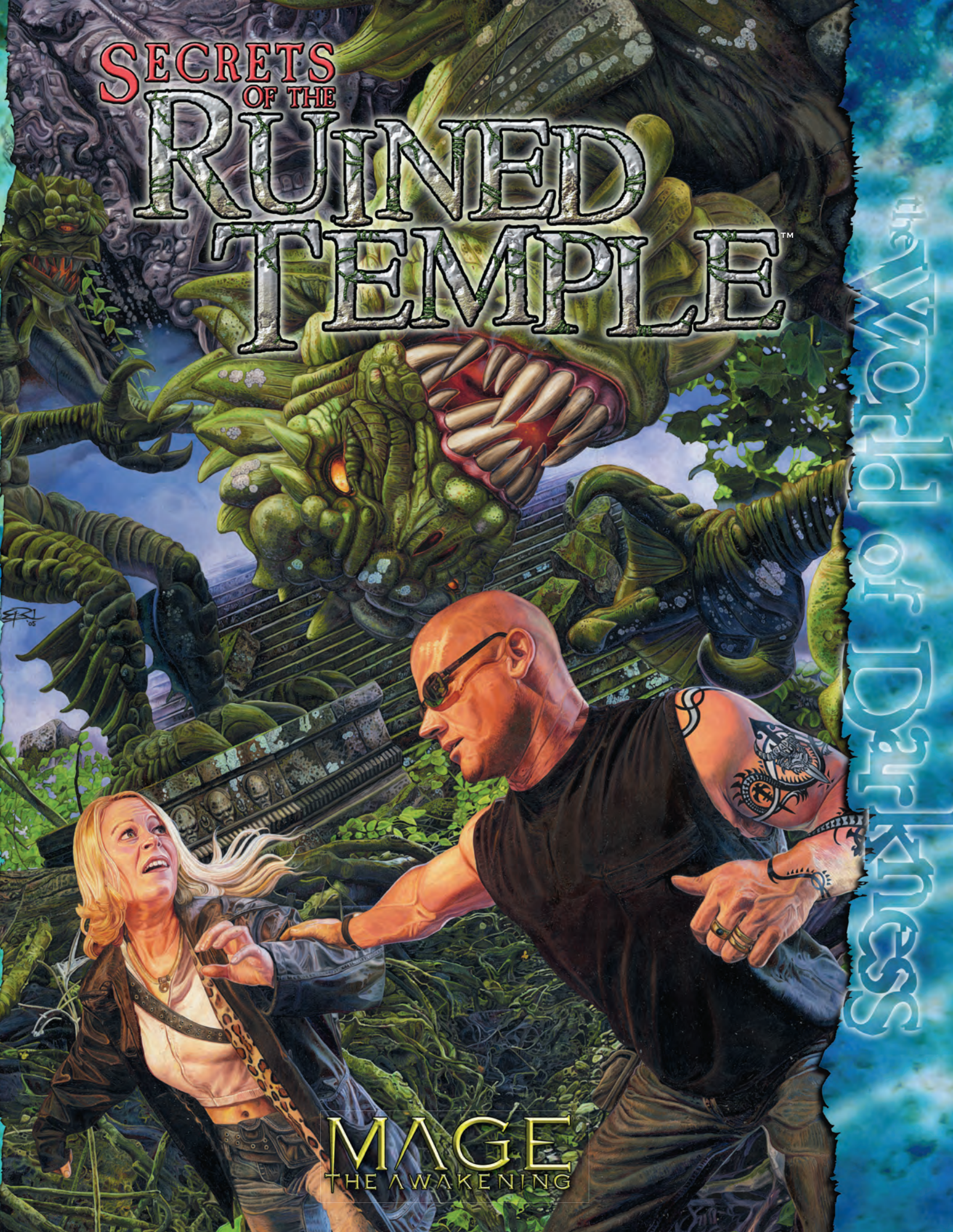


SECRETS OF THE RUINED TEMPLE™



The World of Darkkness

MAGE
THE AWAKENING

CIRCLE AROUND

When it grew towards sunset, we entered a branch of a river that fell into the Orinoco, called Winicapora; where I was informed of the mountain of crystal, to which in truth for the length of the way, and the evil season of the year, I was not able to march, nor abide any longer upon the journey. We saw it afar off; and it appeared like a white church-tower of an exceeding height. There falleth over it a mighty river which toucheth no part of the side of the mountain, but rusheth over the top of it, and falleth to the ground with so terrible a noise and clamour, as if a thousand great bells were knocked one against another. I think there is not in the world so strange an overfall, nor so wonderful to behold. Berreo told me that there were diamonds and other precious stones on it, and that they shined very far off; but what it hath I know not, neither durst he or any of his men ascend to the top of the said mountain.

— Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1596)

ON FRIDAY, 2005 APRIL 08, A HYBRID ECLIPSE OF THE SUN WILL BE VISIBLE FROM WITHIN A NARROW CORRIDOR WHICH TRAVERSES THE FAR SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. . . . THE PATH OF THIS EVENT BEGINS AS AN ANNULAR ECLIPSE, BUT IT CHANGES TO TOTAL ABOUT 2200 KM SOUTH OF TAHITI. AT MAXIMUM ECLIPSE, THE DURATION OF TOTALITY IS 46 SECONDS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TOTAL PORTION OF THE TRACK NEVER CROSSES LAND. THE PATH BECOMES ANNULAR AGAIN ABOUT 800 KM WEST OF COSTA RICA. BY THE TIME THE SHADOW REACHES THE COAST OF COSTA RICA, THE ANNULAR PHASE WILL ALREADY BE 12 SECONDS AND GROWING. AFTER CROSSING PANAMA AND COLOMBIA, THE CENTRAL PATH ENDS IN VENEZUELA WHERE A 33 SECOND ANNULAR ECLIPSE WILL OCCUR AT SUNSET.

— FRED ESPENAK, NASA GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER (2005)

CONTENTS OF THE SHERBORNE ANOMALY, AS DECODED FROM THE LEFT-HAND SCRIPT BY JUANA GUILFOYLE, FIFTH-DEGREE MYSTAGOGUE, ON MAY 8, 2005, WITH CHARON AND MERCURY TRINE IN AURIGA. THE FOURTH ROTATION WAS USED.

TITLE PAGE I IN CLEAR ENGLISH I SURVEYOR'S NOTEBOOK/COOK'S STATIONERS, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA/REG. H.M. PAT. OFF. 00498850

ININE PAGES OF SURVEYING
AND GEOMANTIC CALCULATIONS, WITH LATITUDES
AND LONGITUDES GIVEN THAT CORRESPOND TO
LOCATIONS IN EASTERN VENEZUELA. PHOTO-
GRAPHIC COPY INCLUDED UNDER
SEPARATE COVER.I

THE SUN



ICODED NOTES BE-
GIN HERE!

23 MARCH 2005

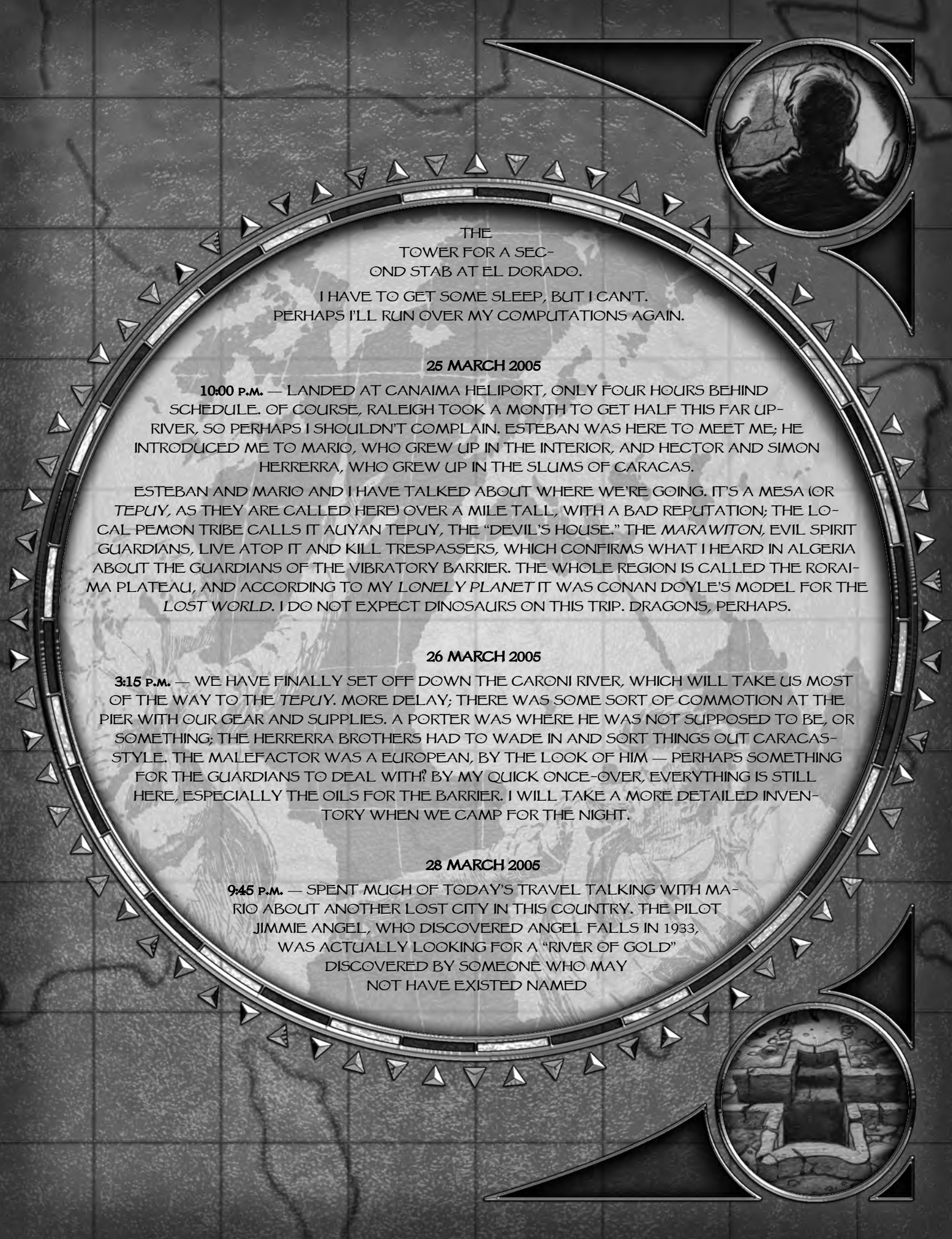
4:39 P.M., CARACAS — THE LABYRINTH TWISTS SLOWLY, BUT I FINALLY RECEIVED MY PERMITS FOR THE INTERIOR TODAY. THE TIMING IS TOO CLOSE; THE ANNULAR ECLIPSE ENDS AT SUNSET, 6:17 P.M. ON 8 APRIL, AND I NEED TO BE THERE AT ZERO POINT. THE MOON WILL CROSS THE FACE OF THE RED SUN, THE MARRIAGE OF RED AND WHITE, OF RUBEDO AND ALBEDO, AND IT WILL BECOME BLACK IN SHADOW, FULFILLING THE NIGREDO. AND AROUND IT WILL SHINE A CIRCLE OF SUNLIGHT, A RING OF GOLD FOR ME TO STEP THROUGH.

THE PATH OF THE ECLIPSE ENDS SOMEWHERE IN THE VENEZUELAN INTERIOR. MY CALCULATIONS HAVE NARROWED IT DOWN SOMEWHAT, BUT I WILL HAVE TO SHOOT THE SUN FROM THE GROUND TO PINPOINT IT PRECISELY. A BLANK SPOT ON THE MAP, EVEN IN 2005, A PLACE SO REMOTE THAT EVEN THE RAF TACTICAL PILOTAGE CHART MARKS AS "RELIEF DATA INCOMPATIBLE." BUT I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK: IT'S THE SAME SPOT ON SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S MAP WHERE HE DREW THE LAKE OF MANOA, THE LAKE OF GOLD RINGING THE ISLAND OF EL DORADO. I COULD UNFOLD HIS MAP FROM MY JACKET, BUT IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK — ALTHOUGH NOBODY IN CARACAS IS LIKELY TO RECOGNIZE IT, I DON'T NEED ANOTHER INVESTIGATION TO DELAY ME NOW.

I HAVE IT MEMORIZED ANYWAY, AND I SUPPOSE STEALING IT FROM THE BRITISH LIBRARY WAS GILDING THE LILY. HOWEVER, THERE'S ALWAYS THE CHANCE THAT THE MAP BEARS A CONCEALED ENCHANTMENT, TO REVEAL MORE TRUTHS UNDER THIS TROPICAL SUN OR IN THE RAYS OF THE ECLIPSE. BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY, AND I DO LOVE LOOKING AT THE MAP WHEN I CAN. I CALL IT TO MIND NOW; I SEE RALEIGH'S LAKE CRAWLING LIKE A GIANT CENTIPEDE ACROSS THE BOTTOM OF THE ORINOCO BASIN, 32 RIVERS SKITTERING OFF IT LIKE LONG LEGS, WITH A ROUND ISLAND AT ITS HEART. HE MADE IT HALFWAY THERE IN 1595, AND SAW A "MOUNTAIN OF CRYSTAL" ON THE HORIZON. I HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT. LIKE RALEIGH, I KNOW WHAT EL DORADO REALLY IS. IT'S THE GREAT WORK, THE OPENING OF THE WAY INTO A GOLDEN WORLD OF ULTIMATE TRUTH AND POWER.

BUT HE DID WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT HE HAD, AND TO WRITE IT DOWN ON HIS MAP. HE WAS FOLLOWING OTHERS, OF COURSE; THE SPANISH EXPLORER BERREO, AND THE RUMORS OF THE UNKNOWN "JUAN MARTINEZ," AND THE HOROSCOPES AND GEOMANCIES OF JOHN DEE AND THE SHOAL OF NIGHT. ON RALEIGH'S SECOND EXPEDITION, IN 1617, HE HAD THE ALCHEMIST LAWRENCE KEYMIS, WHO HAD ALREADY LED TWO JOURNEYS INTO THE INTERIOR, AND HE HAD THE MYSTERIOUS "JOURNALL" THAT SOMEHOW CONVINCED KING JAMES TO FREE HIM FROM





THE
TOWER FOR A SEC-
OND STAB AT EL DORADO.

I HAVE TO GET SOME SLEEP, BUT I CAN'T.
PERHAPS I'LL RUN OVER MY COMPUTATIONS AGAIN.

25 MARCH 2005

10:00 P.M. — LANDED AT CANAIMA HELIPORT, ONLY FOUR HOURS BEHIND SCHEDULE. OF COURSE, RALEIGH TOOK A MONTH TO GET HALF THIS FAR UP-RIVER, SO PERHAPS I SHOULDN'T COMPLAIN. ESTEBAN WAS HERE TO MEET ME; HE INTRODUCED ME TO MARIO, WHO GREW UP IN THE INTERIOR, AND HECTOR AND SIMON HERRERRA, WHO GREW UP IN THE SLUMS OF CARACAS.

ESTEBAN AND MARIO AND I HAVE TALKED ABOUT WHERE WE'RE GOING. IT'S A MESA (OR *TEPUY*, AS THEY ARE CALLED HERE) OVER A MILE TALL, WITH A BAD REPUTATION; THE LOCAL PEMON TRIBE CALLS IT *AUYAN TEPUY*, THE "DEVIL'S HOUSE." THE MARAWITON, EVIL SPIRIT GUARDIANS, LIVE ATOP IT AND KILL TRESPASSERS, WHICH CONFIRMS WHAT I HEARD IN ALGERIA ABOUT THE GUARDIANS OF THE VIBRATORY BARRIER. THE WHOLE REGION IS CALLED THE RORAIMA PLATEAU, AND ACCORDING TO MY *LONELY PLANET* IT WAS CONAN DOYLE'S MODEL FOR THE *LOST WORLD*. I DO NOT EXPECT DINOSAURS ON THIS TRIP. DRAGONS, PERHAPS.

26 MARCH 2005

3:15 P.M. — WE HAVE FINALLY SET OFF DOWN THE CARONI RIVER, WHICH WILL TAKE US MOST OF THE WAY TO THE *TEPUY*. MORE DELAY; THERE WAS SOME SORT OF COMMOTION AT THE PIER WITH OUR GEAR AND SUPPLIES. A PORTER WAS WHERE HE WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE, OR SOMETHING; THE HERRERRA BROTHERS HAD TO WADE IN AND SORT THINGS OUT CARACAS-STYLE. THE MALEFACTOR WAS A EUROPEAN, BY THE LOOK OF HIM — PERHAPS SOMETHING FOR THE GUARDIANS TO DEAL WITH? BY MY QUICK ONCE-OVER, EVERYTHING IS STILL HERE, ESPECIALLY THE OILS FOR THE BARRIER. I WILL TAKE A MORE DETAILED INVENTORY WHEN WE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.

28 MARCH 2005

9:45 P.M. — SPENT MUCH OF TODAY'S TRAVEL TALKING WITH MARIO ABOUT ANOTHER LOST CITY IN THIS COUNTRY. THE PILOT JIMMIE ANGEL, WHO DISCOVERED ANGEL FALLS IN 1933, WAS ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR A "RIVER OF GOLD" DISCOVERED BY SOMEONE WHO MAY NOT HAVE EXISTED NAMED



MCCRACKEN. (RALEIGH WAS ALSO FOLLOWING SOMEONE ELSE'S RUMOR — I, AT LEAST, AM FOLLOWING MY OWN CALCULATIONS. ALTHOUGH IT COULD BE SAID THAT IN A SENSE I'M CHASING RALEIGH'S TAIL.) WHILE CAUGHT IN A MYSTERIOUS WHIRLWIND ON A PROSPECTING FLIGHT OVER A REMOTE *TEPUY* IN THE RORAIMA, ANGEL WAS BLOWN OVER A "CITY IN A LAKE," WITH CIRCULAR WALLS AND WHAT LOOKED LIKE A CANAL. ON A LATER EXPLORATION FLIGHT, HE HAD A MYSTERIOUS PLANE CRASH IN THE INTERIOR SOMEWHERE, AND WAS SUMMARILY EJECTED FROM VENEZUELA UPON HIS RETURN TO CIVILIZATION.

THE INSECTS ARE VERY AGGRESSIVE HERE, BUT I IMAGINE THE HUGE FLOCKS OF TOUCANS KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL. THE CALLS OF THE TOUCANS GET LOUDER AT SUNSET FOR SOME REASON.

30 MARCH 2005

5:12 P.M. — DISASTER. ABOUT TWO HOURS AGO, THE LARGEST CANOE OVERTURNED AND SANK IN A WHIRLPOOL — MORE OF A MAELSTROM — AN ESTIMATED THREE MILES SOUTH OF AN UNMARKED FORK IN THE CARONI. COMPASS SWINGS MAKE PRECISE LATITUDE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE; GPS NO HELP. ALL THE CLIMBING GEAR IS LOST, HALF OF THE FOOD, THE MAPS, AND THE HERRERA BROTHERS. WORST OF ALL, THE SANDALWOOD BOX FROM AFGHANISTAN WENT DOWN WITH IT, AND THE OILS ARE IRREPLACEABLE.

8:30 P.M. — IN WHAT HE CLAIMED WAS AN ATTEMPT TO RAISE OUR SPIRITS, BUT WHICH I SUSPECT WAS MEANT AS A PLEA TO TURN BACK, ESTEBAN INSISTED ON TELLING THE STORY OF PERCY FAWCETT AROUND THE FIRE TONIGHT. IN 1925, AS ESTEBAN TELLS IT, FAWCETT WENT INTO THE BRAZILIAN JUNGLE TRYING TO APPROACH HIS "LOST CITY OF MANOA" FROM THE SOUTH. ON A PREVIOUS TRIP, HE HAD SEEN INDIANS WITH "FAIR SKIN AND WHITE HAIR," WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE A SIGN OF ATLANTIAN BLOODLINES. HE VANISHED IN MAY, ALONG WITH HIS SON AND A FRIEND NAMED RALEIGH RIMMEL. (DOES ESTEBAN RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE SEEMING COINCIDENCES OF NAMES? IT IS SO HARD TO BE SURE, AND I CANNOT RISK THE SIGHT IF HE IS NOT ASLEEP.) FAWCETT LEFT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT NO SEARCH PARTY BE SENT AFTER HIM UNTIL FEBRUARY 1927, WHICH MADE ME WONDER IF HE SUSPECTED SOMETHING ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE VIBRATORY BARRIER ON TIME.





31 MARCH 2005

6:07 A.M. — SUNRISE. I THINK I SEE THE *TEPUY* ON THE HORIZON, BUT THE MIST IS VERY THICK TO THE EAST. MARIO SAYS THE *TEPUY* “VEILS ITSELF FOR WHITE MEN,” BUT I SUSPECT IT VEILS ITSELF FOR ALL COMERS.

8:10 A.M. — OTHER CANOES LEAKING BADLY; SOME SORT OF CONTAMINANT IN THE WATER PERHAPS, AS THE ALUMINUM IS PEELING AWAY FROM THE FRAME SOMEHOW. ESTEBAN KNOWS A TRACK THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO THE EAST OF HERE THAT MAY SERVE TO GET US TO THE *TEPUY*, ALTHOUGH HOW TO CLIMB IT? I HESITATE TO INVOKE THE WALKER THIS FAR SOUTH, AND I HAVE NO OILS.

2:30 P.M. — THE TRAIL IS FOUND; BY MY COMPASS IT RUNS JUST EAST OF SE, BUT THE THING JIGGLES MADLY NOW. ALL SIGHTINGS TAKE MUCH LONGER; I SHALL BE FORCED TO BREAK OUT THE MEMPHITE SUN STICK BEFORE TOO LONG AND TRUST TO DEAD RECKONING.

AGAIN, RALEIGH NEVER GOT THIS FAR. ON THE 1617 TRIP, HE FELL DESPERATELY ILL AT THE MOUTH OF THE ORINOCO AND HAD TO SEND KEYMIS ON AHEAD IN COMMAND. KEYMIS WAS GIVEN EXPLICIT ORDERS TO AVOID COMBAT WITH THE SPANISH — PERHAPS RALEIGH WAS ON A DEADLINE AS WELL — BUT DISOBEYED THEM FOR REASONS THAT REMAIN A MYSTERY EVEN TODAY. KEYMIS ATTACKED THE SPANISH FORT OF SAN THOM, AND IN THE BATTLE A SPANISH MUSKET BALL KILLED RALEIGH'S SON WAT. KEYMIS RETURNED TO RALEIGH'S CAMP AND KILLED HIMSELF WITH A DAGGER THRUST TO THE HEART; RALEIGH SAILED BACK TO ENGLAND AND EXECUTION IN THE TOWER.

I DO NOT HAVE RALEIGH'S LUXURY NOW.

1 APRIL 2005

7:22 P.M. — GOOD PROGRESS ON THE TRAIL TODAY. I CAN HEAR THE FALLS FROM HERE, BUT STILL CANNOT SEE THE *TEPUY*. MARIO SAYS THE PEMON PEOPLE CALL THE FALLS KEREPAKUPAI-MER, “THE FALLS FROM THE DEEPEST OF ALL PLACES.” HE SOUNDS LESS LIKE SOMEONE RECOUNTING A LAUGHABLE NATIVE SUPERSTITION, AND MORE LIKE SOMEONE TRYING TO GIVE A CODED WARNING.

THE INSECTS ARE NEARLY UNBEARABLE; ALL THREE OF US ARE ALL OVER BLOOD AND BLISTERS.

2 APRIL 2005

6:34 A.M. — THE *TEPUY* LOOMS COMPLETELY VISIBLE THIS MORNING, SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE SUNRISE DUE EAST OF HERE. I CAN SEE THE FALLS POURING DOWN, JUST





AS RALEIGH DESCRIBED THEM. HOWEVER, WE MAY BE NO CLOSER TO THE ZERO POINT THAN BEFORE: NO MATTER HOW MANY DAWN SIGHTINGS I TAKE, IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY APPARENT TO ME THAT THE PATH OF THE ECLIPSE BEGINS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE *TEPUY* AND NOT ON TOP OF IT AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT. WHEN I HAVE TIME I MUST RECHECK MY INITIAL FIGURES.

THIS ADDS AT LEAST FIVE MILES TO MY JOURNEY, AND TIME IS RUNNING SHORT. HOWEVER, THE LOSS OF MY CLIMBING EQUIPMENT NOW SEEMS PROVIDENTIAL, EVEN PROPHETIC. ESTEBAN AND MARIO SEEM RELIEVED THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BRAVE THE MARAWITON, AND ARE EAGER TO FIND A PATH AROUND THE *TEPUY* FROM HERE. I JUST REALIZED THAT I HAVEN'T SEEN OR HEARD A TOUCAN ALL DAY.

7:14 P.M. — JUST STUMBLED ONTO THE REMAINS OF THIS MORNING'S COOK FIRE. COMPASSES COMPLETELY USELESS, GPS SIGNALS OUT. EITHER THE *TEPUY* HAS A MAGNETIC METEORIC IRON CORE OR I HAVE FINALLY COME TANGENT TO THE VIBRATORY BARRIER. I WILL PERFORM THE DHO-NHA CANTICLE TO DETERMINE WHICH.

3 APRIL 2005

12:01 A.M. — IT WAS THE BARRIER. NOW I MUST CROSS THE THRESHOLD IN THE OLD WAY, SINCE THE OILS ARE GONE. RUBEDO IT IS. ESTEBAN AND MARIO WILL MEET THE MARAWITON AFTER ALL.

3:33 A.M. — THEIR SCREAMING MAY HAVE ATTRACTED SOMETHING ELSE; I SEE WHITE FORMS IN THE JUNGLE. I WILL NOT USE LANGUAGE FOR THE NEXT 13 HOURS, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

ITHE CRUSHED INSECT BETWEEN PAGES 22 AND 23 IS AN UNKNOWN SPECIES OF CHILOPODA, POSSESSING 16 LEG PAIRS RATHER THAN THE UNIVERSAL 15. PRELIMINARY GUESS BY MYRINUS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM INDICATES A SUPERFICIAL RESEMBLANCE TO *SCUTIGER PROAVUS*, A JURASSIC SPECIES KNOWN ONLY FROM FOSSIL RECORDS. I

5 APRIL 2005

DAWN. — I HAVE REACHED THE BASE OF THE *TEPUY* UNSCATHED, ALTHOUGH MY SKIN IS BLEACHED WHITE WHEREVER I CAN SEE IT. THIS IS THE ALBEDO, THEN. NOW I KNOW WHY CONAN DOYLE PUT AN ALBINO INTO *THE LOST WORLD*; HE LEARNED MORE FROM THE SPIRITS THAN WE THOUGHT.

I WILL NOT WRITE THE WORDS THAT I HEARD, NOT IN SIGHT OF THE *TEPUY* AT ANY RATE. I HAVE COMMIT-





TED
THEM TO MEMORY,
OF COURSE; I DOUBT WHETHER I
HAD ANY CHOICE. THEY ARE THE ONLY THING I
HAVE HEARD BESIDES THE FALLS FOR TWO DAYS.

6 APRIL 2005

THE SOIL HERE IS VERY MARSHY; MY PROGRESS IS MEASURED IN YARDS.
THERE IS SOME SORT OF HIGHER GROUND VISIBLE TO THE NORTH, BASALT OR
GRANITE STONES STICKING OUT OF IT AT ANY RATE.

SUNSET. — 600 YARDS TODAY. FROM SLIGHTLY CLOSER AND HIGHER, THE STONES
ARE TOO REGULAR TO BE NATURAL FEATURES. THEY RESEMBLE THE MEGALITHIC
STRUCTURES IN BRITTANY AND ANDALUSIA, BUT WITH A STRONG ADMIXTURE OF TIHUA-
NACO OR MYCENEAN STYLE "CYCLOPEAN" ARCHITECTURE. IF I COULD GET ON TOP OF THE
TEPUY I COULD SEE THEM FROM ABOVE AND MAP THEM. I SUSPECT A RING FORMATION FROM
THIS ANGLE AND WILL TRY TO GET THROUGH THE SWAMP TO SURVEY THEM TOMORROW.

FALLS MADDENING, AND I SAW A MOSQUITO THE SIZE OF MY HAND.

WHY AM I CONCERNING MYSELF WITH TRIVIA ON THE THRESHOLD OF ATLANTIS?

8 APRIL 2005

NOON. — RESTING, THOUGH I CAN ILL AFFORD IT, BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE AS MY STRENGTH IS
NEARLY GONE. I HAVE FOUND A HIGH SIDE TRAIL LEADING SOUTH AROUND THE *TEPUY* PAST THE
FALLS. THIS MEANS I CANNOT SKETCH OR MAP THE STONES ON THE NORTH AND WEST SIDE,
BUT TIME IS RUNNING SHORT IF I AM TO WORK MY WAY AROUND TO THE EAST SIDE IN TIME
FOR SUNSET. IMAGINE COMING ALL THIS WAY TO MISS THE ECLIPSE BECAUSE I WAS SKETCH-
ING ANOTHER LOST CITY TO JOIN RALEIGH AND FAWCETT AND ANGEL AND ALL THE REST.
I SHALL RETURN BY THE NORTH SIDE IF I CAN, ALTHOUGH ONCE I AM TRANSFIGURED I DO
NOT IMAGINE I SHALL CARE MUCH FOR TUMBLING RUINS.

INSECTS EVEN WORSE HERE. I SHALL TAKE STRENGTH AND MARROW FROM MY
LEFT ARM AS I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO FORWARD OR DROP HERE. MY LEFT
EYE I SHALL SAVE FOR LATER, WHEN NIGREDO BECOMES UNAVOIDABLE.

AFTER THIS ENTRY THE HANDWRITING BECOMES DISTORTED, AS
THOUGH THE NOTEBOOK WERE MOVING AROUND OR RESTING UN-
EVENLY ON A ROUNDED SURFACE.

LATER. — I DO NOT LIKE THE DAMNED *TEPUY*. IT
SQUATS THERE ON THE WESTERN HORIZON
LINE; IT WILL BLOCK THE SUN-
SET. I SHOULD HAVE





THOUGHT OF THAT
BEFORE; I DON'T KNOW HOW IT
SLIPPED MY MIND. TOO MUCH HEAT AND
NOISE. THAT THING HATES ME, AND I CANNOT HEAR
ANYTHING BUT THE FALLS, EVEN WITH THE *TEPUY* BE-
TWEEN ME AND THE CASCADE.

HAVE BEEN APPROACHING THE SITE ON A CURVE; PYTHAGORAS WAS
RIGHT, BUT I MUST AVOID THE ANGLES.

