

Ars Magica

# The Sundered Eagle

The Theban Tribunal



by Chris Jensen-Romer,  
Matt Ryan, Mark Shirley  
& Andrew Smith



## The Sundered Eagle

# Credits

**AUTHORS:** Christian Jensen-Romer, Matt Ryan, Mark Shirley,  
& Andrew Smith

**DEVELOPMENT, EDITING, & PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** David Chart

**LAYOUT:** Roberta A. Olson & Michelle Nephew

**ART DIRECTION & PROOFREADING:** Michelle Nephew

**PUBLISHER:** John Nephew

**COVER ILLUSTRATION:** Grey Thornberry

**CARTOGRAPHY:** Robert Scott & Andrew Smith

**COVENANT SYMBOLS:** Jeff Menges

**INTERIOR ART:** Fred Mason (*Huon of Bordeaux*, London: George Allen Ruskin House, 1895); Gustave Doré, Schopin, Ulpiano Checa, E. K. Liska, Ludwig Thiersch, Fernand Cormon, Jean Léon Gérôme, Jules Jean Lecomte-du-Nouy, Gustave Courtois, August von Heckel, Ary Scheffer, Louis-Frederic Schutzenberger, Gustave Boulanger, A. Gendron, Ch. F. Jalabert, J. Coomans, Jean Léon Gérôme (*Great Men & Famous Women*, NY: Selmar Hess, 1894); Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwuff (*Medieval Woodcut Illustrations*, NY: Dover Publications, 1999); Richard Huber (ed. *Treasurey of Fantastic and Mythological Creatures*, NY: Dover Publications, 1981)

**ARS MAGICA FIFTH EDITION TRADE DRESS:** J. Scott Reeves

**PUBLISHER'S SPECIAL THANKS:** Jerry Corrick & the gang at the Source.

**FIRST ROUND PLAYTESTERS:** Leon Bullock, Peter Ryan, Chris Barrett, Christian Jensen-Romer, Andrew Oakley, David Curtin, Luke Price, Kevin Sides, Donna Giltrap, Malcolm Harbrow, Aaron Hicks, Richard Love, Odysseus Dallas, Menas Karavanos, Panagiotis Koutelidakis, Soteris Zaharopoulos, Angus MacDonald, Wendell BSP Joyner, Mark Pascual, Sally Hutchinson, Brian Watson

**SECOND ROUND PLAYTESTERS:** Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen, Pelle Kofod, Andrew Oakley, Kevin Sides, David Curtin, Luke Price, Christian "CJ" Jensen-Romer, Jason Fryer, Matthew Dyson, Emily Dyson, Odysseus Dallas, Menas Karavanos, Panagiotis Koutelidakis, Soteris Zaharopoulos, Daniel Bishoff, Gregor Gál, Andreas Hajdu, Romana-Samira Polansky, Christoph Safferling, Jan Sprenger, Sheila Thomas



www.atlas-games.com

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

Copyright 2011 Trident, Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work by any means without written permission from the publisher, except short excerpts for the purpose of reviews, is expressly prohibited.

*Ars Magica*, *Mythic Europe*, and *Charting New Realms of Imagination* are trademarks of Trident, Inc. *Order of Hermes*, *Tremere*, and *Doissetep* are trademarks of White Wolf, Inc. and are used with permission.

### AUTHOR BIOS

**Chris Jensen-Romer** knows little Latin, and less Greek. That fact has not stopped him being fascinated by the byzantine politics of the Byzantine Empire. However he'd like to thank Panagiotis Koutelidakis and his friends for their help with language issues, and making the book better, and everyone who attended Grand Tribunal 2008 (especially David Chart and my fellow authors.)

**Matt Ryan** lives in Ithaca, the New York State city not the island. He had the great pleasure of meeting his fellow authors and line editor in Cheltenham, and would like to thank The Cotswold Inn for their hospitality. He would also like to thank Andrew, CJ, David, and Mark for making this monstrously huge undertaking enjoyable.

**Mark Shirley** is an ecologist and modeler living in Newcastle, which couldn't be more different from the sunny shores of Greece. Nevertheless, working on this book has brightened up the gloomy Northern weather, and given him a new-found appreciation for Aristophanes.

**Andrew P. Smith** is a research scientist living in Constance, Germany. He made his first trip to Greece in 2007 where he set foot on the island of Delos as an unsuspecting tourist, little knowing that it would become the site of the Tribunal gathering and that, six months later, he would be drafted into working on this book. He would like to thank his fellow authors, the line editor, and the playtesters for their productive collaboration and input.

