent age: 28)

Personality Traits: Self-Serving +3, Inquisitive +2, Willing to Cut Corners +2

Giacoma is a former apprentice of Marcella who ran up a sizable debt through a Tribunal decision in Rome. Now, owing vis to a vindictive covenant across the Adriatic, she was more than willing to accept an offer from her mater — if she worked with Marcella on her research on the magical spirit of the River Aude for three seasons a year for the next seven years, she could have the vis to pay off her debt, access to the research results, and Marcella would perform her Longevity Ritual. A little bitter about her need to return to the laboratory of her mater, but happy to be clear of the danger she escaped, Giacoma hopes that the results of their investigations will reveal a better way to draw Vim vis from na-

ture spirits, thereby uncovering vis sources in otherwise vis-poor regions. Such a discovery would make Giacoma rich, which is what really concerns her. She loves the temporal power of wealth and often directs her personal research in directions she believes will create it.

RENAUD OF FLAMBEAU

Age: 54 (Apparent age: 40)

Personality Traits: Dignified +3, Courageous +2, Foolhardy +2

The third son of a minor Norman lord who was fostered with his uncle, a petty

Story Seed: Vis from the Stream

Marcella's project has been ongoing for years. The potential ramifications of her research could significantly change the economy of the Order as vis becomes much more abundant in locations tied to ancient nature spirits. Marcella isn't looking to kill the *genii loci* or Daimons, but skim vis from spirits, finding a way to "bleed" them, creating a renewable resource. The situation at Toulouse would probably provide insight, but she refuses to risk herself in such a volatile location. She has not yet determined a way to link an urban population to a Daimon, or how to invoke an Aspect for collection without alerting the Daimon, or how to draw vis from a spirit's locus without disturbing it. She is experimenting with various ideas that address these concerns, but keeps her progress a tightly held secret. The next

steps in Marcella's research might include:

- A ritual incorporating aspects of Wizard's Communion and requiring the participation of magi with high scores in Muto and Rego techniques and elemental Forms. Guided by Marcella, success might forge a persistent link to the magic spirit of the Aude, allowing the Bonisagus to harvest in a manner similar to distilling Vim vis but with a greater yield. Unfortunately, this success might be tempered by the Daimon's awareness and loathing of the connection.
- An extended negotiation with the spirit over the course of a collaborative ritual led by Marcella, where an Aspect of the Daimon undergoes the equivalent of a willing sacrifice which somehow strengthens its bond with

the locus of the town over time while providing the magi with vis through a short-term loss of Might.

- A ritual which results in the ceremonial murder of the spirit of the Aude River, yielding a single bolus of vis determined by the storyguide. The consequences of this action eventually lead to the silting of the waterway and the decline of Narbonne as a port.
- Searching for and attempting to recover the Roman watermill complex of Barbegal. This would bring her into conflict with the Coenobium's political aims. To avoid this complication, she is willing to trade texts and connections in exchange for discreet investigation by a third party, like the player characters.

knight, Renaud has fought in Iberia, the Albigensian Crusade, and even the Third Crusade shortly after his Gauntlet. He firmly believes in the concept of "mens sana in cor-

pore sano," — a healthy mind in a healthy body. He trains with the grogs, serving as their mercenary captain, and his battlefield experience only reinforces his reputation as

a capable warrior and magus. Several close brushes with jinn in Iberia and a bad experience with the nobles executing the Albigensian Crusade left Renaud recently soured and looking for inspiration. A discussion at Tribunal with Jean Marie about the troubadour movement in the area inspired him to join Stella Durus. From here, he can investigate Roman ruins and local universities for bits of Mithraic lore while experiencing the very core of the troubadour movement. In fact, he has suggested becoming a troubadour patron twice to his fellow magi, and may personally retain one despite the perceived risks. The wisdom of bringing a wandering storyteller within the walls of the covenant seems questionable at this time, and so far, he has been dissuaded despite his role as magus in charge of defenses, but who knows for how long.

JEAN MARIE, FOLLOWER OF JERBITON

Age: 87 (Apparent age: 45)

Personality Traits: Genial +3, Spendthrift +2, Talkative +2

Jean Marie enjoys a pleasant semi-retirement at the covenant. He keeps busy, acting as a senior advisor for and managing a portion of a mundane shipping company



owned by a relative, as well as occasionally traveling to Paris or making the pilgrimage to Compostela or Rome. He personally travels to the town of his birth, just outside Marseilles, every five years. As a contest, Jean Marie writes paradoxographia regarding these trips, distributing them to a list of magi and awarding vis or a tractatus on one of his known strengths of Intellego, Mentem, Rego, or Vim as the prize to the magus who identifies the largest number of lies within his letter. He strives to make the covenant a tasteful place, observing all the guidelines of Hermetic Courtesy and Hospitality, and finds Renaud's idea of bringing a troubadour into the household quite attractive. In fact, he's considering establishing a league of magi likewise intrigued by troubadours and the philosophy of courtly love in order to encourage the proliferation of these poet-artists despite the chaos and destructive nature of the Crusade. He is concerned such a league might draw undue attention from Crusaders seeking out Cathar refugees, especially given many of the Cathar-sympathetic nobles in Narbonnais. Jean Marie has recently begun experimenting with subtle Imaginem, trying to improve his abilities at storytelling. This led him to start exchanging letters with Mariola of Tolosa Paratge, and through the correspondence he has developed romantic feelings for her.

DUCARU OF TYTALUS

Age: 44 (Apparent age: 34)

Personality Traits: Boastful +2, Calculating +2, Reckless +2

A Romanian arrival apprenticed in the Theban Tribunal, Ducaru joined the covenant with a very individual goal. He intends to infiltrate the nobility to broker marriages and alliances and has begun doing so, creating a Norman persona. He listens more than he speaks, influencing active participants, rather than participating himself. Ducaru prefers making suggestions and observing the effects versus acting directly. He plays a dangerous game, one which could have him facing charges at Tribunal should it become well-known. Jean Marie suspects it, as the Tylalus occasionally pumps him for information about the local nobility through the Jerbiton's troubadour contacts.

Never seen without his distinctive goatskin cap, Ducaru's mastery of Mentem magics makes his goal a possibility, but his expert knowledge of Vim only seems to draw suspicion. He does not consider himself evil, but he also does not allow morals or society's expectations to limit his actions. He often takes actions, especially unexpected actions, simply to observe the outcome. The least involved in covenant operations, Ducaru always contributes at the most opportune moment. He keeps a game of chess running in a Perpignan tavern, where he is in the process of beating Etienne of Ara Maxima Nova. The two have been trading games for months. Redcaps now frequent the tavern, keeping current on the state of the game and placing wagers on who will win.

Covenfolk

The covenfolk and grogs of Stella Durus are a mix of nationalities, brought to the covenant by its various members over time. They seem to have blended well together, but occasional conflicts emerge. The staff members speak a half dozen different languages, which has led to most of the misunderstandings, but Marcella likes this diversity, and encourages covenfolk to keep their various language skills sharp. The highly competent and veteran turb languishes here, bored with little to keep them occupied. However, in keeping with the magi's request for an unobtrusive existence, they do not train or muster where they might be seen. Renaud wants to maintain their excellence, though, and has been working on ways around this problem.

Covenant of Ara Maxima Nova

Symbol: A wine barrel

Ara Maxima Nova is a Summer covenant made rich through trade in wine and cork. A group of Merinita and a Gifted Mercere established their laboratories while founding a splinter cult of Keepers of a Thousand Tales influenced by the Cult of Heroes and focused on the Via Domitia, the path both

Story Seed: Marriages of Calculation

Ducaru may have assisted in Ramon Berenguer IV's escape from the castle in Aragon where Templars held him prisoner until 1219. Once restored as count of Provence, Raymond married Beatrice of Savoy in June of that year; this added Savoy to his lands, but more importantly, he would have four daughters.

One, Margaret, became queen of France in 1234.

Another, Eleanor, became the queen of England in 1236; a clever trick, since

France had invaded England four years earlier. Eleanor's son was the great Edward I, Longshanks, the Hammer of the Scots.

Yet another, Sanchia, became the second wife of Richard of Cornwall in 1243. Cornwall was the brother of the king of England, became one of the richest men in Europe, and bought himself the Holy Roman Empire.

The last, Beatrice, had to settle for the king of Sicily in 1246.

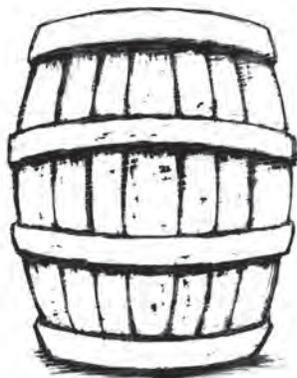
While the timeframe of such alliances

may be beyond the scope of many sagas, they represent exactly what Ducaru attempts to engineer from the shadows. How does he know which pairings to make? Is he a diviner? Does he have prophecies acquired from eastern oracles or is he simply an astute student of local politics? What does he gain from such alliances? What other unions are inspired by his whispers? Ducaru's longer timeframe might even run afoul of the characters, creating a rival in the established Tylalus.

Vis Site: Heracleian Vis

Travelers who walk the Via Domitia from the Pyrenees pass near Perthus to the pass at Col de Montgenevre while carrying the skin of a lion and spending the night encamped at six of the mansion sites find the skin to contain 6 pawns of Intellego vis. However, the magi of Ara Maxima Nova

tend to keep a close watch on the road, and camping, for at least one of the sites involves sleeping in an open lot within Narbonne. The magi of Ara Maxima Nova do not yet know of the road's potential to generate vis, but some of the local fae do and might barter this knowledge.



Heracles and Hannibal traveled through the region. The Merinita hope to tap into the spirits of the vineyards that have covered the hills since before Antiquity, seeking out the wisdom of the Dionysian mysteries while exploring the relationships between their journey of enlightenment, the Roman roads crossing the landscape, and the travels of Heracles.

History

Established 25 years ago by its Merinita magi, Ara Maxima Nova is a covenant focused on the development of the cult created by its senior magus. Having investigated the trials of Heracles in the east and experienced several initiation breakthroughs via experimentation, they traveled west to explore the remaining labors and establish a home closer to Rome. The fact that Perpignan is run as a mostly self-governed commune suits the magi perfectly, and the unfettered access to the remaining portions of the Via Domitia made the choice even easier.

Using their talents, they quickly became a top producer of wine and cork, known for high quality goods available even

when weather or misfortune causes problems for others in the region. The covenant secured several dedicated customers who purchase their stock and ask few questions. With their mundane concerns and obligations met, the magi operate as they like with plenty of funds to spare.

Setting and Description

Ara Maxima Nova ("New Great Altar") is a collection of small structures surrounding a small villa attached to a series of vineyards and cork nurseries. Not completely isolated from their neighbors, they try to keep their appearance as mundane as possible, blending in with the scores of farming estates that make up the outskirts of Perpignan. They perform their Aegis ritual under the cover of darkness and hidden behind Luc's Imaginem magics, in order to keep the ritual's effects and protections secret from even the bulk of their covenfolk. Secrecy is of the utmost importance to the members of this covenant, who, while they don't deny membership in their House, are truly estranged from it.

Culture and Traditions

The covenant's location allows it to serve as an excellent base of operations, midway between the two destinations its members regularly seek out. They are friendly enough and tend not to get involved in Tribunal politics unless a matter threatens to encroach upon their research. Their studies of the Herculean legends have progressed better than investigations into the Dionysian Mysteries — if only because tales of the ancient hero were not subjected to the same sort of purg-

ing pagan mystery cults suffered. Three particular activities epitomize the magi of this well-established covenant.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

The magi of Ara Maxima Nova regularly travel to Rome to visit the church of St. Stephen of the Carriages, the namesake of their covenant (the "Ara Maxima") and a former temple to Heracles converted into a church to prevent its destruction. They research aspects of the ancient temple, seeking artifacts, possible regiones, and clues to other sites. The Dominion aura limits the magi's activities and they are loathe to draw the attention of the clergy. Over time, they hope to recreate the architecture of the structure in the heart of their covenant. Dedicated to their heroic patron, the members of Ara Maxima Nova remain ever vigilant for artwork, sculpture, or texts regarding Heracles or his labors. The jewel of their collection is an enormous sculpted head of the hero himself, bearded and gazing downward, recovered from ruins in the Eternal City.

The group is certain ascension is possible through retracing the route of Heracles' labors and completing rituals which mirror the tasks, complete with crimes and penance as a path of the Dionysian Mysteries. They believe the tomb of Pyrene lies somewhere to the southwest, and regularly seek it out when they have the time or pass through the area.

SEEKING THE HESPERIDES

The magi of Ara Maxima Nova have yet to find the Hesperides, renowned as one location of the 12 labors of Heracles, and would eagerly trade or collaborate with any magi who could reliably present an accurate route to the archipelago. They have made several trips to various libraries, such as Durenmar, the remnants of the Museum of Alexandria, the collections in Constantinople, various established universities like those in Paris or Montpellier, trying to establish the location of the islands. As dictated by their charter, such quests occur every five years, undertaken by a magus with a complement of supporting grogs for a period of no more

than two years. Magi who join the covenant's Cult of Heroes and hope to advance within its ranks are directed to search for this fabled place by any means possible.

SPIRITS OF THE VINEYARDS

The faeries which coexist with the many farms and vineyards of the region are of particular interest to the Merinita of the covenant. They engage these creatures whenever possible, attempting to learn their natures and personalities, seeking to glean ancient secrets of the Dionysian mysteries. At this point, they have found several nymphs and satyrs, but none knowledgeable or willing to share about cult ceremonies.

The Magi

Four magi currently make their residence at Ara Maxima Nova.

LUC OF MERINITA

Age: 66 (Apparent age: 54)

Personality Traits: Intense +3, Charismatic +2, Outspoken +2

The mystagogue of a splinter cult of the Merinita faction of the Keepers of a Thousand Tales (which is taking on aspects of the Cult of Heroes, see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 96) and the unofficial leader of Ara Maxima Nova, Luc is a man fascinated with mysteries and obsessed with delving into them. Considered a master of Imagination, Mentem, and Vim, he waited until nearly reaching the age of 50 before he created his Longevity Ritual, because the possible impact on his ability to successfully explore the more sexual aspects of the Dionysian Mysteries deeply concerned him. An inventive genius many suspect of having been initiated during his apprenticeship, Luc experiments with cult rites, blending aspects of seemingly disparate esoterica, tales of and interactions with Faerie creatures, and astrological and natural signs in order to craft new initiations—all with the help of visions experienced while consum-

ing draughts laced with mandrake root or poppy's tears. His wife, Miriam, is a failed apprentice, his lab assistant, fellow cultist, and regular muse, but his promiscuous attitudes have led him to take several lovers of both genders throughout the course of his studies, a fact he does not advertise. He has two children, both eligible young women, and quite possibly a number of unidentified illegitimate children scattered across the Mediterranean region. Luc relies heavily on his sister, Jeanne, for advice, seeking her out in moments of crisis or frustration, and often feeling only his true sister by birth can fully understand the rigors of the life they led as children of a strict and sometimes abusive deacon in Brittany. His main focus is on the cult, and he tends to ignore the more day-to-day operational requirements of the covenant, much to Etienne's frustration.

His goals at this point include:

- Locate and visit the Hesperides, so that he might complete the final two tasks in his attempt to reenact the Labors of Heracles. Once he has stolen the Apples of the Hesperides, he believes he knows the site of a lapis manalis, or stone covering the gate to the underworld, which will lead him to a regio where he might find Cerberus.
- Establish a legacy ensuring the continuation of his cult and its teachings — at least within House Merinita, quite possibly within the Order of Hermes in general. This will require an excellent text, one reasonably but carefully distributed to likeminded and sympathetic individuals. If he ever learned about them, Luc would be very eager to incorporate the Elysian Ecstasy or Olympian Pact mentioned in *The Sun-*

dered Eagle (page 126).

- Find a way to reverse the sterilizing effects of his Longevity Ritual so that he might sire a literal son to carry on his line. An apprentice is a barely acceptable substitute for this goal, but a male child who could also become his apprentice is perhaps the only dream that could make him postpone his search for ascension.

ETIENNE OF MERINITA

Age: 68 (Apparent age: 43)

Personality Traits: Calm +2, Curious +2, Dedicated +2

With Luc since the beginning through a chance fostering, Etienne is primarily responsible for the maintenance and administration of Ara Maxima Nova as well as for interactions with visitors. An Animal, Herbam, Muto and Rego specialist, he contributes by keeping the structures in superior condition with an almost obsessive attention to detail. Stocky and taciturn with dark features and a piercing gaze, Etienne is a former lover of Luc, but ended the relationship when Luc married Miriam. While he is an active member of the cult, he has no desire to seek its innermost secrets. Rather, he wants to remain close to Luc and support the mystagogue's search for wisdom in anyway possible. Blessed with the Gentle Gift, he has a weakness for sweets and a good game of chess, often making excuses to enter Perpignan looking for both. Outside specific cult initiations, Etienne remains celibate and makes no effort to seek companionship. He does feel the time is right to begin training an apprentice, and intends to search for one very soon.

Story Seed: The Expedition

Using the material presented in chapter 7 of *Ancient Magic*, a storyguide could easily create a joint venture between Ara Maxima Nova and the players' covenant, where the wealthy covenant funds an expedition driven by information gathered by the troupe's magi. Should a storm, created by the dragon which embodies the fierce cur-

rents, separate the groups' sailing vessels or cause a shipwreck as the group arrives, then separated groups could explore the islands for their secrets while attempting to find other survivors and a route home. Divided groups might even conflict with one another for control of the Hesperides after reuniting.

JEANNE OF MERINITA

Age: 63 (Apparent age: 46)

Personality Traits: Dedicated +3, Energetic +2, Reliable +2

The younger sister of Luc, Jeanne compliments Etienne's support of their mystagogue — where Etienne is relaxed and easy-going, Jeanne is excited and concerned, evaluating everything for possible advantage. Jeanne dislikes Luc's wife, and the two regularly bicker about the best course of action for the cult. Luc often finds the compromise which leaves neither one unnecessarily irritated, but perhaps pleased at seeing the other thwarted. When Jeanne's original pater died, Caprican of Oleran in Aquitaine (*The Lion and the Lily*, page 72) took the girl in to complete her apprenticeship as a favor to the dead magus, despite Caprican's age at the time. Jeanne does not share her second pater's interest in the Stone Couches or the legacy of that covenant's leadership. Initiated during her instruction, she corresponded with her brother and the two began to form the nucleus of what would become their cult in its current form. It is possible that Caprican may seek her out in the coming years, believing a reluctant champion is just what the Apple Mile needs. Jeanne's personal interest lies in finding secrets of the Dionysian Mysteries known to the faerie, and she is the covenant's expert regarding Arcadia, interaction with faeries, and their customs. Each winter, she records any experiences with faeries in book which she plans to later

refine and publish as an authoritative summa on Faerie Lore.

GUILLERMO OF MERCERE

Age: 56 (Apparent age: 33)

Personality Traits: Bold +2, Foolhardy +2, Proud +2

The youngest magus of Ara Maxima Nova and the only one originally from outside of France, Guillermo recently became a member of the cult. His research into Hannibal and Heracles through the Cult of Heroes (and a misunderstanding with a local lord about Guillermo's relationship with the lord's wife) led him to leave his home in Genoa and seek the Via Domitia, where he repeatedly crossed paths with Luc. After several encounters, including some failed but genial certamen bouts fought over access to resources and ruins which culminated in extended discussions regarding the ideas of heroic ascension, Luc invited Guillermo to join and take the first series of initiations. His extensive knowledge of ancient tales and extreme familiarity with the area intrigued Luc, and the elder magus became fascinated with the Gifted Mercere. Guillermo recognizes this infatuation and nurtures it, hoping to learn as many of the cult's innermost secrets as possible. His loyalties, however, lie strictly to himself, and should he be forced to choose between some form of extreme sacrifice for the covenant and his own well-being, he is certain to choose

himself. Shortly after his Gauntlet, Guillermo rescued a young Tremere named Sagittaire, who had been accosted by bandits. In gratitude, Sagittaire taught the Mercere the secrets of the Carvers' school of Certamen dueling (*Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 138) and Guillermo has a reputation for freely acting as a champion for any Redcap in the Tribunal who asks.