IFINAL ENTRY IN CLEAR ENGLISH! SUNSET. — ALL IS FINALLY IN READINESS. THE
MOON IS CROSSING THE SETTING SUN AS I WATCH. THE *TEPUY* IS STILL IN THE WAY
NO ITS TRANSPARENT — A MOUNTAIN OF CRYSTAL — I CAN SEE THROUGH THE BLACK
SUN INSIDE THE RING OF GOLD

IEXCERPTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF SANDIFORD LABORATO-
RIES TO IIDENTITY REDACTED BY LONDON CENSORI, 8/8/05:

... DUE TO THE EXTREME ACIDIFICATION OF THE PAPER AND INK. HENCE, THE COMPLETE
DESTRUCTION OF THE SAMPLE DURING FIBER ANALYSIS MEANS THAT RESULTS MUST NECES-
SARILY BE INCONCLUSIVE. INITIAL SAMPLE RESULTS WERE CONSISTENT, HOWEVER, WITH PAPER
MILLED IN SOUTH CAROLINA DURING THE 1990S, ALTHOUGH THE FIBERS WERE TOO BADLY COM-
PRESSED AND ERODED FOR SPECIFIC BATCH MATCHING. THE ACIDIFICATION PATTERN INDICATES
EXPOSURE TO AIR FOR AT LEAST 80 YEARS, WITH THE EDGES OF THE PAPER SHOWING ALMOST
COMPLETE FRIABILITY, WHICH WOULD HAVE SET IN BY YEAR 100. PAST THIS POINT, NO DATE CAN
BE ASSIGNED TO THE PAPER. ALTHOUGH ONLY TRACE AMOUNTS OF INK REMAIN ON THE PAGE,
SPECTROGRAPHIC ANALYSIS GIVES INITIAL RESULTS CONSISTENT WITH ANY ONE OF A NUMBER
OF ANILINE-BASED GLYCOL INKS USED OVER THE LAST HALF CENTURY IN BALLPOINT PENS.

... BINDING IS CALFSKIN, CONSISTENT WITH TOOLS AND METHODS USED IN THE 16TH AND
17TH CENTURIES. THE AGE OF THE CALFSKIN CAN BE ESTIMATED USING C-14 TO 420 YEARS
80. THE VELLUM ENDPAPER LIKEWISE.

... THE INSCRIPTION ON THE ENDPAPER "RAWLEY HIS BOOK FOUND IN GUIANA" IS IN
IRON-BASED GALL INK CONSISTENT WITH THE AGE OF THE CALFSKIN. THE HAND-
WRITING SAMPLE IS TOO SHORT FOR DEFINITIVE ANALYSIS, BUT MATCHES KNOWN
SAMPLES OF JOHN DEE'S SCRIPT.



SECRETS OF THE RUINED TEMPLE™



*By Alexander Freed, Joseph Carriker, Kenneth Hite,
Howard Ingham, Jeffrey Kyer, Keith Winkler*

Credits

Written by: Alexander Freed, Joseph Carriker, Kenneth Hite, Howard Ingham, Jeffrey Kyer, Keith Winkler
World of Darkness created by Mark Rein • Hagen
Developer: Dean Shomshak
Editor: Scribendi.com
Art Direction and Layout: Matt Milberger
Interior Art: John Bridges, Anthony Carpenter, Jeff Holt, Vatche Mavlian, Justin Norman, Nate Pride
Cover Art: David Leri

COMING NEXT FOR MAGE

REIGN OF THE EXARCHS

Special Thanks

Sometimes even the process of making a Mage book is susceptible to a Paradox. In this case, two important credits were inadvertently left out of the credits listings in *Legacies: The Sublime*. For the record, Stephen Michael DiPesa wrote the *Fangs of Mara* Legacy and the "Shaping the Soul" Appendix, and the cover art was by Rick Sardinha. We apologize for the error and hereby award both gentlemen with an Atlantean certificate of honor. We'd reproduce that here, but since it's in the High Speech, we're not really sure what it says. The esteemed author and artist are free to comb any rumored Atlantean ruin in search of a translation, as per the guidelines given in this book, although White Wolf offers no indemnity against temple guardians or Atlantean wards and traps of any kind. Caveat magus!



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

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This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

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SECRETS OF THE RUINED TEMPLE™

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INTRODUCTION: RELICS OF A SHATTERED PAST

*There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashion'd by long forgotten hands:
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!*
— Lord Byron, *Siege of Corinth*

Long ago, the mages tell their pupils, there was a Golden Age of sorcery when the Awakened ruled the world in wisdom and glory. The wizards of that era wrought greater spells than modern mages can imagine. At the center of that age stood Atlantis, the Dragon Isle. The archmages of Atlantis codified the lore of magic and became like unto gods, with their capital, the Awakened City, as their shining temple.

But that wasn't enough for some of the wizard-princes. They wanted to become gods in truth, and force the entire cosmos to kneel before them. The war between these arrogant Exarchs and the Oracles who opposed them broke reality itself and sank Atlantis beneath the waves. The few surviving mages found their magic broken as well, fading into a shadow of its former power. The Atlantean survivors and their heirs tried to create new kingdoms of the Wise, where magic could flourish. Some of their more successful attempts led to Egypt, Sumer, Maya and other civilizations at the dawn of history — but there was never another City of the Awakened. The Temple of Magic lay in ruins. Only scraps and shards of Atlantean magic endured to remind latter-day mages of the Golden Age.

Still — some of those scraps and shards are pretty impressive. What's more, not all of them have been found, or they were found and lost again. In hidden places around the world, Atlantean palaces, fortresses, shrines and tombs await discovery. They still contain artifacts of wizardry no modern mage can duplicate, and occult lore forgotten for thousands of years. Eager willworkers follow slender clues to ancient ruins, dreaming of

adventure, glory and reclaimed magic of the Golden Age. If they are not powerful, cunning, learned and wise, however, they may find terror and death instead. The Atlanteans guarded their secrets well, with a ruthless determination that suggests all was not well in the Golden Age.

The lost power and glory of Atlantis haunts the background of **Mage: The Awakening**. Characters may know the mystically-potent High Speech of Atlantis, belong to sorcerous orders that trace their heritage back to the fabled isle, or even own magical artifacts of the lost land. Many mages want to discover more relics of Atlantis in hopes of increasing their own sorcerous power and knowledge. **Secrets of the Ruined Temple** is a guide and resource for players and Storytellers who want to make the search for Atlantean secrets an important aspect of their character or chronicle.

What's in This Book

Secrets of the Ruined Temple takes an approach that some players might find odd. You won't find a complete guide to Atlantis, with all the mysteries neatly explained. No, this book *deepens* the mystery of Atlantis, by propounding multiple possibilities and a whole lot of new questions. The purpose of this book is to help you imagine your *own* version of Atlantis, and work the clues to that version into your chronicle.

Chapter One, **Atlantean Apocrypha**, takes the legend of Atlantis presented in **Mage: The Awakening** and twists it

through dozens of variations. Any of them might be true in your chronicle, or none, or maybe more than one. Maybe there was more than one Empire of the Awakened – or maybe the Fall of Atlantis broke time itself, leaving shards of many possible Atlantises scattered through time and space – not to mention a dozen other legendary lost lands. Decide for yourself what's true, what's delusion and what's a cunning fraud perpetrated by mages determined to hide the truth.

Chapter Two, **Beneath the Sediment**, offers a toolkit for designing scenarios about seeking and exploring Atlantean ruins. Players can find motives for members of each magical society to join such expeditions, methods to search for magical ruins and a few warnings about the hazards the characters may face. After all, their characters aren't the first mages to hunt the relics of Atlantis as "Seekers" or "archaeomancers." Storytellers, for their part, will find suggestions to help them design Atlantean ruins, make them suitably challenging to find – and even more challenging to explore.

Chapter Three, **Gatekeepers and Treasures**, provides a diverse selection of magical guardians for Atlantean ruins. If the characters can overcome these gatekeepers, the characters may win potent artifacts of Atlantean magic. The conclusion of this chapter describes several such treasures – some awe-inspiring, some deadly and some just plain strange.

Chapter Four, **The Living Temple**, brings Atlantean exploration into a strange, new setting: the Astral Plane. Long after falling, Atlantis still casts shadows into the collective unconscious of humanity. Daring mages can explore the subtle planes of dream and myth for Atlantean secrets.

The Appendix, **High Speech and Atlantean Runes**, takes a new look at two relics of Atlantis known to many mages: the magical words and glyphs they use to increase the power of spells. This Appendix lays out the mysteries surrounding the speech and writing of Atlantis, describes how some willworkers try to solve those mysteries and suggests some new ways characters might use High Speech and runes.

How To Use This Book

You could build an entire chronicle around the search for Atlantean secrets. After all, both treasure-hunting and serious archaeology have inspired plenty of adventures in real life. Modern archaeology, of course, isn't nearly as hazardous as it used to be. Real archaeologists spend more time wielding camel's-hair brushes than pistols and bullwhips, and they value ancient garbage dumps as much as any royal tomb – the dumps give more information about how people really lived.

Mages, however, probably can't get university funding to search for Atlantean ruins, or government soldiers to protect them from bandits and looters. Mages may find themselves facing the same perils of climate, disease, snakes, getting lost and unfriendly locals as the conquistadors who died in droves searching for lost cities of gold. The search for Atlantean relics can lead mages to terror and danger, proving that the World Of Darkness doesn't need the supernatural to be horrifying.

A **Ruined Temple** chronicle or story arc starts with a simple structure. The characters find a clue to some minor Atlantean ruin. For instance, the characters might acquire an earlier Seeker's journal, or notice a mis-identified Atlantean antiquity in a museum. At this minor site, they find clues that lead them someplace more important. As the characters progress from clue to clue, ruin to ruin, they retrieve greater treasures of knowledge and magic. Naturally, they also face greater dangers, ranging from eldritch curses to murderous insurgents. At the chronicle's climax, the characters may not only discover some awesome artifact of Atlantean wizardry, they may solve some mysteries about the fabled land itself. To add complications, the characters face rival mages who want to beat the characters to the prize, Consilium leaders the characters must cajole into supporting their efforts (or at least not opposing them) and whatever personal crises with friends, family and lovers old or new the Storyteller thinks would be appropriate.

Secrets of the Ruined Temple provides enough Atlantean mysteries, sorcerous wards, supernatural guardians and thrilling locations for a short chronicle. More importantly, this book offers guidance to help you design your own Atlantean ruins, so you can continue your archaeomantic chronicle as long as you want. If you prefer merely to run the occasional story of Atlantean treasure-hunting, you have plenty of options to draw upon.

Players can use this book as well. Even if the chronicle doesn't focus on the search for relics of Atlantis, your character might have an interest in this, and her interest might become important in a story. For instance, if another mage seems to have acquired an Atlantean artifact, an archaeomancer could find himself called upon to verify its authenticity – and be caught up in plots and counter-plots to possess it.

Lost Atlantis might also shadow a character's past. For instance, a character might own an Atlantean Artifact, Enhanced Item or Imbued Item – whose powers and origin she might not entirely understand, and that other mages want to take from her. A character's Mentor could be an archaeomancer (successful or otherwise) – or so could an old enemy. Merits such as Destiny or Dream could even hint that a mage spent a past life in Atlantis – or as one of the Dragon Isle's enemies. Mysterious Atlantean forces might reach out of time to affect a mage's life. **Mage: The Awakening** mentions the Ananke, spirits tasked by long-dead Atlantean archmasters to meddle in the lives of their remote descendants; players and Storytellers can devise other entanglements with the remote past as well. A mage might even have Awakened because of an experience with an Atlantean artifact or ruin.

Themes

Archaeological stories can have many different themes. When the ancient ruins are Atlantean, though, "A Greater Past" is a natural choice. Mages who find ruins from the Atlantean Age encounter magic that surpasses anything possible for modern willworkers. It may be faded now, but characters can see what power their forebears wielded – and that they never will.



The greater past is not necessarily a *brighter* past. The corruption of power can easily become a story's theme, too. When characters see how the Atlanteans used their power, the characters might be glad the Dragon Isle fell long ago. Or they might simply feel envy — that's up to the characters themselves. The choice becomes sharper if the characters actually *can* claim some of that ancient power and bring it into the modern world.

The great rewards that can come to archaeomancers make greed an easy theme as well. Whatever characters retrieve from an Atlantean ruin, someone else may want to take from them. Or a greedy enemy may try to seize what he *imagines* they found. (Real-life archaeologists have been threatened or imprisoned by local thugs and despots who thought the archaeologists were looking for gold instead of potsherds.) A valuable find may test the bonds of loyalty in a cabal, too — especially if it's a prize only one mage can keep. If the mages aren't careful, a cabal might find itself playing out a sorcerous version of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

Mood

Searching for treasure in ancient ruins naturally suggests pulp-style high adventure. Atlantean ruins can include plenty of fiendish traps, leering villains, gorgeous treasures and other tropes of pulp adventure. Remember, though, that the characters still operate in the World of Darkness. High adventure comes with an edge of horror.

Atlantean ruins should be eerie and mysterious. A Storyteller can create a mood of mystery by not showing or explaining everything at once. One technique is simply to emphasize the age and decay of a ruin: the cobwebs over the carvings, how paintings or inscriptions have faded, fallen pillars and the like. Once characters learn to expect this, a chamber, artifact or whole site that looks new will set characters on their guard and seem weird by contrast.

The greatest mystery is the nature of Atlantis itself. Don't give the characters too definite or reliable a picture of the fabled land. Let any records the characters discover be in fragments, or contradict something they already learned. Don't feel obliged to explain every strange event, or the purpose of everything they find in a ruin. Characters should always feel that a lot more remains to be discovered.

Storytellers can cut loose when describing a scene, though. Gorgeous or grotesque extravagance can suggest the power and glory (or horror) of the ancient mages. Don't just say there's an inscription on a wall: cover the wall with runic script (and then maybe destroy it before the story ends, to preserve the mystery of what the characters *might* have learned if they could have translated it all). A temple doesn't just have a statue of a god: it has a massive, jeweled idol of surpassing beauty — or a ghastly stone monstrosity still caked with ancient, dried gore. Extravagant settings make it clear the characters have left the ordinary world and entered a place of otherworldly power and mystery.

Inspirational Material

Literally hundreds of books have been written about Atlantis, and nearly as many works of fiction have involved the mystic isle or similar lost lands. In nonfiction, these works stand out:

L. Sprague deCamp, *Lost Continents*. A classic survey of Atlantology by a real archaeologist (and science fiction writer) who doesn't believe a bit of it. A good "first book" for learning about Atlantis mythology, but now somewhat dated.

Richard Ellis, *Imagining Atlantis*. Another skeptical work, more up-to-date than deCamp's.

Kenneth Feder, *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology*. This takes a broader view of "fringe archaeology," with lots of material that can inspire Atlantean or quasi-Atlantean ruins around the world.

David Hatcher Childress, *Lost Cities of...* series. From the other point of view, Childress can pull a lost civilization out of two piled rocks and a couple of scratches. Storytellers can use his travel anecdotes as inspiration for adventures while looking for Atlantean ruins.

William Scott Elliott, *The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria*; Edgar Evans Cayce, *Edgar Cayce on Atlantis*; Rudolf Steiner, *Atlantis and Lemuria*. Seminal works for "occult Atlantis" believers, and all blessedly short.

For real-life archaeology, the *Micropedia of Civilizations* describes many places in the real world you'd think were too weird for fiction.

Smithsonian, *The Journal of Archaeology* and *Geology* magazines are available at many public libraries.

The Discovery Channel and History Channel frequently show programs about ancient civilizations and archaeology that can supply inspiration for Atlantean influences in early history.

On the fictional side, consider these for inspiration:

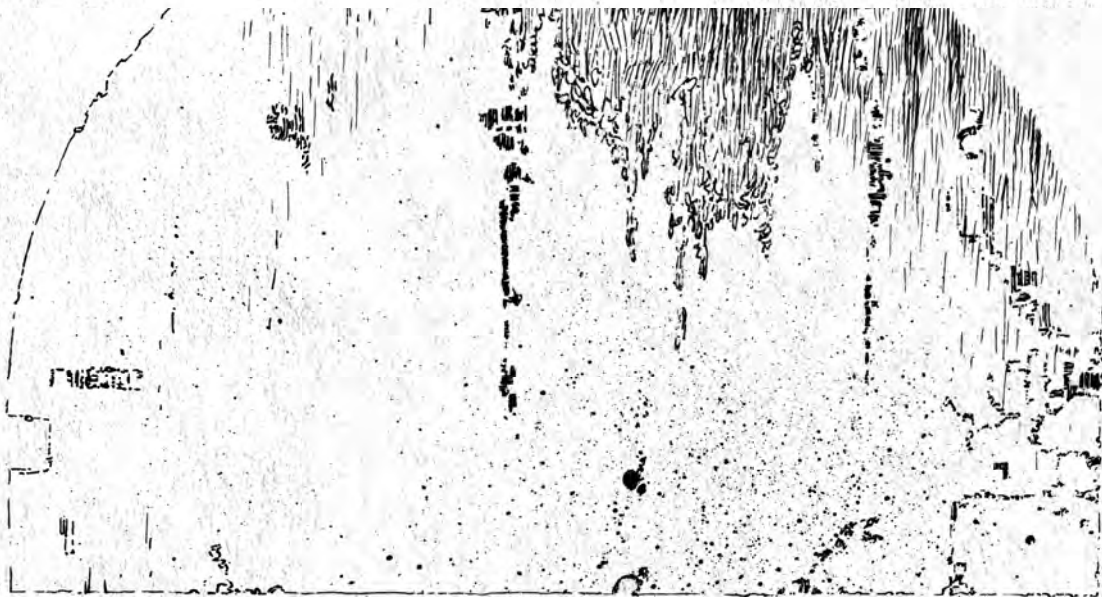
Clark Ashton Smith, *Hyperborea*, *Poseidonis*, *Zothique*, many other collections. Smith's stories set in the fantastical past (Hyperborea, Poseidonis) or an equally fantastical future (Zothique) portray lost worlds where magic is powerful, weird, gorgeous and scary all at the same time. The astute reader will spot several homages to Smith in the present work.

Warren Ellis, *Planetary*. A comic book series built around "weird archaeology" and the search for histories that might have been.

The *Indiana Jones* movies are, of course, required viewing. Pay attention to the weird and horrific aspects as well as the action-adventure. Many horror or fantasy movies involve ancient curses, magic relics and ruined palaces, temples and tombs, but none of them are nearly as good.

Stargate and its TV offspring *Stargate: SG-1* are nominally science fiction, but honestly, the "technology" of the Ancients is carved from rock and engraved with mysterious symbols. Stir in false gods with more "magic" items, weird creatures with unearthly powers, lost races and ancient secrets, and you've got plenty of material to steal for a **Ruined Temple** chronicle. Despite the name, the spinoff series *Stargate: Atlantis* takes a more "space opera" approach and is much less useful as inspiration.





CHAPTER ONE: ATLANTEAN APOCRYPHA

"There, between the Orinoco and Apure rivers!" snapped the first gray-haired mage. "A Paria Indian village called — Atlan!" He jabbed his finger at the push pin he'd thrust into the map, one of dozens. "Come on, Shake-and-Bake," he sneered. "How many more Atlantis-derived names do I have to find before you admit it: The Americas were once Atlantis!"

"More humbug — Humbug!" the other mage snapped. All you've found is evidence of Atlantean colonization. Atlantis was in the Atlantic Ocean, right where Plato said it was, and all our traditions agree!"

Arctos wandered away, shaking his head. He'd imagined hearing great and wonderful secrets at this Consilium, not that he'd ever admit his hopes to his teacher Morvran. These Atlantis-obsessed Mysterium members, though, were worse than Usenet flammers for endless, pointless arguments.

A plump, middle-aged female mage caught his eye as he wandered away. She smiled wryly and nodded at the quarreling duo. "Humboldt and Shabako," she said. "They've been arguing like that for years now." She stuck out her hand and Arctos shook it. "You're Morvran's new student, right? Call me Iris."

"Goddess or flower?"

"Flower. Not all of us put obscure references in our shadow names." They wandered over to the refreshment table. "The thing is, neither Humboldt nor Shabako has ever been in a real Atlantean ruin. They just collect stuff out of books and what other mages say, and argue about it." She shook her head. "Mad, the pair of them."

"Have you been to an Atlantean site?" At last, he thought, maybe he'd get some first-hand information.

"Oh, yes," Iris breathed. "It was wonderful. I met one of their servants and learned... the truth." Her eyes shone. "In the previous cycle of reality, the Golden Age of Kronos when the Earth orbited Saturn..."

Arctos fixed a polite, interested-looking smile on his face while he looked around for an escape.

We consider him a "seeker" . . . who offers explanations according to his personal views, sometimes quite adventurous ones: which is his perfect right, since he is not attached to any currently living tradition and is not in possession of any data received by direct transmission. In other words, we may say that he is doing archaeology, whereas we ourselves are doing initiatic science; and those are two points of view which, even when they touch on the same subjects, cannot coincide in any way.

— René Guénon, "Atlantis and Hyperborea"

A newly Awakened mage, once the glories have dimmed in her inner eye and the hum of power through her fingertips dulls into familiarity, asks the question, "How did this happen?" Not just to her, or to her mentor or to the cabal she has perhaps fallen in with, but to people, to the world, to Us. "Where did all this come from? How did we stumble on to this treasure?" The inevitable, eventual answer: it came from Atlantis, the mountain of the Dragons' Tomb pointing to the polestar, the island at the center of the world, from the Land We Have Lost. In the insular and inside-out thought of the Awakened consensus, this is what passes for normalcy, for orthodoxy, for staid conservatism. "It came from Atlantis, so don't question it." They, the unspoken chorus adds, Knew Better.

Of course, not every mage has given the same answer everywhere and always. Some of the Awakened have their own way of seeing Atlantis, of looking at, or of looking for, the past. Some call it Thule, or Hyperborea, or Lemuria, or Mu, or Aztlán, or Gondwanaland, or Lyonesse. The wise and the exalted are quick to assure their listeners that those splendid lands are all Atlantis, that those names *really* mean the same thing to the harmless eccentrics who use them — the same thing, moreover, that "Atlantis" means to more conventional, more rigorous mages. Never mind that, by faultless magical logic, to change a thing's name is to change that thing. Never mind that even the conventional meaning of "Atlantis" has changed over the centuries, one generation's orthodoxy becoming the eccentric heresy of the next — and vice versa. Best not to worry about the inconsistencies, the changed doctrines, the clinging vines of apocrypha that coil around the trunk of True Knowledge. Best not to follow those trails into the jungle of mystery, into the darkness of doubt. Because if the ancient and eternal orders have to keep asking questions, keep looking over their shoulders and wondering just what was behind them, wondering where they came from, wondering how did this happen — well, then they might be brought down to the level of a newly Awakened mage. And that would be unthinkable.

The Atlantean Heresies

This chapter follows a few of those unused trails off the beaten path of the received Awakened truth about Atlantis. As side roads will, they wind around in time and space, intersecting with the main path every now and again. At some times, and on some subjects, the apocrypha can sound a lot like the gospel for a while. The line between heresy and orthodoxy gets blurred at times like these — faultlessly respectable dons of the Mysterium still debate the accuracy and the agenda of Plato, for example.

The trails also often lead back toward Sleeper occultism, which jackdaw mages dredge for subconscious hints, planted Exarch lies and really cool ideas. Although mortals may have fewer resources than mages, there are an awful lot of mortals, and they don't have to spend nearly as much would-be research time dodging astral parasites. A mundane archaeologist in the Greek islands, or a stodgy academic collator of legendry or even a wannabe wizard with a pointy hat and a gang of credulous Masonic groupies, can stumble on an entirely new insight without benefit of Watchtower or Legacy.

And sometimes, trails just taper off into dead ends, swamps of illogic and pits of monomania.

It's easy for a self-proclaimed freethinker to say that because his trail was only blazed by a small coterie of absinthe-soaked Satanists in 1892, that trail must surely be more authentic than the received wisdom about Atlantis that Everybody Knows. Mages are more susceptible than most, perhaps, to the Gnostic argument that the hidden Truth is *ipso facto* the real Truth. But, seductive though that argument is, it is no more reliable than the argument from authority that the heretics reject. The truth about Atlantis is not determined by counting noses, either up or down. Atlantis must be sought — in libraries, in museums, in the waste places of the world and the starry roads of the Shadow Realm. Because the real Truth just may be that nobody knows any more. Or that nobody knows yet.

Vanished Roads

As the Abyss drove itself into the cosmos, shifting and reshaping the Fallen World, even the survivors of the cataclysm found themselves disoriented and lost. They were unused to the harsh world outside Atlantis, and could no longer find their way back to the Dragons' Tomb. Wars and Paradoxes distracted the first survivors, and their descendants likewise. By the time a few high magical cultures had re-emerged, the way back was gone. From a 21st-century vantage point, even the certainties of these primordial mages remain uncertain. Does the vast influx of harpoons and microlithic fishhooks into southwest Europe around 10,000 BC — the so-called Azilian culture — indicate an invasion by Atlantean survivors or a renewed emphasis on maritime questing by a Cro-Magnon magical aristocracy? Did the cave painters and horse-sculptors of Neolithic China learn their ancient trigrams from Atlantean god-kings, or invent these patterns to divine the location of the Lost Mountain of Heaven? Were the Athapaskan shamans who led their people across the Bering Strait seeking Atlantis, or fleeing werewolves? The answers are gone, drowned in the

flood of centuries. The only thing that seems at all certain is that eventually the ancients searched for Atlantis just as modern mages do.

Modern searchers must reconstruct these antique quests secondhand, or at even further removes. The story of the Flood of Noah, for example, often taken as a memory of the drowning of Atlantis, comes into the Bible from the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh. In those cuneiform texts, themselves written centuries after Gilgamesh ruled in Sumer, the hero of the Flood is one Utnapishtim. But even in Gilgamesh's story, Utnapishtim's Flood appears as an older story, embedded as a flashback in Gilgamesh's quest for the Flower of Immortality and the magical island paradise of Dilmun. Gilgamesh must stay awake for six days to claim the prize, but falls asleep and fails. Awakened or asleep, a student looking for clues to Gilgamesh's quest must deal with at least two layers, and two millennia, of distortion.

Hence, the arguments: Does Gilgamesh's test of sleeplessness indicate that Atlantis cannot be sought in dreams? Is the Flower of Immortality actually a mushroom, perhaps, opening the doors of perception to the shores of Atlantis in a mindspace stored in spores or pollen? Since Gilgamesh finds the Flower of Immortality on the bottom of the sea, does this mean that Atlantis must be sought underwater? Even orthodox mages dispute whether Dilmun is Atlantis itself, a shadow of Atlantis kept alive by flowers or magic or just another one of the lost successor kingdoms founded by survivors such as Utnapishtim. Such controversies double and redouble for every ancient myth and legendary quester, from Rama to Kulkulcán to Pelican. Poetic lore and enigmatic art give a new answer to every questioner.

Ships of Standing Stone

In at least one case, the ancients can be consulted directly, but to little better result. Certain Subtle architects have determined that a few of the megalithic barrows of coastal Brittany and Spain are not merely passages to the afterlife for their builders. These mounds are, according to this analysis anyway, astral rail guns, or perhaps launching pads, aimed toward long-vanished polestars and intended to propel their inhabitants along the ley lines toward Atlantis. The pilots knew well that the Abyss would continue to widen, their careful calculations thrown off by increasing amounts each century. So the barrow-wights of Carnac and Poço de Gateira emerge every few centuries and shoot the new skies, adjusting the menhirs and trilithons to correct for spiritual drift or cosmic parallax. And by careful analysis of the relevant cycles in earth and stars, say these Subtle Ones, a watchful mage can be there when the ancients waken, to ask respectful questions and look on as best the mage can.

Of course, conversation with a barrow-wight has its own drawbacks, even for a mage who speaks fluent proto-Basque; not all of the Stone Pilots are sane, and not a few are far gone in senile dementia. Some demand a price for their answers, and a number of the easternmost megaliths have come to the attention of the vampiric Ordo Dracul, which has its own

interest in living death and ley lines. And then the cutting response of the orthodox mages resounds: if these withered neolithics knew anything useful, they would surely have reached Atlantis after 5,500 years. Why leave the road to consult with those lost at the side of it?

Sunk in a Swamp of Papyrus

Those searching for more reliable ancient wisdom are on seemingly firmer ground in Egypt. Egyptian papyri record quests into the Green Sea, the discovery of an island inhabited by a talking serpent and other promising details. Pharaohs regularly sent expeditions to distant lands, and their court wizards likewise in their own fashion. Magical texts spanning 20 centuries carefully document journeys into the Shadow Realm, the Underworld and other more obscure planes. Mundane scholarship has classified, codified and indexed much of this body of work to a high degree, saving time for purely magical study. Even where the known records are incomplete, the clear holes invite further research in a way that the littered chaos of, say, ancient Hittite stelae do not. At some times, the search for lost Egyptian records of the Pharaohs' search for Atlantis outshines the quest for Atlantis itself.

The Egyptian accounts are so numerous, and so interlocked and allusive, that they present their own obstacles. To paraphrase the old adage, the scholar with one papyrus has a history, but the scholar with two papyri has a controversy. Egyptian bureaucrats were not above burying their rivals' reports, or, in extreme cases, burying their rivals. Even expert Awakened Egyptologists have difficulty telling a falsified claim from a falsely debunked success from an allegorical legend-tale intended to provide insights to the initiates of one or another god-cult. Worse yet, those Pharaohs who came the closest to achieving Atlantean wisdom seem inevitably doomed to murky ends. Khufu, who built the Great Pyramid, and Akhenaten, who built a sacred City of the Sun with strong resemblances to Atlantean sacred architecture, both died suddenly and under mysterious circumstances; more unnerving still, neither ruler's mummy has ever been found. Similar mysteries enshroud the ultimate fates of Queen Nitocris, whose mirror reputedly showed her the secrets of all ages, and the sorcerer Pharaoh Nectanebo II. Thus, although most mages assume and accept the vast extent of Egyptian research into the Atlantis question, the thornier problem of just how much progress the heirs of Imhotep made — and in just what direction such progress might have gone — remains open.

The Riddle of the Sands

Orthodox Egyptian opinion seems to have held that Atlantis lay over the sea — although the scribal controversy over the question of whether Atlantis lay in the Green Sea to the north or the Red Sea to the east matches any modern dispute on the topic. A substantial, and not unrespectable, minority of Egyptian questers seems to have believed that Atlantis perhaps lay past the Gauntlet in Duat, the Underworld. If Atlantis were dead and destroyed, this second line of reasoning seems to have gone, the city must still be in the Land of the Dead. To the Egyptians, this Land lay



to the west of the Nile, where the Sun-Boat sank every day. To a few Egyptian mages, that indicated that Atlantis itself rested in the western deserts, buried in the dunes of the Sahara. These heretics' arguments were doubtless more recondite than the reductionist versions that survive in the papyri of their critics, but the arguments, in their simplest form, rest on two pillars. The first is the clear magical equivalence of the Western Desert and the Duat, accepted even by orthodox Egyptian mages and insisted upon by the priests. The second is the counterintuitive but seductive notion that the scar left on the Fallen World by the shattered Celestial Ladder is much more likely to resemble the Sahara's moonscape of sand dunes and lava flows than it is the smooth waters of the Mediterranean or Atlantic. "Does not a broken bone leave a mark, or a cut palm tree a stump?" asks one heretical papyrus, which even some modern Awakened find convincing.