DIGITAL VERSION 1.0

# The Sundered Eagle

## Contents

### I. Introduction 6

BYZANTINE LANDSCAPE .....	6
BYZANTINE REALMS .....	6
BYZANTINE PEOPLES .....	6
BYZANTINE LEGENDS .....	6
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK .....	7

### II. History of the Empire 8

The Origin of Mankind .....	8
The Age of Heroes .....	8
<i>The Trojan War</i> .....	8
The Persian Wars .....	10
Athens and Sparta .....	10
<i>King Philip II of Macedonia</i> .....	11
<i>Alexander the Great</i> .....	11
Hellenistic Greece .....	12
<i>The Leagues</i> .....	12
<i>Roman Governance</i> .....	12
CONSTANTINE .....	12
<i>The Gothic Yoke</i> .....	12
The Byzantine Empire .....	13
<i>Justinian</i> .....	13
<i>Phocas</i> .....	14
<i>War with Persia</i> .....	14
<i>The Arab Threat</i> .....	14
<i>Iconoclasm</i> .....	14
<i>The Rise of Bulgaria</i> .....	15
<i>The Macedonian Dynasty</i> .....	15
<i>Basil the Bulgar-Slayer</i> .....	15
<i>Zoe and Theodora</i> .....	15
<i>Tragedy at Manzikert (1071)</i> .....	15
<i>Alexius Komnenos (1081-1118)</i> .....	15
<i>The Sicilian Invasion (1081-1084)</i> .....	16
<i>The Pecheneg Threat (1091)</i> .....	16
<i>The First Crusade (1091-1108)</i> .....	16
<i>Genoa &amp; Pisa (1111)</i> .....	16
<i>Ioannes II Komnenos (1118-1143)</i> .....	16
<i>Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)</i> .....	16
<i>War with Venice</i> .....	16
<i>The Sicilian Conflict</i> .....	16
<i>Andronikos the Tyrant (1183-1185)</i> .....	17
<i>Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195)</i> .....	17
<i>Alexius III Angelos (1195-1203)</i> .....	17
The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) .....	17
<i>Prince Alexius</i> .....	17
<i>Constantinople Besieged, Summer 1203</i> .....	17
<i>Emperors Isaac II Angelos</i> & <i>Alexius IV Angelos</i> .....	18
<i>Emperor Murzuphlos, January 1204</i> .....	18
<i>The Second Siege, April 1204</i> .....	18
<i>The Sack of Constantinople</i> .....	19
The Latin Empire .....	19
<i>The Thessaloniki Crisis</i> .....	19
<i>The Death of Baldwin</i> .....	19
<i>Emperor Henry, 1205-1216</i> .....	19
<i>Emperor Peter, 1216-1217</i> .....	19
<i>Empress Yolanda, 1217-1219</i> .....	19

### III. The Order of Hermes 20

HERMETIC HISTORY .....	20
<i>Before the Order of Hermes</i> .....	20
<i>Shaping the Theban Tribunal</i> .....	20
<i>The Collapse of an Empire</i> .....	22
THE LEAGUES OF THEBES .....	22
<i>The League of Constantine</i> .....	22
<i>The Children of Olympos</i> .....	23
<i>The League of the Vigilant</i> .....	24
<i>League Against Idolatry</i> .....	24
THEBAN TRIBUNAL POLITICS .....	24
THE HERMETIC POLITY .....	24
<i>Citizenship</i> .....	25
<i>The Phylai</i> .....	25
<i>The Council of Magistrates</i> .....	25
<i>The Archon</i> .....	26
<i>The Polemarch</i> .....	26
<i>The Logothete</i> .....	26
<i>The Boards of Magistrates</i> .....	27
<i>The Treasury Council</i> .....	28
<i>Tokens and Shards</i> .....	28
CUSTOMS OF THE TRIBUNAL .....	29
<i>The Language of Magi</i> .....	29
<i>Common Vis Sources</i> .....	29
<i>Acts of Altruism</i> .....	30
<i>Provision of Longevity Rituals</i> .....	30
<i>Provision of Healing</i> .....	30
<i>Donation of Apprentices</i> .....	30
<i>The Covenant Patrons</i> .....	30
<i>The Ceremony of Propitiation</i> .....	31
<i>The Founding of Covenants</i> .....	31
THE TRIBUNAL MEETING .....	32
<i>Pre-Tribunal Procedure</i> .....	32
<i>Selection of Archai Candidates</i> .....	32
<i>Interviews with Apprentices</i> .....	32
<i>The Hermetic Assembly</i> .....	32
<i>Announcement of Decrees</i> .....	32
<i>Decrees of Citizenship</i> .....	32
<i>Decrees of Defamation</i> .....	32
<i>Decrees of Contrition</i> .....	32
<i>News from the Order</i> .....	33
<i>The Apprentice Presentation</i> .....	33
<i>Ostrakismos</i> .....	34
<i>The Law Council</i> .....	34
<i>The People's Court</i> .....	34
<i>The Council of Archai</i> .....	35
<i>Execution of Sentences</i> .....	35
<i>Conduct of Archai</i> .....	35
<i>Sortition of Archai</i> .....	35
<i>Election of the Archon and Polemarch</i> .....	35
<i>Rite of Dismissal</i> .....	35