Covenfolk

Ara Maxima Nova regularly recruits new covenfolk from peasants seeking new lives in the town proper of Perpignan, including those seeking respite from the Reconquista to the south. Despite occasional arguments about the practice, Etienne even supplements some personnel needs with slaves from Arab merchants. Many who work in the vineyard or cork operations have no idea of the masters they serve. A dedicated cadre of covenfolk work within the main structure, dutifully tending the specialized needs of the magi. Drawn from servants who show promise and loyalty, these covenfolk are well-cared for and generously compensated. However, covenant policy rarely allows them to travel any great distances — Luc wishes to keep his cult secret and has no desire to take unnecessary risks. The exceptions to this rule are, of course, the fairly small turb of well-trained grogs who accompany magi afield, work foremen, and those who negotiate with merchants in Perpignan.

Chapter Eight

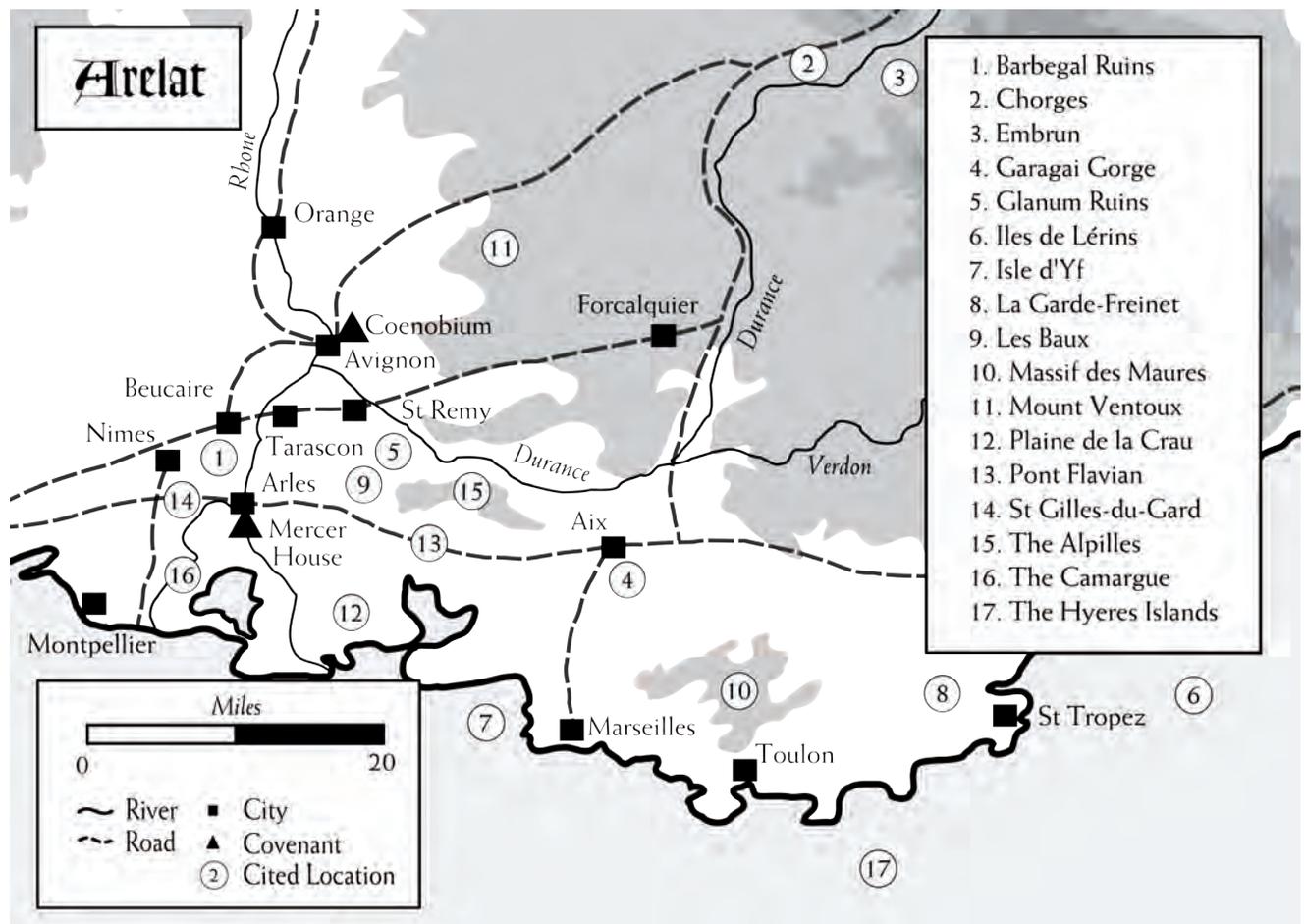
Arelat

The eastern march of the Provençal Tribunal was the site of the first Roman settlements outside Italy. The medieval culture of the Church and the towns of the so-called Kingdom of Arelat and Provence overlies a tapestry of ancient Roman and Gallic ruins. Encompassing the area of the Kingdom of Lower Burgundy, it is bounded by the Rhone in the west except for the small County of Viviers, the town of Beaucaire, and the area of Lyonnais appended across the river. It stretches east along the Mediter-

anean coastline toward the Maritime Alps just past Nice. Over the last millennium the area was beset with repeated waves of barbarians: Franks, Lombards, and Saracens, only to be finally conquered by the armies of Charles Martel. In the 13th century it is more peaceful, and is a blossoming heart of the troubadour culture that is to spread throughout southern Europe.

The area's indistinct northeastern boundary lies just beyond the monastery of Grand Chartreuse somewhere near the

border between the Dauphine Viennois and marches up to the lands of Count Thomas of Savoy in the territory of the Greater Alps. The current settlements of the Order, however, all lie further to the south in the lands of the County and March of Provence proper. Proud of their status as heirs of the Roman Provincia, the original southern Lotharingian covenants began a tradition of preserving their original Latin names for all official documentation. Like the Romans before them, the original Hermetic settlers



Saga Seed: The Rise & Rise of the Coenobium

Considered by its members to be an exemplar of Hermetic cooperation, some other magi of the Tribunal believe the Coenobium to be an increasingly despotic power bloc. The multi-site covenant controls nearly all of the area's significant magical resources and dominates the local hedge magicians (see later for further details).

Some fear the Coenobium will attempt to dominate the disorganized Tribunal in the wake of the recent Albigensian Crusade. Perhaps they will do so in a less aggressive manner than the raiders under Sayyid, but some wonder if the might of the right is worse than that of the initial wrong that forged them. Whose side will the characters choose?

Not the Lotharingian Tribunal...

Originally, the region within the Provençal Tribunal now referred to as Arelat was part of the Lotharingian Tribunal. This early entity ceased to exist after the Grand Tribunal decision of 898 that reassigned many of the northern covenants to either the Normandy or Rhine Tribunals. The rump left behind, comprising the lands of the Kingdom of Arles along the banks of the Rhone and scattered settlements in the Toulousain, became known as the Provençal Tribunal.

The magi of the Coenobium have little interest in the northern political movement sponsored by the Apple Guild of the Rhine led by Daria of Triamore and known as the Lotharingian Movement (see *The Lion and the Lily* page 14 and *Guardians of the Forest* page 29). Apart from a shared desire to be free from strict interpretations of the Peripheral Code concerning interfering with mundanes, in Hermetic terms, they share little culturally or politically with the Flemish covenants. The Coenobium magi mainly see themselves as set apart from

the rest of the Provençal Tribunal. Their mundane servants consider themselves part of neither the distant Holy Roman Empire, nor tributary to the Counts of Barcelona. The current Provençal political situation is to their advantage, and overall they feel there is no incentive to join a gang of northern secessionists.

Similarly, Alazais, the Chief Redcap and leader of the Coenobium, has no plans for her covenant to strike out on its own and form a separatist southern Tribunal. To do so would require the fragmentation of the multi-site network of sancta into at least four separate covenants, a move which would weaken the Coenobium's greatest strength, its united defensive stance. However, individual Tytalus magi may have strong cause to infiltrate the Coenobium and undermine its power, setting the stage for the a wide ranging conflict that may transect the Order (see "The Lotharingian Movement" insert in Chapter 10: Normandy Sagas of *The Lion and the Lily*, page 114–115 for further details).

Arelat Covenants

Current Covenants: The Coenobium Rhodanien

Secret Covenants: Fraxinetum Redux
Ruined, Abandoned, or Lost Covenants: Barbegal, The Birds of Camargue, Castra Peccaius, Elisii Campi, Fraxinetum, Glanum (I and II), Telo Martius, Turrus Masci, Portus Cottiae, Portus Termini, Yf

contrast to the Hermetic situation, much of the area is independent, controlled by minor lords or chartered towns such as the great river communes of Arles and Avignon. So far the region has escaped the devastation of the Albigensian Crusade, although several of its communes (and perhaps some of its magi) have lent discreet aid to both sides of the conflict.



The Legacy of Fraxinetum

The now disbanded covenant of Fraxinetum (Latin: "ash forest") took its name from the surrounding groves of ash established by one of the founding magi, Sayyid Shajarat al-Darda. He was reputedly an Andalusian Flambeau Herbam specialist from northeastern Iberia, but House Flambeau deny this background. They claim Sayyid was a renegade from their philosophy, corrupted by his Tytalan lieutenant Nasr ibn Amaf. Some mutter he may even have been a Tytalus-trained infiltrator from the start.

of the region have left many ruins behind them as lasting reminders of the difficulties of Hermetic cooperation.

Recently, this cooperation has been more successful, however. The heirs of the various ruined covenants forged together their disparate holdings and abandoned many of the smaller sites to form a greater multi-site Hermetic community or coenobium. Although outwardly benign, this alliance has increased its influence throughout the region to the point where it has a stranglehold on most readily accessible magical resources.

The nominal mundane overlord of

Provence and the Kingdom of Arelat is Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor. He holds the somewhat empty title of the King of Arles but exerts only limited influence in practice through his imperial viceroy at Arles, the young prince of Orange, Raymond I of Baux. The most powerful magnate is the Catalan scion, Ramon Berenguer V, Count of Provence and now Forcalquier, recently released from imprisonment in Aragon in 1219. The young Count of Toulouse still claims the area known as the March of Provence, but many of the local lords acknowledge him only when it suits them. In

Unknown to the Tribunal for its first century of existence, this small cadre of Andalusian magi secretly supported the Cordoban-sponsored attacks on Provençal cities staged from the Moors' base within the Massif des Maures above St Tropez. Several smaller coastal covenants fell readily to the Moorish forces under suspicious circumstances, although these machinations went unnoticed by the Quaesitores for some time. The capture and ransom in 973 of Maieul, the Abbott of Cluny, and the Moors' continual encroachment into the foothills of the Alps eventually combined to provoke widespread alarm.

The predominantly Jerbiton magi of the eastern lands of the Tribunal were forced to act. Drawing on their mundane family connections, their supporters within the Church and sympathetic allies amongst the nobility of Provence, the magi of several weak covenants founded a mutual protection pact. No overt Wizard's War was declared, but the Hermetic coalition subtly supported the mundane army amassed by William I of Provence. The bulk of the Moorish forces were routed at the Battle of Tourtour. Following a successful siege of their base, the Fraxinetum magi disappeared into the deeper forest and then seemingly disappeared. Their Moorish allies set sail back to Andalusia, leaving the coasts of Provence temporarily free from the pirates' scourge. The remaining Provençal magi, having learnt the value of cooperation and the benefits of acting through mundane forces, re-established themselves as the multi-site covenant that has become known as the Coenobium.

The Rhone Valley

Known as "the Bruiser" to the local boatmen, the Rhone is famed for its fierce currents, shallows, and spring floods making navigation difficult. Travel by barge is possible up to about Macon. The river combines with the Saone at Lyon to flow through the great furrow of *le sillon rhodanien* between the Massif Central to the west and the foothills of the Alps to the east, forming the southwestern frontier of the Holy Roman Empire.

The land is poor and hot, swept by the fierce Mistral. The region is known for its luxury goods: wine, honey, limes, and olives.

A major trade route from north to south since pre-Roman times, only four bridges cross the great waterway — the ancient bridge of Lyon built on a forest of oak piles, the Roman stone bridge at Vienne, the newer Pont St Benezet of Avignon and a lesser wooden bridge at Arles linking the main settlement to Trinquetaille on the west bank.

Travel from Macon to Arles takes about 3 weeks due to the river's navigational difficulties. At Arles, the goods are transferred onto smaller sailing barges for the last stage to the sea and then by larger ships or galleys

onwards to other ports. Travel upstream is aided by hitching barges to teams of draft horses or using magic to offset the effect of the current, but typically takes at least one to two weeks longer.

Avignon

This town has dominated southern Provence since its commune was established in 1129. Considered semi-independent of the Holy Roman Empire and holding no allegiance to the local Catalan count of Provence, it is one of the central sites of the Coenobium

Boats of the Rhone

The *utriculari*, or boatmen of the Rhone, form a powerful guild in the 13th century, controlling trade along the waterway. Although nominally based in Beaucaire, the largest concentration of guildmembers resides in Arles, where the majority of shipments transfer to ocean going vessels.

Barques du Rhone — These large barges, typically linked in trains of 5–7 craft and drawn by teams of over 50 horses along the banks, provide the main means of transporting large bulk goods from the northern markets to the Mediterranean. The magi of the Coenobium

secretly use at least one of these barges as a floating laboratory, mooring the vessel along the banks or tributaries in areas with significant Magic auras.

Coches d'eau — These "water coaches" are used by important travelers and nobles and either use sail or are drawn by horse. Jerbiton magi prefer this travel method over magic but the coaches are not usually available to Redcaps on mundane errands. As most riverboats are marked with a cross or other religious symbols for protection, many magi incorporate subtle wards within these designs to ease their journey.

The Hermetic Toll and the Price of Hospitality

All magi openly visiting Avignon are asked to stop here and announce their intentions and length of stay, in line with the rules of Hospitality promulgated by House Jerbiton. The various Redcaps of the Tribunal, encouraged by Alazais, have made it known that a silver florin containing a pawn of vis should be donated as a gesture of good will. This vis is used to help support the non-Jerbiton Hermetic specialists retained by the covenant.

Magi conceding to this local custom receive a consul to guide and assist them during their stay. The consul is responsible for the magus's conduct while in the town, leading some visiting magi resent the imposition of a potentially meddle-

some minder in their private affairs. Those magi declining the offer of hospitality and its complementary responsibilities are held to be in poor taste and watched closely by the covenfolk. Disruptive guests openly flaunting their presence or using magic to affect mundanes within the city draw the attention of the ex-hoplite Xiphos or the covenant's non-Hermetic allies. Although the Coenobium may stop short of declaring Wizard's War on a recalcitrant visitor, they seek to subtly disrupt and obstruct the offending magus thereafter, including manufacturing charges at Tribunal. Although seemingly peaceful on the surface, the Coenobium's long and patient reach is inexhaustible when seeking redress.

Drac, Lesser

Common to the Rhone and its tributaries, the lesser drac are aquatic Faerie drakes that lure their helpless prey (washerwomen, children, or vagrants) into watery lairs through their illusory powers. Feeding on the fear the stories of their predations cause, these dragons are very different from Orms and act out stories in the role as Child Stealers or Sexual Predators. They possess some or all of the powers attributed to their elder namesake and are encountered along the more sinister sections of the Rhone's tributary streams.

This version of the drac represents a younger dragon but is not designed for use as a player character. A Faerie enchanter of magus level power using this creature as a template is possible but would require dropping several Virtues and additional Pretenses to provide balance.

Faerie Might: 15 +10* (Animal)

* Denotes increased Might from the Place of Power Virtue

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

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Focus Power (Crafter of Illusion), Greater Power (Gift of the Drac); Faerie Beast, Improved Powers, Increased Faerie Might x2, Personal Power x1 (Transform into Human), Place of Power (the Rhone near Beaucaire), Reputation as Confidence, Rhone Regio Network, Cruel (Major), Monstrous Appearance**, Incognizant.

** Some more civilized drac spend the

majority of their time disguised in human society as boatmen, washerwomen or merchants. These particular Faeries lack the Monstrous Appearance Major Flaw and substitute the Infiltrator Virtue (Minor or Major depending on the Social Status Virtue mimicked) and Dark Secret Flaw instead. The more sociable drac may even be Narrowly Cognizant and usually possess Faerie Speech and additional Pretenses that help maintain their role.

Personality Traits: Cruel +3

Reputations: Watery threat 3 (local)

Combat:

Bite: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +9, Damage +6***

Grapple: Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +9, Damage na

*** Includes a +3 bonus for *Crushing Jaws*: reflects the fact that although these dragons are not particularly strong compared to humans, the muscles with which they bite down are tremendously powerful. The muscles which open its mouth are comparatively weak. A human may hold a drac's jaws closed with a successful Grapple.

Soak: +2

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

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

Pretenses: Area Lore: Rhone 4 (hiding places), Athletics 2 (lunges), Awareness 3 (prey), Brawl 5 (grapple), Concentration 2 (remaining invisible), Folk Ken 2 (river folk), Hunt 4

(prey), Occitan 6 (Provençal), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (river), Swim 2 (rivers)

Powers:

Crafter of Illusion, 0-5 points, Init 0, Imagination. A drac can create illusions, particularly to lure its prey, by spontaneously producing the effect of any *Creo* or *Rego* *Imaginem* spell of fourth magnitude or less at a cost of (magnitude) Might points. Focus Power, 2 Intricacy points to increase magnitude of effects, 3 intricacy points to improve Initiative.

Transform into Human, 3 points, Init 0, Animal. This allows the drac to turn into human size from its larger natural size.

MuAn 30 (Base 10, +2 Sun, +2 size): Personal Power (30 levels).

Gift of the Drac, 3 points, Init -3, Aquam.

Allows a person grappled by the drac to breathe easily underwater until they resurface in the Drac's air-filled lair or escape to the riverbank. **MuCo 30** (Base 4 +1 Touch, +4 Until, +1 Part): Greater Power (30 levels).

Vis: 3 Imagination eyes

Appearance: In its true form, the creature is a greenish-black worm with a long sinuous body girt with webbed legs like a flamingo and vestigial fin-like wings of blue lace.

The statistics above represent a small adult drac, just grown into maturity. Their strong illusory powers allow them to move silently, become invisible, and change their appearance readily in human form.

(see section later for further details).

The Order of Canons of St. Rufus, the patron saint of Avignon, maintain an abbey, church and hospice just outside Avignon, near the Rhone. The grounds have a Divine aura of 3.

PONT SAINT-BÉNEZET

These 22 arches of stone span the low-lying Isle de Barthelasse in the midst of the stream. The eastern end contains a drawbridge to prevent access via the Porte du Rhone into the city, but the great gatehouse remains incomplete. In the early years of the 13th century the

unpaved bridge is still intact.

A small chapel dedicated to St Nicholas of Myrna exists above the third pier from the east bank. It contains the interred body and relics of St Benezet, and is a site of veneration for many of the Rhone boatmen as they journey along the river supplying their livelihood. At the centre of a small Divine aura of 4, the chapel covers the first few piers of the bridge only. A retired Redcap and former boatman known as Jorin serves as the chapel's doorman, reporting to his Hermetic superiors of the Coenobium.

ST ANDRE

Built on Mont Andaon above the western end of the bridge, this prosperous abbey-town dominates the road to the commune of Avignon and provides lodging for the pilgrims traveling to Santiago de Compostela along the Way of St James. The abbey shelters the bones of St Casarie, a sixth century Visigothic hermit-princess and is blanketed by a strong Divine aura of 4.

The abbot of St André is a distant relative of the Les Baux family, and one of the most powerful local landowners. More open-minded than many churchmen, he

AUCASSIN OF TYTALUS

secretly maintains good relations with the magi of the Coenobium. The clergyman sometimes entertains the more respectable of the local hedge wizards. Characters refusing the hospitality of the Coenobium may approach the abbot to allow them to lodge in the appropriately named Tower of Sorcerers, but any arrangement requires discretion or risks arousing the ire of the local bishop or the interests of the Coenobium.

Beucaire

Beucaire (Occitan: "beautiful rock") across from Tarascon on the western Languedoc bank of the Rhone is nominally part of the County of Toulouse. In 1216, the count has recently recaptured it from Simon de Montfort's forces after a short siege. The town is dominated by the powerful *utricularii* of the Boatmen's Guild, who control the wharves at the cliff's base, beneath the city. Unusually, the Coenobium maintains no presence in the town, but recent rumors of the return of the mysterious Drac, a local sorcerer-dragon believed to predate the formation of the Order, may draw them.