Greek mages began sifting through the Egyptian documents in the seventh century BC, by which time the Egyptian records already spanned 2,300 years of nearly continuous history. Some of these Greek scholars came to the same conclusions as those earlier (and later) doubters. Atlantis lay in the Sahara, victim not of the rising waters but of the encroaching desert. The Greeks noted other evidence, first and foremost the "meaningless coincidence" of names between Atlantis and the Atlas Mountains in North Africa. To the wise Awakened, surely, no coincidence is meaningless, especially not a coincidence of names. The Atlas Mountains, of course, were named for

— and perhaps formed from — the Titan Atlas, who in this reading stretched all the way from Earth to Heaven, just like the Celestial Ladder, until Heracles broke him, or his mountain, apart into two Pillars.

The Pillars of Enoch

All researchers in dynastic Egypt, Awakened and otherwise, who sought knowledge of Atlantis (wherever they wished to place its ruins), petitioned for access to the Temple of Sebek in Saïs. Here stood two columns carved with hieroglyphics already hoary with age when the Sphinx was newly sculpted. According to occult rumor then and since, those were the Pillars of Enoch, engraved with the knowledge of "all true arts and sciences" by the seventh patriarch after Adam. Enoch (or Enmeduranki, as the Sumerian records name him) learned magic from the Grigori, the Watchers in the Seventh Heaven. He returned and carved these insights into a pillar of brass and a pillar of stone, strong enough to withstand another cataclysm of flood or fire. The story of his journey, but only hints of his recovered magical lore, made it into the apocryphal *Books of Enoch*, condemned by St. Augustine among other Christian church fathers.

It hardly takes an unconventional mage to see echoes in this legend of the first Watchtowers, and the days when truths of the Supernal were first revealed to the sons of fallen Atlantis. If the Enochian Grigori are actually thin veils worn by the Oracles, the Grigori could well have passed ultimate firsthand truths of Atlantis, the key to the mystery, to an archmage in the

distant past. An Enochian Legacy may still guard these truths against all future disasters, perhaps in some massively parallel computer database or coded in the street grid of Brasilia. Such an Enochian lineage seems to weave in and out of the gaudy tapestry of Sleeper occultism, from the sons of Solomon in medieval Ethiopia to the Elizabethan sorcerer John Dee's "angels" and Freemason schemes to chart the Blue Nile.

The existence of the Pillars of Enoch, or at least of two pillars in the temple precincts at Saïs bearing knowledge of Atlantis, is confirmed by many ancient sources, both Sleeping and Awakened, as late as the visit of Krantor of Cilicia around 280 BC. The eventual Roman overlords of Egypt may have become jealous of the crocodile priests' relics, or the Pillars may have vanished during one of the myriad invasions of Egypt since. The Exarchs (or Oracles) may have stepped in, removing such dangerous truths from the increasingly numerous eyes of mortals and ambitious willworkers alike and secreting the Pillars in some other lost corner of the Earth. If so, the Exarchs were centuries too late, because Solon of Athens saw the pillars in 570 BC and copied their contents into a book he brought back with him to Greece. Passed down through his family, the book eventually reached the eyes of Plato.

Atlantis Revealed

Virtually all discussion of Atlantis, orthodox and unconventional alike, stops—and restarts—with the Athenian philosopher Plato. In 357 BC, Plato's patron and former student Dion of Syracuse seized control of that Sicilian city-state. Plato began work on a trilogy of dialogues advancing his political and mystical agenda, but only finished the *Timaios* and half of the *Kritias* before Dion's assassination dashed Plato's last hope of shaping a "philosopher-king" in Sicily. Conventional scholarship holds that Plato simply abandoned the project and died a few years later. A good many mages, including some of the most blamelessly conventional in all other matters Atlantean, believe that Plato finished the end of the *Kritias* and possibly the *Hermokrates* (the projected third dialogue in the series) before his death. From internal evidence in the first half of the *Kritias*, these works likely dealt with the decadence of Atlantis and the bargain (or struggle) between the Atlanteans and the gods. (On the question of what happened to those hypothetical books afterward, opinion is far less unanimous.) Complete or not, the surviving two (or one and a half) works introduced the name "Atlantis" to the Sleeping world, and revealed immensely more detail about the sunken kingdom than any single source had to that date.

Much of Plato's information strikes the Awakened reader as startlingly informed. Plato's five pairs of twin kings of Atlantis echo the five Paths and the 10 Arcana, and other numerological data he gives map uncannily well to cosmic harmonies heard by the Thrice-Great legatees of the Silver Ladder. Plato's sharp distinction between, and the natures he ascribes to, the World of Matter and the World of Form mirror the true natures of the Fallen and Supernal Realms almost perfectly. Even minor elements of Plato's story reveal much to the alert magical student.

According to the dialogues, Plato drew this information from a book passed down to him by his ancestor Kritias, who received it from Solon. Later sources claim that Plato also worked from a Pythagorean text, which would imply a strongly sorcerous element to the numerical mysticism in Plato's story. According to those sources, this Pythagorean manuscript vanished within a century of Plato's writing, as did the book of Solon (if it ever existed in the first place). Likewise, the world no longer possesses (if it ever did) the end of the *Kritias* or the *Hermokrates*. Any of these works may have disappeared into a looter's fire or a hidden Mysterium archive, or been suppressed by the Seers of the Throne as even more dangerously informative than the works that managed to survive.

Plato's Atlantis

Whether noble lie or revealed truth, Plato's description of Atlantis provides the most accepted, most standardized model of the lost island for Awakened and Sleeper researchers alike.

Whether his description is used as a starting place, as a checklist or as a mystical allegory, almost any search for Atlantis begins with the data that Plato laid down.

The date: Plato gives the date of the war between Athens and Atlantis as "9,000 years past," usually interpreted to mean approximately 9600 BC, counting from Solon's trip to Egypt. Atlantis' founding was many generations before that date.

The location: The island of Atlantis was located somewhere on the Atlantic side of the Straits of Gibraltar, called by Plato the Pillars of Heracles. The sea was "the way to other islands, from which you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent." According to Plato, a shoal of mud thrown up by the subsidence of Atlantis makes the sea in that area impassable.

The dimensions: The island of Atlantis was the size of Anatolia and Libya combined, roughly a million square miles, or approximately the size of India or Argentina.

The mountain: In the middle of the island was a mountain, upon which was a temple to Poseidon. In the center of this temple was set a pillar of orichalcum (a magical metal similar to brass) graven with the names of the kings of Atlantis. At sacred gatherings, the kings would sacrifice a bull and drain its blood out over that pillar.

The kings: Atlantis had 10 kings, descendants of Poseidon, who met in council every fifth and sixth year alternately.

The plain: Most of Atlantis was mountainous, except for a coastal plain of extraordinary fertil-

ity about the size of Great Britain. An irrigation ditch 100 feet deep surrounded the plain.

The city: In the center of the plain was the city, laid out in a pattern of concentric rings of land and water inside a vast circular harbor connected to the sea by a canal. At the center of the rings lay the royal palace and a shrine to Poseidon. An outer city wall encircled the harbor at a distance of 66 stadia (roughly 7.5 miles) from the shrine, enclosing an urban area about the size of Chicago.

The resources: Atlantis produced "whatever fragrant things there are now in the earth . . . in infinite abundance." Elephants and "other sorts of animals" inhabited Atlantis' plains, marshes, lakes and rivers. In addition to plentiful orichalcum and colored stone, gold and silver were abundant.

The empire: These resources enabled Atlantis to support a navy of 1,200 ships and an army of 10,000 chariots, which extended Atlantis' empire over several other islands, to "the opposite continent" and as far as Libya and northern Italy in Europe.

The war: Atlantis was opposed in Europe solely by the city of Athens, which ruled most of Greece. Atlantis and Athens went to war, and, after a ferocious struggle in which Athens fought alone, the Athenians drove the Atlanteans out of the Mediterranean entirely. Whether Plato meant Athens or Atlantis to represent the Exarchs in the context of the Celestial War remains controversial.

The end: "But afterward there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all Athens' heroes in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared into the depths of the sea."

Platonic Ideals

Plato's trilogy is not merely incomplete. It is also, in many important ways, unknowable. Although many of the Awakened read it as history or gramarye, Plato's disciple Aristotle read it as fantasy. Plato himself endorsed the telling of "noble lies" to keep society orderly and stable; was his carefully crafted tale of Atlantis' primordial war with Athens a true secret hidden within patriotic propaganda or a planted rumor intended to divert magical Seekers from the real trail? Was Plato a Sleepwalking philosopher, an Awakened savant trying to open the eyes of humanity or something else? Did his true inspiration come from the ascetic Pythagoras and the Silver Ladder, or from the tyrant Kritias and the Seers of the Throne? Theories multiply with the centuries, but wherever the story of Atlantis came from, it continues forward just as Plato told it.

In short, Plato completely rebuilt Atlantis in the minds of Sleepers and Awakened, to a blueprint of unknown provenance and design. Some heterodox Seekers try to free themselves of Plato's solid net, changing his "9,000 years" to 9,000 months, or 900 years, and parsing "beyond the Pillars of Heracles" to mean anywhere from Crete to Java, but the Atlantic Island of the dialogues has taken inextricable root. Even if Plato's Atlantis never existed before, it certainly does now, in the collective unconscious of humankind, the Temenos. Perhaps Atlantis fell from the Temenos likewise.

The Search Renewed

The rediscovery of just such an astral Atlantis was the goal of the Hong Fu-Sang, the Scarlet Mulberry Society in ancient China. Nearly completely extirpated from official histories, this school most likely began in Gansu province during the time of Laozi in the 7th century BC. (Later Scarlet Mulberry Society texts claim him as an initiate, and push their own founding back to the legendary era of the Yellow Emperors.) Out on the fringe of China, with the vast Gobi Desert stretching away to the north, members of the Scarlet Mulberry Society could turn their quest inward, into the hollow of the mind symbolized by the hollow mulberry tree. Fueled by exotic herbal compounds, arcane physical exercises and the starkest personal asceticism to remove all outer distraction, Hong Fu-Sang mages sent expedition after expedition deep into Astral Space, beyond the Flood of the King of Yu, searching for Peng-lai, the Fortunate Island of the Immortals.

Each explorer mapped the meditative landmarks and symbolic headlands for the next to surpass, painting ideograms of thought onto the walls of the Society's mutual Oneiroi to create an atlas of dream. The Society established a great storehouse in a dream country known as Fu-Sang Guo, the Mulberry Land. Here, dreamers could rest, resupply and replenish their energies before pressing further into the Astral. No expedient was rejected that might return knowledge of Peng-lai. One Scarlet Mulberry Society cabal used highly debatable methods to gaze into the future through a lens of crystallized potential souls, somehow grown from patterns found in the retinas of stillborn children. Another Legacy within the Hong Fu-Sang apprenticed its scholars to the shades of the last of the mammoth shamans in the Siberian Underworld, hoping to track the old shapes of the world through the eyes of dead beasts.

Hyperborea Everywhere

Such Siberian shamanic lore speaks of devil-gods sending diving birds deep into the material world to dredge up earth with which to build their Heaven. This perspective presents a still different take on the Atlantis myth, implying that Atlantis was actively pulled up toward the Supernal by the unimaginable forces of the Arcana. By this reading, the Fall was somehow an undeserved fate visited on the unfortunates left behind, while Atlantis remains whole and inviolate in the Supernal Realm. This Atlantis more closely resembles the Homeric legends of Hyperborea, the "Land Beyond the North Wind," the happy city ruled by Apollo in warmth and sunshine above

the frozen wastes of the north. According to Greek occult lore, Apollo's City of the Sun maintained some connections with the outside world: Pythagoras' mentor Abaris of Scythia was reputedly trained in Hyperborea, for example.

The poet Aristeas of Marmora likewise allegedly learned the secret of immortality from the Hyperboreans, spending most of the 7th century BC traveling the Siberian steppes and discovering the valley of the griffins and the land of the one-eyed Arimaspoi. These tales may be garbled versions of Aristeas' explorations of the Temenos in raven form, which he reported during occasional appearances to favored Awakened cabals in the Mediterranean basin. The strong resemblances between Aristeas' poetic anabasis and the Astral cartographies of the Hong Fu-Sang travelers have struck more than one heretical Atlantis-Seeker. Usually, the claim goes that Aristeas founded the Scarlet Mulberry Society, or that he was a rogue member of that order. The Rainbow Archers, a splinter cabal of the Dreamspeakers, holds that Aristeas and the Hong Fu-Sang fought together in a great war against the Exarchs — or, more specifically, are still fighting such a war forever, given the peculiar simultaneity of the Dreamtime. This, the Rainbow Archers claim, is the same war as the war that splintered Atlantis; they seek to recruit Awakened warriors from everywhen to join them and defeat the forces of hubris in all times at once.

Something New Out of Africa

Aristeas was only one of the earliest Awakened Seekers among the Greeks to voyage far over the horizon in search of Atlantis. A Sardinian willworker sailed north to icy seas with Pytheas; a Trapeziote mage explored djinn-haunted caves in southern Arabia, and not a few followed the tracks of the Egyptians into the desert. Here, they met the Garamanteans, red-haired, chariot-driving warriors with black skins who lived in the Fezzan Desert deep in Libya and resembled a blend — or an ancestor? — of all humanity. The Garamanteans' gardens in the empty Sahara had a definite flavor of the Hyperborean about them, paradises in the wasteland. The gardens bloomed in all seasons, watered by wells and underground aqueducts cut unguessable centuries before. Some Mysterium scholars followed Garamantean priests deep into those tunnels beneath the desert, seeking the "inner ocean" from which the Garamantean legends claimed the Garamanteans emerged millennia ago. During the chaos of Rome's fall, the Garamantean kingdom vanished under Vandal raids and epic sandstorms. The Garamanteans left behind desiccating vineyards of unknown vintage, from the shriveled produce of which some Berber tribes defiantly distill the potent Syrah Atlantide served at a few very exclusive Silver Ladder banquets. The dreams it grants are said to be evocative in the extreme.

The Temple Is a Prison

It was not a dream but a visionary journey that inspired the unknown author of the *Gospel of John the Fairest*. Orthodox Mysterium opinion holds that the pseudo-epigraphical "John Calliston" wrote this Gnostic scripture some time during the second century AD. This work takes the form of the visionary journey of Jesus into the True Heaven, narrated during the two

nights he hung on the cross (this story diverges widely from the orthodox New Testament account, obviously) to the "fairest of the disciples." The ecstatic torture allowed the initiate Jesus to discover the truth: that Atlantis never fell at all. The Temple Atlantis still stands above the Earth, but its rulers, the Oracles, cast powerful spells to keep even the Awakened in slumber. There is no Abyss, but rather a prison wall built around the world by the mage-kings to hide the real sky from us. The Astral pathways to the Watchtowers (actually guard towers in this reading) are illusions, built of desperate hopes and the lies of the prison-keepers. A true pathway, both fully material and fully astral, exists past the Watchtowers that will allow the elect to enter Atlantis, and become as gods.

Unfortunately, that path also allows the Atlanteans to descend onto Earth in full godhood when they desire. Atlantean archmasters walk among us, committing all manner of sins and crimes for their sorcerous pleasure, secure in their invisibility. The arts of the Atlanteans can destroy or create cities, alter bloodlines and hide whole mountains should they choose. Every eon, a single figure, an Exarch, escapes the Temple to try to warn the prisoners of Earth: the Serpent, Enoch, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus and finally Jesus, the most powerful Exarch ever. The gospel ends before Jesus can fully describe the secret way past the Watchtowers, as he is killed by Longinus' spear on the morning of the third day.

The Callistite heresy spread throughout Asia Minor and Egypt until persecuted into oblivion by both the Emperor Justinian and the Hierarch Helena of Alexandria. The Mysterium ordered all copies of the *Gospel of John the Fairest* burned (as did the Catholic Church), but a few survived, carried by Callistite or other Gnostic refugees who fled to Persia and Central Asia. Likewise, at least one copy made it into an Astral library of the Scarlet Mulberry Society. There may yet be a Callistite monastery on some isolated Greek island or Kirghiz dreamscape, the monastery's mad-eyed anchorites still seeking the secret path to the living Atlantis, although the Guardians closely examine both rumor and nightmare for such.

Her Bed It Lies In India

Questing Greek and introspecting Chinese willworkers also met in India, following up promising legends of Sveta-Dvipa, the White Island at the center of the world. Here, however, they encountered not just secretive priesthoods or zealous kings, but a protective order devoted to keeping India's secrets. Instead of leads to the White Island, outsiders soon carried back horror stories of water-breathing serpentine assassins, sentient lotus jungles hungry for souls, manticores guardians, many-armed martial artists of uncanny puissance, silent flying chariots of metal and glass and one-eyed stone giants with vast mental force but no intelligence. This shadow army struck back at any organized sorcerous effort to penetrate certain regions of the Indian interior, and guarded ruined temples and bustling cities alike at seeming random. The army's nine commanders were yogi *rishis*, rumored to have attained immortality and proven to command mesmeric arts that stifled the air and destroyed the mind.



These Nine Lokapalas did not win every engagement, of course. Battle-hardened veterans of Alexander's campaigns and mild-mannered Buddhist pilgrims alike found ways past India's secret defenders. But what fragmented sutras and etched-crystal maps they brought back to Alexandria or Gansu raised more questions than answers. Each of the Nine seemingly originated in, or descended from, a different Atlantis:

- The island continent Rutas, of which Ceylon is the remnant.
- Kumari Kandam, sunk off the Tamil coast of southern India.
- The Vedic kingdom of Dwarka off Gujarat, sunk beneath the Arabian Sea.
- The City of Seven Pagodas under the Bay of Bengal off Mahabalipuram.
- The Sun-City Asgartha in the high wastes of the Deccan, destroyed by lightning.
- The River Saraswati, mother of all good things, now buried in the Thar Desert.
- The metaphysical dimension Lemuria, somehow "thinned out" across the globe at a longer frequency than even the Awakened can perceive.
- The Naga empire, ruled by sacred serpents and shattered into the Andaman islets south of Burma.
- And finally, the Floating Island of Matsyodari, which fell from the Moon.

Each Atlantis fell 30,000 years ago; all were off limits to outsiders by the immutable order of the Nine. Eventually, steadily increasing pressure by Muslim (and later British) mages pushed

the Nine onto the defensive, and opened up some of the forbidden zones to brief lightning tomb-raids without much fear of reprisal. But, even now, some elements of the Adamantine Arrow ascribe to the Nine any mysterious deaths among researchers unsatisfied with Atlantean conventional wisdom.

The Dreaming Temple

To escape such avenger cults, individual cabals of the Scarlet Mulberry Society founded entire lamaseries on eddies and skerries in the Astral, places only they could enter through dreams or meditation. The grandest of these, the Temple of the Dreaming Butterfly, sent its own expeditions out of the Astral and back into the Fallen World. Dreaming Butterfly mages traveled to Indian jungles for specialized herbs and perfumes or to Japan for exalted sexual congress with imprisoned water-beasts, turning from pure Hong Fu-Sang asceticism to knowledge gained at the frontiers of human experience.

Unfortunately, the Dreaming Butterfly's explorations and experiments, and especially its purchases of such luxuries as the 1,000-year wine of Dangtu or the delicate wire garments woven by the blind virgins of Tocharistan, attracted the attention of the decadent eunuch mandarins within the courts of the later Ming. They sought to pervert Dreaming Butterfly techniques to mere gross pleasures, and when the Awakened lamas haughtily refused such desecration, swore petulant revenge. The emperor was easily persuaded that these secretive magicians posed a threat to his power, and ordered the entire Scarlet Mulberry Society suppressed. A brief Society resurgence after the fall of the Ming likewise incurred the terrified wrath of the Manchu warlords, who well remembered the stories of

cruel wizards who had harvested galley slaves and porters from the dreams of northern tribesmen.

The shattered Scarlet Mulberry Society fled into dreams. A few mighty ones recalled charms from the days when high magic was easier, when a thrown yarrow stalk could carve a door into slumber by main force. A few handfuls more, including fortunate guards, eunuchs and servants, made their way through gateways and across bridges surveyed along the frontiers of the Temenos in centuries of dreaming. Six monks carried the ancient rock-crystal mirror of Shaxia Shan away ahead of the marauders, and 13 years later followed its reflections into the Astral. The young, or the wounded or the isolated could not enter the Temenos directly and fled instead over the mountains and deserts of Central Asia. They linked up with small local cabals in desert caravanserais and river *entrepôts* from Yarkand to Damascus, exchanging knowledge for safety. And they encountered ever more willworkers trickling out of the West, looking for their own versions of the sacred kingdom and the Hallows of Atlantis.

Medieval Quests

The first few European mages to struggle past the Caucasus Mountains into Further Asia followed any number of confused dreams, from the Garden of Eden (reputed to sit at the uttermost East) to the all-spanning empire of Prester John, a Christian emperor supposed to reign over “50 kings” in “Greater India.” Others chased the rumors of a City of Brass, or of Iram of the Pillars, in Arabia or the Persian deserts. With the Asiatic mountain passes ringing with Astral warfare between the Scarlet Mulberry Society and the Nine, such quests were more than normally dangerous. Repeatedly, the European branches of the Guardians of the Veil tried to ban all searches after “false truths about the True City” on those grounds.

Even today, an unknown but significant number of false leads, destructive nut cults and out-and-out death traps on the road to Atlantean investigation are rumored to be Guardian ploys to divert the foolish and protect the secrets of magic. Some of these pitfalls in the Labyrinth may be continuing operations begun in the 13th century under Guardian auspices but completely forgotten by all save their own fanatical membership. For a time, at least, the roadblocks the Guardians threw up (with, some said, the assistance of a jealous Mysterium) kept the majority of the Atlantean apocrypha hermetically sealed away.

The Cup From the East

The first major leak in the Guardians’ censorship screen came in Muslim Córdoba around AD 1000. Fatima bint Tashuf al-Isiyah, a Tamer of Stone mage, produced a book of Atlantean magic that she called the *Ghayat al-Hakim*, the “Aim of the Wise.” Furthermore, she claimed that the work had come to her in a series of trance states, channeled from “India” and “the Moon.” Eventually translated into Latin for the court of Alfonso the Wise, the *Picatrix* (as it came to be known) was the greatest text of Atlantean lore to appear since Plato. The *Picatrix* was less a history of Atlantis than a practical guide to disparate understandings of the Paths. However, the work’s

overarching use of astrological values and star positions allowed occult scholars — both Awakened and mundane — to reverse-engineer those formulae to derive important calendar and historical data about Atlantis.

Some gaps in those formulae hint at a second work, as does (perhaps) the book’s Latin name. “*Picatrix*” takes the female ending in Latin, which, along with its strong lunar orientation, leaves theoretical room for a “male” *Picator*, perhaps dealing with solar magic. Given the connection between Cities of the Sun and Atlantis going back as far as Akhenaten and Hyperborea, some believers in the “second text” theory argue that the putative *Picator* would contain a more Platonic description of Atlantis itself. The search for this book became a recurrent fad among the Tamers of Fire from the 12th century onward. The most recent outbreaks of “*Picator* fever” included a cabal of sorcerous architects in Arizona in the 1960s that claimed to have channeled the *Picator* in a nine-day ritual spent in the July desert, and then vanished utterly on an expedition into the Grand Canyon.

The *Picatrix* goaded European willworkers still further. The word “*picatrix*” (or “*picator*”) means “cup maker,” with obvious resonance to medieval quests of all sorts. The notion that the *Picatrix* is a Cup of Wisdom connects Atlantis to the Holy Grail, with all that that implies. Some Awakened scholars believe that the *Picatrix* may have been the “Arabic book” used by Wolfram von Eschenbach to compose the Grail romance *Parzival* — which ends with the Grail concealed in a Mountain of Salvation in India. The Grail frenzy in Western Europe nearly upended both the Labyrinth and the Seers of the Throne in the 12th and 13th centuries; with Atlantis stirred into the mix, things became almost uncontrollable. The appearance of the *Picatrix* in Latin in 1256 was perhaps the final straw for the frustrated Guardians; their efforts to clamp down on “Atlantean heresy” redoubled after that year.

The same questions apply to the *Picatrix* as to Plato, only more so — its provenance, intent and reliability remain a matter of pure guesswork, and not even its actual composer is known. The magical arts revealed in the work provide genuine insights to the Awakened student, but that hardly narrows matters down. Most students of the work assume that it is a compendium of Atlantean lore assembled by either the Nine or the Scarlet Mulberry Society, accidentally “leaked” to the West during a high-stakes Astral contest. However, a substantial minority believe the *Picatrix* to be a genuine utterance by either the Oracles or by an antediluvian Atlantean sage interested in preserving magical knowledge after the cataclysm he somehow saw coming.

Over the Ocean

A similar vision afflicted Bishop Aubert of Avranches in 708, when he saw a great and wondrous tower on a rock in the ocean. He ascribed his vision to the Archangel Michael, and ordered the construction of the Abbey of Mont-St.-Michel on the Rock of the Tomb (Mont Tombe) in the middle of the Forest of Scissy. By the 13th century of the *Picatrix*, Mont-St.-Michel was an island in the English Channel and the Forest was drowned. To more than a few mages, the Abbey was Atlantis

reborn in Norman granite. A cabal of the Adamantine Arrow moved into the secret cellars and crypts below the abbey, and under the motto *Immensi Tremor Oceani* – “the vast dread of the ocean” – set out to defend this material outpost of the Supernal from all comers, mundane and magical alike. Under the pressure of the inspired architecture, and perhaps of the vast dread of the ocean, this Cabal de Saint-Michael became ever stranger. Other Arrows began to question the Michaelites, especially when the cabal’s leaders continued to claim “angelic revelation” as their authority to set an increasingly independent policy. Fishermen told tales of an immense cold light spilling from the ornate Gothic window traceries, filling the church after midnight services. Eventually, even the Sleeper monks would avoid the sanctuary during the “hour of the angels’ song.” The words of their angels, the cabal’s obsession with the ocean and its secrets and their concomitant alienation from the Adamantine leadership, drove (or drew) the Michaelite Arrows into establishing a full-fledged Legacy and opening membership to mages of other orders.

Michaelites sailed Astral and actual seas to negotiate with mermaids, who their revelations had taught were the purest descendants of the sunken continent. The Michaelites tracked rumors of mermaid marriages (and of less savory matings with undersea dwellers), poring through genealogies and baptismal records. Most notoriously, the Michaelites placed a branch of the Merovingian dynasty under the cabal’s protection as “heirs of the Quinotaur blood supernal.” (The Michaelite Legacy itself split into competing strains in 1188 over the priority such protection required.) The Michaelites gathered up copies of the

Irish *Voyages* of Bran and Brendan, poring over them for hints of Atlantis in the tales of Avalon and the Land Promised to the Saints. They developed magic to breathe water, reinvented Alexander the Great’s crystal diving bell, and explored sunk-

en Ys and Dunwich. And at some point, guided by Basque whalers, Skaldic mages returned from Vinland, or by their angelic visions, they reached a new continent, west of the Pillars of Heracles: America.

Sleepwalking to Atlantis

From oath-bound demons to trans-dimensional shewstones, Awakened explorers have Arcane techniques and sorcerous tools unavailable to mundane researchers. That said, the greatest asset of Awakened researchers may yet be the countless efforts and theories of Sleepers searching for and theorizing about the lost continent. This list of potential Atlantises assembles theories and dogmas from cranks, mystics and historians alike – any Sleeper may stumble over the truth.

America: Although Plato’s discussion carefully separates Atlantis from “the continent on the other side of the ocean,” scholars from John Dee to Francis Bacon to Alexander von Humboldt assume that Atlantis was one or the other American continent.

Antarctica: Many modern cranks and mystics believe that a sudden pole shift in 10,500 BC destroyed an “empire of the sea kings” based in a subtropical Antarctica. Suggestive connections lead from this theory to both the South Polar Hole of Symmes and Poe, and the Nazi explorations of an “Antarctic Shangri-la” in 1938.

Bahamas: A submerged formation resembling a pillar-lined road appeared in 1968 near Bimini Island, identified in the 1930s by the Virginia dream-psychic Edgar Cayce as Atlantis.

Britain: The only known source for tin (a possible component of orichalcum) outside the Pillars of Heracles, famous for its concentric circle “temples,” such as Stonehenge. Proposed as Atlantis by Francis Wilford in 1805.

Brazil: Proposed by various authorities as the original “Celtic Atlantis,” confusingly known as Hy-Brasil, the “burning island,” or Huy Breasal, the “fortunate island.” Colonel Percy Fawcett believed that Atlantean cities still stood in the jungle interior; he vanished in 1925 on a search for one such, Manoa.



Caucasus Mountains: In 1799 the French scholar Delisle de Sales identified Atlantis with the “mountains of Ararat” that withstood the Flood. In 1923 the Canadian engineer Reginald Fessenden revived this theory, adding a connection to the Aryan homeland in Central Asia.

Crete: Since 1909, archaeologists have suggested the story of Atlantis as a garbled version of the fall of Minoan civilization. Some Guardians of the Veil, on the other hand, believe the Minoan Labyrinth holds secrets — and perhaps passages — pointing to Atlantis’ true location.

Cuba: Psychic quester Andrew Collins identifies the “Island of Youth” off Cuba as an Atlantean remnant; engineer Paulina Zelitsky claims to have filmed sunken pyramids and roads in those seas in 2001.

Cyprus: Deep-water sonar scans have discovered what might be canal walls and circular buildings off the east coast of this Mediterranean island.

Ethiopia: The French architect Daniel Duville and the Ahnenerbe archaeologist Edmund Kiss both suggested the Abyssinian plateau as Atlantis in 1936; Kiss excavated the area looking for fallen pieces of the moon. Atlantis may also have been the Red Sea floor, submerged when the oceans rose after the Ice Age.

Greenland: The Ahnenerbe Society followed up on a theory first proposed in 1646 by the tutor of the Dauphin, one François de la Mothe le Vayer, that a Hyperborean Atlantis had been covered by the ice sheet in ancient times.

India: See p. 24 for nine theoretical Atlantises in the area, most of which have both legendary roots and modern champions. The most promising lead is the sunken city recently discovered off Mahabalipuram.

Indonesia: The ocean floor near Java may have sunk as recently as 11,600 BC during the end of the last Ice Age; Krakatoa and other volcanoes provide suitably dramatic disaster narratives. Recent discoveries of dwarvish skeletons on the Indonesian island of Flores may somehow be connected.

Iran: Based on butterfly migration patterns (and perhaps other occult insights derived from insect observations) the entomologist Pierre-André Latreille proposed Iran as the original Atlantis. In the Iranian national epic, the *Shah-nameh*, Peshotanu (Poseidon?) rules the holy mountain Kangha.

Iraq: The traditional location of the Garden of Eden, a religious interpretation of Atlantis much favored in the medieval era. Baghdad is a city built in a series of rings, much like Atlantis.

Ireland: A large island with a central plain, intimately connected to the Neolithic megalith builders and ruled by quarrelsome kings. Sunken cities ring the coasts of the British Isles in legend and fact.

Malta: In 1854, the Maltese architect Giorgio Grongnet de Vassé suggested this island, dotted with Neolithic barrows and monuments, later colonized by the Knights Hospitaller, was an Atlantean remnant.

Mexico: The suggestive pyramids of the Mayas, Toltecs and others, as well as the coincidences of the Nahuatl lost paradise “Aztlán” and Mexico City’s founding on a volcanic island in a circular lake have inspired many researchers to seek Atlantis in Mexico.