### IV. Culture & Customs 36

SOCIAL STRUCTURE .....	36
<i>The Emperor</i> .....	36
<i>The Dynatoi</i> .....	36
<i>Latin Lords</i> .....	37

<i>The Middle Classes</i> .....	37
<i>The Lower Classes</i> .....	37
<i>Slavery</i> .....	37
<i>Eunuchs</i> .....	37
<i>Women</i> .....	38
THE EASTERN CHURCH .....	38
<i>The Two Patriarchs</i> of Constantinople .....	38
<i>Buildings</i> .....	39
<i>Clergy</i> .....	39
<i>Monastics</i> .....	40
<i>Icons</i> .....	40
INHABITANTS .....	40
<i>Ethnic Groups</i> .....	40
<i>Vlachs</i> .....	40
<i>Slavs</i> .....	40
<i>Jews</i> .....	40
<i>Other Peoples</i> .....	41
<i>Languages</i> .....	41
<i>Names</i> .....	42
CUSTOMS .....	42
<i>Family Customs</i> .....	42
<i>Food and Drink</i> .....	43
<i>Clothing and Appearance</i> .....	43
<i>Law</i> .....	43
<i>Education</i> .....	43
<i>Literature</i> .....	43
TRADE .....	44
<i>Taxation</i> .....	44
<i>Coinage</i> .....	44
<i>Trade Goods</i> .....	45
<i>Mediterranean Ships</i> .....	45
THE MILITARY .....	46
<i>Organization</i> .....	46
<i>Greek Fire</i> .....	46
SUPERSTITION AND FOLKLORE .....	47
<i>The Alaphroiskiotoi</i> .....	47
<i>The Evil Eye</i> .....	48
<i>The Power of Oaths</i> .....	48

### V. Greece 49

EPIROS .....	49
<i>Arta</i> .....	49
<i>The Bridge of Arta</i> .....	51
<i>Corfu</i> .....	51
<i>The Stone Ship of Corfu</i> .....	51
<i>Durazzo</i> .....	51
<i>Lakes Ohrid and Prespa</i> .....	51
<i>Mount Pelister</i> .....	52
<i>The Pindos Mountains</i> .....	52
<i>Dodona</i> .....	52
MACEDONIA AND THESSALY .....	52
<i>Thessaloniki</i> .....	53
<i>Saint Demetrios</i> .....	53
<i>The Gorgona</i> .....	53
<i>Mount Athos</i> .....	54
<i>Olympos</i> .....	54

*The Forge of Hephaistos*..... 55  
 Larissa ..... 55  
 Meteora ..... 55  
 Mount Pelion ..... 56  
*The Cave of Chiron* ..... 56  
**ATTICA AND BOEOTIA** ..... 56  
 Thebes ..... 57  
 Delphi ..... 57  
*The Castalian Spring* ..... 58  
*The Palace of the Lamia* ..... 58  
 Athens ..... 58  
*The Tumulus of Marathon* ..... 59  
**EUBOEA** ..... 59  
 Chalkis ..... 60  
*The Euripus Strait* ..... 60  
 The Mountains of Euboea ..... 60  
 Aetos ..... 60  
*The Baths of Herakles* ..... 60  
**MOREA** ..... 60  
 Corinth ..... 61  
*The Isthmus of Corinth* ..... 61  
 Angistri ..... 61  
 Lake Stymphalia ..... 61  
 Arcadia ..... 62  
 Vizie ..... 62  
 Zakynthos ..... 62  
*The Queen of the Nereids* ..... 62  
**EPIDAUROS** ..... 63  
 History ..... 63  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 63  
*Epidaurus' Patron: Asklepios* ..... 63  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 63  
 Magi ..... 63  
*Xenias the Leper of House Tytalus* ..... 63  
*Galla of House Ex Miscellanea* ..... 64  
 Covenfolk ..... 64  
**EREBOS** ..... 64  
 History ..... 64  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 64  
*Erebos' Patron: Cyra* ..... 64  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 64  
 Magi ..... 65  
*Destasia of House Ex Miscellanea* ..... 65  
 Covenfolk ..... 65  
**GIGAS** ..... 65  
 History ..... 65  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 65  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 65  
*Gigas' Patron: Čovek* ..... 65  
 Magi ..... 65  
*Boustaphan of House Tremere* ..... 65  
*Monorchis of House Tremere* ..... 66  
*Allectores of House Tremere* ..... 66  
**HEDYOSMOS** ..... 66  
 History ..... 66  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 66  
*Hedyosmos' Patron: Minthe* ..... 67  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 67  
 Magi ..... 68  
*Ausculator of House Guernicus* ..... 68  
*Aiakia of House Guernicus* ..... 68  
*Tisiphon of House Tytalus* ..... 68  
*Celaena of House Bonisagus* ..... 68  
 Covenfolk ..... 68  
*Vrakos* ..... 69  
**OIKOS TOU ELEOUS:**  
**THE LADIES OF THESSALONIKI** ..... 69  
 History ..... 69  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 70  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 70  
 Magi ..... 70  
*Anna Psellus of House Jerbiton* ..... 70  
*Theocharista Psellus of House Jerbiton* ..... 70  
*Nereida Ex Miscellanea* ..... 70  
*Nonna Ex Miscellanea* ..... 70  
 Covenfolk ..... 70