THE DRAC

Local legend tells of a cruel sorcerer-dragon, the ancient Drac (Occitan: "dragon"), who preys on the river-folk of the Rhone, luring mothers and young children to his lair beneath the waters. A notably crafty creature, the elusive river serpent is claimed to be responsible for the deaths of over three thousand knights and villagers, having escaped several campaigns to hunt it down over the centuries. Its magical powers allowed the beast to walk amongst the townsfolk unseen when it desired.

As the story does not mention anyone ever slaying the elder dragon, it was believed to have died of old age, but a decade ago a spate of disappearances in or around Beaucaire has been attributed to the return of the creature. No further disappearances have been reported for the last few years and the townsfolk are beginning to forget the incidents, but one of the wells in the marketplace of Beaucaire is rumored to be still linked to the creature's lair.

In reality, the recent return of the Drac is attributable to a Tytalan eremite secretly styling himself "*Aucassin Le Dracommet*," who has adopted the tale to cover his search for an apprentice and the forcible recruitment of his minions. An orphan adopted by a Rhine peregrinator, Aucassin was inexplicably drawn one day to a weak Magic aura centered on a disused well in the old marketplace of Beaucaire when revisiting his city of birth post-Gauntlet. Beneath the well lay the entrance to the underwater regio network. The Tytalan has built his sanctum within the regio that extends beneath the Rhone and Drac rivers, seeking to take advantage of its powerful Magic aura.

Although he does not attend Tribunal meetings, Aucassin has successfully maintained a Persona for several years (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 87–90) as the consummate merchant, Rene of Dragonianum — a successful capo within Beaucaire's trading establishment. He deals with the Redcaps and hedge wizard allies of the Coenobium in this mundane guise, but has been careful to avoid direct contact with Gifted magi lest his ruse be revealed. As Rene he subtly controls the town's council using his skill in manipulation and select low-level Mentem magics. He is careful enough to avoid displaying any overt magic in town that would draw the attention of the Quaesitores.

In the last two decades Aucassin has discovered that his Mythic Blood descends from the Drac of old and that he is therefore an heir to the creature's magical legacy. Within the complex he has discovered detailed instructions, expressed as images on the cave walls, for rituals promising immortality through unleashing the potential of the dragon blood running in his veins and a deeper level linked to the Magic Realm. The images and the regio together form parts of a Mystery Initiation Script designed to transform a human heir into a truly Magical being by maturing the initiate into a true elder Drac. He has uncovered what appears to be a portal into the Magic Realm via a boundary aligned to the Form of Imaginem, which is guarded on the other side by a sleeping dragon Vestige resembling a giant Drac (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 21–23). Although he has harvested some of the unusual vis beyond the portal, he feels he is not ready to challenge the elder creature for his inheritance until he more deeply understands the ritual images.

Tarascon

Imperial counterpart to Beaucaire on the west bank, Tarascon is known for its own local amphibious dragon legend. In the hills outside the settlement is the cave lair of the slain Tarasque, a six-legged amphibian beast tamed by St Martha and then cowardly slain by the villagers of Nerluc in AD 48. Although the remains of the beast have been scattered over the centuries, the lair deepens into a submerged cave network that may connect with other caves in the region. The cave has a weak residual Magic aura of 2, although stronger regiones are believed to exist and lesser cousins of the infamous dragon may lurk within.

Just north of the town near a small island lies the battle site of the forces of Hannibal and the Volcae tribe, made famous as the Battle of the Rhone Crossing. On a clear moonlit night, travelers in boats have remarked seeing giant skeletal remains of elephants lying on the river bed and giant ghostly animal shapes marching beneath the currents.

Arles

Arles is a free city or commune in the style of the Italian city-states, governed by an elected foreign *podesta* or chief magistrate since 1132. The *podesta* in turn appoints the remaining local consuls. In the 13th century it is a busy seaport, a popular embarkation point for Crusaders and pilgrims from northern France on their way to the Holy Land.

LES ARENES

Once fortified against Moorish raids, the stonework of the Roman arena has been scavenged for building works throughout the city. The ruin now holds a poor neighborhood consisting of a maze-like cluster of hovels. Although there are several churches, the majority of the population here engages in illicit trades. The more genteel citizens avoid the suburb at night.

Within this unofficial thieves' town lies the Mercer House, disguised as a pilgrim's auberge dedicated to St Cyprian. It is nominally owned by the current leader of the Coenobium, the Chief Redcap, Alazais of Mercere. See later in the section on the Coenobium for further details.

Story Seeds: Beaucaire & Tarascon

Many events of the past and present could lead to stories in this area.

THE GOLDEN COURT OF 1174

Held in the meadows just north of Beaucaire, this Faerie-infested festival continue to inspire tales about its opulence, extravagance, and excess. Nominally held to celebrate the reconciliation of the Duke of Narbonne with the King of Aragon by the then Count of Provence, Henry II, the Golden Court consisted of a spectacle of 100,000 Provençal knights, according to the laudatory chronicle of Abbot Geoffrey Breuil of Vigeios.

In truth, most of the knights were not human but rather faeries reveling in the *foudat* or spirit of deliberate foolishness and whimsicality created by troubadour culture. Thirty-thousand golden sous of glamour were plowed into the soil here, and whole herds of faerie cattle were slain and roasted over expensive wax and pitch-pine torches in an orgy of conspicuous wealth, leaving a tale lingering to this day. The faeries crowned the troubadour Raimbaut of Orange, Guilhem Mita, as "King of the Minstrels" using a golden crown sent by the faerie blooded noblewoman Sorgest, Countess of Urgell, a renowned supporter of the troubadour movement.

A multitude of faeries resembling the famous troubadours and nobles of the day revisit and replay the festival on its anniversary, always looking for new humans to draw into variations of the tales they relive. Although the site is still aligned to Faerie, with a modest aura of 3 that rises to 5 on the anniversary of its opening, the field has recently attracted the attention of the Infernal. Many minor demonic spirits associated with envy, greed and lust have detached themselves from the crusading army's wake and begun to settle in the surrounding area. These demons are similar to Tempters & Evil Spirits (see *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 39). The Coenobium magi suspect the field may be a plentiful source of renewable, albeit Faerie tainted, vis and may send the characters to investigate before considering any application to join their community.

A STAY IN THE WATER KINGDOM?

The magi come to hear of Nicolette, a young woman living in Beaucaire, who tells all who will listen of her dreams of underwater kingdoms and dragons. Most folk think her mad but indulge her by listening to her stories when unable to escape her attentions. The older folk say that she once disappeared for seven years without warning, only to return as suddenly as she left, but with no memory or explanation of where she had been and no memories of the son she had abandoned as a babe. Her husband and maturing son care for her the best they can and quickly divert her talk from her dreams when strangers enquire too pointedly.

Nicolette may be a *drac bride*, a Faerie touched woman, once a maid servant and prisoner of the Faerie serpent released to spread tales in the mundane world. Alternatively, she may just be one of Aucassin's escaped grogs. In either version, the mad-woman may seek refuge in the covenant, drawing the unwanted attention of the Tytalus magus, or else leading them into stories beneath the waters of the Rhone.

THE DEEPER SECRETS OF THE RHONE

A brief account of the recent sightings of the Drac is contained in the *Otia imperialia* ("Recreation for an Emperor" or "The Emperor's Solace"), an encyclopedia of myth and magic written between 1210 and 1214 by an eminent former resident of Arles, Gervais of Tilbury. Gervais mentions entrances to the Drac's lair via a pool outside the North Gate of Arles and within one of the main wells of Beaucaire.

The local Redcaps believe at least one other entrance can be found within Magic auras along more desolate stretches of the Rhone. These connect to a large interconnected regio network that is believed to lie beneath the Rhone valley, potentially providing an alternate magical means of travel throughout the region. Travel through the labyrinth is marked by inhuman breathing sounds, giving a feeling of being hunted by some unknown evil.

THE ALYSCAMPS

Once the funerary destination of rich Romans, this field stretching along the Via Tolosa to the east became known for its crypts and sepulchers. At one time the necropolis was so famous and desired that the Rhone boatmen guided floating coffins from all over Europe downriver to the cemetery, although not all their clients' valuable belongings ended up interred at their final destination.

The area's importance has faded since the relics of St Trophimus were removed to the cathedral in 1152. The local people have begun using the stones for building material and the current city council has begun a practice of gifting sarcophagi to important visitors, further depleting the site.

THE BARBEGAL RUINS

A few miles north of Arles lie the ruins of a Roman watermill complex once used as a covenant site in the late ninth century by a trio of magi. One of the magi was a Verditius engineer rumored to have discovered a way to extract different Forms of vis from Magic auras using magical waterwheels.

The peaceful settlement suffered the depredations of Fraxinetum (see earlier). Its sole surviving member fled to join the nascent Coenobium. The Barbegal complex retains a Magic aura of 5.

PONT FLAVIAN

A single-arched bridge framed by two triumphal arches, the Pont Flavian crosses the River Touloubre near St. Chamas as part of the Via Julia Augusta. Built in antiquity, the structure has endured for more than one thousand years thanks in part to the faerie ogre who has taken up residence beneath it. The ogre can be bargained with, and a toll of sheep and beer often purchases a caravan's passage through this area.

The Alpilles

A range of limestone teeth jutting from the northern edge of the plain of the Crau, these little mountains resemble

the greater Alps to such an extent that they are regarded locally as their diminutive offspring. Wild and untamed, they rise above the medieval town of St-Remy just to the north and contain areas of untouched wilderness, home to both Magic and Faerie auras and their respective creatures.

Les Baux

The stronghold of Baux was razed in 1162 at the end of a long conflict known as the Bausenque Wars between its scions and the Catalan counts of Provence. Hugh III, son of Bertrand, is the current Seigneur of Baux but spends most of his time elsewhere, preferring the bustle of Marseilles, which he holds as viscount on behalf of the Holy Roman Emperor. His relatives include the Prince of Orange and many of the minor nobility of Provence. One of his younger cousins, Marcus, is well known amongst the family as the wizard Balthazar, a somewhat notorious member of the Coenobium.

Beneath the plateau of Les Baux lies the infamous Val d'Enfer, a rocky valley associated with a weak Infernal aura of 2, known for the many sinister caves that line the gorge. These caves provide entrances to a Tartaran regio. The regio is the lair of the lesser demons of pride and ambition that have spurred on the Bausenque lords

Story Seeds: Beaucaire & Tarascon, cont'd

Characters may seek to access the watery labyrinth by following the descriptions and clues in Gervais' text. The encyclopedia contains the equivalent of 4 tractati of Quality 6, on Provençal Lore (history), Faerie Lore, Infernal Lore, and Magic Lore, and can be used to research the Drac and its lair. See *Art & Academe*, page 26 for details on additional uses of encyclopedias.

TO PAY THE FERRYMAN

The main crossing between the two towns is by ferry. The guildsmen of Beaucaire guard the right to cross fiercely, usually charging steeply for any transit. This is at the instigation of Aucassin of Tytalus, who controls several agents within the boatsman's guild in both Beaucaire and Arles whom he uses as informers and enforcers. So far, he has allowed Redcaps to pass unmolested, but recently one of his thugs humiliated a messenger entrusted with a private message to one of the Coenobium's magi. The Coenobium asks the characters to investigate whether the *utricularii* need to learn the benefits of cooperating with their agenda.

TO HEAL THE SICKLY HEIR

About a decade ago Aucassin kidnapped several children from the area, giving rise to Gervais' recent accounts of

drac related disappearances. He finally captured a sickly Gifted child who appears to share his Mythic Blood. Although he is unclear of the full path he must follow, he believes that the odd child, nicknamed "Le Petit," must play a part in his ultimate transformation and has begun to train him as a Hermetic apprentice. Unfortunately the child is wasting away from a magical illness and the Tytalus is poorly skilled in healing magic. Disguised as a poor washer woman the eremite may approach the characters to help heal his heir, seeking to play on their compassion while concealing his true ambitions.

WHEN A GROG GOES MISSING

Aucassin has recently begun to abduct mundane servants to care for his young "hatchling". He has so far been able to use his magical talents and his position within the town to cover up the disappearances. Several abductees now dwell under magical compulsion within the cave complex, including a lavender seller wet-nurse and a young female scribe previously used by the Chief Redcap, Alazais. He has forced the latter to act as the child's Latin and Artes Liberales tutor. When another favored grog goes missing during a trip down the Rhone, will the characters investigate further and stumble upon the secretive magus' plans?

Story Seeds: Arles

Many stories could spring from this area.

THE LOST WHEELS

Once used to "grind" vis from the surrounding aura, the broken remains of only 13 of the magically crafted waterwheels of Barbegal lie hidden beneath the wild undergrowth. Repairing the complex and recovering the missing three wheels may allow rediscovery of the watermill's secret of producing varied vis on demand — a feat that would surely indebt the characters to the neighboring Coenobium.

BEYOND THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

A small covenant of Ex Miscellanea necromancers and spirit magi known as *Elisii Campi* dwelt within the crypts of the Alyscamps in the tenth century. Although they survived the Schism War by hiding underground, the magi were driven out by the Coenobium, who subtly flexed their growing mundane power, inciting fear in the local populace by spreading rumors of a group of diabolists living beneath the necropolis.

The descendants of the necromancers apparently decamped to a secluded cave network in the Verdun gorge, naming their new covenant Portus Termini. All contact

was lost shortly after their flight, leading many to speculate that the survivors were hunted down and slain by hoplites sponsored by the Coenobium. The truth may lie hidden beneath the tombs, but many of the sarcophagi hold enchantments and traps laid by the shadowy magi and hedge wizards of the lost covenant.

When an enchanted sarcophagus ends up in the possession of the characters by chance, it may provoke interest in its origin and set off an investigation into the true fate of its former owners. Will the trail lead to a secret covenant in the Verdun Gorge or will they uncover a bloodstained path leading back into the past of the Coenobium?

A Small Tarasque

Magic Might: 20 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per +1, Pre -2, Com -5, Str +6, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik -1

Size: +3

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Greater Immunity (deprivation), Greater Immunity (fire); Ferocity, Improved Characteristics (x2), Tough; Magic Monster, Mute, No Hands, Baneful Circumstances (Sincere Holy Displays), Weakness (Sincere Holy Displays).

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power (Breath of Flame), No Fatigue, Improved Attack (claws), Improved Attack (teeth), Improved Damage (claws), Improved Damage (teeth), Improved Might (x3), Improved Powers (x2), Improved Soak (x7), Personal Power (Unnatural Flight); Monstrous Appearance

Personality Traits: Ravenous +3, Vicious

+3, Tarasque +3, Cunning +2

Reputations: Savage Beast from Galicia 3 (local), Dragon Mesmerized by Hymns 2 (Narbonnais)

Combat:

Large Claws: Init -1, Attack +17, Defense +10, Damage +13

Large Teeth: Init -1, Attack +15, Defense +7, Damage +12

Soak: +20

Fatigue Levels: None.

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

Abilities: Athletics 4 (charging), Awareness 4 (humans), Brawl 7 (claws), Hunt 4 (woods), Stealth 2 (remaining unseen), Survival 3 (forests)

Powers:

Unnatural Flight, 0 points, Init 0, Animal.

The wings of a tarasque should not carry it through the air, but they do, and do so tirelessly. **ReAn 15 R:** Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. (Base 4, +2 sun, +3 size): Personal Power (25 levels), Im-

proved Power (-2 Might cost, +3 Initiative.)

Breath of Flame, 2 points, Init 0, Ignem.

The tarasque breathes a gout of flame 3 paces by 3 paces by 9 paces long. Anything caught in its effect suffers a stress die +25 damage from the fire.

Crlg 40 R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind. (Base 20, +2 Voice, +2 size): Greater Power (50 levels, mastery points: -2 Might cost), Improved Power: (+5 Initiative)

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: There are four pawns of Animal vis in the Tarasque's carapace.

Appearance: The tarasque resembles a scaly, winged oxen with a vaguely reptilian lion's head, six legs, a tortoise-like carapace, and a leathery tail. The full body of the creature measures roughly 15 paces long. Its legs end in heavy, sharply curved talons, and its great maw sports sword-like teeth. Wisps of pale gray smoke curl from its nostrils and open mouth.

into conflict over the preceding centuries.

Carved into the rock beneath the valley is the Tremais, a roughly hewn sculpture depicting three figures commonly thought to represent Saints Lazarus, Mary Magdalene and Martha. The location is considered a minor pilgrimage site with a Divine aura of 4 but the Christian shrine

lies within a larger Faerie aura of 2, as the original pre-Christian sculpture was dedicated to the Roman commander Marius, his wife, and the Syrian sibyl Martha before being adopted by missionaries seeking to convert the local populace.

The Camargue

This swampy triangle between the deltas is formed by the two terminal branches of the Rhone. Trinquetaille, the unwallled suburb of Arles on the right bank of the Grande Rhone, provides entry to the Cam-



The Ogre Under the Bridge

Faerie Might: 20 (30) (Vim)

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

Size: +3

Virtues and Flaws: External Vis (skull, grants Tough), Increased Might; Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Feast of the Dead, Huge x2, Hybrid Form, Improved Characteristics, Improved Powers, Improved Soak x2, Lesser Power, Personal Power x2, Place of Power (Pont Flavian), Tough; Monstrous Appearance, Recovery requires Vitality; Incognizant, Role requires suffering, Susceptible to deprivation, Traditional Ward (Payment: those who pay the toll)

Personality Traits: Destructive +3, Greedy +2, Hungry +3, Ogre +3, Willing to Barter +2

Reputations: Ravenous Guardian of the Pont Flavian 3 (Narbonnais), Sheep and Cattle Thief 2 (local)

Combat:

Club: Init -5, Attack +13, Defense +6, Damage +15

Thrown Rock: Init -6, Attack +13, Defense +4, Damage +14

Large Claws: Init -3, Attack +11, Defense +5, Damage +10

Tusks: Init -3, Attack +10, Defense +4, Damage +11

Soak: +10

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

Pretenses: Awareness 4 (humans), Bargain 4 (creating terms), Brawl 5 (club), Concentration 4 (maintaining *Seeming of the Menhir*), Faerie Speech 5 (sounding intimidating), Guile 3 (bluffing), Narbonnais Lore 3 (surrounding Pont Flavian), Stealth 3 (remaining unseen), Survival 3 (hills), Thrown Weapon 5 (rocks)

Powers:

Stone from the Loam, 0 points, Init -4, Ter-ram. The ogre reaches into the ground

and draws forth a stone appropriate for throwing. The ogre must be in an area of natural earth to use this power. **ReTe 10 R:** Touch, D: Mom, T: Part. (Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Part): Lesser Power (10 levels, +3 Initiative), Improved Powers (-2 Might points)

Seeming of the Menhir, 0 points, Init -6, Imaginem. The ogre takes on the semblance of a large boulder or standing stone appropriate to the area. **MuCo 25 R:** Per, D: Conc, T: Individual. (Base 5, +1 Conc, +3 Size): Personal Power (25 levels), Improved Powers (-3 Might points)

Stealth through the Grass, 2 points, Init -4, Imaginem. The Ogre makes no sound as it moves. Its voice, thrown rocks and attacks make noise normally. **Pelm 20 R:** Per, D: Sun, T: Individual. (Base 3, +2 Sun, +3 Size): Personal Power (20 levels, -1 Initiative)

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: There are four pawns of Corpus in the skull it keeps in a net hanging on its belt. This skull has no encumbrance value and grants the bearer the Tough virtue. It serves as the Ogre's external vis.

Appearance: A very tall, brutishly strong man with heavily clawed hands and a head very reminiscent of a tusked boar. He carries the thick stump of a tree for a club, the knotted roots serving as makeshift spikes. He carries a burlap sack over one shoulder, filled with badly cooked mutton, half-full casks of poor-quality beer or wine, and several throwing stones. His forearms are stained a rusty, dark-brown up to the elbow, and the wickedly curved tusks which jut from his lower jaw are almost amber streaked with dirty brown. He wears a ragged hide for a loincloth and saddle cinch serves as his belt. One bare skull and several recently taken heads in various states of decomposition hang from the creature's waist. He has a vicious and hungry look in his piggish squint.