Mid-Atlantic Island: The orthodox Platonic theory, accepted by most Awakened and many Sleepers (including Ignatius Donnelly), presumes that either the Canary Islands, the Azores or both represent the last remnants of the sunken continent.

Mongolia: The other great “Atlantis in the Sands” theory places the Awakened City deep in the Gobi Desert, sometimes interpreted as the smooth seabed left behind by a retreating shallow ocean that filled the Asian interior in primordial times.

North Africa: The geographer Félix Berlioux suggested the connection between the Atlas Mountains and Atlantis in 1874, reviving a theory posited by Diodorus of Sicily. Other explorers pinpointed the Hoggar Mountains of Algeria, or cited the Garamanteans (see p. 23).

Nigeria: The Prussian explorer and anthropologist Leo Frobenius spent the years between 1904 and 1935 crisscrossing West Africa in search of Atlantis. In 1926, he placed it among the Yoruba of Nigeria based on the plentiful copper and elephants of Yorubaland, and on symbolic elements in Yoruba art that he traced to a Pacific super-continent.

North Sea: The Dogger Bank in the North Sea subsided around 6100 BC; various authors have placed Atlantis all around this area. In 1953, Jürgen Spanuth identified the island of Helgoland as Atlantis, and orichalcum as amber.

Pacific Continent: The composer Jean-Benjamin de la Borde in 1791 was only the first to suggest a Pacific continent as Atlantis, a theme taken up by the mystic Agartha-quester Louis Jacolliot in 1879 and by “Colonel” Churchward’s Mu books in the 1920s and 1930s.

Palestine: Beginning with Jean de Serres in 1570, pious scholars have interpreted Atlantis’ 10 kingdoms as the Ten Tribes of Israel, and the Awakened City as Jerusalem.

Peru: According to researcher J.M. Allen, a flood in Lake Titicaca drowned Atlantis and its people, from whom descended the Inca and other sun-worshipping, copper-mining peoples of the Andes *altiplano*.

Puerto Rico: German U-boat and rocket engineer Otto Muck theorized that a comet struck Atlantis north of Puerto Rico in 8498 BC.

Santorini: Known in classical times as Thera, this Aegean island possessed a large circular harbor and a fertile plain until both were destroyed by a volcanic eruption around 1680 BC. In 1939, the archaeologist Spiridon Marinatos suggested that Thera and Crete were the Atlantean empire, which was destroyed by the eruption and an ensuing tsunami.

Sardinia: In 2002, the journalist Sergio Frau suggested that the megalithic towers or “Nuraghi” on this island were the ruins of Atlantis.

Sargasso Sea: This thick reach of gulfweed runs east of Bermuda and supports a coastal ecosystem in the middle of the ocean. The geographer W.J. Babcock suggested that the gulfweed was Atlantis (or the remains thereof) in 1922.

Spain: The “silver city” of Tartessos, on the Spanish Atlantic coast, disappeared during the lifetime of Solon, possibly buried beneath the mudflats at the mouth of the Rio Tinto. Tartessos has been identified as Atlantis and as the Biblical Tarshish, famous for “ivory, apes and peacocks.”

Spitsbergen: This isolated island chain north of Norway was proposed as Atlantis and Thule by Bailly in 1781 (see p. 37).

Tunisia: The Munich geologist Paul Borchardt believed that Atlantis lay beneath the swamps of southern Tunisia, the site of the ancient Lake Tritonis, legendary home of the Amazons. Both he (in 1926) and Albert Herrmann (in 1934) believed they had discovered material remains of Atlantis, which Herrmann also identified with the legendary City of Brass, in the region.

Turkey: Tantalus, a coastal city ruled by a legendarily rich and greedy king, was destroyed by an earthquake and flooded by a lake after Zeus became angry. Troy, likewise, was a rich city destroyed by the wrath of the gods after losing a war with Athens.

Ukraine: Since about 1900, various scholars have suggested southern Ukraine (ancient Scythia) as both the ancestral home of the Indo Europeans and as Atlantis. The Black Sea flooded around 5500 BC when the Bosphorus straits opened, drowning a Neolithic civilization and driving survivors into Ukraine and Turkey.

Wisconsin: In 1937, the diver Max Nohl saw mysterious pyramids on the bottom of Rock Lake, Wisconsin. Using a blend of psychic archaeology, Winnebago Indian rituals and underwater photography, writer Frank Joseph has identified the sunken site as both Atlantis and Aztlán.

The New Atlantis

Even Sleeper scholars identified Atlantis with this new American continent "emerged from Ocean" after 1492. The Spanish historian Francesco Lopez de Gómara suggested in 1553 that Plato had somehow known of America, and the magicians Guillaume de Postel and John Dee both suggested naming the new continents "Atlantis" instead of "America." The alchemist John Swan in 1644 and the naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (who coined the word "Aztec" as a back-formation from the Nahuatl Atlantis, "Aztlán") in 1807 likewise agreed that America was Atlantis, and vice versa.

Invisible Cities

The reaction in the Awakened world was similarly electric. The Guardians' tenuous ban on Atlantean heresy began to crumble within the century. Willworkers from Portugal to Poland tramped the jungles of Yucatan and the snowfields of New France searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola, the Golden City of El Dorado, the Crystal Empire of Norumbega and any number of other promising rumors. The mages found many wonders, but nothing irrefutably establishing Atlantis in America. Even the dedicated questing societies and cabals came up dry. A channeled report from a Scarlet Mulberry Society refugee and several impeccable divinations identified a pale-haired tribe of Creeks far up the Mobile River as the



pure-blooded heirs of Atlantis. By the time the Michaelites could sort out an expedition, the tribe had vanished without a trace, leaving only peculiar earthworks.

Other seemingly solid leads from roaming spirits, self-proclaimed Atlantean Ascended masters or Sleeper voyagers pointed to tribes on the shores of the Cuyahoga River or the Upper Missouri. Each time, the first Awakened outsiders would find nothing but abandoned hill forts or strangely shaped mounds. The mysterious protectors did not confine their activities to people. Artifacts, mummies, obelisks, rune stones and lakes would evanesce or shift about seemingly overnight. Even a gigantic pyramidal mountain disappeared between the first sighting in the Platte River basin and the hasty Michaelite reconnaissance in force that followed.

Someone or something, it became obvious, was blocking outside Atlantean investigations into America even more completely than the Nine did in India, though less directly and violently. Michaelites and other questers compiled rumors about the unknown force: "shining figures" dressed in silver or white seen on remote hills and mountain tops in the New World, gray- or black-skinned dwarves watching from gullies and forests, glowing spheres hovering above Awakened campsites on the endless American prairies. Those mages who had tangled with the Nine in India noticed parallels to the "Lemurian" magic of those protector-cultists, but could offer little useful advice. Even the friendly Awakened among the native nations could provide nothing concrete, although they helped assemble a mass of testimony about the Little People, the Wendigo, the Ant Makers and anything else that seemed relevant. Slowly and reluctantly, mages abandoned their hopes for dramatic discoveries in America in favor of the slow sifting of myth and folklore.

Utopias of the Mind

This analytical approach appealed to the Shoal of Night, a cabal based in London associated with Queen Elizabeth's court astrologer John Dee and King James I's chancellor Francis Bacon (although whether either figure was Awakened remains an open question today). The Shoal of Night had tried Michaelite-style direct exploration and run into similar problems, from the disappearance of their admiral Humphrey Gilbert in the Bermuda Triangle to the Roanoke Colony fiasco a few years later. John Dee's channeled communication with the "aethyrs of the Watchtowers" provided a great information dump of "Enochian" lore that matched up in some intriguing ways with fragmentary reports from America.

Members of the Shoal of Night attacked the conundrum by using kabbalist methods to correlate and weigh all the data they possessed, and the new methods of textual and historical criticism to produce uncorrupted texts of Plato, Aristeas, the *Picatrix* and other relevant works. (Later rumor claimed their agents even recovered a copy of the *Gospel of John the Fairest* from a burned-out crypt in the Pyrenees.) Ever more obsessed with their reconstructions, the cabal members recruited linguists, mathematicians, cosmographers and even playwrights to work on individual pieces of the problem, feeding their

Sleeper assistants a few Platonic "noble lies" and promises of royal preferment. The result was *The New Atlantis*, published in 1627, the year after Francis Bacon's death. (Whether Bacon was the real author of the work the Shoal produced under his name remains a raging controversy among some Mysterium scholars.) The work sparked immediate denunciations from all four conservative orders.

As John Dee and others had, *The New Atlantis* asserted that the American continent was the original Atlantis, drowned in a sudden deluge but now drained and empty. However, the key arguments of the book discussed a theoretical new Atlantis, called Bensalem, founded on an unknown Pacific island (given its size, most likely New Zealand) by survivors of the flood. Unlike Old Atlantis, Bensalem looked forward to new developments in science and technology. Bensalem's king sent agents into the world every 12 years to return with information, "especially of the sciences, arts, manufactures and inventions of all the world." Bensalem thus developed half-mile tall skyscrapers, air conditioning, computers, submarines, aircraft and "houses of deceptions of the senses," which sound either like virtual reality or propaganda or both. At the center of Bensalem, a vast storehouse of magical and technical arts was freely available to all. Similar to Plato's dialogues, *The New Atlantis* breaks off in the middle of the description, before providing more than a sketch of the new Atlantis' democratic constitution.

The reaction was intense; the Shoal of Night had essentially dismissed Atlantean wisdom as antique and useless, and worse, presented a powerful case for seeking enlightenment in the future from the actions of Sleepers. Adamantine Arrows stormed the Shoal sanctums in Prague, Heidelberg and London, with Mysterium Censors right behind to confiscate the Shoal's carefully assembled library. Guardians of the Veil fanned out across Europe, arresting Shoal collaborators and correspondents (many under the guise of the ongoing witch hunts) fingered by Silver Ladder officials. According to the ballads sung by Libertines of the Free Council (many of whom consider the Shoal of Night the Council's first cabal), the raiders missed the great prize: the secret second volume of *The New Atlantis*, smuggled to America on golden printing plates. Today, an ideological Libertine is more likely to search Oak Island or New Guinea for "Bacon's treasure" than Egypt or Tibet for Atlantean ruins. The Shoal of Night was smashed, its final stand burnt out in 1666.

Mundus Subterraneus

No such fate met the Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, whose theories of Atlantis seemed almost tame by comparison. Kircher was most likely the Superior-General of the Ad Magiorem Dei Gloriam, a Silver Ladder-connected cabal embedded within the Jesuit order and dedicated to reconciling Atlantis, and magic in general, with Roman Catholic doctrine. The cabal's reach extended through the Jesuit chapter houses in Peru, Mexico, Tibet, Japan and China, among other potentially Atlantean locations; the cabal almost certainly worked with Kircher to assemble his hoard of Atlantean lore. Kircher had

the further advantage of access to the Vatican Library, and he may have used the confiscated books from the Shoal of Night archives.

Beginning with a close study of Egyptian hieroglyphics, Kircher expanded his ambit to include magnetism, dragon lore, optics, geology, music theory and Chinese myth. Working in the tradition of the Sphinx Legacy, he assembled the magical insights from all of these disciplines, interpolating missing elements by rational calculation. He combined these studies with his study of the "Voynich Manuscript," a coded text thought to have been produced by Roger Bacon and sold to the Holy Roman Emperor by John Dee in 1584, and with Egyptian obelisks discovered buried beneath Rome's streets. The result was his *Mundus Subterraneus*, published in 1664.

Kircher tried to combine orthodox "Platonist" Atlantism with his "Pythagorean" insights. His Egyptian research indicated that the Platonic narrative was essentially correct: Atlantis was a large Atlantic island, watered by six rivers and ruled by 10 kings, destroyed by earthquakes and sunk below the ocean, leaving only the Canary and Azores Islands. However, a "Hyperborean" Atlantis, guarded by dragons and mummified giants, continued to exist in the "subterranean world" beneath the Earth's crust, linked by fire and water to volcano entrances and whirlpools. He resurrected the Garamantean "inner ocean" and hinted that it connected physically with the dream Atlantis of the Scarlet Mulberry Society. Furthermore, he implied that the World Beneath, the Inner Atlantis, somehow governed surface affairs, and that it may have caused the earthquake that sunk Plato's island. Kircher's privileged position in the heart of Catholic power, or the extraordinarily arcane language in which he couched such heresies, kept his magical career intact, but the Mysterium mounted a steady campaign to denigrate and trivialize his insights. His vision of a secret Atlantis at the heart of global affairs would be neglected for centuries.

Old World Shadows

Instead, such new assemblies of lore and legendry in sanctums across the world, and the expansion of travel and trade, started to feed a resurgence in more conventional "ruined temple" Atlantis questing. Dutch and Japanese mages picked their way through Egyptian tombs and Mexican pyramids just as their Greek and Chinese precursors had millennia ago. Although, in many cases, these mages merely confirmed old discoveries, or stirred up old guardians (the Nine infiltrated the Mogul empire and added brainwashed armies to its arsenal), every so often, the mages discovered something new.

Cities of the Sun

In the year 1600, seemingly by coincidence, widely scattered mages from Nanjing to Constantinople to Mexico City all came to the independent conclusion that fragments of Atlantis, the Awakened City, could only be found in thriving cities in the Material Realm. Atlantis had not so much fallen as come apart, or rather extended itself. Its buildings, plazas, fountains, streets and towers had rotated slightly out of normal time and

geometry and now appeared to the observer as normal parts of whichever city they currently intersected with. A brief but intense craze for sorcerous architecture and urban exploration gripped many wizards over the next generation or so, and recurs periodically to this day. In each generation, according to the urban legend, one building, or perhaps one room, of the Silver City can be entered by a prepared visitor, who can then pass through it to Atlantis itself. In darker versions of the tale, this chamber appears just before some cataclysm visits the city in question; whispers tell of churches in 1666 London, taverns in 1871 Chicago and dockyards in 1945 Nagasaki that glowed violet at sunset in Mage Sight.

Lost Horizons

The 17th century also saw the final dissolution of the Scarlet Mulberry Society by the Manchu warlords. These Sleepers knew only fear and superstition, and put the Hong Fu-Sang compounds in Gansu to the sack. The Manchu opened carefully cultivated gardens of oneirgic herbs to the Gobi sandstorms, tortured or enslaved the Society's apprentices and acolytes, burned and trampled their scrolls and inks. Most of the survivors fled across Asia, although a few made contact with other dream travelers and reached sanctuary. The ongoing Ethiopian project to channel Enoch likely gained important techniques (such as sensory deprivation by sealing the Astral traveler inside the Ark of Axum) from just such a Scarlet Mulberry refugee.

A cadre of the most experienced dreamers, veterans of a 1,000 psychic wars against the Nine in India, managed to pull back into the Temenos and seal themselves within the Temple of the Dreaming Butterfly. The Temple shut off its access to the outside world, leaving only one gateway that only the worthy could attain. The details of this gateway vary with the teller. The most common version holds that an Awakened traveler who hears certain combinations of tones and echoes produced by specially-shaped temple bells ringing in a glacial valley of the Qilian Shan (or Kunlun or Himalaya) mountains can follow the sound to the Temple. Mysterium scholars speculate that the Temple of the Dreaming Butterfly may have summoned, or become, or formed, some sort of Astral Verge, a "soft place in the world's skin" where dream and reality intermingle.

Although the Temple could no longer afford the resources to mount major expeditions into the Astral, the mages there could begin the Baconian process of meditation and collation learned from Jesuit mages in Tibet and Beijing. By the 1680s, the Dreaming Butterfly reputation for learning began to draw increasing numbers of Atlantis questers into the mountains of Tibet in search of the monastery, including at least one entire cabal of Russian willworkers seeking Belovodye, the "land of white waters," who decided that they had found their Awakened Garden in the Temple's Astral enclosure. The Dreaming Butterfly Temple became entangled both in outside rumor, and occasionally in the ever-shifting Astral Realm, with the Buddhist Chang Shambhala, the initiatory center supposedly hidden in the north.

Trail of Blood

Not every quest aimed at inner peace, or even enlightenment as such. An Awakened sultan in northern Java spent the lives of hundreds of Cebuanese pearl divers (purchased at great cost from the Spanish) trying unsuccessfully to recover a 95-foot long scimitar unearthed on the bottom of the Sunda Strait by a seaquake. The Hidden Inca attempted to Awaken his entire army of Quechua peasants using a system of mirrors and flags revealed to him in a coca dream in the ruins of Tihuanaco. But worse was always possible.

In the 1750s, the court alchemist of the Elector of Saxony reputedly boiled down an entire 100-weight of amber — and the primordial insects preserved therein — to extract a poison that sent its victims' souls to the Atlantean Hell. He then established a necromantic cult, the Jailers of Pentheus, in order to obtain priceless Atlantean lore from those tormented souls, who after all were in a remarkable position to learn a great deal from their fellow sufferers. The Jailers eventually descended into total madness, worshiping their victims as gods and sacrificing others to serve their tormented deities. Fortunately, the firebombing of Dresden in 1944 seems to have cauterized the Jailers permanently, and curtailed the degrading market among unscrupulous Moros mages for Penthean research journals and tape-recorded séances.

The mad genealogists of the Radix Regex were, if anything, even more offensive to the Diamond, if only because far more of their victims were fellow mages. Their society began in Versailles in 1773, possibly as the result of a failed Awakened-Kindred alliance to fully explore the Paris catacombs. Three sorceresses in the court of Marie Antoinette discovered (allegedly with aid from a vampiric crone) a method of determining true ancestry from the drained blood of a subject. The more related the subjects, the clearer the picture of the bloodline they could build up. Intrigued by the possibility of tracing an unbroken Atlantean lineage back to the Fall, the genealogists set about obtaining samples from a widening swath of Awakened victims. Protected by an exalted court position, the Radix Regex managed to throw suspicion onto the similarly bloodline-obsessed Legacy of St. Michael and secure the Michaelites' ejection from France (and hence from their Abbey sanctum), a blow that pulverized the Michaelites. (Some Guardians of the Veil will still maintain that the Radix Regex was innocent and the Michaelites deserved their dissolution.) The Radix Regex came close to becoming the triumvir Hierarchs of Paris during the Reign of Terror, but the shifting political tides drove them deep underground during the Napoleonic Wars.

Phantom Empires

In a less metaphorical sense, the search for Atlantis also went deep underground by the first half of the 19th century. Kircher's work, combined with new "Typhonian" papyri uncovered by mages accompanying Napoleon's troops in Egypt, sparked a number of descents into volcanoes or maelstroms to discover passages to the Hollow Earth and the Inner Atlantis therein. The astronomer Edmond Halley and the mathema-

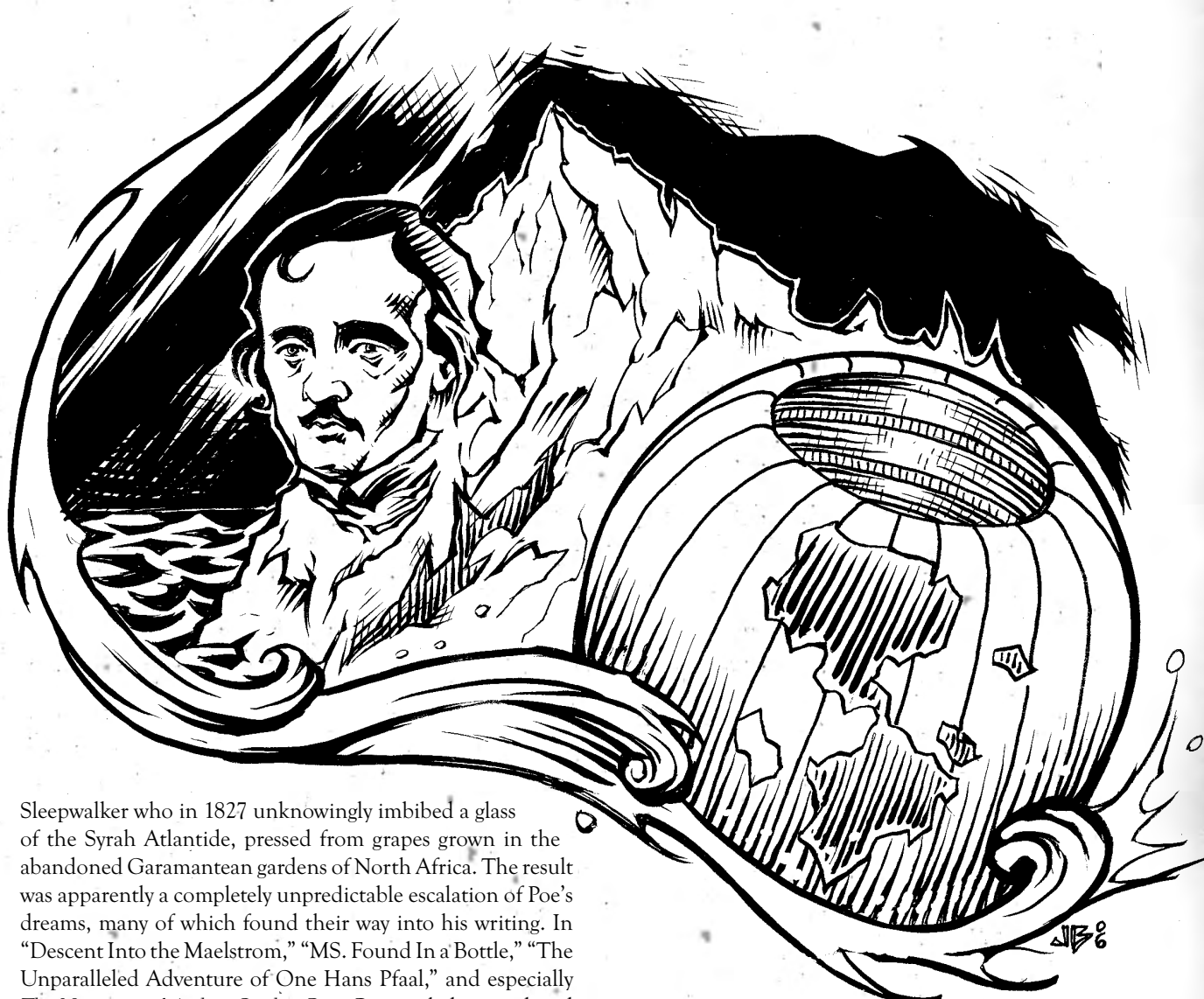
tician Leonhard Euler were two prominent 18th-century supporters of the Hollow Earth. Although neither are known to have Awakened, their calculations proved quite amenable to kabbalist analysis by such groups as the Shadow of Mictlan cabal (which profitably combined piracy, Atlantis-hunting and Moros pathworking from its sanctum in Campeche) or the Cyclopean Eye cabal in Naples (which carried out "inverted Astral baptism" rituals inside the crater of Vesuvius during the 1779 and 1794 eruptions). Willworkers discovered eerie and suggestive passageways in the Peruvian *altiplano* and the plains of Indochina, and mapped interior continents during belladonna-fueled binges.

Unlike the oceanic or Astral voyages of other Atlantis Seekers, journeys into the Earth were not always replicable. One cabal would report vast trapezoidal tunnels running for miles deep underneath an Icelandic volcano, or an arrangement of rocks in Tennessee from which the proper Space spells could translate the caster into a vast hall covered in phosphorescent dinosaur ivory. The next cabal to try it would find nothing, and even the initial discoverers would report failure as often as not upon reattempting the passage. Some mages believed that the Atlantis within the Earth was somehow protected by a secret society or unknown power, much like the one that had frustrated Michaelite investigations into the Atlantean foundations of America. The other, and more common, interpretation was that the interior of the Earth was simply a different sort of Realm from either the Material, the Shadow or the Astral, with different laws of magic, and perhaps even subtly divergent Arcana. To a few excited questers, this implied that perhaps the Inner Atlantis had not fallen, or was perhaps itself the ancestor of the orthodox island kingdom Atlantis.

Just as earlier quests, for the kingdom of Prester John or for Iram of the Pillars, sorcerous explorations of the Hollow Earth spawned Sleeper imitations. However, for some reason, a much higher percentage of Sleepwalkers seemed to follow in the footsteps of the Awakened. This did have the fortunate side effect of completely discrediting the notion of the Hollow Earth among the average Sleeper, since its proponents always turned out to be so very odd. U.S. Army Captain John Cleves Symmes announced that immense holes at each pole, 4,000 miles in diameter, led into an inner world that he grandly christened "Symzonia." He convinced a journalist named Jeremiah Reynolds, whose ceaseless lectures and lobbying in turn convinced President John Quincy Adams — and at least three Atlantis-seeking cabals — to send an expedition to Antarctica in search of the South Polar Hole in 1829. The U.S. Naval expedition turned back at Chile; two of the cabals returned from points farther south with interesting samples (and at least one new Forces rote), but no report of a polar hole. The Brotherhood of Catamounts cabal, however, never came back.

Dreams Within a Dream

A still more dangerous consequence of such a determined assault on the South Pole rode in on the dreams of Edgar Allan Poe. Later sorcerous investigation demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Arrows that Poe was a deeply susceptible



Sleepwalker who in 1827 unknowingly imbibed a glass of the Syrah Atlantide, pressed from grapes grown in the abandoned Garamantean gardens of North Africa. The result was apparently a completely unpredictable escalation of Poe's dreams, many of which found their way into his writing. In "Descent Into the Maelstrom," "MS. Found In a Bottle," "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaal," and especially *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Poe circled around and around the idea of a passage into the Earth's interior, a cave of mysteries opening from the South Pole. In *Pym*, Poe tells of a black island, Tsalal, located on the verge of the opening in a black sea. The inhabitants of Tsalal fear whiteness for some reason, but just as Poe's narrator sees a gigantic white figure guarding a white sea, the story ends. Just as the works of Plato and Bacon, Poe's "Atlantean" work remained unfinished, a magical charge laid and waiting to go off.

All these elements, and others drawn from Poe's imagery, began permeating not just the local Temenos, but, increasingly, the individual Oneiroi of American mages. Transmitted by some unguessable mechanism, these images and elements spread to Europe, South America and even Japan, where an entire cabal committed suicide in 1840 using an ingeniously constructed razor-sharp pendulum. Willworkers on Astral journeys found themselves inexorably drawn to Tsalal, and to the rocky spire at the center of Poe's imagined Antarctic vortex. Almost every mage who sought Atlantis during the 1840s reported seeing "a black island in a black sea" in the Astral Realm — and at least three reports discovered Tsalal appearing in the Material Realm. More than a dozen mages died mysteriously in their sleep in 1847, and many more were menaced by a looming white figure before awakening.

Worse yet, by 1849 such

dreams and visions increasingly began to feature one or more of the Watchtowers, seen crumbling from within like chalk or swaying in colossal whirlwinds similar to the maelstroms in Poe's tales. An alert Guardian of the Veil in Baltimore discovered that Poe was in the process of writing a new story called "The Lighthouse," in which the noble keeper of an isolated tower fears it will be destroyed. Before Poe could complete it, however, he vanished for three days, reappearing only to die raving in the hospital, calling repeatedly for "Reynolds." With Poe's death, the dreams tapered off; the Oneiric storm had passed. Just to be safe, however, the Diamond orders officially banned exploration of the Hollow Earth in 1850.

Print the Legend

Some conspiracy theorists among the Awakened claim that a mysterious willworker in red slipped Poe the libation that opened his channel to the Inner Earth. They further claim Poe as only one of the many puppets and victims of a secret war, fought primarily within Freemasonry, between the Garamantean Inner Ocean and the survivors of the Shoal of Night. By this reading, the four orders of the Diamond were mere helpless pawns, or at best factionalized tools, in a new war for Atlantis. Beginning in the 1830s, one particularly obsessed cabal, the Acacia and

the Gold in Lyon, flooded occult libraries across the world (and not a few mundane libraries) with magically crafted forgeries intended to prove the cabal's thesis. But the Acacia and the Gold had their sights set higher than mere delusional point-scoring. The cabal members wished to do purposely what Poe had almost done accidentally, to somehow bring about just such an occult struggle through sympathetic image magic, altering the world with words. (Their deluge of forgeries may not have created a conspiratorial shadow war, but did make verifying or disproving any such claims virtually impossible for even the most dedicated Awakened historian.) An American offshoot of the Acacia and the Gold planned to publish an *Encyclopedia of Atlantis* to do the same thing on a more dramatic scale and simply "print Atlantis into being as Plato did," but the cabal split up and vanished during the Civil War.

Brazilian Backlash

Such utopian thinking was anathema to the Nameless cabals forming in Brazil during that era. Their members, drawn especially from escaped slaves, displaced natives and the urban poor, were not particularly well disposed to Atlantean monarchy in the first place. Teresa Abiola, a Sleepwalking *mãe-de-santo* (a Candomblé priestess), first channeled the Word of the Helots in 1863, and the force of it fully Awakened her. She proclaimed it to her congregation, and the Word spread across Brazil like wildfire, rapidly becoming a major new heresy in rebellious Awakened circles. Teresa testified that the Word came from a chorus of Helotes Velhos, "old helots," ghosts of the slaves kept by the Atlantean mage-kings now finally able to call across the Abyss and across the eons to their true spiritual descendants. The new doctrine didn't bother explaining whether some change in the otherworld, or a more effective channeling ritual used by the *mães-de-santos*, opened the "Iron Gate of the Watchtower" for the Helotes Velhos. The forces of orthodoxy accused Teresa and her growing number of disciples of using Jailers of Pentheus grimoires, and unsettling similarities exist between known Jailer texts and the *Book of the Helots*.

Teresa transcribed the volume while in a series of trance states between 1863 and her sudden death in the middle of a chapter, of a heart attack during a channeling session in 1881. In language by turns lambent and impenetrable, the *Book of the Helots* teaches that Atlantis (which the work calls Ajuka), far from the home of perfect Awakened enlightenment, was a brutal tyranny that monstrously exploited not only the mortals in the outer world but its own citizens. The 10 kings of Ajuka reshaped the world to their whim, but doled out only scraps of magical truth to even their favored toadies, carving an Abyss between the kings' hearts' desire and the sight of all others.

The fall of this hateful kingdom of fear, which exceeded even Plato's dreams for his totalitarian Republic, was no tragedy but the first opportunity that any human besides a handful had to rise above mud, blood and filth. Even now, say the Helotists, the Fallen Kings' undead jaws gape wide between the Earth and the Supernal Realm, swallowing up all but a few of the Helotes Velhos who would try to rejoin the two sides and close the moat Ajuka dug against the world. To

the orders, this is all bad enough, but, worse yet, some of the Helotist oblations involve negotiating with the Exarchs (or Exús) for access to the Supernal. One or two Helotist branches consider the Exarchs active embodiments of good and justice, embodiments or emissaries of the Good Fathers who created humanity and magic in the first place. Although the main Helotist congregations of the time joined the Free Council in the Great Refusal of 1899, cabals of Filhexús ("sons of the Exús") still thrive in urban Brazil.