**VI. The Islands**

71

**THE NORTH AEGEAN**..... 71  
 Lesbos ..... 72  
*Orphykia* ..... 72  
*The Petrified Forest*..... 73  
**THE CYCLADES**..... 73  
 Delos ..... 74  
*The Legendary Origins of Delos*..... 74  
*The Hyperborean Nymphs*..... 75  
*Delos Today*..... 76  
*The Hermetic Agora*..... 76  
*The Tribunal Treasury*..... 77  
 Thera ..... 78  
*The Bay of Thera*..... 78  
**THE DODECANESE** ..... 78  
 Patmos ..... 78  
*The Cave of the Apocalypse* ..... 78  
 Kos ..... 78  
*The Tree of Hippocrates*..... 78  
 Rodos ..... 79  
**CANDIA** ..... 79  
 Chandax ..... 79  
*Mounts Zeus and Ida*..... 80  
*The Labyrinth of Knossos*..... 80  
 The Gorge of Apollon ..... 81  
**AEGAEA** ..... 81  
 History ..... 81  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 82  
*Aegaea's Patron: Triton* ..... 82  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 82  
 Magi ..... 83  
*Lucian the Scholar of House Merinita*..... 83  
*Leukothea of House Merinita* ..... 83  
*Delfini of House Bjornaer* ..... 83  
*Krum the Swift of House Bjornaer* ..... 83  
 Covenfolk ..... 83  
**FAVONIUS** ..... 83  
 History ..... 83  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 84  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 84  
 Magi ..... 85  
*Memnos of House Verditius* ..... 85  
*Verecunda of House Verditius* ..... 85  
*Aeliophanes of House Flambeau*..... 85  
 Covenfolk ..... 86  
*Basil of Andros* ..... 86  
*Peter Monocheiros*..... 86  
**INGASIA** ..... 86  
 History ..... 86  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 86  
*Stated Purpose* ..... 86  
*Patron Spirit* ..... 86  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 87  
 Magi ..... 87  
*Stouritus of House Verditius* ..... 87  
*Euxodia of House Verditius* ..... 87  
*Gemma and Bobila of House Verditius*..... 87  
 Covenfolk ..... 87  
**POLYAIGOS** ..... 88  
 History ..... 88  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 88  
*Polyaigos' Patron: Varazes*..... 89  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 89  
 Magi ..... 89  
*Maria Laskarina of House Guernicus*..... 89  
*Gerasimos the Simple of House Flambeau*..... 89  
*Ioannes of House Bonisagus* ..... 90  
*Caterina da Vigonovo of House Jerbiton*... 90  
 Covenfolk ..... 90

**VII. Constantinople**

91

**APPROACHING THE CITY**..... 92  
 The Walls ..... 93

**INSIDE CONSTANTINOPLE**..... 93  
 The Forums ..... 94  
 Waterworks ..... 94  
 The Venetian Quarter ..... 94  
 Hippodrome ..... 95  
*The Serpent Column*..... 95  
*The Egyptian Obelisk*..... 96  
 The Baths of Zeuxippus ..... 96  
 The Churches ..... 97  
*Hagbia Sophia* ..... 97  
*Hagbia Eirene* ..... 97  
*Church of the Blessed Virgin of the Pharos*..... 97  
*Church of the Holy Apostles* ..... 97  
*The Church of St. John the Baptist of Studius and The Studion* ..... 98  
 The Imperial Palaces ..... 98  
*The Great Palace* ..... 98  
*The Palace of Bucoleon* ..... 98  
*The Palace of Magnaura* ..... 98  
*The Palace of Blachernae* ..... 99  
*The Porphyry Chamber*..... 99  
**MICHAEL'S TABULA**..... 99  
 History ..... 99  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 99  
*Michael's Tabula's Patron: Fylakas*..... 100  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 100  
 Magi ..... 100  
*Petros of House Jerbiton*..... 100  
*Wilrich of House Flambeau*..... 100  
 Covenfolk ..... 100  
**XYLINITES** ..... 101  
 History ..... 101  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 102  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 102  
 Magi ..... 102  
*Artoud of House Criamon* ..... 102  
*Theoderet of House Criamon*..... 102  
*Trasaricus of House Criamon* ..... 102  
 Covenfolk ..... 102