STORY SEED: THE OGRE'S PRISONER

Some claim the ogre can be placated by leaving him a skin of wine and a sheep for each wagon or herd to cross the Pont Flavian, or with a simple sack of coins. Those who attempt to sneak across or damage the bridge are often waylaid and eaten. A Redcap, unfamiliar with the area and trying to deliver correspondence to the covenant, found himself captured by the ogre. In a panicked attempt to barter for his life, he promised the ogre that the magi would pay a ransom for his freedom—whatever the ogre desired, be it ten head of cattle, a great lump of gold, a wagon loaded with full wine casks. Unwilling to surrender his prisoner or leave the bridge, the ogre captured the next shepherd to wander nearby. The ogre made the Redcap give directions to the covenant, telling the lad he would eat a sheep for every day beyond the fourth it took the shepherd to return, and swore he'd eat the boy himself if he failed to return with the wizards.

So how will the magi react when a random sheepherder arrives at their doorstep unannounced, telling them they must come to see the ogre of Pont Flavian, and perhaps pay the ransom for a Redcap they have never met? The ogre is not foolish, either. He has hidden the Redcap in a secret oubliette only he knows and has the strength to open. If the Ogre is killed before the Redcap's ransom is paid, the Mercere will likely rot in an unconsecrated grave, lost in the hills. Complicating matters, the ogre claims to be the cousin of the Boar King (*The Lion and the Lily*, page 120), declaring his noble kinsman will avenge any wrong committed against him.

argue marshes to the south. It is the site of the Coenobium's Factory, a series of seemingly mundane warehouses that house the bulk of the covenant's magically produced mundane wealth.

Although nominally only visitors to the Coenobium, the two Bjornaer magi who

permanently dwell on the outskirts of the town spend most of their time within the marshlands of the Camargue. The diminutive Bubulcus roams the swamps astride his bull Animal Companion, usually in his egret Heartbeast form, and is the more sociable of the pair. Elornis One-Leg spends at least a sea-

son a year in his North African homeland or traveling through dreams. Descended from a line of African diviners, his Heartbeast is that of a greater flamingo. Both magi are aware of the legendary horses of the Camargue led by the Great Stallion but contact is minimal (See *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 59-60).



The Ruins of Glanum

Nestled to the south of the medieval town of St-Remy at the site of the old Roman settlement, pre-Schism Glanum was the site of two very short-lived Hermetic settlements of the same name in the ninth century — one Mercurian, one Mithraic. Both failed abruptly due to lack of diversity in magical skills and a fanatical prejudice against accepting members not aligned to their cult's philosophy. Neither covenant attempt lasted long enough to be formally recognized as covenants of the then Lotharingian Tribunal by having a Quaesitor review their charter.

Since the Schism War the ruins have been abandoned but have recently been proposed as the compromise location for the next Tribunal gathering (see Chapter 3: Hermetic Culture). The site is currently considered off-limits for formal resettlement until this issue has been decided. Currently only Beatrice of Guernicus dwells here as a visitor to the Coenobium. Her sanctum effectively constitutes a small chapter of *Castra Solis* loosely dedicated to the bipartisan study of the Roman shrines associated with the various cults that once flourished there.

The Legacy of Balthazar

The House of Baux claims descent from the historical figure of Balthazar, reputedly one of the three wise kings who visited the infant Christ. To reflect this ancestry, their arms contain the Star of Bethlehem, but their actions as a line have been less than Christian. The Gift occurs uncommonly frequently within this mundane family for reasons that are unclear, but which lend credence to Bausenque claims of a magical heritage.

The lords of Baux have traditionally strong links to House Jerbiton, who sometimes recruit the less martially inclined scions of the family into their ranks. Unfortunately even these softer Bausenque heirs usually lack the Gentle Gift and are generally more interested in nepotism and aggrandizement. More often than not they possess the Brutal Artist Flaw as their outlook on Taste and Beauty is considered less refined than many of their Housemates. This often makes them more suited to House Tytalus, and at least one scion has switched allegiance after her initial apprenticeship.

House Jerbiton has learned to use this to its advantage. The Coenobium encourages the story of Balthazar's legacy with the local nobility and actively reinforces the stereotypes and myths propagated by House Jerbiton (see *Lords of Men*, page 41) to their own advantage or uses Balthazarine magi as decoys and scapegoats.

Although Balthazarine magi are en-

couraged to subtly draw attention away from their less martial brethren, they must be careful not to draw too much attention through their more overt interaction with mundanes. The current Hermetic scion is Marcus d'Les Baux (see the Coenobium, later), although there are at least two other younger Balthazarine magi from junior branches of the family.

Player magi or their apprentices may choose to belong to this lineage. At least two previous Balthazarine magi in recent memory, noted for their particular lack of taste, have joined House Tytalus, and a handful of the more warlike or chivalrous individuals in the past have joined House Flambeau. Marcus may see any younger members of his lineage more as a potential rival than an ally, reflected by the Enemy or even the Beloved Rival Flaw.

MYTHIC BLOOD (BALTHAZARINE)

Hermetic, Major

Balthazarine descent grants a Minor Magical Focus with Fear or Obedience, and the associated Minor Personality Flaw tends to be one of Cruel or Proud. Their granted power is usually a version of *Aura of Rightful Authority* (ArM5, page 151) but with Duration Sun and no Penetration, invoked without words by adopting an overly haughty pose. See ArM5, page 47 for further details on the Mythic Blood Virtue.

Le Chevre D'Or

Known to roam the crags of the Alpilles, the Golden Goat of Provence is said to guard the cave containing the legendary treasure of her father, Abd al-Rahman III, first Caliph of Cordoba. In its natural form its long coat gleams with a golden fire and it wears a golden coronet around its ebony horns. When encountered it may appear to be trapped and beg to be freed in first Arabic and then Occitan, shifting into the form of a breathtakingly beautiful Saracen princess if its pleas are ignored and promising its treasure to its savior.

Le Chevre D'Or is a form of powerful nymph (described in *Tales of Power: Faerie*, pages 73–74) that controls the entrance to a regio that leads to a grand treasure trove. Alternatively the maiden may as easily be represented by a Spirit of Deceit (see *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 38).

The geographic entrance to the treasure regio may lie at the base of the Ga-

ragai Gorge, in the Val d'Enfer beneath the plateau of Les Baux, or perhaps in any and every one of the various gullies in the foothills of the Provençal Alps. Unfortunately, the Faerie goat provides only ready entry and not ready exit — without Second Sight or other applicable magic, the entrapped lover may be unable to find the exit to the mundane world and must wander the layers of the sinister regio.

STORY SEED: THE SMITTEN YOUTH RETURNS

Rarely, the young men lured by the princess do find a way out of the trap, but usually only at the expense of their sanity or their soul. When the characters camp overnight while traveling in the area, their most attractive male mundane companion disappears during his watch, only to re-

turn late morning with an incredible tale of hidden treasure. Despite attempts to dissuade them, the accompanying grogs wish to investigate, but is the returned youth a Faerie or Infernal impostor seeking to lead them to their doom?

STORY SEED: THE GOLDEN FLEECE OF PROVENCE?

Shepherds sometimes come across strands of the goat's golden wool snagged in bushes on the hillsides. Such wool is recognized by Hermetic magi as Imaginem-flavored Accrued vis (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 19). Characters may be tasked with finding this wool by one of the more aesthetically minded magi of the Coenobium if they petition for membership of the Coenobium or wish to access its resources.

Salt for Life, Life for Salt...

Salt preserves, salt protects and salt pays — in the 13th century salt is a valuable magical and mundane commodity worth fighting over. The ruins of the abandoned Hermetic settlement of Castra Peccaius lie on the eastern bank of the Petit Rhone, just across from the future site of Aigues Mortes. Although the settlement has been abandoned for three centuries, the covenfolk of the Coenobium still travel here regularly to harvest a prized vis source from a particularly brackish pond just within the ruins. The magi of the Coenobium nominally lease this land from the nearby Abbey of Psalmody through their mundane dependents. In a few years time, if your saga follows history, the monks will sell the land to King Louis to establish the

embarkation point for his Crusade. This build up of mundane forces may threaten the Order's ability to access to this unusual vis source without disturbing the king's army, as corrupt local commanders move to secure harvest rights over the nearby salt pans to enrich themselves.

THE SALT THAT PRESERVES

The magical salt produced by evaporation in this secret pond acts as a special form of Dedicated Corpus Vis (See *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 122–123). A pawn of this vis allows a magus to add +2 to their Creo Corpus total during the creation of their Longevity Ritual, regardless of the magus' Magic Theory score. Only

one pawn of this vis can be used per Longevity Ritual, although it counts as one of the pawns needed.

Control of this small vis source, which produces only 1 to 3 pawns of vis per year of the salt, provides a valuable trade commodity to the Coenobium, who exchange the harvest with a research covenant in the Greater Alps, in return for favors for its elder magi. Threatening this supply is likely to provoke an extreme response from the otherwise politically aloof magi, and is a weakness that might be exploited by opponents of the Coenobium.

Salt: +5 preservation, +3 protection from evil spirits and demons

St Gilles-du-Gard

Based on a hermitage founded by St Giles (Aegidius) in the seventh century, this Benedictine monastery is the first stopping point on the Via Tolosena from Arles. As a waypoint within a day's journey on the Way of St James

to Santiago de Compostela (see Chapter 5: Gascony, for further details), the abbey and dependent town have become an important pilgrimage site in their own right and are famous as the birthplace and family holdings of the recent counts of Toulouse.

The crypt holding the relics of St Giles is frequented by barren women wishing to

become pregnant, although cripples are also found seeking the saint's intercession on his feast day, the first day of September.

Just outside St Gilles on the banks of the Rhone lies the scene of Peter of Castelnau's assassination. The ford at which the papal legate was slain, perhaps by a demon, perhaps by one of Raimond VI's supporters, is still stained

Story Seed: The Green Magi in the Trees

Visitors who spend the night sleeping beneath the boughs of Yf report dreaming of green robed magi who disappear into the shadows whispering threats of vengeance. The Diedne of Yf used this site for their pagan rituals, but unlike their fellows further north, it was the Moors sponsored by Fraxinetum rather

than the local Flambeau who spilled their blood amidst the groves. Characters who investigate the area looking to speak with pre-Schism War ghosts or uncover clues about their non-Hermetic secrets arouse the suspicion of the Chief Quaesitor elect and her Mercurian allies if they attempt to settle at the site.

by an Infernal aura of 3. On the anniversary of Peter's death, the Rhone runs red like blood and small skull-shaped pebbles can be harvested for several pawns of Corpus vis, but the vis obtained is always Infernally tainted (see *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, pages 18–19).

Orange

Originally the Celtic oppidum Arausio, then later a colony for the veterans of Caesar's Gallic War, this town has been ruled by the Les Baux family since the breakup of the Kingdom of Arles in 1033. Emperor Frederick I promoted the former county to a minor principality in 1163 as he passed through. The current count, Raymond I, still claims the vicerealty of Arles since his troubadour father William's death in 1218 in the depths of an Avignon prison. His power is greatly limited by the strong influence of the local commune.

One of the finest Roman theaters outside of Italy dominated the settlement's social life until closed by the Christians in 391, and in 1220 it remains in ruins from its sacking by the barbarian invasions of the fourth century. The triumphal arch constructed by Tiberius has been incorporated into the town walls as its northern gate but still retains a Magic aura of 2 that flickers into being at night when the Divine aura subsides. As it stands astride the old Via Agrippa, some Hermetic magi speculate the monument may hold some secrets into the ancient Road magic of their Mercurian past. Both Neo-Mercurians and Cult of Mercury members visit the site discreetly to look for possible clues in the inscriptions or architecture.

Plaine de la Crau

This stony plain is of great interest to the magi of Ara Maxima Nova, as legend has it that the hero Heracles was confronted by the giants Bergion and Ligur, sons of Poseidon, on his return along the Via Domitia after successfully corralling the huge cattle of Geryon. Unarmed, the demigod prayed for assistance to Zeus and the plain produced the numerous rocks that he then employed with vigor as missiles, successfully defeating his larger enemies from a distance.

The abundant round stones found on the plain make excellent slingshot or catapult stones depending on their size. Amongst the numerous irregularly shaped rocks can occasionally be found small, perfectly spherical specimens the size of a sling stone that are an unusual form of Terram vis. A handful of these pawns of vis are harvested yearly by the grogs of the Coenobium using lesser enchanted devices supervised by apprentice magi — a tedious and painstaking task used as a punishment for troublemakers or lazy underlings.

Eastern Provence

The eastern regions of Provence were the site of one of the oldest Greek colonies in western Europe, and remain important in Mediterranean trade.

Marseilles

Founded above the mouth of the river Lycaon by the Phocaeen Greeks as Massalia, this port was a thriving prospect un-

til snubbed in favor of Arles by Caesar for supporting Pompey in the Roman civil war. Although it fell into decline and suffered greatly from the Saracen raids that plagued the whole coast, at the start of the 13th century it is an important Mediterranean port thanks to the support of the Catalan counts of Provence. Ships carrying pilgrims and crusaders leave here intermittently as most of the Levantine pilgrim trade is currently dominated by the Genoese.

Its current viscount, Hugh III of Les Baux has close connections with the representatives of the Coenobium through his magus relative Marcus of Les Baux, although his young son, Barral, is deeply suspicious of his father's involvement with the wizards.

ARCHIPEL DU FRIOUL AND THE ISLE D'YF

These four small islands off the coast of Marseilles are uninhabited. The two largest, Pomegues and Ratonneau, are frequently used as moorings for smugglers, pirates, and Saracen raiders from their eastern nest in the Hyeres archipelago. The tiniest island, Tiboulain, is completely uninhabited. The remaining Isle d'Yf is covered by small Magic aura of strength 3 centered on the ancient grove of yew trees that give the outcrop its name.

The youngest branches of the oldest yew each contain a pawn of Extraordinary Intellego vis that, if burnt, gives the bearer of the wooden brand the power to invoke the ability to communicate with the spirits of the dead as though casting the spell, *Whispers Through the Black Gate* (ArM5, page 130). Up to half a dozen branches can be harvested each year on All Soul's Eve, but each branch can only be used once.

Toulon

Nestled beneath the slopes of Mount Faron, this town was known in ancient writings for its dye-making from the earliest Phoenician settlements in the area. Its beaches are one of the few sources of the rare *murex* shellfish vital for producing imperial (true) purple, and the oak groves on the hillsides above maintain the *kermes* beetle that produces an almost as valuable crimson dye when crushed.

The Coenobium maintains a small chapter house here at the location of the former Flambeau covenant of Telo Martius, run by a retired Redcap. Aloysius Porphyri is an un-Gifted alchemist who coordinates the harvesting of the two resources here and runs one of the dye-making works from the Coenobium's factory outside the town.

OF PURPLE AND OF CRIMSON

The true purple dye produced from the murex shellfish by the Coenobium here was reserved for the sole use of the Byzantine emperors in pre-Hermetic times, but now only some of the dye makes its way eastwards, as the covenant keeps a portion of the factory's product for their own magical purposes. See *The Sundered Eagle: the Theban Tribunal*, page 45 for details of the value of true purple in the Byzantine lands.

In contrast, the violent crimson produced from the crushed *kermes* beetle is more widely distributed and is particularly favored by hoplites and magi of Flambeau for their clothing, although it has less magical potency.

The Coenobium's magically aided extraction process gives them a competitive advantage compared to other suppliers, but they are careful not to flood the market and draw mundane attention to their activities. Rare examples of the shells and oak-loving beetles contain small amounts of *Imaginem vis*, which is harvested by Aloysius while overseeing the dye-making process.

Purple (murex) dye: +10 royalty, +7 rulership and authority, +5 control people

Crimson (kermes) dye: +7 violence, +4 courage and martyrdom, +3 sin

THE HYERES ISLANDS

Known as the *Stoichades* to Pliny and the ancient Greeks, this cluster of islands across from the ancient Greek settlement of Olbia is known for the lush pastures of lavender that cover its gentle slopes. A monastery claims the larger eastern island known as Ile du Levant, but pirates haunt the more secluded coves of Port-Cros and Porquerolles. The current scions of Fraxinetum still use the area as their base. The nearby Giens peninsula to the west is only accessible at extremely low tide and forms a fourth island for the majority of the year.

Massifs des Maures

Between Hyeres and Frejus lies this geological anomaly of granite, a stark contrast to the limestone hills of the rest of Provence. Blackened by dark forests, it takes name from the Saracen privateers who dominated the lands from the coast to the Alpine passes during the later eighth, ninth and tenth centuries.

LA GARDE-FREINET

The original site of the covenant of Fraxinetum (see earlier for further details) lies almost inaccessible within the billowing crystalline summits of the region. Before the raider magi were forced to flee the consequences of their excessive mundane interference, this village above St Tropez amidst

The Pirate Isles

Although no longer based in the original *fraxinet* in the Massif des Maures, the latest heirs of the Hermetic privateers have moved their base to the islands just off the southern coast. They continue to sponsor mundane raids on the coastal cities of Provence and disrupt the Catalan and Genoan ships plying their trade along the coast. Ahmad's ships are careful to target non-Hermetic shipping, relying on carefully placed mundane spies to give the fleet of the Coenobium a wide berth.

Currently, there are only two Moorish magi dwelling at the pirate's main base amidst the lavender, although they can be found at occasionally harvesting vis sources scattered along the small islands of the southern Provence coastline, including the deserted Diedne base at Yf. A third magus has established a sanctum on one of the larger ships used by the magi's shady associates. The group have yet to declare themselves a Provençal covenant at Tribunal out of concern that the specter of their ancestors may provoke an unmitigated Wizard's War against them.

AHMAD IBN NASR OF TYTALUS

Age: 68 (Apparent Age: 43)

Personality Traits: Carefree +3, Brave +2

Directly descended from the founder of the original raider covenant, Nasr ibn Ahmad, the current leader of the pirates is a master of sea magics, jinn and water elementals. Rumor has it he may have been at least partially schooled by a Hermetic sahir of Andalusia and privy to non-Hermetic mysteries learnt from Faerie *jinn*. His spirit familiar is a powerful seaw-dwelling *'afrit* who claims to be a prince of an underwater tribe of *jinn* dwelling near

Gibraltar that Ahmad defeated during his self-taught initiation script.

THE MYTHIC USES OF LAVENDER

Dioscorides of Anazarba first described this plant, *stoechas*, in his great medical work, *De Materia Medica* as a slender herb with leaves longer longer than thyme. Since its introduction from the Hyeres islands to the mainland by Charlemagne in the ninth century, the herb has become a standard in monastic physic gardens. Its use is integral to the folk magic practices of southeastern France, where it is still called by its ancient name.

Lavender: +3 cleansing / purification or healing, +5 protection from evil spirits

LAVENDER OF VIRTUE

Unenriched Lavender of Virtue contain 1 pawns of Rego vis. Proper enrichment requires a time consuming process of sun drying the herb within an open barn during the winter rages of the Mistral. The twigs are then bound using twine into a small poesy and steeped in the venom of an asp for a season to activate the magic.

The finished amulet grants the Major Virtue Greater Immunity (one major disease) to any wearer without Magic Resistance so long as he or she can smell the herb's scent (equivalent to a Necessary Condition). The herb's magic only lasts a single year and it confers Warring Points on the wearer as a constant effect of Low Power (ArM5, page 168). If mounted above the lintel of a room, the amulet grants its protection to those in the chamber beyond while they recover within.

Story Seed: The Mistral

Stories can be blown in by the winds when they come from a magical source.

THE MASTER'S IRE

The legendary abundance of spirits has recently attracted Calais filius Septentrio of Bonisagus, a visitor to the Coenobium from the Rhine who styles himself "Master of the Winds." This magus established his sanctum in a cave just below the summit, near the entrance to the regio, seeking to convince the daimon within to let him act as its Spirit Votary.

This petitioning has aroused the ire of the self-proclaimed "true" master of the winds however, an ancient Faerie lord known as Mistrau ("the Master") who embodies all the Provençal myths of the *mistral*. The Faerie lord has somehow sealed the spirits' regio. This has prevented their egress and resulted in an unusually mild season.

The wind magus is now trapped within the regio and is still engaged in an ongoing battle with the enraged minions of Ventoux. His hosts at the Coenobium are becoming concerned, as they expected this valued specialist's return last season. Young magi may be charged with rescuing Calais, or, learning of his plans may decide to also try and bargain

with the greater daimon or the Faerie lord. To do so they will have to petition the hostile Mistrau to gain entrance. Its chosen challenge is for a wizard or mundane to best one of his Faerie champions in capturing two ephemeral concepts from Arcadia: the last breath of Winter and the first exhalation of Spring.