The Agra Revelations

A much different picture of Atlantis emerged from obscurity in India, where, in the wake of the 1857 Rebellion, British cabals had managed to wrench a major repository of scriptures and other artifacts in Agra from control of the Nine. Although many of the writings contradicted not only the orthodox version of Atlantis but also each other, the bulk of the material could be reconciled roughly into a single narrative. Over the last 150 million years or so, most of the texts seemingly agree, five decreasingly magical races rose and fell from five decreasingly transcendent "Atlantisés." Each race left behind shattered descendant sub-races, from whom arose the next builders of the next Atlantis. The five stages of history as given in the "Agra Revelations" run as follows:

- One hundred and fifty million years ago, a nameless, invisible, formless (but colossal) race of astral beings built the Imperishable Sacred Land as a cap over the North Pole of the Earth. They still exist, although the act of building their Atlantis impelled a sub-race of them to take quasi-material etheric forms.

- These forms became the second race, the Hyperboreans, which some texts identified with Nagas or with giant dragon-people. Androgynous and egg-laying, the Hyperboreans built their crescent-shaped Atlantis in the northern wastes of Canada and Siberia before abandoning their Atlantis to the ice some 30 million years ago.

- The Hyperboreans' increasingly humanoid and material descendants, left behind after the Nagas' departure, became the Lemurians. They physically resembled enormous four-armed apes, some with three eyes and others with only one. The Lemurians served as channels for higher spiritual entities, who guided the Lemurians in the construction of vast cities on an immense southern continent, Lemuria, which covered roughly the entire Indian and South Atlantic Oceans. Lemuria fell during a cosmic war with an unknown foe (perhaps a returned Naga remnant) some 18 million years ago. Rather than be physically destroyed, however, Lemuria attenuated into imperceptibility, "thinning out" across the world except for certain vortex points such as the Red Cliffs of Madagascar.

- The only remaining Lemurians, the most dense and material, were two-eyed mutations that became the Atlanteans. These Lemurians resembled human beings, albeit 12-foot-tall human beings with obsidian skin. A series of catastrophic earthquakes and floods destroyed Atlantis (a continent in the North Atlantic) 850,000 years ago, leaving a number of successor kingdoms scattered over the world.

- True Humans descend from one group of surviving Atlanteans, although the Agra Revelations differ widely concerning which particular ethnic stock represents the Atlanteans today. Inspired by Ascended masters within the Supernal Realm, True Humans built their own “Atlantis,” which sank in its own turn 30,000 (or 12,000) years ago.

Shortly after sorcerous scholars disseminated the Agra texts across the Awakened world, mages all over the globe began receiving channeled Astral communications from beings claiming to be Lemurians or Atlanteans, each with their own particular version of cosmic history and magical geology. Reconciling the myriad of pettifogging differences soon became a fulltime task for Mysterium scholars, and, over the next several decades, they quietly sidelined the Agra Revelations in favor of a return to orthodox Platonist opinion. Although very little evidence could be adduced to refute this new cosmogony, and a great deal of scattered testimony (both channeled from “Ascended masters” and deduced from mute artifacts) bolstered individual strands, the preponderance of Awakened opinion remained unswayed by such a convoluted mythology. Its emergence within Sleeper occultism by means of a series of inspired confidence schemes using a mislaid Mysterium study document also damaged the mythology’s credibility among willworking savants.

The Mother of Civilizations

Not all the materials in the Agra cache supported the Agra Revelations by any means. The so-called Naacal Tablets were among the many anomalous artifacts found in the Agra repository. The Tablets are carved in four scripts: two unknown alphabets (called Naacal A and Naacal B), an allusive and antiquated version of the High Speech and an initiatic rune system used by the shamanic priests of a corpse-eating cult in the Burmese highlands. The Tablets themselves are made of smooth, blood-colored stone with no marks or weathering whatsoever — in fact, the Tablets are impervious to every physical test so far performed on them. Use of Time spells to examine the Tablets gives wildly divergent results, from trillions of years old to “not in existence yet.” In 1898, a team of three Awakened scholars prepared a translation of the Tablets, which turned out (by their reading) to tell the story of the Queen of Tears, the last monarch of Atlantis.

Mhu, heiress to the throne of Atlantis, was courted by both Qo and Aac, a warrior and scholar, respectively. She chose Qo, who was promptly murdered by Aac, who claimed the throne by force. Qo’s soldiers mutinied at this flagrant usurpation, and the ensuing war became the great struggle that destroyed Atlantis, “drowned in the tears of Queen Mhu,” as the Tablets say. The translation team immediately broke down in arguments about what the story signified when presenting their work at a Convocation in London. One member held that the story was an allegorical myth about the Fall, while his brother argued just as strenuously (bolstered by recent finds in the Yucatan) that the Tablets were a real historical record of the lost Pacific continent.

The third member of the team, Kristina von Boden-Kabine, had still a third explanation, although it depended upon

further mystery. While translating the Naacal inscriptions, she said, they had several times changed to faultless German before her eyes and then changed back. The German text she saw always matched the results of later translations by other scholars. Based on this phenomenon, and certain other Arcane indications, Professor von Boden-Kabine claimed that the Naacal Tablets were in an “eka-language,” written on a higher plane of reality, from whence the Tablets also received their completely immeasurable physical properties. On this plane, von Boden-Kabine said, “Queen” Mhu lives, most probably in a madhouse. The entire universe, both the Supernal and Material Realms, is solely the Queen’s imagination; the Fall and the Abyss are how we, as fragments of her sundered mind, perceive her crippling madness. Our myths of the Flood are memories of her tears, and Atlantis was torn apart not by hubris or earthquake, but by the trauma of a being on an immensely higher plane of reality. The Tablets are the sole core of this being’s sanity, a memory repressed or reconstructed to allow her to heal.

Von Boden-Kabine concluded that only by constant meditation on the Tablets by every Awakened being (Sleepers being purely imaginary fictions without even shards of Mhu’s original personality or consciousness in them) can we lift the world into the light of the Supernal and restore the working of true Reason. Although von Boden-Kabine’s interpretation caused a great sensation at the time, most of the Naacal Meditative Chancels she established in Germany and Austria died out during World War I. The image of the “Queen of Tears” (often based on von Boden-Kabine’s own face) survives on T-shirts and in tattoo art among some younger Eastern European mages.

Atlantis and Ragnarok

The sensation the Naacal Tablets created within the Atlanteological sections of Awakened opinion was dwarfed by a new, more spectacular heresy. Atlantis, claimed a growing number of mages during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had not been destroyed by a noble war in the Supernal between the Exarchs and the Oracles, or even by a natural disaster. Atlantis had been destroyed when a comet struck the Awakened City and obliterated it. That impact, not hubris or revenge, split open the Abyss and sundered the Realms. The great phenomena of the universe — matter and magic — happened by accident.

Unusually, this theory entered the Awakened consciousness from the Sleeper side. Edmond Halley had proposed that a comet’s passage caused the Biblical Flood, and in 1788 one Count Giovanni Rinaldo Carli first proposed that a comet had destroyed Atlantis. The thesis lay relatively dormant even on the Sleeper fringe until 1883, when Minnesota politician and polemicist Ignatius Donnelly published the sequel to his bestseller *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* as *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel*. Donnelly’s first book placed Atlantis in the mid-Atlantic (where Kircher had 200 years before), and Donnelly’s second argued that a comet destroyed Atlantis and left a layer of gravel in drift patterns across the Northern Hemisphere, wrongly ascribed to the glaciers of the Ice Ages.

The Knight of the Comet

Even in 1883, Donnelly's science was considered ludicrous, but his book caught the attention of a cabal of mages headed by Sir James Owsley-Palmer, the Astronomer Royal for Capetown. Sir James recognized that a comet, in classical astrology, represented exactly what Donnelly had implied: a disruptive change completely outside the system of the world. Furthermore, a large number of anomalous astronomical and astrological readings could be explained by just such an immense perturbation. Sir James' 1885 report to the Astrological Consilium at Edinburgh laid out a strong case for the cometary theory, and other cabals in America, Japan and Germany joined the search for further confirmation. But that mathematical work, and further astronomical observations of Mars and the Moon, led to a revised theory and a great deal of practical activity.

By 1893, the new kabbalist and gravitational calculations demonstrated that a single Earth impact was insufficient to explain the anomalies in the data. Again, Sir James came up with the crucial insight. Atlantis, he realized, was the original fifth planet of the solar system, orbiting between Jupiter (representing Heaven, kingship and the Supernal Realm) and Mars (representing war, struggle, base emotion and the Material Realm). The planet Atlantis, struck by a comet, exploded, leaving the asteroid belt (the Abyss) and a few survivors who fled, as best they could, to the lower planets where the Atlanteans may have planted colonies. Earth, Sir James theorized, might well have been a howling super-tropical wilderness full of monsters and spirits until the rain of fragments from doomed Atlantis shot up immense dust-clouds that cooled the world and caused the Ice Age. A similar rain may have started the inexorable growth of the Martian desert, dooming the Atlantean colony there to slow desiccation and death.

The Bellerophon Society

By this time, the core mages in Owsley-Palmer's study group had formed their own extended cabal, the Bellerophon Society. Named for the legendary rider of the winged horse Pegasus, the cabal's announced purpose was to "improve the understanding of the Heavens"; the cabal recruited members among Awakened astronomers and navigators throughout the world. One open priority of Bellerophon Society investigators was the hunt for meteorite fragments. If Atlantis exploded in outer space, shards of the Heavenly City might still litter the waste places of the Earth. Bellerophonites trekked across the Siberian taiga, plunged deep into the Matto Grosso and climbed the Mountains of the Moon in central Africa following up historical (and sorcerous) records of fallen stars, anomalous craters and "thunder stones."

Other Bellerophon Society teams researched possible meteorites of legend, from the Holy Grail (the "stone fallen from Heaven" of *Parzival*) to the Kaaba in Mecca to Chintamani, the Black Stone of the Mongols. Some Bellerophonites dove into the Temenos, seeking the mythical craters left behind by such stones, from the Lia Fail in Ireland to the Stones of Niobe dropped across Anatolia by the tears of the goddess



Cybele. But as Arcane as this research became, rumors filtered out to the Consilii that the Bellerophon Society was up to something even stranger. Cargoes of worked brass and crystal arrived at Capetown and disappeared into the interior. Parchments containing immensely powerful Space and Forces rites became items much sought by Owsley-Palmer's correspondents. Dreamers heard vast rumbles above the Astral Planes when Mars was in close opposition.

Sir James and the Bellerophon Society, it was whispered, had constructed their own ships of space, flinging themselves across the void to Mars and the asteroids. From a hidden sanctum in Upper Rhodesia or some isolated Pacific island, the Bellerophontes supposedly quested for Atlantean ruins beside the canals of Mars and in the splintered caverns of the asteroids. The Paris caucus of the Guardians of the Veil investigated every story, no matter how wild. A Japanese Bellerophonte was fingered as instrumental in Percival Lowell's rapid shift of interest from esoteric Buddhism to mapping Mars. An Awakened Prussian industrialist paid a huge sum for the core of the Tunguska meteorite at a secret auction in 1909. Tall, thin cloaked figures were seen shuffling into a South African observatory one night in 1912, weighed down as if by an unfamiliar gravitation. The Guardians even sifted the channeled reports of Swedenborg and Hélène Smith concerning masked (and French-speaking) initiates on Mars and other worlds, trying to work backwards through the Astral. But Sir James' paranoid security precautions (and possibly the Bellerophontes' obsessive desire to monopolize their extraterrestrial Atlantis) left the Guardians with nothing more solid than the tissue of rumors and hints with which they began. Before they could build further, the Bellerophon Society splintered in the chaos of the First World War, and its member cabals turtled up and added yet another layer of secrecy to hide their salvaged pieces of the puzzle from each other. If a grand conspiracy to seek Atlantis in space had ever existed, it had sunk without a trace.

The Outsiders and Others

After World War I, Sir James' pronouncements changed tenor yet again. He still theorized that Atlantis lay in outer space, but increasingly questioned the overarching narrative of the Celestial Ladder and the War in Heaven. Atlantis may, he admitted, have secured a passageway into the Supernal—but his meteorite research, he claimed, indicated Atlantean exposure not merely to Supernal but to Abyssal, or even trans-Supernal forces. Atlantis had been destroyed, he argued, not by internal dissension and struggle, but by a previously unsuspected race of godlike entities he called the Outsiders. In Owsley-Palmer's 1922 book on the subject, *Cheiron's Arrow*, he argued that the trans-Supernal Outsiders had smashed the planet Atlantis with "an arrow of Abyssal energy perceptible in the Material as a comet" out of fear once the Atlanteans had opened the ways to the Supernal.

The majority of the Mysterium, and indeed most conventional mages, responded with skepticism. Orthodox theorists explained the Abyssal energies of Sir James' meteorites as

disproof of Sir James' chronology: obviously, these meteors did not come from Atlantis, but merely passed through the Abyss after the Fall. Rebuttals simply ignored or ridiculed Owsley-Palmer's claims of "trans-Supernal" energies, noting that the few samples Sir James allowed others to examine showed wildly variant results to each experimenter. To Sir James, however, his results painted a consistent picture, one that grew darker as he gathered more material. In 1926, reduced to a single coterie of fellow paranoids, Sir James Owsley-Palmer and his followers vanished forever—self-exiled in an etheric space Ark, removed to some isolated sanctum in the African wilderness or encysted within an Astral oubliette, no one could say for certain. He left behind a final manuscript, published in 1927 as *The Oracle of Typhon*, which presented the final version of his theory.

The Outsiders, he wrote, were the "higher acamoth," beings actually native to a Realm *under* the Abyss, which predated, surrounded and transcended the "fragile bubble of the Supernal" built by the planet Atlantis. The Outsiders smashed Atlantis not out of fear, but out of idle malice or, worse yet, as casually and unknowingly as a man steps on an ant. Once their Abyssal energies leaked "up into our perception," humankind was doomed. Owsley-Palmer identified hundreds of anomalous happenings, mysterious deaths and occult rumors as stemming from the activities of "acamothic cults," formed by the "wisest of the wise," whose greater perceptions forcibly realigned their sympathies toward the Outsiders. The more Awakenings, the more tunnels the Outsiders potentially possess into our Realm and the weaker reality becomes. The Fall of Atlantis, Sir James wrote, is happening all around us right now, inescapable and implacable.

Time and Again

Sir James' various theories might have had more impact in another era, but by the interwar period, challenges to the classical view of Atlantis had become practically de rigueur among daring young mages. Only a few of the wild variations proposed ever caught on with any but a small circle of would-be heresiarchs. Most of these theories turned out to be either misunderstood or bowdlerized versions of earlier theories lifted from previous Atlantean questers or from the increasingly tumultuous world of Sleeper science and occultism. A circle of Awakened poets in Paris, Les Cantosphériens, reprinted a number of Scarlet Mulberry codices in collectors' editions throughout the 1920s, sparking another wave of Astral searches and a civil war in Mongolia. Elsewhere, a very enthusiastic trader of the Thrysus named Byron Khun de Porok attempted to reawaken the entire Garamantean empire in 1925 through "bio-archaeo-necromancy" in the Algerian mountains.

One of the more original variations on the Atlantean theme came out of an attempt to blend Einstein and Atlantis. The eccentric Lithuanian physicist Ingrid Tyaamat proposed that Atlantis did not "sink" in the vertical dimension, but in the temporal one. The Awakened City was not buried deep beneath the waves, but deep behind the eons, hurled 900 million years backward in time. The Atlanteans had slowly lived their way back toward the present, evolving both magically and physi-

cally until they became the great dragons that appeared in the dreams of the first human Awakened. Just as some conventional theorists believe that a single island outcrop of Atlantis remains above the waves, Tyaamat proposed that as much as a week of Atlantis might remain in the present, accessible at “calender chakra points.” Fragmentary seconds of Atlantis, scattered across the ages like ash from a volcano, may explain the Awakening of similarly scattered human mages.

It Is All Happening Over Again

Another relatively original theory sprang from the pen of the exiled Russian symbolist poet Dmitri Sergeyevitch Merezhkovsky. Although a Sleepwalker, he attracted an active salon of Awakened followers within the Russian émigré community in Warsaw and Paris, who treated him as something between a mascot and a “holy fool.” In 1930, he published a nearly impenetrable tome, *The Mystery of the West: Atlantis-Europe*. Although Merezhkovsky plagiarized most of his supporting arguments from Donnelly’s books and similar works, the central argument was the Russian’s own. Atlantis, it seems, reincarnates itself throughout history. In every epoch, a faction disgusted by the base activities of the Material Realm attempts to raise a Celestial Ladder to enter the Supernal, and a rival faction wages war to prevent it. That war knocks away the Ladder and destroys Atlantis all over again. Merezhkovsky was cagey about specific past incarnations of Atlantis, hinting that Troy, Rome and Tenochtitlán all show suggestive elements of the pattern. He reserved more of his attention to warn this epoch’s Atlantis, Europe (specifically Paris) that a “hidden hand” had smashed the last empires and was raising up a new blasphemy. A new war was inevitable, then, between those who sought to conquer the Supernal and those who would prevent them, and, in that war, Atlantis-Europe would be destroyed within the century. As it happened, it only took another decade.

The Return of Hyperborea

The forces that would confirm Merezhkovsky’s vision, if not his cosmology, had been gathering intellectual steam for 250 years. In 1679, the Swedish savant Olaf Rudbeck began by arguing that Plato was a blind alley: Norse sagas and Homeric epics both pointed to Sweden as the original Atlantis. In 1781, the French astronomer and mystic Jean Sylvain Bailly used Rudbeck’s research to argue that Atlantis must have been in the far north, well above the Arctic Circle. The coming of the ice, in a sudden catastrophic cooling, destroyed Atlantis, and the Atlanteans migrated south to found civilizations in India, Greece and so forth. In 1819, the philosopher Friedrich von Schlegel adapted a name from Herodotus to denote this super-race: the Aryans.

Tilted Paradise

The “northern Atlantis” theory appealed to a faction of Awakened thought as well, which had likewise neglected Plato in favor of other threads to the skein. A number of cabals built from neo-Druid movements in Georgian England, German university fraternities and a widespread clan of Awakened

Tuscan nobility took part in a wide-ranging letter-writing circle of occult study and occasional Astral travel. These Drachensöhnen, the Sons of the Dragon, began to focus ever more closely on the flights of the dragons seen by the original Awakened around the spire of Atlantis. To the Drachensöhnen, that flight both prefigured and symbolized the wheeling of the constellations around the polestar. Thus, the study of ancient astronomy was the first key to the study of Atlantis.

Although the traditional Atlantis legend of the Awakened describes the spire of Atlantis as “pointing at the polestar,” most mages neglected that element of the story, considering it merely emblematic of the role of Atlantis in magical evolution. To the Drachensöhnen, the pointing of the polestar was the literal truth. But if Atlantis was beneath the polestar, it meant one inescapable truth: the Pole was once warm. Bailly’s work showed that on an Earth with a vertical axis and no orbital tilt, there would be no seasons, and the world would be in eternal spring. The 12-hour day of the Arctic would be a day of fertility and life, allowing cultivation and cities far above the modern Arctic Circle. This, then, was Atlantis: a city raised on a rocky crag too far north for the monsters and revenants of the primordial world to hunt but warm enough to allow human civilization to grow there, protected by the watchful eye of Draco, the constellation coiled around the northern sky. Until one fatal day, the day of the Fall, when the Earth’s axis tilted to its present 23.5 degrees, throwing the Arctic into six months of darkness every winter and allowing glaciers to spread over the battlements of the Awakened City.

The notion of a catastrophic tilt in the distant past, ending a Golden Age of perfection, was not original to the Sons of the Dragon. The pre-Socratic philosophers Empedocles and Anaxagoras both assumed axial tilt, and even Plato (in *The Statesman*) mentioned a reordering of the Earth’s rotation as a “shock that set up a great quaking which caused . . . the destruction of living creatures of all kinds.” In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton described an axial tilt as the proximate cause of the destruction of Eden, and the 18th-century French naturalist the Comte du Buffon had likewise explained the extinction of large animals by that means. What the Sons of the Dragon did was present a coherent Awakened version of the theory, and tie it to the notion of a northern “Aryan Atlantis.”

As far as any modern Awakened researcher can discover, the Drachensöhnen did little damage in the name of their anthropological enthusiasms. They mounted expeditions to polar islands, investigated the *Edda* and sagas of the Norse and drew up elaborate charts of the stars during various distant epochs. Of course, various dark rumors still cling to the Drachensöhnen’s actions, from vampiric contamination by the Ordo Dracul to ritual arson and incest. Most of these are probably “blowback” from the Sons’ vastly more dangerous intellectual descendants, the Thule Gesellschaft of Munich.

Armies of Thule

If the Sons of the Dragon now wear a veil of obscurity and rumor, the Thule Society is practically buried beneath a shroud of such stuff. Few mages will even admit that the

Thule Gesellschaft might have been a cabal, and those who do ascribe it to their own worst enemies within the Pentacle. Self-justification, slander and the chaos of World War II have drowned the truth about the Thulists deeper than Atlantis. All that is known are the bare facts.

In 1918, a mystic named Rudolf von Sebottendorf organized meetings of an "intellectual study group" called the Thule Gesellschaft, or Thule Society, in the Four Seasons Hotel in Munich. This group named itself for "Ultima Thule," the northerly land discovered by Pytheas of Massilia in around 300 BC, which, thanks to the Sons of the Dragon and similar scholars, had entered common occult parlance as a synonym for Atlantis. The Thule Society in its turn founded the National Socialist German Workers Party – the Nazi Party – as a "workers' auxiliary" to its aristocratic, intellectual activities. After the failed Nazi putsch of 1923, the Thule Society *per se* drops out of the records. Five years later, another theorist, Hermann Wirth, posited the existence of an "Atlantean" civilization on Thule (in his theory, a continent spanning Greenland, Iceland and Spitsbergen) between 25,000 and 12,000 BC. Wirth founded the Ahnenerbe (Ancestral Heritage) Society in 1935, along with his patron, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. Although the Ahnenerbe expelled Wirth in 1937, it continued to seek out the remnants of Thule (and Atlantis) across the globe.

The Thulists most likely believed in a "Hyperborean" Atlantis, a secret sorcerous kingdom of perfect Aryan giants hidden from corrupt, fallen humankind, and spent no little effort searching for it. The Ahnenerbe launched expeditions, with increasing SS participation, to Iceland, Tibet, Brazil, Ethiopia and the Canary Islands, among other exotic locations. Ahnenerbe researchers studied rune magic, yoga, Druidism, astral and dream travel, weather control and witchcraft – and ran the Dachau torture chambers and V-2 rocket facilities. This much is known; the rest disappeared with the Ahnenerbe records during the Allied invasion of Germany in 1945.

The rumors, by contrast, are vast and contain multitudes. The Thulists have been painted as a "noble remnant" of Awakened working secretly to destroy Germany's magical empire from within, or as the black core of Nazism, puppet-masters jerking the strings of Hitler, Hess, Himmler and others. The Thulists were mere mortal fumblers, or masters of magics completely unknown to today's Awakened. The Thulists sought the Dreaming Butterfly Temple in Tibet, or the Hollow Earth in Antarctica. Their lore was pure Aryan runic wisdom, or technomagic of the most inhuman and futuristic kind. They all died in a suicidal death-ritual in 1945, or they escaped to Argentina or the Astral Realm. They were a completely independent group Awakened by some unfortunate coincidence or evil demon, or willing slaves of the Seers of the Throne or loyal tools of some faction still working its will unsuspected in today's Pentacle politics.

Although official Pentacle Consilium opinion is that the whole topic is tasteless, pointless and beneath comment, almost every mage has an opinion about which, if any, of the Thulist personalities were Awakened; and, if so, which known or

existing cabals or orders they might have worked with. It does beggar belief that Nazi Germany, alone of all major human governments from Shang dynasty China to Castro's Cuba, would have no Awakened mages working within it. If such mages did exist, they could well have been carrying out the agenda of the Silver Ladder or the Guardians of the Veil, who, in all other circumstances, boast of their complete penetration of Sleeper politics and society. Likewise, the *modus operandi* of the Ahnenerbe could be a model of Mysterium activities; Free Council Libertines are quick to toss hints and allegations (not to mention epithets such as "storm troopers") at the Adamantine Arrows. Of course, more sensitive members of the four Diamond orders then point out that the Thulist movement was as rejectionist as any Free Council cabal, and the whole argument disintegrates into personalities and subjectivism.

New Views Over Atlantis

In the modern era, Atlantis remains a symbol and a lodestone, but the meaning of the symbol, and the direction the lodestone draws the Seeker, are perhaps as tangled as they have ever been. All the theories and speculations of the past four millennia have been revived by the simultaneous flowering of information on the Internet and elsewhere and disintegration of orthodoxy in politics, mores and art. Even now, though, most Awakened probably still hold an orthodox, "Platonist" view of Atlantis: an Awakened island city at the beginning of history destroyed by hubris and war in a flood or cataclysm that left behind the Abyss and scattered remnants across the globe. A plurality may even still accept Plato's word that Atlantis was "beyond the Pillars of Heracles," in the North Atlantic Ocean somewhere. But even the average, conventional mage (a concept that doesn't really exist, of course) likely takes her own view of the specifics. She breathes in the dust of heresy and apocrypha raised over the last 4,000 years, and some of it sticks. She may believe that the Exarchs were Nagas, or that Atlantis sank beneath lava in Tanganyika rather than saltwater in the Caribbean. And somewhere, there's a cabal ready to stake everything on any one of those doubts.

Apocrypha Now

There is still room for Atlantis in the postmodern, over-explored, evermore interconnected world of the third millennium. The Congo River has only been scientifically descended once. The Gobi Desert remains a blank spot on the map. Pristine valleys still reveal themselves in the Guiana highlands or upper Laos. Revisionist geologists and orthodox Tamers of Rivers debate underwater pyramids newly seen off Cuba and Okinawa. Sleeper archaeologists admit that there are still hidden chambers beneath the Giza Plateau; Awakened scholars discover unknown map tables baked into the ruins of Pompeii. Even where satellites or sryers spot new and promising details – a roadway through the Guatemalan jungle or a buried fortress in the Pakistani highlands – civil war or environmental chaos can keep whole provinces as inaccessible as they were during the time of Solon.

Forgotten Cities

These five vanished places straddle the shifting boundary between truth and legend, history and myth. The roads to Atlantis lead through such gates.

Bigo bya Mugenyi: A network of interlocking earthworks and trenches, some of them cut 12 feet deep through bedrock, encircles a cluster of eroded mounds along the Katonga River in Uganda. Iron tools and crystal artifacts have been found, along with niches cut high in the trench walls and a ceremonial reservoir up the river at Bwogera.

Archaeologists ascribe these mounds, similar to others in the area, to the Kitara, a culture that flourished in the region between 1000 and AD 1500. Others say the Bigo ruins date to the Shenzi, a large kingdom destroyed by Arab slave traders in the 8th century AD. The locals, however, ascribe them to Mugenyi, the wizard-king of the Chwezi, who are a combination of spirits and giants possibly based on the priestly "mediums" of the Kitara. The locals swear that the Chwezi carry off trespassers in their ruins.

Cahokia: On the eastern shore of the Mississippi River, opposite modern St. Louis, a 100-foot earthen mound similar to a Toltec pyramid rises from a base larger than the Great Pyramid of Giza. "Monk's Mound" (the largest of over 100 earthworks on the site) was the center of Cahokia, the largest city north of Mexico until the 19th century. Cahokia's population crested at 40,000 around AD 1100; 400 years later, it was an unknown wasteland. Perhaps one reason why: one skeleton, the "Bird Man of Cahokia," was found in a ridge-top mound, lying atop 20,000 seashell beads laid out in the shape of a falcon — and atop 250 slaughtered corpses.

Ephyra: Located in mountainous Epirus, in the wild northwest of Greece, the Cyclopean fortress walls here date back to the 13th century BC. On the shore of Lake Acherousia, where the rivers Cocytus and Acheron met, Ephyra held the famous Nekromanteion, the "oracle of the dead." Ephyra was literally the opening to the underworld. As such, it became a shrine to Hades and Persephone, and a major cult center down to the classical era. A vast underground labyrinth connected the temple buildings and provided access to the "cauldron" where the dead appeared to pilgrims. The Romans destroyed Ephyra in 167 BC; in the 18th century, a monastery of St. John the Baptist was built on the hilltop above the ruins.

Loulan: Likely called Kroraina in the Tocharian language of the city's founders, this city in the wastes of Xinjiang dominated the Silk Road traffic between China proper and Central Asia. The red-haired Tocharians mummified their dead in bright plaid kilts, and buried them in caves overlooking the Tarim River. The Chinese described the people of Loulan as "resembling birds and wild beasts," and treacherously slaughtered the Tocharian king at a banquet in 77 BC. Around 400 years later, the Tarim River abruptly changed course, leaving Loulan in the middle of the desert, where the sands swiftly buried it.

Yonaguni: In 1985, Kihachiro Aratake discovered immense, regular structures underwater off Yonaguni in the Ryukyu Islands south of Japan. Later dives, especially after a 1998 seaquake in the area, seemed to reveal an 80-foot pyramid of stone and coral, with weathering and lichen patterns indicating that its construction (if such there was) dated back to 8000 BC. This "pyramid" matches both the legendary palace of the Japanese Dragon King, Ryujin, and the natural result of undersea volcanic flows.

In and out of the Mysterium, mages search ancient records, or clamber across the Nan Madol causeways in Pohnpei and down the Moche grave shafts in Ecuador. Algerian mages now trumpet the "Atlantis in the Sands" theory, and vision-quest in dreams for the vanished bison-lords of the Saharan grassland. Occult architects and Awakened eco-tourists hunt for Cities of the Sun in Australia and the 999 Steps to Shangri-la in Nepal (and occasionally vice versa). Presumably, the spirits damned by the Jailers of Pentheus to the Atlantean Hell are also still imprisoned there; every so often, rumor claims that some Moros mage or Clavicularian legatee has contacted or freed one of the spirits out of desperation or charity.

Driven half by kitsch and half by nightmare, the Knights of Maelzel cabal in Baltimore launches an annual expedition in search of the Hollow Earth during the first week of October on the anniversary of Poe's occultation and death. Even India seems more welcoming to Atlantis questers driven by the Agra Revelations, although such expeditions seldom find anything but further twisty complications. The few that succeed seemingly require the active cooperation of one of the nine officious and opaque directors of the Vighnaharta Secretariat in New Delhi (which blandly claims affiliation with the Guardians of the Veil and the Silver Ladder, to the confusion of both) to avoid bureaucratic entanglements, misadventure and the occasional tragic accident.

Both protectors and pilgrims take on new forms in the new India. Bangalore is the "hub sanctum" for the New Shoal of Night, a Free Council-affiliated "hypercabal" run online by Awakened scholars in India, Singapore and Hong Kong. Other programmers in Spain and Finland are working on algorithmi-

cally interleaving the *Picatrix* with the “most reliable versions” of the various *Picators* to “breed” a “pure-bred Atlantean child-text,” the *Calix*, which they believe may somehow combine the features of familiar, grimoire and spirit guide. Going the other direction, an anonymous cabal posting as RDX/RGX claims to be attempting to crack the Atlantean genome using “donated mage DNA.” Their web page denounces the “tale of the blood thief” in which newly-Awakened in Lagos or Caracas suffer “missing time” and mysterious wounds as an urban legend unrelated to their work. Such mytho-ideological chaff is grist for the mill at *acacia-and-gold.net*, which freely and anonymously distributes top-shelf document and photo forgery materials to all comers in the name of letting “a 1,000 flowers bloom in Dilmun.”