**VIII. Anatolia**

103

**BITHYNIA** ..... 103  
 The Empire of Nicaea ..... 103  
 Nicaea ..... 103  
*The Seven Demons of Nicaea* ..... 105  
 Nicomedia ..... 105  
**THE TROAD (TROAS)** ..... 106  
 Hellespont ..... 106  
*The Vantage Point of Xerxes*..... 106  
 Pergamos ..... 106  
*The Great Altar* ..... 107  
 Ilion ..... 107  
**LYDIA**..... 108  
 Smyrna ..... 108  
 Hagios Theologos (Ephesus)..... 108  
*The Temple of Artemis* ..... 108  
*The Cave of the Seven Sleepers*..... 109  
**THRAKESION** ..... 109  
*Maeander River*..... 109  
*Philadelphia* ..... 109  
*Mt Sipylos*..... 110  
**PAPHLAGONIA AND PONTUS** ..... 110  
 The Empire of Trebizond ..... 111  
*Trebizond* ..... 111  
**THE COVENANT OF ALEXANDRIA** ..... 112  
 History ..... 112  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 113  
*Stated Purpose* ..... 113  
*Patron Spirit: Fides*..... 113  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 113  
 Magi ..... 114  
*Leontius of House Mercere* ..... 114  
*Proximos of House Mercere* ..... 114



Catella of House Bonisagus ..... 114  
 Covenfolk ..... 114  
 Enchanted Devices ..... 114  
     *The Flying Device* ..... 114  
     *The Glass Submarine* ..... 115  
**MOERO'S GARDEN** ..... 115  
 History ..... 115  
 Setting and Physical Description ..... 116  
     *Stated Purpose* ..... 116  
     *Patron Spirit: Hipparchus* ..... 116  
 Culture and Traditions ..... 116  
 Magi ..... 116  
     *Ionia of House Jerbiton* ..... 117  
     *Syagricus of House Jerbiton* ..... 117  
     *Ziper of House Tytalus* ..... 117  
 Covenfolk ..... 117

**IX. The Magical Landscape 118**

**THE TITANS** ..... 118  
 The Titans as Governors  
     of the Universe ..... 118  
     *Seekers of the Fallen* ..... 118  
 The Titans as Enemies of the Gods ..... 119  
     *Legion of Atlas* ..... 119  
 The Titans as Government in Exile ..... 119  
     *Kampe's Lovers* ..... 119  
**THE SIBYLS** ..... 120  
     *The Erythraean Sibyl* ..... 120  
     *The Delphic Sibyl* ..... 120  
     *The Samian Sibyl* ..... 120  
     *The Hellespontine Sibyl* ..... 120  
     *The Phrygian Sibyl* ..... 120  
     *The Sibyllides* ..... 120  
**MAGICAL BINDINGS** ..... 121  
     Epanankoi ..... 121  
     *Diabolai* ..... 121  
     *Goetia* ..... 122  
     *Spirit Magic and Theurgy* ..... 122  
     *Katadesmos Magic* ..... 122  
**HEDGE MAGIC AND MAGICIANS** ..... 122  
     Magical Traditions ..... 123  
         *Elementalists* ..... 123  
         *Folk Witches* ..... 123  
         *Gruagachan* ..... 123  
         *Learned Magicians* ..... 123  
         *Nightwalkers* ..... 123  
     Peasant Magic ..... 123

**X. The Faerie Landscape 124**

**THE GREEK GODS** ..... 124  
 The Twelve Olympians ..... 124  
 Other Gods ..... 124  
 Heroes ..... 124  
 The Children of Olympus ..... 125  
**FAERIES OF GREECE** ..... 127  
     *Lamia* ..... 127  
     *Childhood Terrors* ..... 127  
     *Centaur* ..... 127  
     *Kallikantzaroi* ..... 127  
     *Fauns and Satyroi* ..... 127  
     *Tritones and Sea Nymphs* ..... 127  
     *Drakoi* ..... 128  
     Nereides ..... 128  
     Stoicheia ..... 128