AN INFERNAL BREEZE

The storyguide may decide that either the daimon Ventoux or the Faerie lord Mistrau is better represented by an Infernal spirit that seeks to corrupt both Hermetic and hedge elemental traditions. Player magi drawn to Mount Ventoux by its legends may then be readily deceived they are dealing with a Faerie rather than an Infernal entity and be led into corruption. Using an Infernal pact, the demon hopes to spread his influence beyond the Rhone Valley and create a miasma of corruption that will eventually infect all elemental traditions throughout the Order.

In this scenario, Mistrau is a similarly named demon of the Order of Aerial Powers of similar Might to his Faerie counterpart. To date, the demon has been partly contained by the prayers and hymns of the nearby monks of Notre-Dame-du-Groseau.

an encircling forest of cork, oak and chestnuts was their base.

Still dominated by the ruins of the old covenant fort, the razed site retains a Magic aura of 4. A palisade of densely packed ash trees created by the Herbam specialists surrounds the former covenant grounds. Remnants of the defensive rituals of the magi animate the larger ash trees to repel intruders that pass the outer perimeter, giving rise to stories of ghosts haunting the area and keeping the local peasants from looting the Hermetic ruins.

Mount Ventoux

The "Home of the Winds," this bald mountain marks the northern boundary of Provence and dominates the surrounding plains, and has long had an evil reputation as the source of the *Mistral*, the famous wind of Provence. Various chapels are built on its lower slopes, including a pair of chapels and a guard tower at Beumont-du-Ventoux and the large monastery of Notre-Dame-du-Groseau. Further north lies the Source du Groseau, a magical spring pouring from the cliff-face dedicated to the Celtic spring-deity Groselos and a potential source of Aquam vis.

The upper slopes of the mountain are covered by a strong Magic aura of level 7 that rises into a regio of level 9 as a climber ascends to the gravelly summit. The wind is constantly blowing here, reaching frightening speeds and



preventing any vegetation from taking hold.

The regio above the peak is home to numerous air spirits of varying Might ruled by a greater Daimon referred to as Ventoux. This elder spirit periodically looses his lesser kin to wreak havoc on the surrounding countryside, adding substance to the folktales of the hill as a source of malevolent spirits.

Forcalquier

Capital of the county of the same name stretching along the Durance River, the town's citadel dominates the landscape from the top of a steep conical hill. Countess Garsenda is the current regent. Her political marriage to Alfonso in 1209 granted her son Raymond-Berengar an extensive local inheritance to add to his lands held as the Catalan count of Provence.

Garsenda is recognized as a *trobairitz* in her own right and is reputed to have magical powers beyond the mundane ability to inspire with song common to all troubadours. She is known as a famous patron of troubadours throughout the south. Her rumored lovers include at least one *Jerbiton* magus of the *Coenobium*. See Chapter 2: History and Culture for more details on troubadours and troubadour culture in Provence.

Aix

The recently chosen capital of the County of Provence has its roots in the old Celtic oppidum or hill-fort of Entremont, but was replaced by the Roman camp of *Aquae Sextiae*, sited near the nearby thermal spring. The famous Roman general Marius defeated the descending horde of Teutones near here at *Montagne Saint-Victoire* in 102 BC — his troops slaying so many barbarians that the soil of the resulting *Campi Putridi* was enriched for years to come. Stories tell that 300 of the defeated chieftains were forced into the sinister *Garagai* gorge at the urging of Marius's Syrian sibyl, *Martha*. Their murdered spirits rise from the floor of the pit on the anniversary of the battle to reenact their defeat. The lip of the chasm has an *Infernal* aura of 2, although deeper

The Ghosts of the Garagai Gorge

The ghosts of the murdered chieftains are not actually *Infernal* spirits despite the prevailing aura, but rather specters aligned to the Magic realm — Teutonic counterparts to the ghostly soldiers of *House Tremere* (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 126–127). Questioning the slain victims may provide an insight into the secrets of the lost tradition of *Martha*, the Syrian sibyl in the legends, who may have been from

a lineage akin to the *Canaanite Necromancers* (see *Ancient Magic*, pages 30–39 for more details on *Canaanite Necromancy*).

Even prior to the mass sacrifice, the chasm was said to be home to prophetic spirits that rose from the depths that may still be invoked by local *masques* or magi using necromantic magic. These older pagan spirits are best represented by *Spirits of Deceit* (see *Realms of Power: the Infernal*, page 38).

Story Seed: The Magic Milestone

Pope Urban II reconsecrated the local cathedral of *St Apollinaris* in 1095 after it was rebuilt in the *Cluniac Romanesque* style. Built into a column in its ambulatory is a milestone from the *Via Agrippa* roadway that carries an inscription in Latin attributing its sponsorship to *Florentius Niger*, a Roman senator believed to have been a priest of the *Cult of Mercury*. The inscription strongly radiates *non-Hermet-*

ic magic. It may contain an *Insight* into the ancient *Mercurian Road Magic* of the original *Mercurian* priests or a clue to the whereabouts of a lost *Mercurian* temple.

Studying the milestone in its current position is difficult, but removing the block is sure to be noticed and will trigger the church authorities to investigate the theft. Is there a solution that will keep the priests fooled?

in the gorge the strength rises and gives rise to yet unexplored *Tartaran* regiones, including a supposed entrance to *Hell* itself at its utmost bottom. Some local stories place the treasure cave of the *Le Chevre d'Or* here.

despoiled by the 14th abbot, *St Nazarius*, lies hidden in a cave network beneath the sister convent of *St Marguerite* on the smaller island, named *St Marguerite* after the convent. It contains a weak *Magic* aura of 2 still. Also on the island is an unusual almond tree which blossoms every month — its blooms can be collected and crushed to produce 1 *pawn* of *Mentem vis* per month, but the *vis* produced is *Divinely tainted* (see *ArM5*, page 190).

Iles de Lérins

Monks have dominated this area since the fifth century thanks to *St Honoratus*, who drove out the venomous snakes that infested the islands in antiquity. Although the serpents never returned, the *Saracens* did, repeatedly, and were responsible for the death of one of its abbots, *St Porcarius*, during the eighth century. The fortified *Cistercian* monastery of *Lerins* on the nearby *Ile Saint-Honorat* controls the walled town on the mainland, overlooked by a defensive tower on the *Suquet* hill.

Lerins is an important pilgrimage destination due to *St Honoratus* — traveling to *Lerins* is considered by some equivalent to a journey to the *Holy Land*, and the monastery has trained several remarkable clergymen, possibly even *Saint Patrick*.

A small sanctuary of *Venus*, unsuccessfully

TROPAEUM ALPIMUM

Originally this structure was nothing more than a circular arched monument dedicated to the defeat of the *Gaulish* tribes at the hands of the imperial legions. It once marked the boundary of *Roman Italy* on the *Via Julia Augusta*. This *Trophy of Augustus* later became a fortress and redoubt to protect the inhabitants in times of attack. By tradition, it still marks the easternmost limit of the *Provençal Tribunal*, although the town of *Turbia* is currently under the influence of the nearby *Republic of Genoa* and considered politically and linguistically part of *mundane Liguria*.

A partial statue of Augustus stands inside the monument, mostly smashed by Christian mobs who thought the Tropaeum was a pagan temple possibly dedicated to the cult of the Emperors. The site was investigated by the predominantly Mercurian magi of the short-lived covenant of Turrus Mascis ("Tower of the Masques"), but the fruits of their investigation have been lost. Stones from the monument have been used throughout the village for building, although any magical effects are suppressed by the strength 3 Divine aura of the nearby church of St Michael.

to escalate into overt violence.

The church of Notre Dame de Vie conceals the former peripteral Temple of Augustus and Livia and a Magic aura of 3, believed to have once been an important Mercurian site. A truncated pyramid known as Pilate's Tomb was reputedly dedicated near the spot where the body of the Biblical figure was submerged in the river before being removed as it aroused evil spirits in the waters. The remains of a Roman theatre adorn Mont Pipet to the east and traces of old Roman roads and aqueducts can be found on the outskirts of the city.

the deepest lake of the area, fed by the river Leysse and believed to contain an Aquam aligned regio deep within its waters. Some Hermetic magi have reported sightings of the mysterious elemental *Men of the Lake* (*Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 93–94) in the area, but this has not been confirmed.



Lower Burgundy

Once part of the Kingdom of Lower Burgundy, or Cisjurania, declared by Boso of Provence at Arles in 879 and then part of the reunited Kingdom of Arelat in 933, this area fell under the imperial control of Conrad II in 1032. Lately it has become increasingly independent of its imperial overlords. Like its French counterpart in the Normandy Tribunal, the Duchy of Burgundy, the area is known for its cathedrals, monasteries, and pilgrimages rather than trade.

The current Dauphine of Viennois and Countess Albon is Beatrice of Albon, grandmother of the eight year old Hugh IV of Burgundy, ruler of the Duchy of Burgundy in the Normandy Tribunal (see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 111–114). It is notably separate from the former Kingdom of Upper Burgundy formed by Rudolphe of Auxerre north of the Jura range in 888 and the Free County of Burgundy that lie within the Tribunal of the Greater Alps.

Vienne

Formerly the capital of the Gaulish Allobroges, then an important Roman colony, Vienne is the seat of the archbishop of northern Arelat. Although the legitimate count of the area on behalf of the emperor, the current prince-archbishop, Jean de Bernin, is constantly challenged by the local dauphins for control of the region. Armed conflict has not yet occurred but the situation threatens

Grand Chartreuse

This large monastic complex in the mountain cluster above the town of Grenoble consists of a main cloister of individual cells each with a high-walled garden connecting to a long corridor. Each so-called choir monk's living quarters consists of a two-story hermitage with a small walled courtyard isolated from its neighbor. Here the monks live a secluded life of communal retreat, devoting themselves to prayer.

Several of the current choir monks are unGifted Ascetics, members of a Holy Tradition for Mythic Companions introduced in *Realms of Power: the Divine Revised Edition*, page 47. The current prior and at least one of the other monks possess True Faith. At least two older brothers are very adept at Mythic Herbalism and the old hunchbacked cellarer, Salvatore, possesses the Blatant Gift.

The Great Motherhouse has a strong Divine aura of 7, strengthened by the simple unworldly devotions of the hermit monks. The valley itself has a Divine aura of 3.

Aix Les Bains

Once named Aquae Graticule (Latin: "waters of Gratian") to commemorate the emperor assassinated in Lyons in 383, the town was renowned as a bath during the Roman Empire. Travelers still frequent the hot thermal springs of the hilly country that forms the foothills of the Jura and the Alps.

Aix lies just south of the beautiful *Lac du Bourget*, purported to be the largest and

The Coenobium Rhodanien

Symbol: An arched bridge

This covenant is still referred to officially in the Redcap rolls as *Masum Sub Pontem* after the original name of the main site. Most Provençal magi refer to it just as *The Coenobium*. Normandy magi prefer the official term "Coenobium Rhodanien" to distinguish it from the small unofficial covenants of their home Tribunal designated by the same term.

This covenant is arguably the largest in the Tribunal, depending on the number of visiting magi present at any one time. The level of cooperation amongst the magi is somewhat unusual, but all members appreciate the benefit of being able to call upon the collective's extensive resources to defend their personal interests when required. The many Jerbiton magi here are focused less on the acquisition of magical power than on their various mundane pursuits. Despite being dominated by a single House philosophy, many of its members pursue somewhat varying visions of Beauty compared to their housemates elsewhere.

The Lost Chapters of Portus Cottiae

An ostracized Mercurian magus from the Greater Alps originally founded this fallen covenant in the Cottian Alps. Established in 821 by Julius Donnus of Flambeau just outside Briancon, near the border of the Roman Tribunal, it was intended to serve as an alternative home to Harco for the revived Cult of Mercury. The main site commanded the descent from the Col de Montgenevre pass for travelers coming from the Piedmont in the east. Built in the Roman style of a Greater Alps covenant, it controlled the trade routes along the upper Durance valley. At its height it had established chapter houses maintained by officers known as a *mansionarii* at Gap, Chorges, Embrun, and a border-post at Oulx on the Redcap route following the old Via Domitia through the mountains down the valley of the Dora Riparia into the western Piedmont.

Portus Cottiae was one of the first of the former Lotharingian covenants to fall to the Saracen raiders in 906 when Berber mountaineers overran its divided turf and forced the geographically separated magi to flee south along the Durance. The surviving maga, Anaïs of Jerbiton, retreated to the relative safety of Avignon, becoming one of the most strident voices calling for the Hermetic hegemony that resulted in the Coenobium.

STORY SEEDS: REOPENING THE LOST GATES

The main site of Portus Cottiae and the three chapter locations may be suitable covenant locations for young magi wishing to found a new covenant or chapter of the Coenobium (see later), but each

has its own challenges. In addition, the heirs of Anaïs may oppose any interloping magi, either through legal means or by discreet attacks in an attempt to disrupt the resettlement.

Brigantium: The "motherhouse" of the covenant was near Briancon, built just above the town into the cliffs overlooking the Guisane River before it joins the Durance. The desperate magi there collapsed the mountainside above on the Saracen raiders but inadvertently entombed themselves within their own sancta. Accessing the laboratories and council chambers may require shifting large amounts of stone but will evoke the ire of both the ghosts of the former magi and the malevolent Infernal shades of their attackers, which may prove a much more serious obstacle. The Mercere Portal lies buried beneath the rocks and could be uncovered and reactivated.

Caturigomagus: An isolated sanctum lies beneath the ruined Roman *mansio* (way station), one day's travel beyond Chorges and their Roman ruins. Once belonging to a Merinita magus who fled at the raiders' approach only to be slain, the area has attracted three local faeries known as *démemoilles*, a Provençal variant of lesser White Ladies (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 82–83). Any attempts to recover the magus's trove of books of Faerie magic will require dealing with this trio of seductive creatures.

Vapincum: The site at Gap was the rallying point for the few survivors of the Saracen attacks and escaped the attacks due to its concealed position. Built beneath the crypts under the cathedral within an old temple to Apollo, formerly maintained by the Cult of Mercury, this chapter's weak Magic aura is suppressed by the Divine aura of the Christian build-

ing. Reusing the abandoned site just beneath the gaze of the Dominion will limit magical development unless its aura can be strengthened without noticeably interfering with the bishop's church.

Ebrodunum: The Embrun chapter was nothing more than a stabling point for the covenfolk and traveling Redcaps. A former *mansio* in ancient times like the sanctum at Chorges, a hidden shrine to Mercury once lay beneath the cathedral. The stones have since been used in construction of the new church however and its Magic aura has long faded. Unlike the other sites, there are no magical resources to be harvested here. Several mundane descendents of the covenfolk may have inherited lost records or books from the covenant library, however, and may help magi seeking to refound the settlement. Known as a site of pilgrimage since the remains of St Nazarius were transferred here in the fifth century, the priests of the newly completed Romanesque cathedral are suspicious of the pagan scholars that used to dwell here. They may actively obstruct any attempts to enlist the townsfolk in what they see as an attempt at a pagan revival.

Ulcium: Founded within the precincts of a temple to Mars Ultor, this site at Oulx controlled the Col du Mont Cenis pass used by Hannibal and then Charlemagne to invade the area that is now Lombardy. The old Mercurian cult temple to Mars can be accessed through a regio in the ruins above the small village. Although the most physically isolated, it is perhaps the easiest to resettle. Its position on the border with the Roman Tribunal may have unwelcome political consequences as older neighboring covenants feel their local vis sources threatened.

History

This large multi-site covenant strung out along the lower Rhone and eastwards along the coast of the County of Provence consists of the heirs of several former covenants of Provence and eremitic magi who banded together in the late tenth century for mutual protection in response to the depredations of Fraxinetum (see earlier).

Using their extensive mundane family

contacts and influence with the local nobility in defense of their own safety, the mainly Jerbiton magi were behind the marshaling of the army under William I of Provence that drove the Saracens from their strongholds in the Massif des Maures. Despite narrowly escaping the wrath of the Quaesitores for infringing the Code by destroying the rogue covenant of Fraxinetum, the many advantages of the league outweighed any benefits of disbanding.

The victorious magi continued a policy of mutual cooperation and nepotism to their advantage, gradually gaining control of or influence over the majority of magical and mundane resources within the County of Provence. They justify the use of this hegemony as a means of ensuring their own pursuits are not compromised by being caught unprepared by Hermetic aggression a second time. Although not a direct threat to any of the other covenants of Provençal,

The Carthusian Order

Stat crux dum volvitur orbis ("The Cross is steady while the world is turning")
— motto of the Carthusian Order

Founded comparatively recently in 1084 by the hermit Saint Bruno of Cologne and adhering to its own set of statutes, the Carthusians dedicate their communal life to solitude and silence within the impregnable natural barrier of the Chartreuse Massif. Escaping the worldliness of the Benedictines and the Cistercians, the followers of Bruno have no active ministry and contribute only their prayers to the outer world. They rarely accept retreatants, unlike other monasteries.

Although not strictly bound to silence, Carthusian monks avoid unnecessary speech. They are allowed to converse during their weekly four-hour walk through the woods above the charterhouse, although they must change partners every half hour. Only the prior is permitted to speak to pro-

spective retreatants or outsiders.

The monastery's lay brothers perform most of the manual labour and intercept any outside visitors, living in a dormitory at the foot of the valley. They are responsible for managing the settlement's supplies and prevent their coenobitic brethren from being disturbed.

THE MAGUS OF CHARTREUSE

The most recent retreatant to the Motherhouse is an unusual aspirant known as Romualdus, a former Jerbiton magus who has abandoned active Hermetic life for the contemplative life of the Carthusian community. He cites the remnant pagan practices and cultural decay of the wider Order as his reasons and as the new novice, Brother Thomas, now eschews all contact with his former Hermetic brethren. He no longer actively practices con-

ventional Hermetic magic and seeks God through a more ascetic expression of his Gift. He hopes the development of a new prayer-based tradition of Holy Magic will be pleasing to the Lord.

STORY SEED: THE MONK'S APPRENTICE

The former Romualdus has discovered that an awkward and shy younger novice, Brother Jude, has both True Faith and The Gift, making him a potential apprentice for a holy magus. The ex-magus has only formed a friendship with the younger man at this stage but fears that the monk may be in danger of being claimed as a Hermetic apprentice if word gets out of his Gift. Perhaps the retired Jerbiton can persuade a Bonisagus magus to intervene on his behalf and then help train the young monk, or will his new principles forfeit his chances?

the considerable mundane resources and influence of the Coenobium makes it a potentially powerful enemy if it regards its collective interests as being threatened.

Setting & Description

The heart of the urban covenant has been established at Avignon, although important holdings of the covenant are located in the city of Arles and at the entrance to the Camargue, throughout southern Provence and even as far north as Grenoble. In reality, the whole body of the Rhone supports the covenant magically and in a mercantile sense. Several Coenobium magi spend the majority of their time either on, alongside, or beneath the waters of the river — at any time at least two magi are traveling up and down the river in large barges created by the resident boatwright. Smaller boats carry both visiting Redcaps from other Tribunals and the local unGifted Merceres on their errands. Many of the permanent enchantments available to the covenant's magi and Redcaps either target the whole river or remain effective as long as the individual is afloat on the Rhone or one of its major tributaries.

Currently Aegis of the Hearth rituals protect only the northern Avignon site — the Factory building requires a separate ritual to the main complex beneath the Isle de Barthelasse and the Pont St Benezet. The town houses of the magi in and around Avignon, the Mercer House in Arles and the other sites controlled by the Coenobium rely variously on less effective Hermetic wards, non-Hermetic protective charms, or their urban location. Those magi acting as patrons are granted transportation magic linked by Arcane Connection to the main council chamber, and can thus travel to a meeting quickly even if given little notice.

AVIGNON: THE SUB PONTEM CHAMBERS

The first arch of the Pont St Benezet, the only one to rest on the low lying land of the eastern shore, contains the fragment of the Roman temple allegedly placed there by St Benezet. During the day, the Divine aura of the nearby chapel suppresses the small Magic *lacuna* (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 57–58) with a strength of 4, but the Magic aura is able to manifest

at night. Many of the areas designated as visiting magi's laboratories are located underground beneath the nearby Isle of Barthelasse to take advantage of the weak Magic aura of 3 that covers the extensive northern reaches of the island. The occasional flooding of the Rhone makes this a difficult prospect at times.

The entrance to the subterranean laboratory of Nicodemus lies beneath the second pier. The remainder of the bridge beyond the chapel of St Nicholas is sometimes used by the members of the former covenant of Sub Pontem for their urban magical activities as it lies just beyond the edge of the strength 3 Divine aura generated by the city and the abbey across the stream. It has a weak Magic aura of 2 generated by the flowing of the captive Rhone spirits beneath its arches. One of the laboratory barges of the covenant is usually moored on the downstream side of one of the western piers.