Off the Net, the Helotists still draw worshipers both Sleeping and Awakened to their Candomblé ceremonies in the teeming slums of Brazil and Angola, not to mention more upscale temples in Los Angeles and Lisbon. Los Angeles also hosts at least one moribund “Neo-Callistite Church,” and an active Awakened rave club that doubles as a fane of the Queen of Tears. Specialty publishers catering to the Awakened keep Tyamaat and Merezkhovsky in print, and crank out endless Agra Variations. Older sects and heresies likewise cling to relevance, if not to reality, in shabby sanctums from Volgograd to Vancouver.

The Legacy of St. Michael has splintered into three main surviving branches. The Scriptoire de St.-Michel pursues futile lawsuits against the French government to be allowed to return to the Mont while chasing increasingly faint genealogical trails through the lesser libraries of Europe. The Daughters of Melusine officially disbanded in 1968, but have allegedly moved their entire operation undersea to a hidden sanctum off the coast of Brittany to explore parthenogenesis, mermaids and “Atlantis in Ovo,” whatever that means. The last branch of the Legacy, which calls itself the True Legacy of Saint Michael Protector, bases itself in a compound in Montana, where the members worship the theoretical “shining ones” who conceal “Atlantis-America.”

The Legacy’s idiosyncratic blend of Sioux traditions and British Israelitism would convince nobody of anything, save that the Legacy’s grim, crew-cut scholars turn up amazing finds, which they share with a select few mages at infrequent Chicago Mysterium caucuses. Less openly, rumors persist of a New Bellerophon Society, transmitting its conceptual spacecraft along radio waves to NASA or ESA satellites, and more grimly of a Thulskaya Soviet emerging in chaotic post-Gorbachev Russia devoted to “advancing the bloodline of pure Slavic Thule.” These mages reportedly recovered the old Ahnenerbe library seized by the Red Army in 1945, and carry on the Thulist agenda from sanctums in abandoned gulags above the Arctic Circle.

But even the self-proclaimed heretics have their own heretics who question their sources and methods. At least two other fringe cabals claim the “true” mantle of Thule, and there are more variations on the Agra Revelations than ever. Awakened conspiracy theorists accuse each other of being fronts for (or

enemies of) the Hyperborean Secret Masters, and occasionally confess it themselves. Even uncertainty is uncertain, in the postmodern magical mind. As the Age of Aquarius pours out this flood of confusion, both ancient and modern, a few new apocrypha have bobbed to the surface, new lands of inspiration above the murky waters.

Atlantis/Babylon

Probably as a result of a Weimar-era upsurge in sorcerous urbanism, a number of artists both Awakened and Sleepwalking put on a 1931 exhibition in Berlin entitled “Atlantis-am-Spree.” The paintings and photographs (many of them composed in trance states) depicted Atlantis in existence simultaneously with Berlin; even individual buildings were shown in both “blind” and Atlantean “poses.” The exhibit became a founding document of the Atlantean Spectacle International, a quasi-Situationist postwar cabal that attempted to magically and perceptually repurpose West Berlin, recuperating the Spectacle of the Cold War as the Struggle for Atlantis/Babylon. To the ASI, “Babylon” was the universal unitary Material City, while Atlantis was the universal unitary Awakened City, which were the same city. The motto of the ASI was “lose the other eye instead,” which became a viral chorus in a number of punk repertoires of the 1970s, with unknown magical effects today.

Atlantis Never Ended

A postmodern Acanthus mage who goes by the Net handle VALIS postulated a slightly similar theory in 1992, namely that Atlantis remains all around us, “drowned beneath a sea of consciousness.” In this view, the Fall was also the waking of humankind to active consciousness, and Awakening is a kind of return to a “sleep of incubation” in which the powerful Aethyrs of the Watchtowers act within us and “see through our eyes.” Atlantis “disappears by day for the same reason the stars do — not because it is gone, but because we are blinded to it by the sun of our mentation.” A bizarre blend of Sufism, Situationism and Jaynesian psychology, VALIS’ theory enjoyed a brief vogue during the 1990s among younger mages, especially those who found their oblations leading through pharmaceuticals.

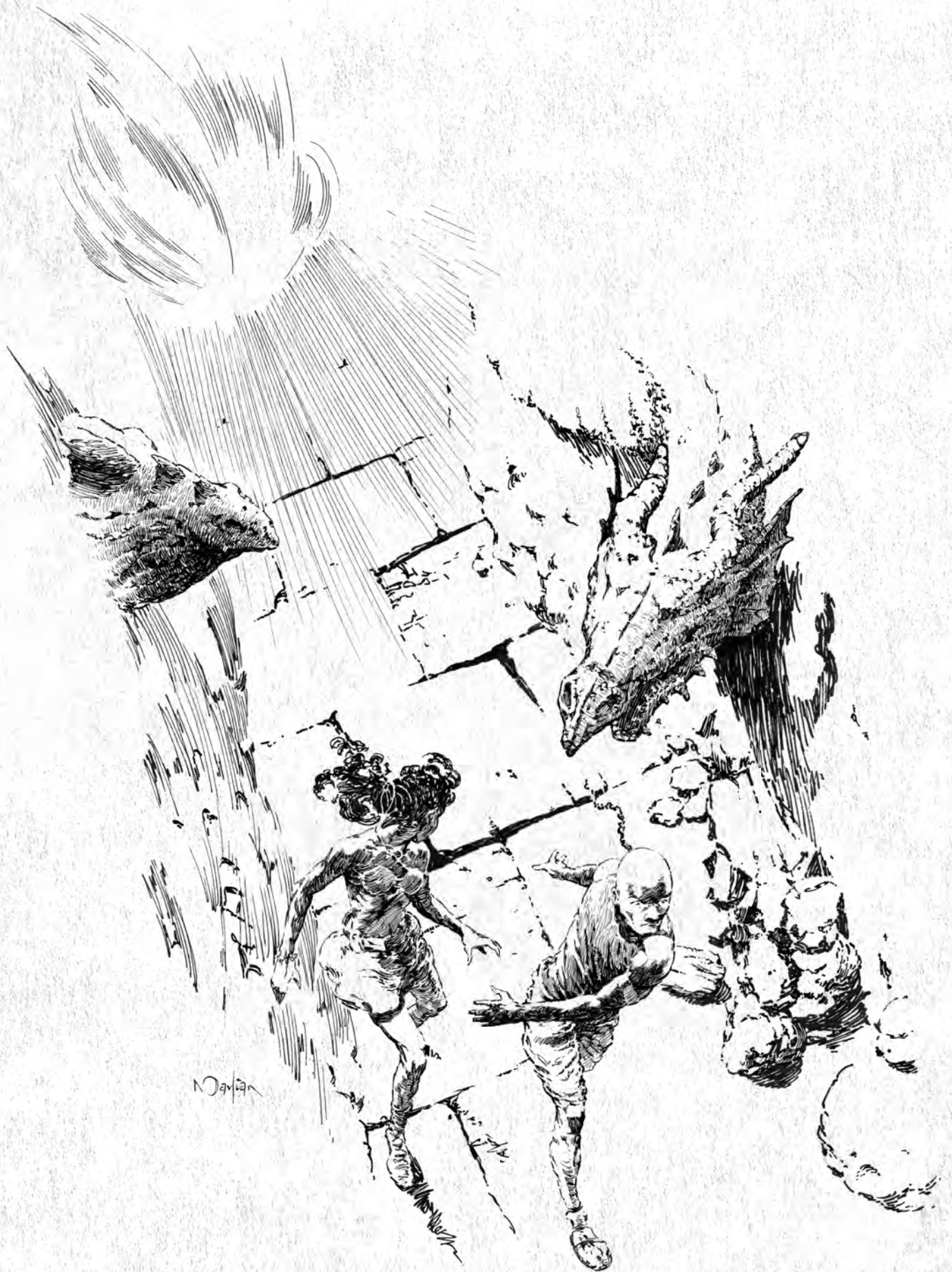
On January 8, 2001, VALIS posted a second (or, by his new reckoning, first) theory: Atlantis only sank seven days ago, on the last day of the last millennium. Time, history and memory are scrims thrown up by the trauma of the Fall, which has led to a “seemingly random ordering of wealth, magic and society.” These, he says, are the first years of chaos, and our job is to “pierce the veil of the Exarchs and see the bubbling maelstrom where our City can yet be saved.” Although rather fewer mages seem to have embraced VALIS’ “New Old Echoism,” a handful of extreme Mastigos theorists in Japan claim that his insight explains some of their more puzzling experimental data. Their truculent championing of the “Quantum New Echoism” has raised hackles among some conservative Guardians of the Veil, who claim to have discovered connections between VALIS’ Japanese acolytes and the remnants of Sir James Owsley-Palmer’s old Bellerophon Society.

And We Shall Build Atlantis

The most popular new apocryphon is probably the New Jerusalem Movement, which began as a Pentecostal church in Uganda. The pastor, Philip Kalule, is an active Awakened member of the Free Council with a powerful interest in all matters Atlantean. Through prayer, meditation and research, Kalule determined that the New Testament book of Revelation refers to Atlantis, which the New Testament calls the New Jerusalem, to be built in the perfect Kingdom of God after the tribulations of the millennium. Although this concept had existed before in Christian hermeneutics of Plato, Kalule's new wrinkle was to reverse causality. The orthodox myth of Atlantis, he preaches, is backward. The effect precedes the apparent cause; the legend is not past but prophecy. These are not the post-Atlantean times of chaos, but the pre-Atlantean times of chaos. There never was an Atlantis, save for the one we still see in dreams, drawing us forth to our best Awakened selves. With every Awakened soul, and every new magical rote, we mages build the Awakened City, which we will call Atlantis and New Jerusalem. We will raise the Ladder to Heaven, and walk in the green and pleasant lands of the Supernal Realms, one with God the Father of All Magic.

Kalule's preaching, and his vociferous rejection of the "doom myth," has had an electric effect on many African, Asian and South American Awakened of all traditions, especially those drawn to the Free Council. The strong Christian gloss he puts on his preaching turns off some European Libertines, and orthodox mages in the other four orders reject Kalule's gospel, but demographics are for now on his side. Even if the New Jerusalem Movement does not remain the new face of Atlantean apocrypha, the legend of Atlantis will no doubt break increasingly free of Plato and Donnelly and sail forth into the dreams and goals of a new world washed by the oceans of the south.





CHAPTER TWO: BENEATH THE SEDIMENT – RUINS

“Run!” shouted Lytton. Velleda didn’t argue. Together they sprinted out of the chamber and down the tunnel. Behind them, the circle of glyphs on the chamber wall spat out a huge globe of sparking, roiling Mana. The two mages ran as fast as they could, up and down stairs, through galleries lined with pillars, past statues and inscriptions. With a flick of his will, Lytton sent great stone doors crashing shut behind them. The violet-sparking globe passed through them like a ghost.

Velleda tried to concentrate through the pain in her lungs and the stitch in her side. The orb followed them like... like a bloodhound. What trail did it follow? How would this ball of magical lightning know to pursue a mage?

Praying her guess correct, Velleda willed her own store of Mana to rise within her and concentrate in her hands. She skidded to a halt, slapped her hands against a statue of a dragon-headed man and willed the raw force of reality to pass into it — all her Mana at once. The wrenching but completely non-physical effort left her shaking. At the end of the gallery, Lytton saw Velleda couldn’t run. He shouted words in the High Speech, made a grabbing motion, and Velleda felt herself yanked through the air towards him.

But the glowing orb did not pursue. A moment after Lytton pulled Velleda away, it swerved and slammed into the statue. The orb vanished in a loud crack. The statue vanished too.

“Nice save,” Velleda gasped as she bent over to catch her breath. And then the second orb rolled into the other end of the gallery.

For the moment — an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by — I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, "Can you see anything?" it was all I could do to get out the words, "Yes, wonderful things . . ."

— Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen*

Mages — at least those of the Atlantean orders — revere the lost glory of Atlantis as a mythical Golden Age. While Atlantis' unity and power remain forever shattered by time and the ever-widening Abyss, relics of the Awakened City's art yet remain. Outposts of empire and refuges of the Exiled still survive the passage of millennia. The remains of other kingdoms exist too, rising and falling with Atlantis and the Sundering or created upon the ruins of past glory by their successors. Finding an intact site from the Atlantean age is a lifelong quest for many mages. In Awakened parlance, such explorers and investigators are commonly called "Seekers," though some of the more scholastic ones prefer the term "archaeomancer."

Atlantis fell long ago, taking with it most of its wonders and treasures. The crystal palaces and silver towers of the Awakened City are gone, as if they never were. Little remains of the ancient miracles wrought in other lands, making those sites yet undiscovered among the most precious of all secrets in the Fallen World. Naturally, the only sorts of "ruins" that interest Seekers are places constructed with enough permanence to survive until the present day. The growing strength of the Abyss erodes the magic empowering and preserving Atlantis' relics, so Seekers know their hoped-for prize shall not last forever. Perversely, however, this entropy also reveals new sites as the spells that conceal them also weaken and fade.

Mages who quest for Atlantean secrets follow a difficult and dangerous path, but the rewards can be astonishing. Even a simple bolt-hole dug by post-Fall refugees might contain long-lost rites, forgotten lore or artifacts impossible for modern magic to replicate — as well as more prosaic rewards such as material wealth or tass. Every new site likewise brings hope that it contains clues revealing the truth about Atlantis' Fall. These secrets come at a high price, though — not least, the naked envy of other Awakened.

Seekers often find that others dog their footsteps or lie in wait for them. Archaeomancers should always beware of foes wresting the prize away at the very moment of triumph, or rushing ahead of them to the goal. Many mages (and stranger entities) would kill for a mere glimpse at Atlantis' secrets. Others would shed oceans of blood to keep them hidden. Those who search for lost relics should stay on their guard — especially of those who share in the quest.

Those Who Have Gone Before

For one brief and shining age, Atlantis stood as a beacon to the Awakened. Then Atlantis Fell, leaving behind only ruins, legends and fragments of lore. Although mages have sought Atlantis' remains for millennia, numerous ancient ruins remain

undiscovered. However, only some of these ruins are actually the work of ancient Atlanteans.

Despite the comforting fables of the Diamond orders, Atlanteans were not the only ancient builders and mystic masters — assuming Atlantis existed as such. More than one "barbarian" kingdom or sorcery rose and fell alongside the Awakened City or afterwards, the rulers following traditions alien to the Dragon Isle. They, too, left monumental works — temples, tombs, palaces and cities — and magical heritages of their own. Just as the remains of the Atlanteans, the remains of these kingdoms' passing await discovery, but the terrors and treasures found within will be exotic and strange — even for Seekers.

Most archaeomancers in the Atlantean orders believe the pre-Fall Atlanteans built relatively few sites away from the Dragon Isle, making them among the most coveted relics imaginable. These far-flung locations sheltered the Dragon Isle's best explorers, researchers and guardians. In these places, Alae Draconis explorers, similar to their modern mystagogue descendants, scoured the world for Arcane phenomena or hunted the fantastic beasts that still roamed the Earth. Other explorers, more studious in their pursuits, investigated mysteries of the Supernal or probed byways of magic considered too risky (or forbidden) for study on the island itself. Outposts and fortresses housed the Atlanteans tasked with keeping the "barbarian" kingdoms in check. These stalwarts were usually drawn from the Eyes and Talons of the Dragon. A few locations were colonies planted by Atlantis to grow and spread the Atlanteans' enlightenment and dominion throughout the world.

After these titans, the Exiles who fled the island became the next wave of Atlantean settlement. They founded several hidden, fortified communities before the Sundering destroyed Atlantis. The shrines and workshops erected by the desperate Exiles remain amongst the most dangerous places a Seeker can find. The Exiles studied dangerous lore and brought forth Things Best Forgotten in their bid to reclaim the Dragon Isle from the nascent Exarchs. Those who trespass upon their halls had best be on their guard.

However, the most numerous sites were built after the Fall. These were the homes of refugees who managed to survive — at least for a time — the Exarchs, the Sundering and the vengeance of Atlantis' many enemies. Some refugees fled the city as the catastrophe struck, using magic portals to any place they could manage. Other Atlanteans foresaw the coming apocalypse and retreated to hidden sanctums erected in haste, but still mighty by the standards of modern Awakened. These mages and their followers were better prepared than the ones who simply fled; some of these mages managed to save a few of Atlantis' greatest treasures.

Shangri-La

One myth debated by the Mysterium says the legendary Timori were one such group of colonists, departing the City in secret long before the Exarchs seized power. These Exiles supposedly built a new city far from the conflict of Exarchs and Oracles and cloaked the city with the deepest secrecy. Some mages think the legend of Shambhala (or its modern name, Shangri-la) comes from this secret city of the Awakened, so they search for it in hidden, remote valleys of the Himalayas and other Central Asian mountain ranges. Other tales place the "second Atlantis" anywhere from the jungles of the Congo to the Hollow Earth; see Chapter One for related speculations.

Such rumors of Shangri-la and other refuges of primal sorcery emerge, mutate and reappear with each generation of mages. These mystic communities live in quiet contemplation and strict isolation to avoid the fate that overwhelmed their enemies and ancestors. Skeptical mages suggest that Awakened who *don't* feel the urge to meddle are more unbelievable than survivors from Atlantis.

Other cultures left their own signatures in the past. Several traditions of "barbarian" mages lived far from the Blessed Isle. While some of these groups may have derived their lore in part from Atlantean custom, others produced completely alien traditions of magery.

Many of these "aberrant" or "barbarian" kingdoms resisted the growing power and tyranny of the Dragon Isle with youthful vigor and desperate Arcane practices. For a time, according to mages who claim to preserve their heritage, these outland sorcerers thwarted the occult machinations of the Visus Draconis and repulsed repeated raids and invasions by the Dragon's Talons. In the end, these sorcerers, too, succumbed to the march of time and the Sundering, to leave behind only fragments and ruins. These other magical traditions are distinct from Atlantean ones. Too late, more than one Seeker has discovered that his carefully prepared rites fail against alien wards and his pleas in High Speech fall upon uncaring ears.

The Fall Into Nightmare

The destruction of the Celestial Ladder did not go unnoticed. The world's other supernatural denizens faced Atlantean attacks and struck back after the Fall. Cryptids and other beasts hunted the survivors, as did those Awakened who opposed Atlantis. Without Atlantis' might to fear, "barbarian" wizards attacked the refugee settlements, partially in revenge for centuries of oppression but mostly to wrest Atlantean secrets from the pitiful survivors. Many colonies perished without Atlantean

support. However, the outlanders suffered as much as the Atlanteans from the Abyss' scourge and fell prey to the same foes that plagued the Atlanteans. The outlanders' legacies and secrets similarly faded over time.

A few refugees tried to recreate the Awakened empire, but each attempt was doomed to failure. It proved almost impossible for the remaining mages to rule the Sleepers with magic as the mages once did as the growing tides of Disbelief overwhelmed their waning might. Paradoxes grew more common and severe until many spells became too dangerous, or simply impossible, forcing the use of smaller, subtler magic. Even the discovery of the Watchtowers did little to halt the slow decline. With fewer mages Awakening in each passing generation, many practices and lineages of teaching died out or retreated into a paranoid secrecy.

Some of these scatterlings blended into their new surroundings in hopes they could civilize and enlighten the barbarians they now lived among — often with mixed results. Although none of these mystic teachers rekindled the flame of Atlantean culture, some of them established new and vibrant cultures in their own right. Today, they are sometimes remembered in myth and legend as mighty gods and mythic heroes.

Enter the Seekers

As the Seekers search for ancient places, they enjoy much the same glamorous reputation among the Awakened that Egyptologists held during throughout 19th century: intrepid explorers and idiotic fools. On one hand, they uncover ancient lore, lost rites and powerful artifacts of Atlantis for their orders. On the other, they face grave dangers and often awaken things best left undisturbed. Many cabals have suffered from powerful curses unleashed by rash explorers or become the victim of horrors unleashed from long-hidden crypts.

Modern mages enjoy an unprecedented level of success in finding Atlantean-era ruins, making this a very profitable pastime for those who can survive it. The pace of discovery has increased for several reasons. The recent growth in global population has brought the mage population to an all-time high. Few places remain far from the notice of the Awakened, just as there are fewer unpopulated areas. The widening of the Abyss and the actions of modern man in diverting ley lines frequently dissipates the ancient spells concealing ancient sites. However, the most important factor may be the simple fact that mages use modern technology as well as magic. Atlantean-era mages and their descendants never designed their wards to hide their refuges from satellite sensors arrays or ultra-precise mapping by lasers and GPS units.

Numerous sites dating back to the days of lost Atlantis still await discovery — each complete with traps, curses, monsters and treasures left behind by the ancient Masters. A Seeker may face just as much danger in searching for an Atlantean ruin, however, as when she enters it. A Seeker soon finds that other entities do not want her to claim the relics of Atlantean power. These entities range from friendly rivals — who may not be above a little sabotage or subterfuge — to deadly enemies

drawn from the Seers of the Throne or the Scelesti. Some of the latter mages do not even honor even the loose rules of the Magicus. Some opponents might not even be among the Awakened since explorers often disturb the lairs of spirits, cryptids or stranger creatures squatting in lost ruins.

The Orders

The orders often provide the lore and clues leading to ancient sites. Seekers often barter information in exchange for favors or support, particularly when dealing with the Mysterium. On the other hand, prudent Seekers should avoid attracting other mages' attention — and envy. Politics is endemic in the Awakened community, and Atlantean ruins rank among the greatest of prizes. Hostile Consilii or superiors in the orders might strip poorly connected or impolitic cabals of their winnings and award them to "more deserving" mages. Cabals often seek the patronage of more powerful mages, but, even with the most influential backers, Seekers sometimes find themselves outmaneuvered in the political arena. Wise mages keep their activities secret until they can present their "betters" with a *fait accompli*.

Each of the orders (and their foes) has its own typical views about Seeking, and ways its members can participate:

Adamantine Arrow

On the surface, the militant order does not appear as interested as the others in seeking out the remains of the lost city. Like so much in the Awakened world, things are not quite how they appear. Few experiences challenge an Arrow's wits and valor more than the traps and guardians the Atlanteans left behind. Far too often, over-eager companions unleash things that ought never to have been or unearth dangerous tools and artifacts — forcing the Adamantine Arrow to act.

Those walking the Brilliant Road can become excellent Seekers in their own right as mages who are more scholarly seek the Arrows' expertise in military Arcana. The Arrows provide much-needed magical muscle and firepower should spells or diplomacy fail.

Free Council

The Libertines care little for the myths of ancient Atlantis, but the Free Council eagerly seeks out original sources of lore and magic. The Libertines don't trust the bastardized, bowdlerized, altered, annotated and expurgated lore handed down as "truth" by the Atlantean orders. The Libertines would rather see what the Atlanteans themselves had to say, and decide for themselves if it's useful. After all, the Atlanteans themselves didn't draw on millennia of tradition: they invented their own magic, like the Free Council itself! Libertine Seekers who manage to recover "the straight goods" gain great status among their fellow mages, especially if their discoveries challenge some bit of hoary tradition about the Dragon Isle.

The bewildering array of abilities at the disposal of the Libertines gives them a great advantage when stalking Atlantis relics. Their multidisciplinary approach and use of modern

science and technology often circumvents more traditionally organized defenses. The Libertines' rejection of tradition occasionally gives them insights into Atlantean ways lost on the more traditional orders, just because the Libertines think without preconceptions about what the Atlanteans "must" have done.

Guardians of the Veil

Guardians of the Veil seek out mysteries as well as preserve them. Over the centuries, many secrets have been lost in tangles of lies, but the Guardians refuse to allow the unworthy to recover such lore, preferring to thwart or outrace the other Seekers. This order does its best to stop the meritless. Labyrinths and cabals test opponents mercilessly until the other mages demonstrate their worth by winning through to their goal — or they fail.

As Seekers, the Guardians have access to many of the truths concealed beneath millennia of adaptations, reconstructions and outright lies sown by the Seers and their own Labyrinths. Who better than the Guardians to unravel the secret codes and ancient death-traps the ancients left behind? Although all Seekers value the Guardians' assistance and crave their blessing, few mages are foolish enough to *trust* them.

Despite the passing of years, the Mask Bearers have not forgotten the duties and obligations they owe to Atlantis. Their Labyrinths conceal things best left forgotten: rites too powerful to be trusted to the Silver Ladder, corrupting lore too seductive for the Mysterium, fell creatures too dangerous for the Adamantine Arrow to face and artifacts too dangerous for any mortal hands. Many of the Guardians' front groups and secret vaults have themselves become lost, however, and the Guardians strive to recover them with an almost religious fervor.

Mysterium

Knowledgeable, inquisitive and well prepared: mystagogues are the archetypical Seekers. Searching out ancient wisdom is the lifework for many in the Mysterium. With the other orders so focused on secrecy and the pervasive isolationism so common among the Awakened, many secrets have become lost. Cabals drop from sight. Teaching lineages die out. Secret sanctums go missing. The Mysterium has lost much since the Sundering; many in the order believe the time has come to seek out and reclaim their full heritage. To this end, the Mysterium has become very active during the past century as members seek out any trace of their forbears in ruins and the other realms of the Fallen World.

Mysterium Curators are masters at recovering and re-recovering ancient trinkets from their current owners. Many expeditions start when a Mysterium-acquired treasure provides the first clue to a lost fortress, shrine or tomb. Most of all, the Mysterium seeks any traces of the order's forbears' Athenaeums. The Mysterium has labored far too long without the wisdom of its departed scholars and tutelary spirits. The information contained within these temples may prove more relevant to the degenerate mages of modern times than even the most potent Atlantean weapons.

Silver Ladder

Even before the Fall, this order struggled to bring god and demon under the yoke of the Awakened. The passing of millennia has not swayed the order from its goal; the members harness anything that might aid them in their quest. They would like to recover the secrets once held by the Vox Draconis. Naturally, only the Silver Ladder can be trusted with such power

The théarchs vow to break the cults that hide Atlantean secrets from the orders, expose the Exarchs and their hidden pawns and Awaken mortals who have the wit to *see*. The relics of Atlantis remain among the most powerful examples of the Great Art. That makes them a potent tool for helping Sleepers to Awaken (or at least to Sleepwalk). Other mages fear that such schemes could backfire and render these powerful treasures worthless from Disbelief. These fearful mages believe the Silver Ladder courts hubris with its plans and often thwart the order's Seekers. Despite these setbacks, mages of the Silver Ladder sometimes find that spiritual and mortal guardians of Atlantis' heritage still heed the Dragon's Voice.

The Others

Mages of the Pentagram are not the only willworkers eager to claim the Dragon Isle's lost treasures for themselves. The Seers of the Throne, the Banishers and the Accursed all lust after the powerful artifacts and secret lore that an Atlantean ruin might contain. Each find might hold the key to unlock the Supernal Realms and catapult the discoverers to prominence. Even non-Awakened can interfere with Seekers as many ancient shrines and cities rouse the interest of Sleeper archaeologists and tourists. Seekers may even encounter shapeshifters or vampires in their exploration, especially when a site holds significance for more than one "faction" in the World of Darkness.

Seers of the Throne

Maintaining the Lie is all. The Seers attempt to suppress or control each and every source of occult wisdom. Similar to the Guardians, the Seers mask the truth with layer upon layer of lies. Unlike the Guardians, the Seers don't see this as a way to protect either the Sleepers or their fellow mages. The Seers follow up any rumors of Atlantean-era artifacts or ruins with every available resource. Local pylons and Ministries will stop at nothing to control any Arcane treasures, passing them on to enrich the Hidden Masters. Failing this, the Seers pervert or destroy their finds to prevent them from falling into the hands of the rebellious orders.

The Seers never forget that the Exiles spirited away and hid powerful Atlantean devices to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Exarchs. The minions of the Exarchs most persistently search for remnants of the Exiles, just as these are the very places most heavily warded against the Seers. When the Seers and their minions find they cannot enter these places, at least they strive to prevent others from benefiting.



For all their power, the Seers are more reactive than active in nature. They cast their nets widely, but often their resources are spread very thin indeed. Despite this, few Seekers can brag of completely escaping the Seers' notice.

Banishers

The Banishers show little interest in past glories or Arcane histories, let alone anything as clearly bogus as "Atlantis." As they see it, demon-spawned mages take precedence over some antique fairy tale. Furthermore, since most Banishers operate

in small cabals or as lone hunters, they simply do not have the resources to engage in long-term exploration and research. However, those Banishers who manage to stumble across clues — often taken from the hands of their victims — might feel compelled to seek out and destroy the perversions of magic at the source. A few Banishers, however, become guardians of ancient sites: in their delusions, they may think a magical site has given them “holy” powers to defend it from “evil” mages.

Banishers who know of Atlantis may hate its legacy with a passion, believing Atlantis to be the fount of all misery — especially their own. Some even know of the Timori. One legend passed from Banisher to Banisher says that these proto-mages spread their righteous fear of magic and Atlantis far and wide. Such fears and hatreds flourished when the dragon-spawned Atlanteans began enslaving humanity. According to this legend, this ancestral hatred remains to this day in all pure humans, and accounts for both Paradox and Disbelief.

Accursed and other Sinister Lineages

Seekers may encounter particularly odious competitors among the various groups of Scelesti. Similar to most mages, the Scelesti would like to claim the powers of ancient wizardry — albeit for their own foul ends.

The Abyssal overlords of the Scelesti maintain their own interests in the treasures of Atlanteans and the other primal mages. These overlords encourage their servants to recover or destroy particular artifacts and caches of lore. The Accursed may be sent to desecrate some ancient ward that prevents their masters from entering the Fallen World. Other Scelesti merely hope to become more powerful servants of Unbeing. Whatever their immediate motives, Scelesti are incredibly dangerous opponents. The Accursed often suffer from complete moral degeneration. Mages facing the Scelesti can expect no mercy, not even a quick end, from these mad cultists.

Sleepers and Sleepwalkers

Other groups besides fellow Awakened can help and hinder Seekers. In fact, several Awakened groups use mundane explorers and scholars as their “stalking-horses” to uncover lost ruins or hamper other Seekers. The Guardians of the Veil commonly employ archaeologists and classicists in their Labyrinths, letting these scholars do the order’s legwork. Labyrinth academics search dusty libraries, raise money for archaeological expeditions, painstakingly examine long-forgotten rubbings of Hittite stele or cross-reference the similarities of Greco-Roman pottery rims. With Sleepers performing the academic drudgery, Guardians and mystagogues are free to pursue any clues revealed by their unwitting allies’ winnowing through minutiae.

The Seers of the Throne deploy their minions and thralls liberally in their search for signs of other Awakened. These “cut-outs” are usually expendable dupes. Their masters squander their minions’ lives to delay or hamper enemies. Some minions are mere cultists eager to lay down their lives for a delusion, while others are cunning adversaries who can use all the advantages of modern technology to spy upon or assassinate their targets.

A very few Sleepers and Sleepwalkers are *called* by the ancient sites themselves. Many of these involuntary Seekers are Proximi, compelled by ancestral memory or potent vision to search out some long-forgotten temple. Atlantean-era mages and their pupils created these occult bloodlines; their ancient sanctums may draw the descendants back to their place of origin. Discovering these truths can deeply affect such Sleepwalkers, making them question any loyalties they may have for the mages who claim the Dragon Isle’s legacy.