**XI. The Divine Landscape 131**

**CHURCH HISTORY** ..... 131  
     *Iconoclasts and Iconodulists* ..... 131  
     Schism ..... 131  
**MYSTICISM** ..... 132  
     Hesychnasm ..... 132  
     Magic & The Church ..... 132

**List of Inserts**

**I. INTRODUCTION**  
 Medieval Perceptions of Antiquity ..... 7  
 The Tales of Knossos ..... 80  
 Talos, the Protector of Candia ..... 81  
 Favonius' Patron: Dryops ..... 84  
 The Enchanted Ships ..... 84

**II. HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE**  
 Nation of Historians ..... 8  
 The Pulchritude of Princesses ..... 9  
 Persian Magical Warfare ..... 10  
 Amphipolos ..... 11  
 Constantine's Visions ..... 13  
 The Mob in Constantinople ..... 13

**III. THE ORDER OF HERMES**  
 The Descendents of Prokopios ..... 20  
 Former Covenants of the Theban Tribunal ..... 24  
 The Origins of the Polity ..... 24  
 Theban Quaesitores ..... 25  
 A Selection of Redcaps ..... 27  
 Other Tasks for the Common Good ..... 29  
 Gifts of Vis ..... 30  
 Story Seeds ..... 33  
 The Nature of the Law ..... 34

**IV. CULTURE & CUSTOMS**  
 The Dynatoi as Player Characters ..... 37  
 Virtues and Flaws for Eunuchs ..... 38  
 Anna Komnene ..... 39  
 Example Names ..... 42  
 Hermetic Correspondence ..... 44  
 Digenes Akrites ..... 45  
 The Color Purple ..... 45  
 The Imperial Guard ..... 47  
 Baskanos ..... 47  
 Adelphopoiesis ..... 48  
 Punishments for Oath-Breaking ..... 48

**V. GREECE**  
 The Via Egnatia ..... 51  
 Count Oberto ..... 52  
 Bad Boars ..... 54  
 Story Seed: Twilight of the Gods ..... 55  
 Magnesians Stones ..... 56  
 The Temptations of Christ ..... 56  
 Story Seed: The Absent Oracle ..... 57  
 The Cult of Eleusis ..... 58  
 The Nature of Herakles ..... 60  
 The Peloponnesian Labors of Herakles ..... 61  
 The Blood of Medusa ..... 62  
 Story Seed: Healing the Realm ..... 63  
 The Cult of the Earth ..... 67  
 Rumors ..... 67  
 Story Seed: The Estate of Hades ..... 68

**VI. THE ISLANDS**  
 Piracy in the Aegean ..... 71  
 Islands of Exile ..... 72  
 Other North Aegean Islands ..... 73  
 The Nymphs Arge, Opis, and Loxo ..... 75  
 Hyperborean Magic ..... 76  
 Delian Stories ..... 76  
 Other Cycladic Islands ..... 77  
 Story Seed: The Despot's Advisor ..... 79

**VII. CONSTANTINOPLE**  
 Constantinople's Auras ..... 91  
 Belisarius and Porphyrio ..... 93  
 The Medusas' Tears ..... 94  
 The Ghosts of the Hippodrome ..... 95  
 The Automata of the Hippodrome ..... 96  
 The Architects of Haghia Sophia ..... 97  
 Story Seed: Seeking the Julian Library ..... 97  
 Story Seed: The Return of Zeno ..... 98  
 Story Seed: The Curse of Pride ..... 98  
 Porphyrogenitos ..... 99  
 Xylinites' False Icon: St. Loukia ..... 101

**VIII. ANATOLIA**  
 Demon of Nicaea ..... 105  
 The Prison of Klymene ..... 106  
 Story Seed: In Search of Wilusa ..... 107  
 Story Seed: The Mysterious Savior ..... 109  
 The Christians of Serapis ..... 111  
 The Pearl of Peroz ..... 111  
 Anima: The Glass Submarine ..... 115

**IX. THE MAGICAL LANDSCAPE**  
 The Titans, in Brief ..... 119  
 Mythic Blood – Gigantes ..... 120  
 The Other Sibyls ..... 120  
 Character Guide: A Sibyl ..... 121  
 Modifiers to Diabolai ..... 122  
 Stygian Magi ..... 122  
 New Virtue: Folk Magic ..... 123  
 The Makhai ..... 123

**X. THE FAERIE LANDSCAPE**  
 The Olympian Houses of Hermes ..... 125  
 The Problem of Hermes ..... 125  
 New Minor Supernatural Virtue:  
     Elysian Ecstasy & Olympian Pact ..... 126  
 Sympathy Traits of the Olympians ..... 127  
 Character Guide: Stoicheion ..... 129  
 Story Seeds ..... 130