ARLES: THE MERCER HOUSE AT ST CYPRIAN'S

A whore-house built within an old pilgrim's auberge dedicated to St Cyprian just

within the city walls, Alazais's headquarters acts as the meeting place of the covenant's Redcaps and Jerbiton magi, who often enjoy the earthy diversions on offer once their official business has been concluded. Beneath the old auberge and client rooms are a series of chambers where the covenfolk can conduct more discreet business, although the city's Divine aura prevents the development of a Magic aura and the site therefore lacks an Aegis, instead relying on the prevailing Divine aura. An archway etched with magical inscriptions links one of the chambers with the complex beneath the Isle de Barthelasse outside of Avignon.

THE CAMARGUE: THE FACTORY AT TRINQUETAILLE

The large warehouse that stores the Coenobium's mundane wealth is likewise often referred to as *the Factory*, although similar smaller complexes are maintained by other merchant groups. Extending several levels below ground, the structure provides a maximum of storage without provoking mundane suspicion. The complex includes a heavily warded area within the established secondary *Aegis* to contain the more dangerous and exotic items and captive creatures that pass through the covenant's hands. Only patrons are allowed to participate in the *Aegis* ritual for the Factory. The handful of tokens produced each year are closely controlled by the First Consul. Several of the more intensive industrial processes involved in maintaining the covenant's mundane wealth are discreetly located here, their magical augmentation or replacement of traditional methods being kept from prying mundane eyes by subtle wards or traps that trigger memory erasing spells.

Magi

Although dominated by Houses Jerbiton and Mercere, some of the associated magi belong to other Hermetic Houses such as Bonisagus (especially the politically minded Trianomae branch), Ex Miscellanea, Verditiis, and even Flambeau. As most of the non-Mercere magi belong to Societates

Is the Coenobium in Good Taste?

The Jerbiton and affiliated magi of the Coenobium consider that they strive to live tastefully, according to the philosophy of their House (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 44–51), but to other Jerbiton their pragmatic approach of magically dominating the nobility, mundane resources, and hedge wizards of their hinterland may seem ugly. The Coenobium consuls counter that their highly organized management of their magical and mundane resources allows them the opportunity to live more

tastefully by freeing up their time to engage in leisure, intrigue, travel, and the practice of good etiquette. By generously offering hospitality to specialist magi who perform the less tasteful tasks of running a covenant such as defense, magical research, and the maintenance of their mundane resources, they hope to encourage their sodales to learn from their example and move away from the traditions of the more unpleasant Founders that dominate much of the Order's contemporary culture.

Notes on Urban Magic and the Island of Barthelasse

As the majority of the Coenobium's holdings lie within the urban communes of the Rhone valley, overt magic use is more limited than at most covenants. The townhouses and business fronts of the covenant are strategically located in or near the various small *lacunae* or areas of non-Divine auras within the towns.

An exception is the ever-shifting midstream island of Barthelasse, extending upstream from the arches of the Pont

St Benezet. It is effectively a large lacuna with a Magic aura of 2, rising to 3 at its northern tip. Beneath the lightly wooded island lies the council rooms and guest quarters of the covenant, covered by the main *Aegis of the Hearth* that is renewed at the summer instead of winter solstice, unlike most other covenants. Further details of lacunae and using magic in urban settings within the Dominion are found in *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 57–60.

that have loose membership requirements, the actual House of a magus matters less to Alazais than his having an agreeable personality and demonstrating a commitment to the covenant's goals as a whole. Each magus has his own agenda and interests but there is a surprising degree of cooperation and tolerance despite the rampant nepotism — perhaps aided by the fact that only a few of the magi are ever gathered in the same place at one time.

Currently there are over two dozen predominantly Jerbiton magi registered as consuls, or voting members of the covenant. Nearly a dozen other magi are considered permanent guests and up to half a dozen Redcaps may be staying at any one time. Very few of these magi live in the city permanently, and most of the non-Jerbiton or non-Mercere magi have their own sancta or places of residence outside of Avignon and Arles, using the shared covenant chambers reached from beneath the Pont St Benezet when staying in Avignon or the chambers be-

neath Alazais's auberge when visiting Arles.

While not an official member, Beatrice of Guernicus, the Chief Quaesitor elect of Provençal dwells within the nearby ruins of Glanum. She has shown no intent of leaving the Coenobium's hinterland, at least not until the next Tribunal meeting is confirmed. Beatrice is detailed further in Chapter 5: Gascony.

ALAZAIS OF MERCERE, CHIEF REDCAP AND FIRST CONSUL OF THE COENOBIMUM

Age: 59 (Apparent Age: 27)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +6, Wily +3,
Patient +2

Claiming descent from Helen of Troy, the First Consul and Chief Redcap wears a tragic mask once favored by classical actors. She never removes her mask except in the presence of magi or her lover, an unGifted folk witch ally of the Coenobium for whom

The Masques of the Coenobium

Although Hermetic magi have long dominated the southern Rhone valley and the coast of Provence, they have chosen not to supplant the local hedge wizards or *masques* but instead foster the lesser witches and magicians of the area. This arrangement has proved beneficial to both groups over the last two centuries, although the Hermetic magi remain the dominant partners in the alliance.

The network of folk-witches, cunning folk, faerie doctors, and herbalists relies on the wider covenant for protection from the mundane authorities and Hermetic aggression. In return they pro-

vide a network of unGifted informants and agents throughout the southern coast and Alpine foothills that helps protect the covenant's extensive mundane interests while allowing the magi to remain within the letter of the Code. The allied *masques* also harvest and protect vis sources in the area, provide minor protective amulets and charms to the covenant folk and other agents of the covenant, and increase the magi's influence over the mundane folk of the local area.

The Coenobium may be an appropriate base for troupes wishing to try their hand at a non-Hermetic saga.

she has obtained a long-lasting Longevity Ritual at great cost with help from the Praeco, Dama. Rumor has it that she was once attacked with alchemical acid by a former suitor, leaving her face hideously scarred but none of the other magi will either confirm or deny this.

UnGifted, she nevertheless makes much of a claim to be directly descended from the Founder Mercere though his granddaughter, using it to engender respect amongst Redcaps and the Jerbiton magi alike. Alazais's leadership has seen an increasing number of non-Jerbiton magi being accepted as semi-permanent or permanent guests and the adoption of a number of lesser hedge wizards as nominal Redcaps.

Although careful to maintain the appearance of never voting openly in council meetings, she quietly pulls the strings behind the scenes, maneuvering the might of the Coenobium to further her own goals. She is careful to maintain the guise of encouraging the Jerbiton magi to seek beauty and leave the mundane tasks of running the covenant to their supposed inferiors.

NICODEMUS EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 102 (Apparent Age: 63)

Personality Traits: Absent-Minded +6, Reclusive +3

Although Nicodemus was originally a member of House Jerbiton fascinated by the beauty of Roman hydraulic engineering, the

multiple Twilight Scars suffered in his youth have resulted in a Blatant Gift. Obsessed with his experiments in Aquam magic, this senior magus has become estranged from his Gently Gifted colleagues. Unable to blend into mundane society easily and live the usual tasteful lifestyle of his housemates, he has reluctantly transferred his allegiance to House Ex Miscellanea.

He is warily respected by the river-folk and Redcaps that ply the Rhone and known by most boatmen to live as a hermit along the river shore beneath the Pont St Benezet. He is still considered a nominal consul of the Coenobium, although most think his behavior is unbecoming for a former Jerbiton magus.

Alazais has noted that he is becoming less and less interested in behaving according to the expectations of his Housemates. She suspects that Warping from his experiments is slowly taking its toll on his sanity. Nicodemus is increasingly devoting his energies in attempting to integrate the Atlantean magics of his lineage into standard Hermetic theory.

THE BALTHAZAR, MARCUS D'LES BAUX OF TYTALUS

Age: 42 (Apparent Age: 35)

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Sly +2

An aggressive young scion of the Seigneurs of Les Baux, Marcus has been cautioned by the previous Chief Quaesitor about openly meddling too much in mundane affairs on behalf of his family or his

friends within the Church, particularly the Abbott of St Andao. Although he retains his position as consul, he has been forbidden to act as patron until he has proven he can be trusted to be more discreet about his nepotism. His Hermetic name reflects his family's legendary descent from one of the three magi that visited Christ and in reflection of his family crest, his sigil includes the pointed star of Christmas.

POLA THE SOPHIST OF JERBITON

Age: 81 (Apparent Age: 51)

Personality Traits: Precise +3, Haughty +1, Impatient +2

Pola is a descendent of a Jerbiton magus who was a noted Gorgiastic — a member of House Criamon who left the House and rejected its teachings about the Enigma. Over time the lineage has developed into a peripatetic tradition of rhetoricians and skillful advocates by focusing on the teachings of Gorgias and the other Sophists. Some of its younger scions have more recently been adopted into House Tytalus on merit. An excellent speaker, Pola considers the art of debate an expression of beauty and strives to further its popularity as an alternative means of resolving disputes to more distasteful practices such as certamen or Wizard's War.

Out of all the consuls, she is the one most likely to act as a patron to visiting magi. As the maga nominally in charge of the Avignon holdings of the covenant, she is responsible for supervising Jerbiton apprentices passing through the Coenobium's sphere of influence while journeying on their Itinerarium to or from the covenant of Eboris in Paris.

XIPHOS FILIA DAMOCLES OF JERBITON

Age: 73 (Apparent Age: 54)

Personality Traits: Ill-tempered +3, Intolerant +2, Cruel +2

This disgraced Terram master hoplite, hailing from beyond the Provençal Tribunal, was expelled from House Guernicus for repeated behavior unbecoming for a hoplite.

At the unexpected insistence of Primus

Saga Seeds: Joining the Coenobium

There are no official restrictions preventing new Hermetic settlements in eastern Provençal, particularly when compared to the tradition-bound Rhine Tribunal or the feudal arrangements of the Normandy Tribunal. Establishing a new Spring covenant in Provence beneath the shadow of the Coenobium may be difficult, but not impossible. Although not adopting an overtly threatening stance, the combined Jerbiton and Mercere grip on the surrounding mundane lands is very strong. The majority of vis sources and supernatural resources are already claimed directly or controlled by the Coenobium's hedge wizard allies. The competitive advantage of such an Autumn covenant of two dozen magi that can act in a coordinated manner is significant. There have notably been no independent attempts to establish a new covenant in southern Provence since the Coenobium's founding over a century ago. It is unclear whether this is due to indirect or subtle interference by the established covenant, or just due to the clear advantages of joining the existing covenant structure, albeit under considerable conditions compared to elsewhere in the region.

Fortunately, the multiple sites, inherent hospitality, ongoing need for both mundane and magical specialists, and a recent change in overall philosophy toward accepting members of other Houses make the Coenobium an excellent base for beginning characters and traveling magi. Player magi should be able to negotiate support for their own goals if they can demonstrate that their activities are in the interests of the local Hermetic community, albeit at the price of independence.

JUST VISIT, ACT TASTEFULLY, AND DON'T LEAVE...

In addition to the consuls, up to a dozen visiting or independent magi are associated with the covenant on a regular basis, including up to half a dozen newly Gauntleted Jerbiton magi resting between stages of their Itinerarium. Although not entitled to vote, visitors who behave according to the covenant's philosophy are accorded considerable hospitality and can petition for use of the covenant's resources, requiring the approval of their patron and two other consuls. While not officially members, this arrangement is so similar to the structure of many Autumn covenants throughout the Order that the distinction matters little in practice.

IF YOU CAN'T BE TASTEFUL, BE UNIQUELY USEFUL

Dominated by the less magically adept and more peaceful Houses of Jerbiton and Mercere, the Coenobium increasingly needs magi with particular magical skills it lacks to sustain its wider activities, protect it from magical threats, and support its large population. Many of the Jerbiton magi are generalists or have sacrificed their magical development to concentrate on developing the covenant's political power and temporal influence. Hermetic specialists such as Calais or Xiphos capable of high-magnitude magic or rituals within a narrow field of expertise are invited to join or granted access to the covenant's resources as an incentive to support the Coenobium's goals. More recently, magi from Ex Miscellanea are particularly

sought, as the consuls find that their needs are often better met by more unusual magics and are distrustful of the uglier traditional philosophies of Flambeau, Tremere, and Tytalus magi.

Characters with skill at wards, transportation magic or weather magic are particularly desired, although a non-Tremere certamen champion would be considered a valuable asset to help further Alazais' goals. Magi with aptitude in Teaching are also highly sought to help train the Jerbiton apprentices, as their masters may not have developed their Arts scores sufficiently due to their preferred pursuit of non-magical fields of study.

RECLAIM A LOST SITE OR RESOURCE OF VALUE

In the aftermath of the Wizard's War against the magi of Fraxinetum and the rise of the Coenobium, many of the former covenant sites of the founding magi were abandoned as the community closed ranks and established itself. Some locations have been restored or converted into chapters occupied by a single magus but there are still many eligible resources that need attention.

Reclaiming the Alpine sites or the nearby Barbegal mill-complex are both projects that would readily attract a sponsor. Either would be a great boon to the Coenobium, which has some difficulty accessing sites with high Magic auras. Magi who establish a chapter house under the patronage of one of the existing consuls and demonstrate their worth, will be in a good position to petition for official membership or even declare themselves independent of the Coenobium.

Andru of Jerbiton, she has been grudgingly accepted into House Jerbiton and given a chance to reform. The exact details of her pardon are uncertain, but she appears bound to the provision that she use her talents to support the stability of the Coenobium. Her less martial Housemates may pursue their concepts of Beauty and Taste, but they do so with minimal disruption from magical threats due to her efforts.

Xiphos claims descent from a legendary

Guernicus Terrae-magus known as Adamantius, and has almost complete mastery over metal and blades.

LAVANDARIUS THE PRALICIAN, EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 67 (Apparent Age: 38)

Personality Traits: Cautious +3, Diplomatic +2, Charming +2

This wizard is the current liaison between the Coenobium and their hedge wizard allies. A Gifted student of one of the local herbalist traditions, he was adopted by his Pralician parents as her second Hermetic apprentice. Lavandarius's lineage has been responsible for the extensive integration of hedge wizards from the local area into the covenant's roster. This policy is supported by Alazais but is considered wildly unorthodox by more conservative magi of

the northern Tribunals of Normandy and the Rhine in particular.

Although officially one of the few non-Jerbiton consuls, he is not assigned to visiting magi as a patron, but has been given extended responsibility over the more powerful hedge magicians that visit the towns controlled by the Coenobium. He is continuing his mater's work toward integrating the herbalist's folk practices into standard Hermetic Theory. Progress has been slow. His familiar is a common asp he discovered amidst the lavender fields of the Hyeres.

ARGENTIUS OF MERCERE, THE INVITED REDCAP

Age: 49 (Apparent Age: 41)

Personality Traits: Wrathful +3, Gloomy +2, Pious +2

This former weapon-master of Valnastium is living a second life. Once known as Auriel Blake, he is now known as the Redcap Argentius. Auriel was seemingly slain by the disgraced magus Damocles in a mundane duel, but then restored to life by a miracle produced by the greater relic of St Michael he carries within his sword pommel. Since recovering from his fatal injury, he has been accepted as a Redcap of the Coenobium as part of Alazais' plans. Still coping with his return from death, he remains distanced from the other covenfolk, who regard him with a mixture of reverence and fear.

His resurrection appears to have awakened the latent magical powers of his Heroes' Birthright Major Virtue, and many magi are uncertain whether to treat him as a hedge magician or respect his unorthodox Redcap status. Argentius has developed a remarkable control over swords and other bladed weapons, and has formed an unlikely friendship with his murderer's former apprentice, Xiphos.

He now believes, perhaps correctly, that the sword he carries is the mythical Sword of Ares — the weapon reputedly carried by Attila on his rampage into western Europe as "Scourge of God." To date he has not allowed investigation of his weapon to verify this claim.

Covenfolk

The Coenobium has no official roster of covenfolk — each consul maintains his or her own staff or agency of minions, grogs and allies depending on how best this allows them to pursue their interests (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 140–144 for more details on Agents). For many of the Jerbiton magi, their staff consists of their servants and unGifted family members, as well as any specialist companions they may support through mundane patronage including academics, artists, artisans, and more recently accomplished troubadours. Although not afforded the same level of respect as Hermetic magi, many of the local Provençal hedge wizards are considered allies of the Coenobium, providing a wider base of albeit lesser magical resources than would otherwise be expected from a covenant of non-magically inclined Jerbiton magi. This is mainly thanks to the political efforts of a dedicated lineage of Pralician magi, such as Lavandarius.

The First Consul has the established right to ask another maga, consul or visitor, to make use of their mundane and magical resources on behalf of the covenant, but the maga is under no obligation to agree. Most Coenobium magi appreciate the advantages of cooperating, citing the precedent of the covenant's founding in response to the common threat of Fraxinetum. The current First Consul, as Chief Redcap, can draw on an extensive network of Redcaps, retired Redcaps, and their families to pursue her agenda and policies, as well as trading on the goodwill she has garnered by promoting the Coenobium's interests and growth.

Culture & Traditions

"Together we rule, divided we fall."

— motto of the Coenobium

Somewhat unusually, the Coenobium is currently led by the UnGifted Chief Redcap of Provençal, Alazais of Mercere. As First Consul, she acts on their behalf as both auto-

crat and leader, allowing the majority of magi to pursue their own interests for much of the year. Full members are termed consuls and are predominantly Jerbiton magi, although several magi from other Houses and a few Redcaps have been accorded this privilege.

HOSPITALITY AND COURTESY

The Jerbiton magi of the Coenobium take their duties as hosts to magi visiting one of their towns on the Rhone very seriously, priding themselves on their covenant's welcoming reputation. All guests are offered food, lodgings and laboratory space if requested. The consuls select one of their number to act as *patron* for the guest for the duration of their stay, an honor usually reserved for Jerbiton magi.

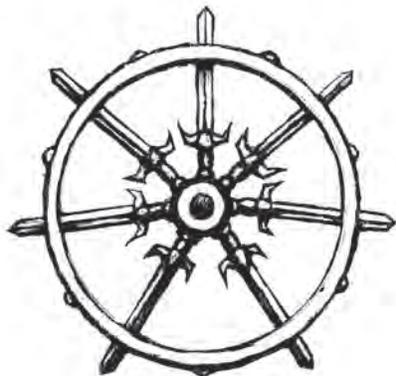
In return for their goodwill and support, the Coenobium expects visiting magi to:

- introduce themselves properly, preferably announcing their intention to visit beforehand by Redcap
- bring a small gift, traditionally a silver florin containing one pawn of vis
- state the purpose of their visit and its likely duration, informing their patron when they are leaving
- conduct themselves with decorum and restraint at all times, aiding their patron if asked
- leave immediately if requested.

The chosen patron is expected to familiarize the visitor with these expectations of courtesy and is responsible for the actions of the visitor during their stay. In addition, the patron is required to protect the guest from harm or inconvenience and present them with a symbolic gift on their departure. Although it carries more responsibility than tangible benefit, patrons are highly regarded by the other members of the Coenobium for their sacrifice. They may call upon other members of the covenant to support them in their duties or otherwise ask for a season of service to be waived in return for their time and effort.

Chapter Nine

The Lost Covenant of Val-Negra



Symbol: A wagon wheel with spokes made of seven swords

One of the oldest covenants of the Order of Hermes, Val-Negra was once a paragon of power and influence on par with Durmar. It was the most populous covenant in the Order's history, having 33 members at its peak. Ravaged by politics and devastated in the Schism War, its legend is familiar to every Hermetic magus, yet much remains mystery. Even its exact location and the means of entry are forgotten.

Some believe Val-Negra still exists in self-imposed isolation, deliberately hiding from the rest of the Order. Others say it's slowly fading into myth because of the mystical nature of Mount Perditu's regio, or has been absorbed by the Magic Realm. But a few say the potential remains for bold magi to seek out and revive Val-Negra.

History

Complex and largely forgotten, the history of Val-Negra should only emerge from dedicated effort on the part of magi re-

searching the many rumors, tales, few facts, and many obvious lies.