In addition to the Proximi, the blood of ancient mages flows in the veins of many otherwise ordinary people. These descendants of Atlantis or her rivals sometimes fall under the compulsion of ancestral duties. However, these modern men and women are usually ill-equipped to fulfill or even understand sudden, inexplicable desires that can make them wonder whether they have gone insane. The reasons behind such familial compulsions might involve delayed vengeance, occult entities breaking free or even spells cast by long-dead archmasters of Time upon their own descendants.

Sleepers don’t have to be pawns of the supernatural to endanger Seekers, though. Sleepers’ explorations can take mages to lawless parts of the world where they may encounter bandits, insurgents, government death squads or tribal warfare. Looters are a danger, too. Some looters are just poor local people hoping they can feed their family for a week off the sale of a purloined antiquity. Others belong to ruthless, organized and heavily armed gangs. Aside from the risk of automatic weapons fire, would-be looters may spy on archaeomancers — becoming dangerous witnesses to vulgar magic.

Stranger Things

Finally, Seekers may encounter supernatural creatures that have no connection to mages. For instance, some sites of ancient magic contain loci, or places where spirits can obtain their mystic sustenance. These locations not only attract spirits (for obvious reasons), they also draw in werewolves, who seem to regard these locations as sacred — and any other creature as a defiler. Certain vampires also show an interest in places of Arcane power such as Hallows and ley line nodes. The few mages who study the undead say that vampires of this “Ordo Dracul” may cut a deal with a Seeker, but should never be trusted. They have dark powers unknown to mages, and thirsts for blood and power that inevitably lead to treachery.

Friendly Rivals

*“What was once yours, so briefly,
is now mine, Dr. Jones.”*

— Rene Bellog

What band of intrepid Seekers is without its rivals — friendly or otherwise? Well-played rivals provide Seekers with a long-term foil, and Storytellers with numerous opportunities for character interaction and plot twists.

Unlike outright enemies, the greatest threat from a rival is “getting there first.” Relationships

with these rivals can range the gamut from friendly fellow professionals to bitter foes.

In the former case, the opponents deal amiably with the characters when together. Such rivals might even provide characters with a little help if necessary, especially if the rivals see that their fellow Seekers are in danger from mutual foes. Of course, rivals are not above a little sabotage — they want the prize for themselves, after all. Failure brings good-natured ribbing rather than the swearing of eternal vengeance. Fellow mages, especially those from the same order or Consilium, make good rivals. Other options include an old school chum who “just happens” to own the other half of the amulet pointing the way to the Emerald Tablet, or an old lover from the Silver Ladder who cannot take “It’s mine” for an answer.

More dangerous rivalries pit the characters against ruthless scoundrels who stop at nothing to win. These adversaries often come from enemy lineages or hostile orders. Therefore, they are quite capable of dealing with the Arcane threats posed by other mages. Woe betide the mage who falls into the clutches of these fiends — the mage can expect little respite or mercy. However, in the best tradition of occult fiction, such rivals rarely slay their captives out of hand: one never knows when an expendable prisoner is needed to set off a trap or as a sacrifice to dark gods.

Shards of the Dragon Isle

An Atlantean-era or post-Atlantean site can be defined in as much detail as any sanctum. Storytellers should give careful thought to the effects any given ruin might have on their campaigns. Just as important as the contents is the original purpose of the site. Was it a hidden research complex where mages unraveled the Tapestry in the name of enlightenment, or a grim fortress that resisted the onslaught of barbarians in the name of Empire? A site’s defenses and contents depend on these decisions. In addition, the Storyteller must also decide what condition the place is in: a barely recognizable ruin, a disturbingly pristine and efficient complex or something in between?

Some sites may be refuges for long-forgotten spirits and creatures, while other sites contain things best forgotten. Many of the powers used to build Atlantean sites are ones that modern sorcerers can only dream of. Of old, the Masters and archmages conjured their sanctums from the living rock or wove impossible materials into lofty fortresses.

Location, Location, Location

The temples and shrines left behind by the Atlanteans, their heirs and their rivals can occur almost anywhere: hidden

deep beneath modern cities, carved into isolated mountains, concealed beneath lakes, built upon the seabed or ensconced in grottoes only reachable through Space magic. The Dragon Isle spread its web across the world, and Atlantis’ refugees were similarly scattered. Other peoples rose up against Atlantis; their remains lie scattered down through the ages.

Ruins of these places can occur in the most desolate of regions such as Siberia or the Himalayas. One infamous site was found clinging tenaciously to a spire in the Ellsworth Mountains of Antarctica. Unfortunately, the guardians bound within the shrine’s walls attacked the expedition and the subsequent battle collapsed the entire peak.

Appropriately enough, Atlantean-era ruins are also found under the sea. Mythology says ancient lands have sunk; geology says sea levels rose when the vast glaciers melted at the end of the last Ice Age, more than 10,000 years ago. Sleeper archaeologists don’t expect to find anything but the occasional spearpoint or hunter’s campsite in the drowned lands of the Bering Strait, the North Sea, the Mediterranean Sea or the Black Sea. Archaeomancers know better.

Few of the world’s famous archaeological and historical sites house Atlantean-era ruins. If these sites ever did, the relentless scrutiny by Sleepers and their casual Disbelief has long since corroded away any relationship between the sites and the Supernal. This does not preclude a historical site’s importance. Studies of several locations such as Karnack have led Awakened investigators to other sites that remain unspoiled and un plundered. In at least one case, Seekers discovered remnants of the original Atlantean-era construction concealed behind a mask of historical architecture. Other times, modern mages find the treasure-troves collected by Seekers of long ago. Several years ago, a group of Mysterium Seekers stumbled upon a secret shrine within the sprawling complex of Angkor Wat in Cambodia that contained several ancient treasures, among them a set of Mestorian Bracers (see p. 106).

While most ruins discovered exist in the Material Realm, a few are located in Twilight or even within the Shadow Realm. Mages wishing to explore these places must enter Twilight themselves or use Arcane means to manipulate these subtle Realms. Many of these ghostly places once had a corresponding component in the material world but now only exist as ephemeral memories of the past. In a few cases, the ancients built sites in their entirety on the Subtle Planes. There, the mages studied ephemera directly. The location of these sites provides an effective shield against spies and mundane interlopers. Returning treasures from these hiding places to the coarser material world might prove difficult.

Even the Shadow Realm provides a home to relics and ruins. Constructed from principles and allegory, the Atlanteans (and others) constructed at least one stronghold entirely on the far side of the Gauntlet. Evidence exists that some places were actually *pushed* through it with powerful rituals. From these spiritual citadels, the ancient magicians studied the shifting lands beyond the Gauntlet and conducted experiments upon spirits. Such spirits might remain there, as timeless guardians or as bitter foes of those who tormented them.



Many Atlantean-era sites exist entirely within their own realms, suspended in the pockets and folds of reality. Here the sites remain, unaffected by the passage of years or the rise and fall of empires. In these places, Atlanteans, their descendants and others conducted experiments into the very nature of the Tapestry, striving to wrest the powers of Heaven from the gods themselves. Other realms were refuges, temples of contemplation and healing as their perfect isolation allowed those within peace. Some were magical oubliettes where rebels and abominations were sequestered.

The dangers of investigating these hidden realms are many. Some realms even disappear or collapse if violated by trespassers, stranding would-be thieves elsewhere. Others sites are frozen bubbles of time that preserve the contents against future need. Some Pocket Realms hold fantastical creatures not seen by Sleepers for millennia, protected against rust and rot — only to fall to the scourge of Paradox when exposed to this degenerate modern age.

However, the most sought-after Atlantean sites lie within ancient Demesnes. It is said that here, hidden and protected by the most powerful Arcane wards, are soul stones belonging to pre-Fall Atlanteans or their rivals. Many mages would kill for the chance to study what secrets these stones possess.

Searching Among the Ruins

Traces of Atlantis and her rivals appear throughout the past. Hints are gleaned from ancient texts, and their shadows are cast by antique architecture — but only if one knows where to look and how.

Uncovering the clues leading to some ancient stronghold are often adventures in themselves. This makes the life of a Seeker one of careful research and meticulous investigation, punctuated by episodes of travel, conflict and occasional terror. Frequently, Labyrinths or archaeological expeditions uncover

an Atlantean relic and catalog it along with their more mundane findings. For example, clay tablets written in the High Speech might be mistaken for some variant of Linear B or an unknown tongue of the ur-peoples of Mesopotamia, and put aside. Only when the tablets fall into Awakened hands is their true significance understood. From these beginnings, Seekers may journey from museum to archaeological dig, to the home of a reclusive collector and then back to their home city to unlock the gate leading to some ancient temple.

King Scorpion's Frieze

Carved into an isolated cliff-face halfway between the ancient Egyptian cities of Abydos and Hierakonpolis, a frieze depicts King Scorpion and a victory procession. This is the first concrete proof of Egypt's first ruler (deemed mythical by generations of archaeologists) and is more than 5,000 years old. Scattered throughout the account are glyphs and symbols in the High Speech! The writing hints at the location of Scorpion's palace, where his priests and magicians worked great spells to bring him victory. Time has ravaged much of the picture, but that should be no obstacle to clever mages . . .

Deciphering ancient scrolls, finding Atlantean references in ancient myths and similar bits of Arcane research is an exercise in the Academic or Investigation Skill, depending upon the resources available. See **World of Darkness**, pp. 55–56, 59–60. Typical penalties range from –1 to –5 unless the character has the appropriate specialization or research material at hand, as the material is usually written in some obscure language or contained on shattered fragments.

On very rare occasions, some Atlantean-era treasure is discovered intact, marking the way to a new trove. These astounding finds invariably spawn a mystical “gold rush” between rival expeditions. In other rare instances, an ancient place itself calls out to souls naturally attuned to it by resonance.

Advice From Beyond

Robbing the dead suits the style of certain mages as they loot tombs and call up the ghosts of the departed for interrogation. Although ghosts of the Awakened—especially ghosts of Atlanteans or their contemporaries—are in short supply, the servants and companions of such mages can yield a wealth of information to the mage willing to disturb their slumber. The Jailers of Pentheus were infamous for binding their murdered sacrifices into Atlantean Hells, in hopes of gleaning information from the ancient dead.

Other mages use the Spirit Arcanum to summon advice from entities that dwell timelessly beyond the Gauntlet. This course is fraught with danger, but it yields staggering rewards to a clever mage.

Anyone interested in calling forth spirits to question them about the ancients must realize several things. Most spirits are in fact too young to remember the Sundering and can provide little advice. Those spirits that might recall the days of the Awakened City are often powerful in their own right, and many of them have little cause to remember Atlantis fondly. They have no wish to see its heirs prosper. Before you can question these spirits safely, you must find the bans and formulas of obedience set by the ancient Atlanteans—formulas themselves hidden or lost for millennia.

Unless coerced, any spirit with knowledge worth having will attempt to strike a bargain in exchange for the knowledge. Spirits that simply volunteer information have their own reasons for such “generosity.” Being told of an Atlantean ruin “for free” should trouble any mage with an ounce of sense. Occasionally, spirits such as Ananke (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 330) might be charged with passing on their master’s legacy, but such “guides” have their own agendas that make them troublesome (to say the least).

Ley Lines and Geomancy

Many ancient sites—not just the Atlantean ones—are intimately associated with the network of ley lines that spread like a web over city and countryside alike. Such juxtapositions lead many Awakened scholars to speculate that the ancient mages harnessed or even created these flowing channels of mystical energy. Such geographic manipulation is traditionally called geomancy, although spells are not necessarily involved. The most well-known modern form is the Chinese art of *feng shui*, which seeks to control resonance through the manipulation of architectural form, landscape design and geological wisdom.

As a result, Seekers who know geomancy sometimes trace powerful ley lines from node to node, hoping they will lead to new treasures. This is not as easy as it sounds. Over the centuries, ley lines shift location and resonance as the climate and landscape change. A rockslide blocks a river one year. A forest fire denudes a hillside a century later. Marshes encroach

upon meadows. Each event changes the “dragon lines” a little more and can completely alter the course and “flavor” of a line over time.

Changes to the landscape caused by humans have become far more important in recent centuries. The effects on the ley lines caused by terracing for olive groves or clearing pastureland is a fleabite to the landscape compared to the widespread flooding for hydroelectric dams, or the vast amounts of earth and metal laid down for a railway. Even so, a skilled mage may still locate ancient ruins based on careful studies of the local geomancy—though the task often requires the hand of a master.

Geomancy

Intentional geomancy requires sensitivity to ley energies, best represented by the Prime 1 “Supernal Vision” spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 221), though any form of Mage Sight will do. Some Sleepers develop such sensitivity, perhaps through dowsing or other folk methods. (See **World of Darkness: Second Sight** for information about such Sleeper magic.)

Characters who can feel these energies can study the complex interplay of their shape and flow. The contingencies involved are so varied and dependant on local situations that no concise guidelines can be given. The only way to be sure is for someone with knowledge of geomancy to study the particular area, which is represented in the game through a Mental Merit, described in Chapter Two of **Sanctum & Sigil**. This description focuses on its uses in Arcane archaeology.

Merit: Geomancer (•)

Prerequisite: Occult Skill Specialty in Geomancy

Effect: The character has a sense for the ley line energies in the local landscape, and can apply certain principles to determine how the ley lines’ path, intensity and resonance are affected by construction, architecture, interior design, landscaping and pretty much any activity that has occurred in the place.

The character can make an extended action Intelligence + Occult roll to figure out what has affected the ley energies. The target number depends on the size of the area, and how far back the character wants to trace the geomantic changes. Atlantean-era sites lie in the distant past, and the local net of ley lines may have undergone dozens or even hundreds of changes.

In such cases, 20 or more successes might be required to map the effects of time—even considering that powerful mystic sites tend to bend the local energies and attract ley lines through all

the changes. The time per roll is one day, during which the character studies the area and contemplates how geomantic principles might apply. Possible tool modifiers include classic geomancy manuals (+1 or +2, depending on quality), dowsing rods (+1) and even satellite imagery (+2).

Dramatic Failure: The character completely misunderstands the meaning and portent of certain features of the area. If exploration proceeds along these lines, the investigators find themselves in some dire predicament (clinging to cliffs, exploring unstable caves, trespassing upon military bases, etc.).

Failure: The character fails to grasp how the area's ley landscape has altered.

Success: The character has a timeline for how the shape and/or flow of ley lines in the area have changed.

Exceptional Success: The character's knowledge is so precise that other effects are possible, such as uncovering possible nodes or revealing the logic behind the initial network of ley lines.

Other uses of geomancy can be found in
Sanctum & Sigil.

Through the Smoke

Visions are another source of Atlantean revelations. These experiences run the gamut from peyote dreams and spirit-quests to Seer-sponsored experiments using LSD on unsuspecting Sleepers. However achieved, these visions gift a mage with insight into Supernal truths behind Fallen World symbols. Through these methods, groups such as the Shoal of Night traced the symbolic truths thus revealed to their manifestations in the material world. Not surprisingly, Acanthus mages favor this chancy avenue of investigation more than most Awakened.

Even a mage's Awakening might foreshadow an Atlantean site through symbols and shadow plays, encountered during Astral journeys, or seen in waking dreams: a site that will become crucial in the dreamer's future. This helps set up characters for a long-term campaign as Seekers or provides a convenient hook for Storytellers to engage in a flashback scene.

Some mages choose to journey within. Setting sail through the Astral Realms, these mages seek out traces of Atlantis resonating in their souls. The insights granted by this technique are highly subjective but have proven their worth on several occasions. This is particularly true of those mages who have strong ties to an Atlantean past. Sometimes, the clues within the Temenos or the Dreamtime are full-blown Atlantean sites in their own right; see Chapter Four.

Visions can break upon the unprepared mage, too. Susceptible mages may receive images of a nearby holy place on the verge of desecration by Scelesti or looting by minions of the

Exarchs. Images of terrible weaponry or unholy forces breaking free of their shackles might haunt the Awakened until they act — or until it is too late.

Hiding in Plain Sight

Some hidden truths lie in the propaganda embraced by various occult groups and the "lunatic fringe." This is especially true of former or "misplaced" Labyrinths of the Guardians of the Veil and orphaned Seer pylons. Careful sifting through half-understood cant, partial-truths and outright lies might dislodge some kernel of truth. Perhaps some occult rhyme contains the location of an Atlantean treasure or the key unlocking the wards of some forbidden site.

A Muddle of Magicians

Certain books and games are designed to discredit the occult by making it silly. One series of books portrays a young boy, Mordechai Jones, and how his overly active imagination and belief in "magik" gets him in trouble. An astute Libertine realized that the setting of *A Muddle of Magicians* (featuring a bizarre non-Euclidean library) bore a great resemblance to the lost Sanguine Repository. How the clues ended up in the book is not yet known, but the wealth of lore more than repaid the effort of reading several children's books.

The Exarches' thralls, enslaved spirits and ghosts keep a covert watch over many ruins. Mages who can spot these guards for what they are might be able to explore a site previously unknown to the Pentacle. Seekers should be wary as the guards and their masters may actually permit intruders to get past them and follow in their wake or ambush them upon exit. The Exiles warded many sites against the Exarches: the Exarches' minions are happy to relieve the Seekers of what the minions could never obtain on their own.

Disappearances are common in the World of Darkness. In a few places, people disappear at almost regular intervals but no cause is ever found. Sometimes these places are associated with Verges, but there may be other explanations. Such regular disappearances may point to a lost ruin. Such places may only be accessible at certain times. Perhaps the spells warding the site only open at certain times or places. Rumors exist of Atlantean places where even the most powerful sorcerers disappear without a trace.

Palace of Alabaster Fountains

In the Empty Quarter of Arabia, mirages of unknown settlements and strange mountains are frequently seen. Travelers' tales speak of beautiful cities and gardens hidden by jealous demons. However, if a mage knows exactly where to stand, a single step brings the traveler to the

Palace of Alabaster Fountains — but only if he waits for dawn. There, the joys of the ancients wait the mage's arrival. None have returned.

Some lost places call out to mortals sufficiently aware to hear them. On rare occasions, the mere proximity of someone with sufficiently high Gnosis can draw the attention of spirits and guardians who reach out to contact the mage. This contact may be as subtle as a mystical tug leading the mage back to the site. Other mages may find themselves abruptly transported to the confines of some hidden Demesne or a Pocket Realm. Mages may find escape from this predicament difficult, as the guardians strive to keep their new “master.”

Hidden Shrines, Hidden Terrors

Even after Seekers deduce the general location of a ruin, they face many obstacles. Almost without exception, powerful magic hides and protects any ruins that remain inviolate.

Mages have always instinctively hid secrets and knowledge to ensure that their power does not fall into unworthy hands. Most especially, mages hide anything that could be used against them. What defined “unworthy” changed and narrowed as the Atlantean orders grew estranged and the Dragon Isle's legacy faded from the world. Eventually, entire teaching lineages died out and took the secrets of their Atlantean forebears to the grave. These places yet remain, abandoned and forgotten.

Getting In

These ancient places lie hidden, often at the end of deep cave systems and Labyrinths, hidden in trackless jungles or otherwise sequestered beyond the touch of the profane material world. Only mages with the proper keys and knowledge might locate an entrance — though Mage Sight might suffice for a willworker in the right place at the right time. Only the most skilled and clever willworkers can hope to disarm the mystical and mundane hazards that discourage the unworthy from entering these sacred precincts.

Passwords, Keys and Sigils

Sometimes, entering a mystic site is as simple as presenting the right token or saying a password — except that paranoid willworkers rarely make anything simple. The tradition has grown among Seekers of calling physical tokens of passage *keys*, even though they rarely take the form of a literal key to open a mundane lock.

More likely, a key is a special talisman or other object. Perhaps a Seeker must fit the key into a matching carving on a door; perhaps the key's mere presence lets a person past a barrier or guardian. Mages who try to duplicate a key's shape probably find that's not enough. A key might need to be made of thaumium or some other exotic or magical material, or the key may need a specific resonance, or actually be imbued with a particular spell. (Such keys might be useful items in their own right, and often are needed for other purposes inside a ruin.)

Not all keys are so easily defined, though. Stranger possibilities include the following:

- The key is a rare substance or combination of substances; the shape doesn't matter. For instance, Seekers may need a special perfume or incense to appease a gatekeeper entity.

- Only a particular sort of creature (perhaps a gatekeeper entity) can pass a ward or enter a region charged with some deadly magical aura. To enter, a Seeker must kill the creature and cover herself in its blood, fat or skin. This gives protection — for a little while. Or, a mage might take the form of that creature. (For a nasty example, perhaps only zombies and revenants can pass.)

- The key is *itself* a creature. A portal might open only for a descendant of its creator, a Seeker might need fruit from a specific, enchanted tree or the key might be a spirit or Goetic entity Seekers must summon from unearthly Realms.

- The key is actually the gate itself. If taken to a particular place, perhaps at a particular time, the key creates a Space portal to — elsewhere.

Ancient mages also used passwords a lot. (So do their modern heirs, of course.) Some passwords are meant for anyone with a particular background to use, such as a proverb or maxim favored by the order or faction who built a site. Other passwords can be idiosyncratic and virtually impossible to guess or research. Even a master of Time might fail to scry several millennia into the past to overhear a long-lost password. Even if known, a password can be made more challenging to communicate. For instance:

- A personal password might need to be spoken in the actual voice of a site's creator. Refer back to “overhear something from millennia ago.”

- A password may need to be spoken with a nonhuman voice. A Seeker must use Life magic so she can speak in the ultrasonic squeak of a bat, say, or an authentic tiger's roar.

- Or a password isn't spoken at all, but telepathically sent using Mind magic.

Sigils fall somewhere between keys and passwords. They don't have to be pre-existing objects; a Seeker just has to draw the right diagram or image to gain entry. As usual, there may be complications:

- A sigil may need to be drawn in some specially compounded pigment, such as a chalk infused with particular minerals, or ink brewed from special herbs.

- The most mystically potent drawing material is, of course, human blood. A Seeker may need to carve a sigil into his own bleeding flesh.

- Less drastically, a sigil might be drawn on a person's body using Life magic (or tattooing with a special pigment), turning the person into a key.

- A sigil may need to be drawn in a special way, such as the pigment-spitting method sometimes used by Australian Aborigines, or the Paleolithic painters of Lascaux and other caves.

Mystical patterns form a subtler analogue to keys or sigils. A key might be completely nonphysical, such as a shape crafted in ephemera or pure Mana. A barrier might open only to a person with a particular Pattern or resonance, such as a descendant of the site's creator, or a member of a particular



Path. Life magic might be needed to give a Seeker a particular quirk to her Pattern. A mage might set a ward or guardian to accept nothing but his own, specific Life pattern.

Any or all of these methods might be combined in a ritual. Many ancient portals, wards or guardians demand both a key and a password before they let someone pass. A more elaborate ritual might call for a mage to chant a formula (a password) while tracing a mystic figure (a sigil) using a special knife, wand or other object (a key). A human sacrifice is just an especially nasty ritual — but some ancient mages thought that way, and not all of them were barbarians.

Sometimes the ritual is as simple as showing up at the right place at the right time to say a password or present a key. Such times are usually set astronomically, such as moonrise, the vernal equinox or a particular conjunction of planets. Or the time might be set by some sort of astronomical clock, such as the one hour a year when sunlight passes through a deep slit or between two standing stones to shine on a carved symbol. Ancient peoples relied on the Heavens to tell them the time; the Atlanteans, their rivals and heirs followed the same custom.

Challenging the Worthy

Some ancient builders didn't trust any sort of key, password or other objectively definable token of passage. Physical keys can be duplicated. Life magic can change a mage's appearance to fool a sentry. Even resonance can be faked. A test or ordeal, however, can reveal an attempt to verify a mage's identity and right to enter by challenging the entrant's knowledge and qualities. The builders hoped that intruders could not fake such elements of character.

Thus, puzzles and enigmas are as frequent challenges as guardians. Typical challenges revolve around virtues pertinent to the architect's order or Path as well as being suited to the secrets hidden within. Other challenges may be based upon philosophical precepts or allow entrance only to those with certain Virtues or Merits. Provided here are guidelines and typical challenges based upon the Paths and Atlantean orders:

• Members of the **Adamantine Arrow** prides themselves on being masters of occult defense. Mages entering Arrow fortresses and monasteries must demonstrate their mastery over the world. Tests of strategy and the warrior virtues of bravery and service are just as common as confronting and defeating a guardian. (Carving a sigil in one's own flesh, as mentioned above, would be a classical Arrow test of resolution.)

• **Guardians of the Veil** are purveyors and protectors of secrets. Those seeking entry into Guardian ancient safehouses must demonstrate their knowledge of secrets. Seekers might have to choose the necessary over the moral — and pay a personal price of some sort. Perhaps the Seeker must offer up a secret to the Guardians in payment. Alternatively, an intruder might be challenged to *keep* a secret, no matter what.

• **Mysterium** mages were Atlantis' scholars. Spectral loremasters and other gatekeepers may challenge the Seeker to demonstrate her logical acumen or knowledge of ancient secrets. Tests frequently involve solving riddles or puzzles.

• The **Silver Ladder** values will and judgment. Those able to command others through force of personality or persuasion are worthy. Seekers who can determine just solutions to legal and moral dilemmas are also cherished. Compelling a hostile guardian to obey is a typical test; this might involve riddling out its Ban, to show that one commands by wisdom instead of brute force.

• Much as other orders hate to admit it, the **Seers of the Throne** are heirs of Atlantis too, and the supporters of the Exarchs left their own ruins. Gaining entrance to the Seers hidden shrines and temples may involve accepting powerful oaths of fealty to the Exarchs. Nothing is acceptable except complete submission.

Some time after the Fall of Atlantis, the Watchtowers arose. The mages who served them built their own shrines and devised testing rituals as well. While these builders may have wielded less arcane might than their Atlantean forbears, sites dedicated to the Paths carry a lighter burden of history. Their builders cared less about arcane points of lore than an entrant's character. Simple spells can detect the resonance of a mage's Path — but other spells can disguise resonance. A mage's choices, especially when made under stress, provide a surer guide.

• **Acanthus** — Arcadia and faerie partake of oaths. Mages seeking entrance are often judged based on how they have upheld trust and faith in the past. A quester may find himself transformed into another shape and must regain his true appearance.

• **Mastigos** — These willworkers draw power from Pandemonium's mind-realm of lies and nightmare. Tests invoke the quester's own mind and challenge her mastery over her failings and longings. Seekers must discern truth from lies if they wish to continue.

• **Moros** — This Path's tests seek to distract the quester with wealth or mundane power. The unworthy crave these trivialities. Death is always present; Seekers often must overcome or evade its embrace.

• **Obrimos** — Mages of the Mighty face challenges of combat and righteous strength. Less violent tests might involve a difficult moral judgment. Through tests of lightning, fire and justice, mages demonstrate their worth.

• **Thysrus** — Only those who can exert their will over beast and spirit deserve to learn the jungle's secrets. A test might involve defeating or taming a fell beast — or perhaps fleeing from it. The Primal Wild's first law is survival and includes knowing when to run.

Ancient Etiquette

Ancient customs of hospitality, Atlantean and otherwise, remain sacred in some holy places. Guardians may permit entry only to visitors who know the proper rituals, and thereby prove they are Atlanteans rather than barbarians. (Such courtesy only extends to entry and is no guarantee of safe conduct inside.) Lacking further instruction from the original owners, the guardians may revert to attacking intruders, especially if the mages make poor "guests." Naturally, High Speech is essential in many Atlantean ruins, though modern willworkers may find their understanding challenged at every turn. Even the most learned mystagogue couldn't know all the variations of custom practiced through the ages. Often what is believed to be "true" Atlantean practice is revealed as a modern conceit or even a *barbarian* custom.

Outlander Custom

Some places, such as those built by non-Atlantean traditions, maintain customs that seem outré to willworkers who follow the heritage of Atlantis. For example:

• Blood shed on the door-stone shows the trust of the guest for his host. Intruders become vulnerable to sympathetic magic, especially the Life and Fate Arcana, should they betray their hosts.

• Guests must properly accept the Three Gifts of fire, salt, and bread from their hosts. It is unfortunate that the remaining "hosts" are now long-dead revenants — and they hunger.

Through the Back Door

Some ruins offer willworkers a way past the trials and tribulations of the outer wards — usually a Space portal. Almost without exception, however, "back doors" have wards and gatekeepers as formidable as the main entrance, and require very specific keys or passwords to use safely. The creator of a back door probably never meant for *anyone* else to use it, *ever*, so there shall be no clues or tests of worthiness to help other mages. Prudent Seekers traverse "unguarded" portals with great trepidation, for they often dump unauthorized travelers in prison-cells, deathtraps or other dire predicaments. A Master of the Space Arcanum might be able to reset the spells controlling such a portal — but this requires access to both ends of the passage.

Veil of Concealment

In addition to defending ancient sites from trespassers, spells of remarkable power conceal the sites from casual discovery or deliberate scrying. The most common of these defenses rely upon the Mind, Time, Space and Fate Arcana. These spells resemble the concealments used by modern mages (see **Sanctum & Sigil** for examples) – but are more powerful than any modern mage can cast.

Wards built with the Mind Arcanum twist the thoughts of people near the site to other concerns. Simply put, mortals living within the spell's grip never think to question the anomalies hidden in their midst.

The Hill

A hill covered in tangled forest rises from the middle of a well-manicured suburb. The local citizens never explore the hill or notice the tumbled stones at its peak; the inhabitants don't acknowledge the hill's existence in any way. People who see the hill from afar and draw close soon forget the reason they came and depart, never once looking or noticing the hill again.

Powerful mental bans can prevent a site from appearing on maps. People who study the area from afar with such modern means as aerial photography, remote sensing and satellite imagery might uncover such anomalies, but when they enter the area, the investigators lose interest in their goal – distracted by local minutiae – until they leave once again. Occasionally, these powerful wards permanently alter investigators, who then move on to other concerns. Only supernatural creatures have any chance to resist the magic – and even they may succumb if they venture near the source of the spell.

Similarly, the Fate Arcanum ensures that only people who *ought* to find the site ever do. Other Seekers might search forever, but they never seem to locate the correct entrance or unlock the warding magics on their own. Mishaps or distractions always intervene. With luck and destiny stacked against them, these Seekers should find and follow explorers who are more favored. Let people destined for success blaze the trail. Minions of the Exarchs often employ this scheme, hoping to seize control as soon as other mages have threaded the maze of destiny around a site.

While not especially useful in keeping intruders at bay, Prime 3 “Disguise Resonance” can alter a site's resonance, making it less visible to those seeking it out. Prime 5 “Dead Zones” surround some sites. This spell makes them almost impossible to discover through magical means though areas where magic does not work implies the existence of these hidden sites.

The Space Arcanum is one of the primary warding methods used during the era of Atlantis. Powerful magic warps the land around the location, making it impossible to locate without a precise map. Such maps were closely guarded in Atlantean times, and probably don't exist anymore. Trying to unravel this form of

ward requires careful study, perhaps by using the Fate Arcanum to determine the correct path. This can be a time-consuming process; Seekers might be wiser to search out a guide or map instead. Variants of “Hide Space” are another common method of sheltering ancient sanctums from both casual and determined visitors. In several cases, ancient mages created Pocket Realms whose size staggers the imagination of modern mages.