**XI. THE DIVINE LANDSCAPE**  
 Story Seed: The Procession ..... 131  
 The Filoque Clause ..... 132  
 Holy Tradition: Hesychnasts ..... 133  
 Story Seed: Death of an Artificer ..... 133  
 Society of Cyprian and Justina ..... 133  
 The Relics of Constantinople ..... 134  
 The Hagka, Protector  
     of Constantinople ..... 137  
 Greek Saints ..... 137

**XII. THE INFERNAL LANDSCAPE**  
 Akgah, the Demon of the Fourth Crusade ..... 139  
 Vrykolakas ..... 141  
 Smerdaki ..... 142  
 Bibliography ..... 142

**XII. The Infernal Landscape 138**

Corruption of the Byzantine Empire ..... 138  
 Corruption of the Fourth Crusade ..... 138  
 The Fall of Constantinople ..... 138  
     *The Destruction of Thermakopolis* ..... 139  
     *The Fate of the Crusaders* ..... 139  
**AN ENEMY WITHIN** ..... 140  
**THEBAN DEMONS** ..... 140  
     The Vrykolakas ..... 140  
     The Smerdaki ..... 141  
     Infernal Tradition: Stringla ..... 141  
     Infernal Tradition: The Paulicians ..... 142

## Chapter One

# Introduction

Welcome to the Byzantine Empire — or what's left of it. This is the *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* sourcebook dealing with the Theban Tribunal: the lands of Greece and Asia Minor in 1220 AD. If you or your storyguide has or intends to establish a saga set in the Tribunal of Thebes, or neighboring lands, you will find in these pages a rich variety of landscapes and legends, magi and covenants, and plot ideas to enrich your setting and stories.

## Byzantine Landscape

The former Byzantine Empire is a land united by language, but divided by landscape. Its component realms and provinces of fertile fields, hillside pastures, olive groves, and vineyards are divided from each other by gulfs and mountain chains, making passage by sea the most practical means of transport. Indeed, this region is centered around the Aegean. Dotted with thousands of islands, the sea plays a greater role here than in any other Tribunal. Several covenants are located on islands — one is even ship-borne and another is underwater — and most of the others lie only a short distance from the coast.

To the west of the Aegean Sea lies the mainland of Greece; to the east is Asia Minor; to the north are Macedonia and Thrace, and beyond them Bulgarian lands; to the south is the island realm of Candia (Crete) and the Mediterranean Sea. At the crossroads between West and East, at the passage between the Aegean and Black Seas, lies Constantinople, the Queen of Cities. Even half-ruined as she is now, she outshines any of the lesser cities of Western Europe in both size and splendor.

Magic and the supernatural is more

commonplace in the Theban Tribunal than in many Western Tribunals. Forgotten gods and nature spirits abound in this land, and words have power. Even peasants can produce simple spells to make life easier for themselves. More important to magi, *vis* is plentiful. In contrast to Western Europe, where *vis* is the currency of the Order, in the Theban Tribunal a better analogy is to consider it as food, essential for the life of a magus, but not the common coin of the economy. This bounty has allowed the Tribunal to flourish in the absence of a continual struggle for a limited resource, and permitted the development of a society of magi that is largely altruistic and egalitarian.

## Byzantine Realms

Before 1204, the entire region covered by this book had been ruled as a single empire for the previous 900 years. As the successor to the empire that had been ruled from Rome, they called themselves *Rhomaioi*, or Romans, despite being composed of many cultures, and their ruler was called the *basileus Rhomaion*, the Roman emperor. Referring to this empire as "Byzantium" or the "Byzantine Empire" is a modern convention and is anachronistic in the 13th century, yet it is a useful label for the region, and will be used throughout this book.

The landscape of the empire changed dramatically and suddenly in 1204, with the sack of Constantinople by an army of bloodthirsty crusaders from the West. The invaders, described by the blanket term of "Frankish" by the natives, replaced the upper classes of the Roman Empire and instituted their own government, which became called the Latin Empire. The great and the

good who survived this invasion fled to former provinces and founded governments-in-exile — the most significant of which are the Empire of Nicaea, Epiros, and the distant Empire of Trebizond. Meanwhile, the northern provinces won independence from the Latin Empire to form the Empire of Bulgaria. Now Western and Eastern cultures clash amid a rapidly changing political situation where native Greeks and foreign Franks vie for supremacy.

## Byzantine Peoples

Principally inhabited by Greeks (or "Hellenes"), the lands of the Theban Tribunal are united under a common language called Romaic Greek. Most magi use this language instead of Latin, and even work their spells in its ancient precursor, Classical Greek. As a cosmopolitan region and the gateway to the East, Greece hosts many people from exotic nations; Egyptians, Seljuks, and Persians, to name just a few. However, the indigenous Greeks are the dominant race, and are typified by dark hair, dark eyes, and an olive complexion.