DELENDAR THE DESTROYER

Val-Negra was originally the stronghold of an old Mercurian wizard named Delendar, who seized it after defeating a cabal of sorcerers who had themselves subjugated the mysterious indigenous inhabitants, the Aerie Clan. Flambeau came to recruit Delendar after the Founding, but the old wizard had passed before his arrival. In his dying vision, Delendar saw the coming of Flambeau and bequeathed him the stronghold. His only apprentice, young Delendos, joined the Order under House Flambeau.

THE FOUNDING

Val-Negra was established immediately after the First Tribunal, but it took several years before Flambeau and Guernicus agreed upon a charter. Flambeau insisted upon suzerainty over any covenants Val-Negra helped establish. His insistence on this matter resulted in the Second Grand Tribunal creating procedures to establish and govern Regional Tribunals. The next year, 774, the Covenant of Val-Negra was officially recognized, and a regional Tribunal formed around it.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The covenant knew a glorious history during the golden age of the early Order. The stories of this era are too numerous and varied (and contradictory) to detail here. Troupes should feel free to write their own version of history on this blank page.

THE SCHISM WAR

Long suspicious of House Diedne and wary of their regional influence, members of Val-Negra clamored for conflict. Their political clout helped spark the Schism War, though they only hastened the inevitable. At Val-Negra, Primus Entisimon galvanized his House into unity with a stirring speech. The vaults opened, pouring forth vis and silver from the coffers indiscriminately. Many members sallied forth to make early strikes upon an unprepared enemy.

These early expeditions suffered heavy casualties: Lucien the Fat of Flambeau died in an ambush; Leo Augustus of Flambeau and Vegetius of Tremere perished in the assault on Askelarre; Delendez of Flambeau won many victories against the Diedne of Galicia and Navarre, but disappeared into Twilight amid the heat of battle; Val-Negra lost seven magi of various Houses in the Final Victory against Llewellyn. At the end of the war, Iama of Flambeau departed to pursue the Diedne to the far corners of existence and was never seen again. An Ex Miscellanea prophecy says she will return should the Diedne ever reappear. Of 25 magi at the start of the conflict, only 4 survived by the end. Thus, many of the cultures and traditions of Val-Negra perished as well.

The zealous magi also made the tragic mistake of leaving their home weakly defended. Five Diedne Archmagi assaulted Val-Negra, believed impregnable to outsiders. What trickery they used in order function inside the Aegis remains a mystery. Passing undetected through magical traps and wards, they bravely assaulted the Iron Door itself. In the chaos, something was released. The Diedne killed three of the five defending magi and several grogs. But they, in turn, were destroyed by the horror unleashed.

The two surviving defenders, themselves archmagi, astonishingly managed to

THE VILLAGE OF PERDUT

subdue this menace and reclose the door. But the ancient magical seal had been disenchanted. In its place, they cast a powerful Hermetic ward upon it, enough to keep whatever it is locked inside. Unlike the seal, created by a now-lost Rite of Fenicil that made it permanent, the circular ward can be broken by simply opening the door.

This crisis caused a quiet panic. The Quaesitors made great effort to keep events secret from the Order at large, and decided Val-Negra must not rise again. The domus magna of House Flambeau moved to Castra Solis.

Setting & Description

The Black Vale (Val Negra) is located in a gorge of the Tessier River on the southern side of Mount Perditu in the Pyrenees. Cut deep into the living rock, the sun directly shines down into the ravine only during the peak hours of the day. The thick mists rising from the river below obscure even this small amount of light and inspired the name Val Negra, "the black vale."

Many strange things happen on Perditu. Travelers become lost and are usually never seen again. Those who do return remember almost nothing. Folk tales speak of a faerie "King of the Lost Mountain," who built Perditu as a sanctuary for the forgotten heroes of yore. Though Merinita magi report encounters with strange faeries on the mountain, the fabled Lost King and his stronghold remain both lost and fables. Very few human settlements persist, mainly isolated villages in the foothills subsisting on goat-herding and simple agriculture.

INTO THE BLACK VALE

The magical center of the mountain, the greater portion of the Black Vale's wilderness has Magic auras varying between 1 to 4, depending on location and time of year. At the edge of the gorge sits the mysterious village of Perdut. Beyond it, the valley twists in a complicated network called the Labyrinthine Caverns. At the innermost point lies the fortress of Val-Negra, secreted in the deepest layer of a regio with a Magic aura of 8.

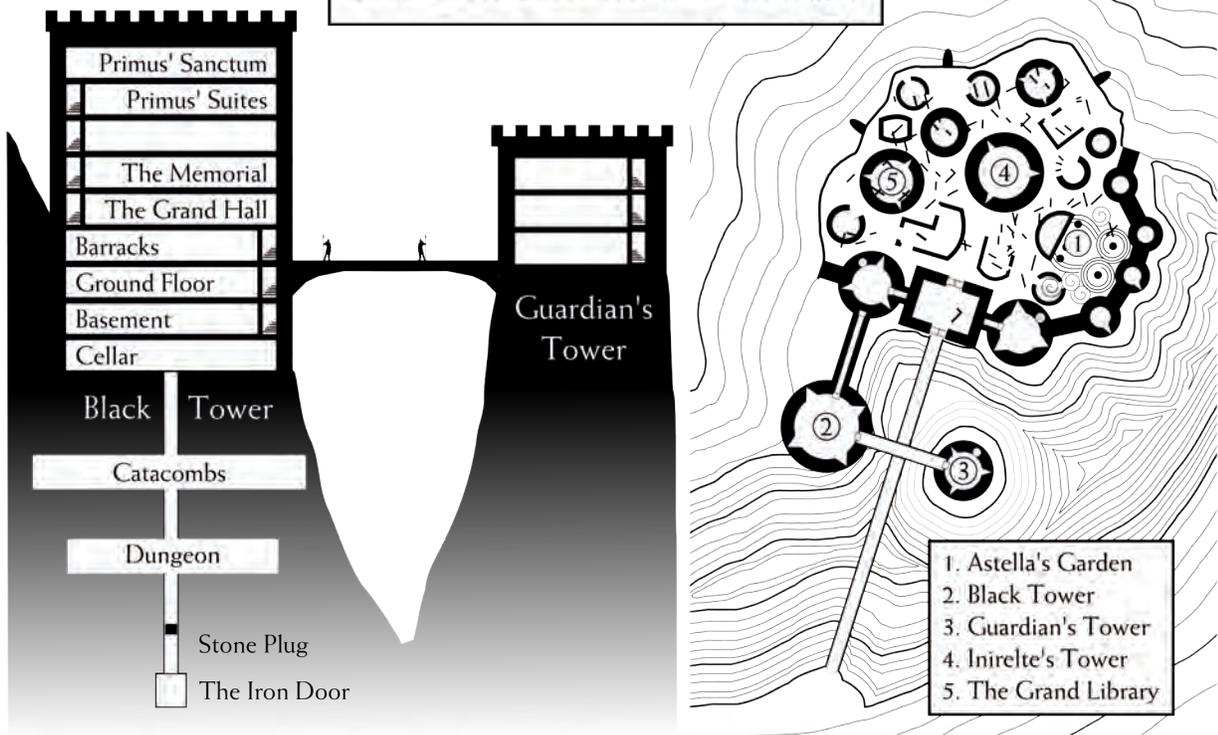
Magic Aura 6

Perdut is a tiny isolated village, whose residents have been warped by the aura to appear extremely old or very young. They haven't seen outsiders in generations, but their folklore speaks of a time when strangers would come to meet with the "watchers." They live in fear and awe of these unseen watchers, unknowingly referring to members of the Aerie Clan who still walk invisibly amongst the villagers on occasion.

This village of about thirty consists of five houses and a shared plot of farmland. On a hill stands an old manor. Empty for years, the villagers maintain it out of fear of and respect for the watchers. This once served as Val-Negra's guest house.

These villagers gladly show visiting characters to the guest house, providing service and food. Though they seem intimidated by strangers, The Gift apparently doesn't affect them. A small stone building sits on the outskirts of the village. Now in ruins, this once housed a Mercere Portal (destination unknown), deliberately destroyed by a

The Lost Covenant of Val-Negra



Disenchant ritual long ago.

Proceeding into the gorge, travelers cross into the regio and enter the Labyrinthine Caverns.

THE LABYRINTHINE CAVERNS

Magic Aura 6

The gorge twists and splits chaotically, and the trail seems to shift and change. All along are numerous cave openings into what is known as the Labyrinthine Caverns. These complex caverns are likewise inconsistent, forming shifting mazes of endless dark passages that connect to the regio network of the Pyrenees. Various creatures have become trapped in this honeycomb of passages. Others inhabit areas around cave openings. These include flesh-hungry ogres, venomous drakes, mutated animals, and fiery serpents. Travelers may be forced to deal with numerous terrible foes to pass through this area.

THE VALLEY OF MISTS

Magic Aura 7

Passing from the Labyrinthine Caverns to the Valley of the Mists involves crossing the regio boundary, accessible only when the valley fills with mist rising up from the Tessier River at night and soon after dawn. This level of the regio is filled with a thick mist which obscures vision and makes breathing laborious. Its consistency varies from hot and humid to bone chilling cold, with opposite extremes existing paces apart. It is quiet here. Living things rarely stir. Those with Second Sight may perceive the mist as thriving with spirits; ghosts of lost travelers, malicious imps, river sprites, tortured spirits who have forgotten their purpose and origin, and others.

Finding the boundary to exit the Valley of Mists is easy as finding a clearing in the fog, easily accomplished with Auram magic, but finding Val-Negra requires finding a hidden circle of light. The boundary cannot be perceived from any other location. Finding the circle requires at least an hour, and a failed Perception test (Ease Factor 12) requires another hour. Once the boundary is crossed, Val-Negra becomes visible in the distance.

The Circle of Light

Mu (Pe)Vi(Te) 79

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch D: Constant T: Boundary

This shrinks access to Val-Negra to a small circle of light ten paces in diameter, preventing anyone seeing into the next level of regio unless standing in it. This spell utilizes the Mystery of Hermetic Architecture and the enchantment Closed Privacy of the Enchanted Regio, both detailed in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 97.

THE FORTRESS OF VAL-NEGRA

Magic Aura 8

From the circle of light, a successful regio perception reveals the entrance of a massive stone bridge across a vast chasm. There is nothing but desolate plateau on this side, but across the distance one may clearly see the crumbling yet still majestic fortress of Val-Negra built along the face of the mountain. The most impressive edifice, the great Black Tower, looms tall over the covenant. The outer walls still stand strong, and several other towers remain intact. Few interior buildings remain; most have crumbled into ruins. A vast garden of magical plants, grown wild, spreads over the area. Several scattered pits lead down into a network of caves and tunnels beneath the covenant. The Black Guard of the Aerie Clan stands constant watch, despite a lack of visitors in generations.

Sites of Interest

A few sites within Val-Negra proper stand out as of particular interest.

THE GUARDIAN'S TOWER

Crossing the chasm, one formally enters the precincts of Val-Negra. The path to the main gate crosses under a bridge between the Guardian's Tower on the right (overlooking the chasm) and the Black Tower on the left (built into and up out from the stone of the mountain). Neither can be accessed from here. Entering the Guardian's Tower requires crossing the bridge from the Black Tower, which can only be entered from in-

Story Seed: Lighting the Way

In times past, Redcaps were equipped with enchanted lanterns which shone different colored lights illuminating a safe path through the regio all the way to Val-Negra. Obtaining one would make the journey much easier, but could form a story unto itself. Harco keeps such a lantern in their vault, and the Primus Garus owns one as well. But asking to borrow one will certainly raise questions.

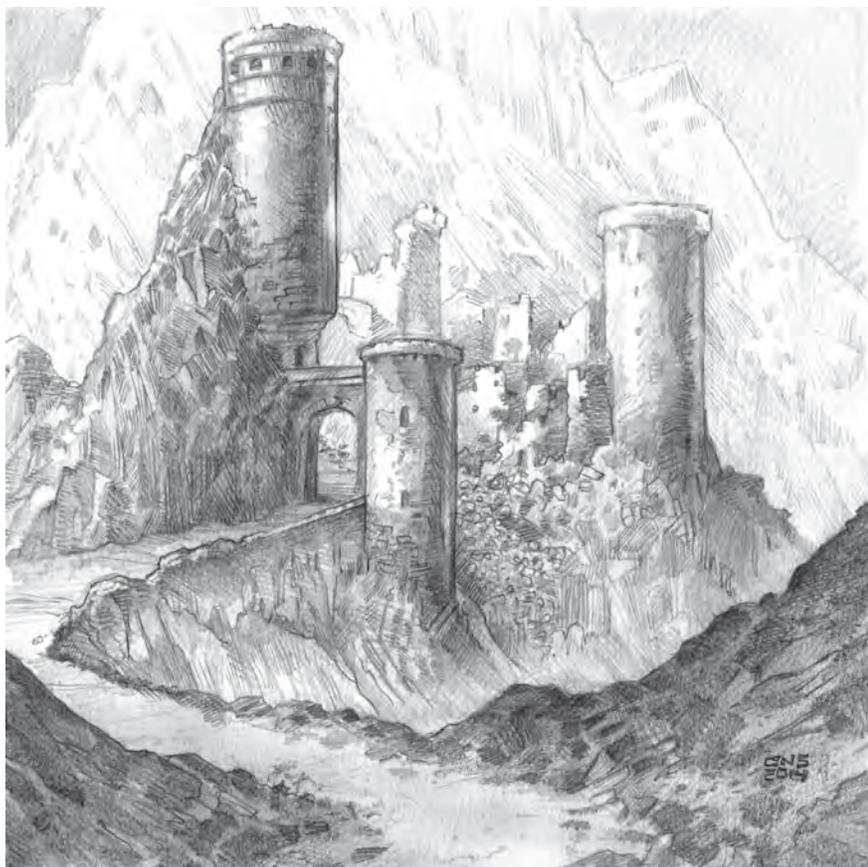
side the covenant. A magus may use magic to transport himself up onto the bridge, but he may be inhibited by a very powerful Aegis of the Hearth (level 50, with a Penetration of 25). At least two guards of the Aerie Clan (see below) occupy the tower at any given time, one on the top floor and one on the bottom. If visitors are properly identified as Hermetic magi, the guards grant them entry and provide them with tokens to operate within the Aegis.

The top floor of the Guardian's Tower connects to the Black Tower via the bridge. A bell in the center of the tower is enchanted to ring whenever someone crosses the boundary of the regio. Because of the design of the covenant alongside a cliff, the middle floor of this tower is on the covenant's ground level. The bottom floor is built in to the cliff overlooking the chasm below. Large windows open to a terrifying fall.

THE BLACK TOWER

The most prominent physical feature of the covenant, the Black Tower stands as a silent memorial to past days of glory. It was created by Delendos, and presented to Apromor as the seat from which to preside as Primus. Successors maintained their sanctum here until the relocation of the domus magna.

Half the tower is embedded in the very mountain; only the top is unattached. There are several staircases within. The Grand Stair runs between the third and sixth floors, and the seventh can only be accessed by magic. The top two floors were one considered the traditional sanctum and seat of the Primus of



A Ruin Wreathed in Flowers

Fond of strange, magical plants, Astella of Jerbiton established a vast garden which yielded vis and herbs of virtue. Astella fled in the early days of the Schism War and the garden has since grown feral, covering much of the surface of Val-Negra. Bizarre creepers, strange exotic plants, and weird magical flowers have forced their tendrils deep within the rocks of the fortress walls; destroying the plants would cause many parts of the ruin to simply collapse into a stupendous pile of dust and falling rocks. Several rooms

of the covenant contain plants that have colonized the chambers: some potent vis sources, others with strange spell like powers, and a few monstrous plants capable of killing unwary intruders. Astella's Garden itself still stands, and there the chaos of plant life falls into order, regulated by ancient enchantments. For magi willing to take the risk, studying the garden and wild growth is equivalent to a Significato in Herbam (see Covenants for details), rolling a Stress Die + 8 for the amount of experience gained.

House Flambeau. The sixth was designed to be the reception halls of the Primus, a private area outside his sanctum where he could entertain guests and hold private meetings. There are a small dining hall, a spare lab (in relatively good condition), and guest quarters for up to six people.

The seventh floor cannot be accessed by mundane means, for it is sealed off without doors, windows, or stairs. It contains separate

living quarters for the Primus, a tiny private library, a main lab (redesigned by successive Primi) and the infamous Dissolution Chamber (the specialized Perdo laboratory of Apromor). Other things that remain here are up to the imagination of the storyguide.

The fourth and fifth floors contain numerous miscellaneous rooms for various purposes; meeting rooms, a conference hall, a scriptorium, two guest laboratories (in a state of ruin),

and more. The Memorial, on the fourth floor, is an opulent chamber now shrouded in cobwebs, dedicated to the memory of heroic magi. A magnificent tapestry depicts the Val-Negra magi who perished in the Schism War, though it is incomplete. Other artifacts and displays depict earlier events in Hermetic history.

The third floor is the first reached when traveling through the covenant's main corridors. It once served as a grand hall and reception room, hosting some of the most lavish banquets and most significant meetings of the Order and House Flambeau. Mostly empty, remaining furnishings lie against the walls, coated with a thick layer of dust.

A spiral staircase leads down to the second floor. The exterior juts out from the rock slightly and supports the rest of the tower above it. This level also has the only exterior door, opening to the bridge leading to the Guardian's Tower. It also serves as barracks for the watch guards. There is another spiral staircase behind a blocked-off door, which leads down to the ground floor and in turn the basement.

Most of the ground floor is embedded in the rock, except for that portion of the exterior wall next to the entrance path. This space was once used for storage, though it was filled and forgotten long ago. The staircase leads further down into the basement, which was filled with storage even longer ago and forgotten while the covenant was still thriving. There are two trap doors in the basement, one wood and the other stone. Covered over with junk, they have not been opened in ages. Beneath the wooden door is a cellar, which once contained magical ingredients for lab activities. Much has rotted away, though some still remains and strange magical effects persist.

The stone door requires a (combined) Strength of +3 to open, or the use of magic. Underneath is another spiral staircase, carved from stone, which leads down past the catacombs into the Dungeon. Passages in the Dungeon level lead back up to the Catacombs. Further down, the staircase ends abruptly in solid stone. Jade spiral flecks within the rock suggest a magical creation, for this is clearly a sigil effect, not natural stone. The rock is solid though, and completely bars the way further down. The next area can only be reached if this barrier is somehow circumvented. Any Aerie in the vicinity sound an alarm and ferociously attack anyone attempting to pass beyond. Their dire warnings of great and ter-

rible danger beyond may dissuade some from investigation, but the threat of having to fight your way out of Val-Negra against the whole Aerie Clan if the staircase is disturbed may be more convincing.

The narrow shaft winds deep into the mountain, terminating in a small round room of damp stone (about ten paces diameter). The walls are carved in relief sculpture depicting ancient conflicts, and possibly containing clues to the history of Flambeau. A large circle of iron, about five paces diameter, is set into the center of the floor and engraved in the design of a wagon wheel with spokes made of seven swords, (the covenant symbol of Val-Negra). Knocking against it reveals that it is thick and solid, but the dull ring indicates there is space beyond. Magic is unlikely to reveal much information, for the door itself is enchanted to frustrate any such effort unless the spell exceeds level 40 (PeVi40 Masking the Odor of Magic, with a Constant Duration and a Target of Room).

This is the Iron Door.

THE IRON DOOR

The ominous Iron Door has been a fixture of Val-Negra from the beginning. There is no record of who created it, nor how or why. Legend claims it has been here as long as the Aerie and their Shrine, and imprisons powerful demons or other malicious spirits. In truth, it probably originates sometime after Delendos created the Black Tower, and

may have been created by him or another magus. But as for how, and what lies behind, there are no certain details on record. What is known is that since the era of Apromor's Primacy, it has been forbidden to tamper with the Iron Door, and there are warnings of some mysterious danger locked behind it.

The Iron Door, magically protected by a powerful ward yet physically easy to open, imprisons the Adulteration of Flambeau the Founder. An Adulteration is a bizarre magical creation resulting from Twilight episodes, as described in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*. House Criamon is aware of these terrible entities and the havoc they

can cause. This particular Adulteration is the magical detritus of one Hermetic history's most powerful magi, and certainly the deadliest.

The Adulteration is not in any sense actually Flambeau, who is long dead or passed into Final Twilight. Though it believes it is the Founder, it is naught but a horrific shadow of the great magus who once was. If released, it causes havoc and horror, devastating the countryside driven by pure angst and wrath. It is a crazed, psychopathic magical construct, built from the mistakes, the base desires, and the failings of the Founder.