## Byzantine Legends

The legends of these lands inevitably draw heavily — but by no means exclusively — on the rich mythology of ancient Greece, as well as romances contemporary to the 13th century, and Christian mythology. Many of



the supernatural denizens of the Theban Tribunal have evolved from classical origins; *nerieides* and *drakoi* bear some resemblance to the nymphs and giants of the ancient world, for example. Others, such as the *stoicheia* and *vrykolakes*, have their roots in local folklore and peasant superstitions.

The mythology of ancient Greece is associated with all four of the supernatural Realms. From the Magic Realm are the primeval Titans who are reckoned to be personifications of forces of nature, as well as lesser natural gods and beings who pay scant regard to mortal worship, such as Helios, Asklepios, or the sibyls. Belonging to the Faerie Realm are the famed Olympian gods, as well as many members of the classical bestiary such as centaurs, fauns, and satyrs. Stories of these gods are often fables or morality plays, exploited for a rhetorical purpose or as a moral lesson. These beings then arise from the human stories. The tales of the Heroic Age, in contrast, are interpreted scripturally; that is, they are alternative versions of stories from the bible. Their heroes, such as Herakles or Theseus, are associated with the Divine Realm, as are sites associated with their virtue. Their adversaries often belong to the Infernal Realm, as do the sites associated with their struggles.



## How to Use this Book

As always, nothing written here is “set in stone” as far as your saga is concerned. You should feel free to use as written those bits that you like, and adapt or discard other parts. It’s up to you to decide how closely you want to follow the real history of the region, or the Tribunal as it is depicted here. There are numerous covenants and magi described in these pages, but by no means enough to fill entirely a Tribunal consisting of about a hun-

dred magi. Space is left for you to add covenants of your own devising, and to add to the membership of the described covenants.

If you are a player in a Theban saga, it may be best to consult your storyguide before reading further. Most of Chapters 2 to 8 should be safe for you to read, consisting of information that characters could reasonably be expected to know about their home territory and Tribunal. Although in places there are some story seeds and game statistics that the storyguide may prefer you not to read. Heavier spoilers may be found in Chapters 9 to 12, each of which deals with creatures, schemes, factions, and story plots associated with one of the four supernatural Realms.

## Medieval Perceptions of Antiquity

The perception of the ancient civilizations of Greece in the rest of medieval Europe varied substantially with time and place, and with social standing. The intelligentsia were aware of Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides, while lords and peasants were regaled with epic romances of Aeneas, Hector, and Odysseus, which cast their heroes in roles more suited to Western feudalism than Ancient Greece. Certainly, the scholars of the Byzantine Empire had access to both the mythology and the histories of the classical period in superior number and quality to Western scholars, but even in the West, most educated people had heard of the Greek gods, of the Trojan War, and of the national characters of its most famous cities: Athens, Thebes, and Sparta.

In later times, the disorderly democracy of Athens will be contrasted unfavorably with the good stern control exerted by Sparta over its subjects, but in the 13th century matters were somewhat different.

St. Augustine relates the myth of Athens’ founding in his *City of God*, casting the conflict between Athene and Poseidon as an allegory for the triumph of reason over passion. Athens was portrayed as a place where law and reason prevailed, largely due to the reputation of its most famous king, Theseus. In an allegorical sense, Theseus stood for the perfect man, divine and inherently good. These characteristics were transferred by association to the city he ruled, despite the fact that the days of the Athenian polity had little to do with the rule of King Theseus.

In contrast, ancient Thebes was known for the nasty, animalistic intensity of its crimes. This is directly attributed to the origin of the people of Thebes, who were born from the dragon-teeth sown by Kadmus. Its history of incest, betrayal, patricide, and fratricide led to its branding as a den of iniquity and its name becoming poetic shorthand for moral corruption.

Sparta is little known in the 13th century except by those who have access to the histories. It is admired for its strict hierarchy, almost as a model of feudalism, and lauded for its military prowess.

The Greek myths were not necessarily shunned because of their pagan origins. Writings of the Church Fathers, including St. Augustine’s *On Church Doctrine*, instructed Christians to read these myths in a number of ways: as moral allegory the mythic figures represent virtues, vices, desires, and inclinations; as exempla they demonstrate a virtue or failing; as physical allegory they can represent the forces and elements of the cosmos such as planets; and as typology they can stand for versions of Biblical characters — Deucalion was a type of Noah, Herakles a type of Samson, and both Orpheus and Theseus were types of Christ.