A Covenant of Ghosts

The catacombs house corpses of many ancient magi, and some of their ghosts walk these halls. They are keys to its legacy, but in death their memories are faded and distorted.

One of these is a Living Ghost, Archmagus Abaddon of Tyalus. A powerful necromancer, he was one of the two who subdued the Adulteration and resealed the Iron Door. He took the responsibility of guarding it and protecting Val-Negra from outsiders, sacrificing himself to maintain his post for eternity. As the last magus of Val-Negra, the Aerie Clan serves him devotedly.

It is Abaddon who sustains the Aegis of the Hearth over the covenant, employing the Mystery of Hermetic Empowerment and often binding the ghosts of past members. This knowledge may shock and outrage players initially, but in truth these ghosts volunteer for the effort and need no coercion. Abaddon has several specialized laboratories hidden in the catacombs. Using Lab Texts, he is able to craft the item in a single season, and the spirits he employs can empower the devices two or three times before they must be dismissed. The vis available for his enchantments is such that he can continue this for centuries, for not only was Val-Negra rich, the Haruspex makes sure he is well supplied to maintain his duty. Abaddon also maintains vigil over the Iron Door, making sure the ward is not disrupted and ready to recast it if needed.

If you want to flesh out his details, refer to *The Mysteries: Revised Edition* pages 64–74 for rules concerning

Hermetic Spirit Magic and the Living Ghost. Abaddon can be a resource for magi seeking such knowledge, and may possess a few unique mysteries as well. He has many useful spells stored in his Talisman and is free to create other items as desired. Storyguides are encouraged to be creative thinking of ways he might employ his magic, for he is reputed to be one of the most powerful necromancers in the Order of Hermes.

Abaddon is intended as a role-playing challenge, with an idiosyncratic personality that can frustrate and amuse players. He is obsessed with his duty as guardian of the Iron Door, but he is a Tyalus through and through and enjoys befuddling and annoying visitors. His haunt is the whole of Val-Negra, and he prefers to mimic a semblance of life by conjuring and possessing a strong young body (which he dissolves if needed). Direct confrontation with Abaddon should probably be unnecessary. In fact, though he may be initially suspicious of visitors, he is willing to trust them (to an extent) and will grant them Casting Tokens for the Aegis. He may even ask them to help cast a more powerful one over the covenant or request assistance for many varied neglected tasks. Abaddon can also be a hook for a saga revolving around the restoration of Val-Negra.

Magic Might: 50 (Mentem)

Personality Traits: Eclectic +5, Obsessed +3, Ruthless +2

Reputations: Hermetic Prestige 4, Necromancer 3 (Hermetic)

Shroud of Memories

The truth of Val-Negra is simple. Only a few old and powerful magi still living have ever been there or know anything about it. Aware of the danger of the Iron Door, they discourage tourism and are reluctant to share information. Nevertheless, they may relish telling tales of Val-Negra's golden age, and player characters can thereby charm information from them via clever roleplaying. It is also a daunting task for young magi, and older magi quickly lose interest. But with some effort and wisely applied magic, the players could be the ones who reveal the mysteries of Val-Negra.

The Adulteration of Flambeau (Malignancy, Autumn)

Magic Might: 65 (Igm)

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

Size: 0

Confidence: 3 (4)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit; Greater Immunity (Deprivation); Improved Characteristics x3, Great Intelligence, Great Stamina, Tough Warrior; Blatant Magical Air, Magic Monster, Environmental Magic Condition (Enclosed by the Iron Door), Wrathful (Major); Proud (Minor)

Magical Qualities: Focus Power x5, Greater Power x4, Magical Meditation, Major Virtue: Greater Immunity to Fire, No Fatigue, Ritual Power x2, Vis Mastery (Igm); Improved Abilities x5, Improved Confidence, Improved Power x9, Minor Virtue: Arcane Lore, Minor Virtue: Educated, Minor Virtue: Unaffected by the Gift, Improved Recovery (65)

Personality Traits: Hard-Hearted +2, Proud +3, Wrathful +5

Soak: +7

Fatigue Levels: N/A

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

Abilities: Awareness 3 (light sources), Concentration 4 (maintaining), Dead Language: Latin 4 (curses), Folk Ken 4 (sensing lies), Guile 3 (concealing intent), Finesse 5 (Igm), Artes Liberales 1 (literacy), Living Language: French 5 (Gascony dialect), Living Language: Spanish 5 (Asturian dialect), Magical Meditation 4 (recovery), Magic Lore 4 (Igm entities), Magic Theory 7 (Igm), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 4 (early members), Philosophiae 2 (metaphysics), Penetration 6 (Igm), Pyrenees Lore 4 (caverns), Single Weapon 5 (longsword), Theology: Christian 1 (gospel), Thrown Weapon 4 (javelin), Val-Negra Lore 4 (regio boundaries)

Powers

Arc of Fiery Ribbons, 0 points, Init 0, Igm.

As per the spell of the same name, creating a dozen fiery ribbons that fan out in a sixty-degree arc and inflict +10 Damage. **Crlg 25 R:** Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Group. (Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Group): Greater Power (25 levels); Improved Power (+3 Init, -3 Might cost, Spell Mastery 3 (Fast Cast, Multi-Cast, Penetration))

Aura of the Avenger, 0 points, Init 0, Igm. Swaths the Adulteration with a fiery aura, which will burn whatever it touches and inflicts +10 damage to others (the Adulteration being immune to fire). **Crlg 20 R:** Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind. (Base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Conc); Greater Power (20 levels); Improved Power (-2 Might cost, +2 Init)

Aura of Enlightenment, 0 points, Init -1, Igm. The Adulteration can glow as bright as direct sunlight on a clear day. **Crlg 10 R:** Per, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind. (Base 5, +1 Conc): Greater Power (10 levels); Improved Power (-1 Might cost)

Authority of Igm, 1-10 points, (Igm), Init 0 (- Might points spent). The spirit can recreate any non-ritual Igm effects no greater than 50th level at a cost of 1 Might point per magnitude of the effect. **(Te)Ig 50 R:** varies, **D:** varies, **T:** varies: Focus Power x4

Ball of Abysmal Flame, 0 points, Init 0, Igm. Another favorite of the Founder, shooting a ball of flame that inflicts +30 damage to a single target. **Crlg 35 R:** Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Group. (Base 25, +2 Voice): Greater Power (35 levels); Improved Power (+4 Init, -4 Might cost, Spell Mastery 3 (Fast Cast, Multi-Cast, Penetration))

Eidolon, 0 points, Init -2, Imaginem. Creates an illusionary form visible and audible to material beings. The spirit can create a single form. The image can move and speak as directed, and lasts until the spirit has no further use for it. **Crlm 15 R:** Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind. (Base 2, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +2 move at

THE GRAND LIBRARY

This is a great chamber filled with charred oak tables which once held many books, many of which were burned in the Diedne assault when one immolated herself here. The ashes, if reconstituted, may yield rare and powerful books. However, most that could be salvaged were taken when the covenant was abandoned.

INIRELTE'S TOWER

The third largest tower was built by the Prima Inirelte, and wasn't filled with labs following her death. It was once enchanted as her Talisman using the Mystery of Hermetic Geometry (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 92). The tower has three floors. Inirelte's sanctum, on the top floor, still contains a small library of ancient Hermetic books preserved by powerful magic — and even more powerful magical traps.

THE CATACOMBS

Beneath Val-Negra lies an extensive and complicated system of caves and catacombs. Here can be found numerous specialized labs, small libraries, a few rooms dedicated to arcane purposes, and other mysterious chambers. Most eerie, however, are the tombs of Val-Negra's magi and the final resting places of several Primi of House Flambeau. The dry conditions have mummified their mortal remains.

THE SHRINE OF THE AERIE

Deep within the Catacombs lies the Shrine of the Aerie, their most important religious site. The cavern containing it is utterly awe inspiring; crystalline strata flash with color, the roar of a waterfall at one end sounds musical and imposing, and carvings created by generations of Aerie are of intense beauty. The atmosphere is very relaxing, inspiring visitors to sit down and forget their cares (storyguides may require an appropriate Personality Trait roll, but there is no magical effect).

The Aerie Clan

For generations, the Aerie have dwelled at Val-Negra. Their peaceful isolation was disrupted by outsiders seeking to plunder the magic of the mountain. Their tales speak of repelling foes ranging from Roman wizards to Carthaginian sorcerers. They were eventually subjugated by a cabal of Sahirs. The wizard Delendar liberated the Aerie and seized Val-Negra. Ever since, they've served him and his heirs with dedication. This included the Primi of House Flambeau until the relocation of the domus magna. Now they await the day when a (living) magus will return to claim that inheritance, a day that may never come.

Aerie culture is centered around serving as covenfolk. They have forgotten any other way of life, and carry on as if Val-Negra were thriving and active. Aerie folk have names derived from classical Latin, and use that language for any writing if they are literate.

Lifecycle of the Aerie

The Aerie are mostly indistinguishable from each other; the only measurable differences being age, gender, and rank. The lifecycle of the Aerie serves as a guideline for character creation. Youths (appearing to be 21 or less) are Spring Characters, Adults (22 to 44) are Summer Characters, the Mature (45 to 66) are Autumn, and the Elders (67 to 99) are Winter Characters. The only exceptions are Romulus and Remus, who are always Winter characters no matter what physical age they are. The Aerie also believe in reincarnation, that each generation is reborn from the spirits of their elders. There is no apparent proof of these claims, and the naming rituals of infants held at the shrine have no detectable supernatural effect. The fact that there is no memory of past lives, only tales handed down through the ages, would seem to indicate that this is just superstition. But then there are Romulus and Remus, who seem to remember everything.

The Adulteration of Flambeau (Malignancy, Autumn), cont'd

command, +1 intricacy): Greater Power (15 levels); Improved Power (-2 Might cost)

Curse of Ash, 5 points, (Ignem), Init -10. Imposes the Minor Flaw of Deficient Form (Ignem). If permanent, the cost is removed from the Adulteration's Might score as well as Might pool. If temporary, Might points spent are recovered when the Flaw is withdrawn. R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Ritual. Ritual Power (non-Hermetic)

Curse of Cinders, 5 points, (Ignem), Init -10. Imposes the Minor Flaw of Incompatible Arts (Crlg, Relg) upon the victim. If permanent, the cost is removed from the Adulteration's Might score as well as Might pool. If temporary, Might points spent are recovered when the Flaw is withdrawn. R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Ritual. Ritual Power (non-Hermetic)

Donning the Corporeal Veil, 0 point, Init -3, Corpus. Allows the spirit to physically manifest until the next sunrise or sunset, as a darkly tanned older man, dressed in a rough, brown woolen robe. The penalties imposed by The Gift still apply though; the spirit is somehow disturbing and stands out, despite appearing very average in every way. Cr(Re)Co 25 R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind. (Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 requisite): Greater Power (25 levels); Improved Power (-3 Might cost)

Ghost Touch, variable cost, (Te), Init 0 (- Might points spent). Moves objects not held by another or fastened down. For 1 Might point, a maximum of 5 pounds can be moved; every additional Might point doubles this weight limit. If the item is hurled with force, use the Thrown Weapons ability and it inflicts +5 damage per Might point spent. The spirit can enter combat with an object when using this power. All physical attacks with this power must penetrate Magic Resistance. The power last until the object is released by the

spirit. The Adulteration cannot affect items beyond the Iron Door unless the door ceases to function. ReTe25 R: varies, D: varies, T: varies. Focus Power

Pilum of Fire, 0 points, (Ignem), Init 0. The Founder's signature spell, creating a jet of flame that inflicts +15 damage. Crlg20 R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group. (Base 10, +2 Voice): Greater Power (20 levels); Improved Power (+2 Init, -3 Might cost, Spell Mastery 3 (Fast Casting, Multiple Casting, Penetration))

Presence, 0 points, Init -4, Imaginem. Grants awareness of everything that happens within the innermost regio of Val-Negra, but cannot affect anything beyond the Iron Door unless the Ward ceases to function. InIm35 R: Arc, D: Sun, T: Ind. (Base 2 +4 Arc, +2 Sun, +1 constant effect. +1 non-Hermetic effects): Greater Powers (35 levels); Improved Power (-3 Might cost)

Smoke on the Wind, 0 points, Init 0, Ignem. The Adulteration can fly through the air in any direction simply by concentrating. If distracted, control is lost but the power holds the Adulteration aloft indefinitely. Relg15 R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind (Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 Constant): Greater Power (15 levels); Improved Power (-2 Might cost, +2 Init)

Appearance: If perceived or manifested the Adulteration appears as a deeply tanned, bald man in his late 50's. If angry, it begins to smolder and smoke and releases bits of ash, bursting into an immolated form when furious and ready to attack. It truly believes it is the Founder Flambeau, trapped within the regio. It usually manifests in human form, but may conceal itself and interact via its Eidolon. It loathes Moors and sahirs, and immediately attacks if confronted by such individuals. Imprisonment confuses it and it strives to escape, though it doesn't understand how the door prevents it from leaving.

Character Guide: Aerie Guard

Magic Might: 10 (Mentem)

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

Size: 0

Age: unknown (33)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Affinity with Single Weapon, Custos, Warrior; Covenant Upbringing, Dutybound, Vow (service to Val-Negra)

Qualities and Inferiorities: Natural Appearance; Essential Virtue: Unnoticeable (Minor), Gift of Tongues, Improved Powers (x2), Lesser Powers (x2), Mentem Resistance, Minor Virtue: Arcane Lore, Second Sight, Unaffected by the Gift; Restricted Power, Slow Power, Susceptible to Depravation

Personality Traits: Unnoticeable (Dexterity) +3, Loyal +2, Brave -2, Inconspicuous (Presence) -3

Combat:

Long Sword & Round Shield: Init +3, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +8

Soak: +7

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

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

Abilities: Aerie Language 5 (gossip), Athletics 3 (climb), Awareness 2 (alert), Brawl 4 (grapple), Carouse 1 (drinking songs), Concentration 1 (silent speech), Folk Ken 1 (Aerie Clan), Latin 3 (Hermetic), Magic Lore 1 (effects of magic), Mentem Resistance 1 (Hermetic), Organization Lore: Aerie 1 (ancestors), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 1 (House Flambeau), Penetration 4 (other Aerie), Profession: Soldier 4 (guard duty), Second Sight 4 (spirits), Single Weapon 6 (long sword), Stealth 3 (quiet), Thrown Weapon 4 (spear), Val-Negra Lore 1 (glory days)

Powers:

Silent Speech of the Aerie Clan, 0 points, Init +1, Mentem. Aerie can mentally communicate with each other using a form of "silent speech." That is, if they communicate their thoughts "aloud," they can be heard by any other Aerie within range of their "voice"; that is, how much effort they put into the

"volume" of their words, which for them is no different that the effort a man puts into whispering or shouting. This power is Restricted in that communication is only possible with other Aerie, and concerning one another, Penetration is multiplied by 6; +2 Sympathetic Connection for being blood related and knowing each other's names, +4 for the Arcane Connection they share (this connection is personal and cannot be used by others). The typical Aerie will thus have a Penetration of 40, allowing them to speak with Romulus and Remus. **CrMe20 R:** Special, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind. (Base 3, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +2 Group); Lesser Power (20 levels, -1 cost); Restricted Power: 25xp Penetration

Invisibility of Silent Standing, 0 points, Init one round then +0, Imaginem. If standing quietly for more than a few moments, an Aerie totally blends in with her surroundings to the point that she is invisible. The effect is brought upon automatically if the conditions are met, but is broken if she moves or speaks aloud or mentally (remaining mentally silent can be challenging, thus the Duration of Concentration). Aerie elders are able to remain invisible longer and even while moving (optional Variable Power). **Pelm5 R:** Per, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind. (Base 4, +1 Conc); Lesser Power (5 levels, -1 cost, Slow Power)

Equipment: long sword, round shield, partial suit chain mail

Encumbrance: 1

Vis: 2 Mentem in brains

Appearance: The people of the Aerie Clan appear drab, dull, and unnoticeable. Physically they are nearly identical, with variations due to gender and age.

Variations: These statistics represent a typical adult clan member, in this case a soldier of the Black Guard. These statistics can be changed represent any clan member by applying a few quick adjustments. The Minor Flaw of Covenant Upbringing is required, and they each have an Affinity pertaining to their role (a primary Ability). Make adjustments to Characteristics and other Abilities as needed. Grog Level

Characters have a Might Score of 10, and Companions have a score of 20 (and additional Qualities). Children and Youth have 240 fewer experience points, and Elders have an additional 360 experience points.

Aerie Weaver Woman: (Mature Grog)

Virtues & Flaws: Covenfolk; Magic Human; Affinity with Craft: Weaving, Gossip; Covenant Upbringing, Fear: of Outside World (Minor)

Characteristics: Per +2, Str -1, Dex +2

Abilities: Aerie Language 5 (gossip), Awareness 1 (details), Brawl 1 (knife), Carouse 1 (drinking songs), Craft: Weaving 5 (tapestries), Concentration 2 (silent speech), Folk Ken 3 (Aerie Clan), Intrigue 3 (gossip), Latin 3 (Hermetic), Magic Lore 2 (effects of magic), Mentem Resistance 1 (Hermetic), Organization Lore: Aerie 2 (ancestors), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 1 (House Flambeau), Penetration 4 (other Aerie), Second Sight 3 (spirits), Stealth 2 (quiet), Val-Negra Lore 2 (interesting sites)

Romulus & Remus: The Aerie are always led by a pair of twins named Romulus and Remus. Romulus is Autocrat of the Interior and the dominant of the pair. Remus, Autocrat of the Exterior, is slightly weaker but possesses secret knowledge. Twins are rare amongst the Aerie, and signify a time to transfer knowledge to the next generation. The elder and younger twins conduct a secret ceremony before the Shrine. When it is finished, the young twins emerge with the minds and memories of the elder pair, who have disappeared. Romulus is obsessed with keeping Val-Negra closed off, and Remus wants to reach out to the outside world. They have Might scores of 33 & 32 (respectively), and are more advanced than other Aerie in various other ways. Each has the following additional power:

Aura of Rightful Authority, 0 points, Init -2, Mentem. **ReMe20 R:** Voice, **D:** Concentration, **T:** Ind. (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Concentration); Lesser Power (20 levels, -4 cost +1 Init; Improved Power: +5 Init)

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Ars Magica

Recent Releases

The Contested Isle: The Hibernian Tribunal

The magi of Hibernia respect the land and its supernatural inhabitants, granting much of the Tribunal's area to hedge traditions and allowing supernatural creatures a vote at Tribunal. Now, magi from elsewhere in the Order have come to "reform" the Peripheral Code, laying siege to and taking one of the Irish covenants. If the native magi could just stop fighting each other, they would resist.

As English lords push further into the island, and the Church struggles with attempts to make it fit continental ideals, the Order of Hermes faces its own conflict. The traces of past conflicts are everywhere: the faerie Tuatha De Danaan, the magic Fir Bolg and Formorach, and saints as prone to curse as bless. Demons, however, are nowhere to be seen, as constant fighting convulses the Emerald Isle. It is, as ever in Ireland, a time for heroes.

Transforming Mythic Europe

Hermetic magic has the power to change the world. A magus fresh from apprenticeship can create a land to rule where there was nothing but ocean. Magic can replace much of the back-breaking labor typical of the medieval world. Even without changing their use of magic, magi could upend the structure of society by involving themselves in its problems and politics. But magi avoid such activities. They know the risks involved, and do nothing that might upset the status quo of Mythic Europe. Except when they do.

This book describes the magic and activities necessary to transform Mythic Europe, whether by creating an island for magi to rule, integrating the Order of Hermes into wider society, or starting a technological revolution. None of the magic is particularly hard, nor does it rely on hidden secrets. Magi have not changed Europe because they have not yet chosen to. Your magi may choose differently.

hooks

Mythic Europe is a place of wonders. Ancient spirits live in the rivers and sleep under towns and cities. Merchants travel between those cities, bringing the mundane population together, while nobles fight and hunt from their castles of stone. The dead do not all rest quietly, and the traces of ancient magics take an active interest in the present day. Yet still magi prefer to sit in their libraries and laboratories, oblivious to everything beyond the walls of their covenant. Get their attention.

This book contains eight short scenarios for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* tied to a previously released *Ars Magica* sourcebook. Each is designed to be played in a single session, and to draw the characters into some aspect of the rich background of Mythic Europe. Each scenario could serve as a single session's entertainment, or as the springboard for a saga arc.

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