Hints passed down through the Scarlet Mulberry Society indicate that some Atlantean-era mages used powerful versions of the “Future Legacy” spell to push entire temples forward in time. These places remain undiscovered simply because they *do not exist yet*.

Blackout Zones

Mayday! Mayday! Everything's gone dead!
We're—
— *Unheard distress call of Flight 109 over Labrador*

The suppression of modern devices over a wide area is an effect observed around the most isolated Atlantean-era ruins. Within these zones, electrical and electronic devices function fitfully or not at all. Since most modern equipment relies on such principles to function, most of it stops working. Helicopters fall from the sky. Radios receive only static, then go dead. Compasses spin wildly. In extreme cases, even some chemical reactions such as explosives are suppressed. Seekers trapped in such zones must rely on brute force – and Arcana.

Mages speculate why these “Blackout Zones” occur. Are they powerful Forces wards? But why would the Atlanteans ban technologies that wouldn't exist for millennia? (Though some evidence suggests the Atlanteans wielded a strange, magical technology of their own; see “the Vimana Engine” on p. 106, for instance.) Some mages think these zones are actually remnants of reality as it was before the Sundering and the Exarchs changed the world. For all the frustration and danger of such zones, these mages believe these zones may be the most precious Atlantean relics of all.

Fortunately or unfortunately (depending on your point of view), “Blackout Zones” are subject to the unraveling effects of Disbelief. Encounters with modern explorers have long since destroyed any of these zones near populated areas – though such locations might explain the inexplicable disappearance of aircraft flying over remote parts of the world. However, the shocked Disbelief of passengers and crew as their equipment undergoes impossible failure usually results in the zone's destruction.

Fooling the Wards

Bypassing wards with brute force is often an exercise in suicidal futility. Such arrogant foolishness usually results in the detonating of wards, the arrival of guardians and all the pain and suffering the builders saw fit to inflict upon such interlopers. Instead, mages answering the riddles or challenges posed by the guardians demonstrate the rightfulness of the mages' presence.

For all the care ancient mages took to keep out uninvited guests, however, wards and gatekeepers are seldom infallible. Wily mages can trick their way past wards by using Mind Arcana to Think Right Thoughts or to read the minds of guardians for correct passwords. Force rotates a mage's image or conceal her presence. Prime may neutralize detection spells long enough for intruders to slip past. Space magic allows willworkers to bypass defenses entirely by moving past them — assuming there's no ward specifically against this Arcanum. Spirit or Death magic might be used to call up the ghosts and spirits of long-dead builders or their minions for interrogation.

For Seekers without the precise lore, applying Investigation and Occult abilities might allow a clever mage to solve unanticipated puzzles or figure out a way to deceive a warding spell, challenge or guardian. Those mages with the "Enigmas" specialization are particularly adept at these challenges.

Gnosis and Arcanum: The Keys to Awakening

Some Atlanteans (and to a lesser extent, their contemporaries and heirs) apparently thought that mages with a greater Supernal connection were somehow worthier than others. Gnosis, rather than ability with Arcana, formed the litmus test; these builders reckoned that only Atlanteans — or only Atlanteans from their order or faction — could possibly possess wisdom and Supernal understanding equal to their own. What hubris! Later mages would curse this arrogance as they struggled to acquire the Supernal lore the Atlanteans so handily gained. For better or worse, though, the ancient mages constructed barriers that were sensitive to the Supernal connection of people confronting them. These might bar all but worthy entrants to an entire site, or these barriers might protect only certain, special chambers within a ruin.

Gnosis Ward

Some wards and gates require the person passing through them to have a certain minimal connection to the Supernal World. Fortunately, a mage who lacks sufficient Gnosis might attempt to alter her own resonance to convince the wards that she has the needed Supernal connection after all.

Dice Pool: Wits+ Investigation or Occult

Each point of Gnosis the mage has provides one automatic success. The mage requires a number of successes equal to the Gnosis Threshold to pass the barrier.

Other closures bar mages with insufficient knowledge of a particular Arcanum, requiring a supplicant to demonstrate his level of mastery to earn passage. Depending upon the purpose of the place being warded, either method might be found: a temple might judge someone by Gnosis (the Supernal connection), while a mystic laboratory might require Arcana mastery.

Beyond the Doors

Once the Seekers locate a site and penetrate the natural or supernatural barriers that shield it from Sleepers, the Seekers face new challenges. Anything the ancient builders thought was valuable probably has wards, guardians or concealment of its own. Protective spells and spirits may be even more dangerous than the outer defenses.

On the other hand, some things the Atlanteans considered commonplace might now hold great value for modern mages, and have no special protections at all. Even if the Seekers cannot pass every test and breach every barrier, they can return with valuable information about Atlantis — assuming the site they explore is actually Atlantean.

Places of Power

Quite apart from any protective spells, some ancient sites are infused with supernatural power. They may be built on natural sites of power — or maybe the ancient builders could shape the Tapestry to create Hallows, loci and other mystical upwellings. A few ruins are so charged with Supernal energy they are practically Realms of their own. Places of power can make an ancient site its own reward for Seekers — but such places can also present special dangers.

Realm Affinity

Often a site is closely associated with a particular Supernal Realm. A few sites are even associated with more than one Realm, but this is rare. Unconfirmed tales also speak of ruins associated with pairs of Arcana that don't match the modern Paths.

Inside, the Arcana associated with this Realm's expression are never vulgar. The Realm's inferior Arcanum is often slighted, and its use labors under some penalty. (Usually a -1 dice, but it may be as drastic as rendering vulgar any use of that Arcanum.) In this, the effects are similar to the effects of Paths within Demesnes (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 280)

Hallowed Ground

Many Atlanteans built their temples, libraries and fortresses around Hallows. Exiles and refugees built similarly whenever possible; so did the sorcerers who lived beyond the sway of the Dragon Isle. However, the centuries have not been kind to the wellsprings of magic, and many Hallows are now dormant. In these cases, a geomancer's skill is required to discern the Hallows' existence. Fortunately or not, many of the spells and

arcane guardians begin to fail when cut off from a steady flow of Mana. Thaumavores such as cryptids and magical constructs are the most vulnerable. These often starve or go dormant until their supply of Mana is renewed — or they sleep to save their last Mana, and rouse themselves only when a new source comes near — such as a mage.

In many cases, considerable quantities of tass are associated with these ruins. Much of the tass constantly recycles through the local magical environment, sustaining the spells and guardians. Harvesting such tass may prove disastrous, since this deprives the site of the “fuel” it needs to exist. Desperate or ruthless mages may employ such “scorched earth” tactics to deny a site to rivals.

The Hallows associated with Atlantean sites can be of any size, but maintaining any remnant spells usually consumes the bulk of the sites’ Mana. This is especially true when the Hallow is sinking toward dormancy, which leaves little or no excess Mana available.

In sharp contrast to modern Hallows, excess Mana sometimes imbues living creatures in or near Atlantean sites, enchanting animals appropriate to its resonance. Fantastical stories of geese laying Mana-filled eggs, or the shark whose ever-regenerating teeth contain tass, might originate from these ancient Hallows.

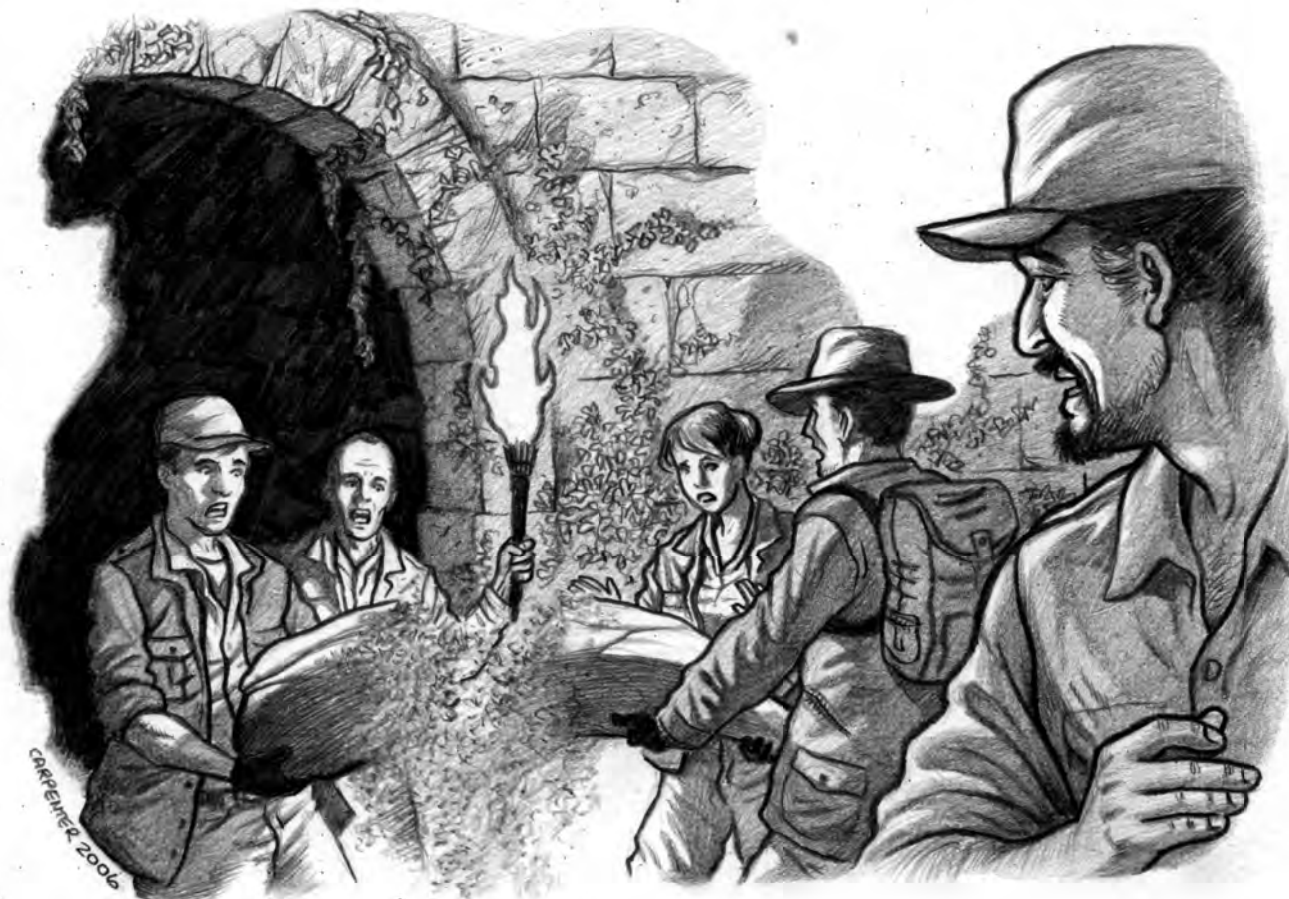
Demesnes

Many Atlantean-era sites were constructed as Demesnes. Here, free from Paradoxes, magic still rules supreme. To the

puzzlement and chagrin of Seekers, however, pre-Sundering Demesnes seldom contain soul stones. Instead, objects made of a strange, translucent ivory sustain many Atlantean Demesnes. Many archaeomancers believe these objects are carved from dragon bones taken from the very caves the Atlanteans used for their soul journeys. Some of these objects actually look like huge ribs, vertebrae or teeth. Whether or not this speculation is correct, “dragon bone” crumbles into dust when taken from its Demesne and exposed to the modern world. Rumors that the Mysterium has somehow managed to preserve at least one piece for study — and the outré powers within it — are common throughout the Seeker community.

Post-Sundering mages, Atlantean and barbarian alike, built their Demesnes almost exclusively with soul stones; mystagogues speculate that after the Fall, mages had to rely on more primitive methods to erect their spiritual retreats. Other mages believe the Sundering and the growing Abyss made “dragon bone” no longer sufficient to create such havens. Whatever the cause, any soul stones within an Atlantean site are hidden with cunning and guarded by the most powerful wards at their creator’s disposal.

What might a mage do with an Atlantean’s soul stone? The Mana and Demesne-creating power of the stone is dross compared to the chance that a link remains between the stone and the soul of its creator. Can one conjure up the long-dead mage? What knowledge could be wrested from such a ghost? Hope persists among the most ambitious Seekers that somewhere, they can find the soul stone of an Oracle — or an Exarch.



Ley Lines

Many ruins were built on nodes of varying power — often these nodes are the dwindled remains of far more powerful ones. The Atlanteans were masters of the geomantic art. While Exiles and refugees might use such unsubtle methods as ley anchors to realign the local chi flows, their ancestors preferred to rework the landscape by diverting rivers, reshaping hills and modifying the underlying geology. These changes realigned the dragon lines to the form and resonance desired. Such efforts go far beyond the capabilities of present-day magi, but modern geomancers can study the effects.

Some sites appear to be able to survive without access to chi flows, but archaeomancers speculate that many ruins began to die when their node changed. To support this, the mages point out that sites retaining their nodes contain far more robust defenders than in cases where they can tell a node has shifted away.

Verges

Very few genuine Atlantean sites exist upon Verges, but the few that have been discovered are all very dangerous. Mages who investigate these sites must not only deal with the guardians and wards, but also with the spirits that dwell within the Verge's boundaries. Verges attract werewolves and cryptids as well — all of whom are extremely territorial. Unwary mages transported to the Shadow Realm discover that returning home can be far more difficult, even after defeating the site's spiritual squatters.

Ephemeral Fortification

To reduce the depredations of Shadow Realm intruders, the ancients often modified the Gauntlet around their fortresses and sanctums. In fact, the strength of the Gauntlet can vary dramatically within a ruin. To keep out marauding spirits and enemy mages (as well as thwart any spies lurking in Shadow or Twilight), Atlantean-era mages frequently reinforced the local Gauntlet, raising its strength to 5 or providing additional penalties to those attempting to cross it. In some complexes, the Gauntlet bristles with latent spells and guardians, waiting to strike down any attempt to breach this spiritual barrier.

Other areas, such as those used for studying Spirit or Death magic, might have an abnormally low Gauntlet, or even an artificial Verge. Such spiritual “crossroads” are rare. In the case of the “barbarian” kingdoms and their descendants, the Verge may have a religious purpose — worship — and their “god” may still wait within. Most sane mages don't want to tangle with creatures of such magnitude. Most sites oriented toward studying spiritual realms employ permanent Spirit 4 “Spirit Roads” or Death 4 “Death Gates” as portals between the two faces of Fallen Reality instead.

Interior Wards and Defenses

When spells to conceal a site or prevent entry fail, the internal wards and spells make up the next line of defense. These enchantments often protect specific objects and locations within

the complex. Despite the passage of time, the spells protecting the shrines and sanctums of old often remain powerful — a sharp contrast to wards erected by modern willworkers, which have a disconcerting tendency to erode.

Duration and Conditions

Many wards are coupled with a Fate 2 component that allowed the ward to be turned on and off by a trigger, such as a spoken word or specific gesture. Sadly, these commands are usually long lost before the explorers arrive.

Arcane Protections

Many of the warding spells and rites used by modern sorcerers are the legacy of the ancient Atlanteans. However, the Atlantean originals can be far more powerful. In addition to being associated with a particular order, many sites are also draw upon a particular Path; this linkage to a Supernal Realm colors the mystical defenses arrayed against intruders. See **Mage: The Awakening** for all named spells.

- **Death:** Bound ghosts and the walking dead make effective guards and servants. Death 2 “Ghostly Object” keeps important items out of the hands of intruders. Death 3 “Ghost Gate” (with a conditional trigger) consigns intruders to the same ephemeral existence as any ghost. Death 3 “Quicken Corpse” creates zombie guardians. Powerful versions of this spell cause recently slain intruders to join the defenders. Death 4 “Rotting Flesh” makes an exquisitely appropriate curse for people who violate ancient tombs. Death 5 “Destroy Mana” robs intruders of their means of defense. Death 5 “Quell the Spark” can snuff out an invader's most powerful spells.

- **Fate:** Curses are particularly common defenses — even a little bad luck can prove fatal to an explorer, especially those Sleepers who somehow enter a site. Fate 3 “Monkey's Paw” curses treasures, making thieves' lives both miserable and short. Fate 4 “Gifts of Fortune” sends the keys to ancient treasures into the “right” hands, ensuring the keys' proper use. As the opposite sides of the same coin, Fate 5 “Forge Destiny” and Fate 5 “Forge Doom” await those fulfilling certain conditions; the mages' presence at a ruin may fulfill some ancient prophecy, for their good or ill. Fate 5 “Great Curse” spells certain doom for anyone foolish enough to violate sacred wards. Fate workings beyond those of modern mages can weave skeins of destiny that affect entire lineages for millennia.

- **Forces:** In addition to unleashing powerful rites of fire and destruction upon intruders, this Arcanum has subtler applications in wards. Forces 3 “Invisible Object” hides treasure and guardians alike from the sight of unwanted visitors. A conjunctive Forces 3 “Autonomous Servant” spell with Mind 5 and Space 2 allows magically created servants to patrol the site. Forces 3 “Light Mastery” with a conditional trigger can create light whenever someone enters an area — or plunge the area into darkness. Similarly, “Sound Mastery” can create the sounds of some guardian beast to deter intruders, or just as easily plunge them into silence. Forces 4 “Friction Knife” cast over an area can make anyone moving through that location regret he ever came. The ubiquitous Forces 4 “Unseen

Hand” might be used to capture interlopers and hold them until (long-dead) authorities can interrogate them. Forces 5 “Bestow Levitation” allow visitors to travel through fantastically shaped lairs — or just as easily hurl them into a chasm or against a wall of blades.

- **Life:** Fantastical and uplifted beasts can be conjured to defend a site at a moment’s notice. Some ruins are warded by the plants about them, guarded by strangling vines and animate trees. Life 1 “Sense Life” can alert guardians to any unwanted intruder. Life 3 “Contagion” sickens trespassers, or even unleashes unknown plagues upon an unsuspecting humanity. When triggered, Life 4 “Transform Other” may leave an unlucky Seeker unable to appear in public (or speak or hold anything in hands turned to paws.) Life 4 “Trigger the Lizard Brain” with a conditional trigger can instill fear in anyone entering the area. Curses laid upon ancient barriers taint violators with disease, enfeeblement and suffering.

- **Matter:** Command over matter allows the builders to weave greater strength into the building material, locks, doors and fixtures. Matter 3 “Alter Integrity” can be set with a conditional trigger to reinforce a door or window’s Durability. Likewise, Matter 3 “Transmute Earth” might transform an innocuous floor into a quicksand death-trap. Matter 4 “Transmute Air” can change oxygen into a deadly gas, although this works best when the defenders do not require oxygen. Matter 5 “Annihilate Extraordinary Matter” combined with a conditional trigger readily damages any special “door openers” carried by intruders. Matter 5 “Self-Repairing Machine” causes doors and walls to repair damage done to them. With proper rituals, even the very walls can live (after a fashion) and change under the influence of long-dead archmages: interlopers may find themselves contending with sudden chasms or hedgerows of spikes, while walls and portals close to cut off routes of escape.

- **Mind:** Frequently, Mind magic confuses or subverts intruders, possibly even turning them against one another. In other cases, this Arcanum is used to coordinate the defenders with uncanny precision — almost as if they were all parts of a single intellect. Mind 1 “Sense Consciousness” can detect the presence of minds where they are not supposed to be. Mind 2 “Emotional Urging” can project feelings of dread or anger and is effective at keeping Sleepers away. Seekers have trouble deceiving guardians with Mind 3 “Telepathy” or Mind 4 “Read the Depths.” Wards involving Mind 4 “Breach the Vault of Memory” leave victims without recollection of what they have seen or even how they got there. Mind 4 “Hallucination” makes imaginative misdirection and deterrence easy. Mind 4 “Telepathic Control” or Mind 5 “Psychic Domination” forces intruders to turn on one another in apparent “betrayal” and treachery. Mind 5 “Twilight Temple” was the basis for numerous sites the Atlanteans (and others) constructed in the Subtle Planes.

- **Prime:** The destructive aspects of the Primal Arcanum make excellent wards, draining intruders of Mana and dispelling protective magic against other hazards. Prime also provides a wide assortment of phantasmal defenses and warders. Prime 1 “Dispel Magic” wards against unwanted magic such as dis-

pellling Mind or Life disguises — or Forces invisibility — on an uninvited “guest” as he enters a protected room. Used similarly, Prime 4 “Supernal Dispellation” deprives foes of magic no matter what Arcanum is involved. Prime 5 “Dead Zone” is often used as a sort of self-destruct switch on a site. Trapped ruins simply crumble into dust when the spell destroys the local Mana supply.

- **Space:** This Arcanum supplies basic wards for other Arcana to build upon. Some of ancient sites are even built within their own private worlds, accessible only to mages who possess the correct keys. The Space 2 “Ward” spell is one of the most common protections found in these sites. Not only does it prevent unwanted scrying, but it also blocks Space Portals and Teleportation spells. Space 3, along with conjunctional Arcana, can introduce Bans into the Ward, blocking a host of things from entering the sanctum. Space 3 “Portal” cast over an area can send people who step through a certain door on an unexpected trip, especially if a Mind Hallucination disguises the perceived location until after the hapless intruder has stepped through. Space 4 “Portal Key” is used to facilitate communications and to prevent unauthorized entry. Space 4 “Suspension” is a common spell for use against intruders, laid as a trap to catch them in place. Space 5 “Dimensional Axis” is the perfect rote for madness-inducing-yet-efficient laboratories. Space 5 “Labyrinth” makes paths leading to deadly traps inescapable.

- **Spirit:** Guardian spirits are stock in trade for tombs and shrines. However, Spirit has other uses as well. Spirit 3 “Spirit Road” can summarily dispatch a visitor *elsewhere*. This spell also provides access to areas constructed beyond the Gauntlet. Spirit 3 “Numinous Shield” protects against spiritual intruders. Spirit 5 “Control Gauntlet” similarly fortifies or weakens the Gauntlet depending on local needs. Spirit 5 “Shadow Slaves” brings forth gruesome defenders. Unlike many conjured defenders, these are capable of complex tasks. A few Spirit 5 “Spirit Manse” structures built by Atlanteans and their rivals still exist. Some of these structures are vast ethereal fortresses that look jarringly out of place in the Spirit Realm.

- **Time:** Places ensorcelled with Time 5 “Faerie Glade” exist outside the passage of time; ancient residents who attempt to leave crumble to dust as the years return with a vengeance. Time 5 “Stop Time” can be set as a trap (using a conditional trigger) to ensnare intruders, freezing them in time until other guardians arrive and deal with them; similarly, this spell can preserve guardians against future need. Mightier Time effects might put entire areas into stasis to be released when the right conditions are fulfilled. Such traps might unleash now-extinct cryptids upon explorers or preserve mortal guardians against time of need. Perhaps even some Atlanteans still wait, safe within stasis.

By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them

The four Atlantean orders trace their heritage back to institutions of the Awakened City. Members of those orders might have an advantage exploring the ruined strongholds of their Atlantean forebears because the order members recognize the style of the site’s defenses. Or maybe not. The orders

have changed greatly since the days of Atlantis. Characters may need to succeed at Enigmas tests to figure out that some obscure symbol or ritual from their order's tradition is actually a distorted version of an Atlantean password.

- **The Adamantine Arrow** typically uses guardians and constructs in many of their ancient sites. Arrows prefer flexible defenses and defenders over the static barriers of wards but employ them to bar access to important areas. Internal guardians react to intruders with military precision as befits the martial order.

- **Guardians of the Veil** prefer that their sites remain undetected and unknown. To this end, they employed Mind, Space and Fate spells to keep strangers at bay. Once inside, a Seeker might never stumble onto the *real* purpose of the site, as she falls prey to false leads and "important" treasures. Above all, the Guardians strive to ensure that their secrets do not fall into the wrong hands. To this end, many sites and their guardians are quite capable of destroying themselves if compromised.

- **Mysterium:** A mixture of wards and guardians protects the order's libraries and temples. In most cases, the nature of these spells and creatures is dictated by the Arcana or topic researched there. For example, a site dedicated to investigating the spiritual realms might have several powerful spirits and their minions

at its disposal. Any wards are usually from the subtler spells and are always set up with the safety of any research materials in mind. Spells that simply slay or immobilize an opponent are more likely than, say, fire-breathing juggernauts.

- **The Silver Ladder** centers on control. These ancient priest-mages used whatever creatures and powers under their sway to defend their holdings. As the high-premier order in the Great City, they could (and did) draw upon the resources of the other orders as well.

After the Fall, the Paths became more prominent. (Indeed, archaeomancers debate whether the Paths existed as such before the Sundering and the appearance of the Watchtowers. Some mages believe Atlanteans could study all Arcana with equal ease. Other mages believe the Paths always existed. At present, evidence gleaned from spirits and ruins is not persuasive one way or the other.) Many sites draw upon a particular Path as well as, or instead of, an order. This linkage to a Supernal Realm colors the mystical defenses arrayed against intruders.

- **Acanthus:** Ruins built by mages of this Path are often faerie-like. Time flows differently there, and a few of them seem to be actually outside of time. An intruder who evades the threat of stasis, aging or being hurled into the future can count himself lucky. However, the luck found in these places

is almost all bad, and many who succeed in escaping have merely avoided some doom.

- **Moros:** Death and Matter are the purview of the Necromancers. Shambling undead are commonly pressed into service as guardians or laborers. Wards bearing death-curses in one form or another are also feared.

- **Mastigos** archmasters infuse the powers of Mind and Space into their strongholds.



Both are extremely useful for rendering places very difficult to locate and explore, either through clouding the minds of searchers or by warping the space around the places into an impassible Labyrinth. Once inside, the illusions and dangers continue with wards that attack the minds and wills of intruders or Space enchantments sending them into deathtraps.

- **Obrimos:** Forces and Prime are among the least subtle methods of protecting a sanctum, but subtlety is not the hallmark of the Aether. Wards involving devastating Forces attacks or barriers of searing flame are as common as the challenges of powerful defenders.

- **Thyrus:** Sites connected to the Primal Wild draw upon Life and Spirit for defense. What life gives, it can take away. Intruders who can defeat the bestial and spiritual defenders or a site may still fall prey to wards of disease, poison and transformation.

Potent Conjurations

The rites and spells found within ancient strongholds generally were created by mages who had larger spellcasting dice pools than any modern character is likely to achieve. Such powerful casting ability let Atlantean builders invest considerable Potency in the magic they worked.

Without the Abyss to hinder them, the ancient Masters and archmages cast spells of now-unimaginable magnitude. When first created, the wards and spells often had as much as 6 to 10 levels of Potency. As the Abyss grew in power, more of a willworker's effort went into creating the spell in the first place than in bolstering its power. Wards of lesser import or created by post-Fall magicians are considerably weaker.

Note that the Potency inherent in a spell or ward can drop over time, especially if a site's Hallow goes dormant or the site's ley lines shift. Such deficiencies slowly wear away the available Potency until only the barest remains of the spell are present. Another factor dictating spell

Potency and ward survival is the activities of any previous visitors. Seeker expeditions typically dispel wards and breach defenses during the course of their explorations. Similarly, the remains of ancient war parties uncovered in the rubble of many sites show how fierce the battles were between the Awakened, sometimes leaving even the most powerful defenses in tatters.

The upshot is that an ancient site's defenses can be as formidable as the Storyteller wants. A site that's meant as a minor challenge during the course of a chronicle might have defenses no greater than a modern cabal's sanctum. A fortress, temple or tomb designed as the setting for a chronicle's climax might have defenses so

powerful they act as plot devices: Seekers must defeat or bypass them in a certain way, and no possible magic can overcome them. For instance, if a guardian only surrenders a crucial Artifact to a mage willing to die for it, some character must volunteer to die. That's it. No tricks. The brave and supremely worthy character's eventual resurrection is just as miraculous, of course.

Fiendish Traps

A staple of pulp fiction and two-fisted adventure as well as exploration, puzzles and traps that must be outwitted are part and parcel of a Seeker's life. While entire books could be written upon the nearly infinite variety of tricks and traps available, most traps fall into several basic categories: traps that fall or crush, puzzles, pits, projectile traps and environmental dangers. Although magic figures prominently in creating and triggering many traps found in Atlantean-era ruins, we will consider purely magical traps elsewhere.

Fortunately for explorers, traps do succumb to the march of time. This makes avoiding or disarming them somewhat easier than their builders' intent. Conversely, rust and decay has brought some traps to within a hair's breadth of activation, making disarming them extremely hazardous.

Often puzzles and traps are part of the complex's testing process. These challenges often play to a recognizable theme such as the underlying philosophies of an Arcanum, Path or order. How the trap or puzzle is solved can tell much about the intruder's mindset. Successfully negotiating such gauntlets are necessary to convince guardians that the intruder is worthy of admittance rather than destruction.

The two major components of any trap are its triggering mechanism and its damage component. Triggers can vary from the mechanical — such as tripwires, pressure plates or simple attachment to door handles, locks and the like — to magical. Magical triggers can involve almost any Knowing or Unveiling spell. For example, using Mind spells, traps can activate in the presence of sentient beings. Forces may trigger spells upon detection of motion or electrical activity. A Prime spell might activate traps when experiencing a sudden influx of Mana (Awakened beings). Traps can become very discerning in their effects and targeting through the use of Bans and the more sophisticated spells from the Knowing or Unveiling Practices.

Traps fall into a few basic categories, such as:

Pits

Whether a simple 10' x 10' x 10' pit in the middle of the corridor or a bottomless chasm, the pit's basic premise is "something you fall into." Concealment changes pits from simple hazards and increases their deadliness. The types of concealment range from simple coverings to pivoted lids triggered by a careless footstep or when spells detect an intruder. Particularly fiendish pits slam shut above the victim or have

vicious arrays of spikes and spears at the bottom. Other pits may be home to monsters dwelling at the bottom or be filled with fire, acid or lava. If victims survive the experience, they must then somehow climb out and escape.

Mechanical Traps

Things that shoot, slice, impale or otherwise attack the target are all considered mechanical traps. These can include such charming devices as scything blades, hails of darts, crossbow bolts or similarly fiendish contrivances. These traps rely upon the skill or magical ability of the builder to harm trespassers. Once triggered, the traps' damage is based on the weapon and any enhancements their builders saw fit to give them.

Additionally, many traps of this type are poisoned, either due to design or the buildup of rust and filth (Often the latter is the residue of the last — failed — adventurer attempting to bypass the trap).

Falling Walls and Rolling Boulders

Falling rocks, collapsing walls and other things that fall onto their victims (and, by extension, boulders rolling down corridors after intruders) are all crushing-type traps. Once these traps are triggered, dodging out of harm's way or quickly conjuring a defense is the best way to avoid injury.

Damage from these traps is treated as environmental damage, such as fire. Any character caught in the area of effect takes the requisite damage. In some cases, a successful roll means a complete escape; in others, such as running through a hall while the roof crumbles, each success can reduce the damage. Use Strength + Athletics or Dexterity + Athletics, depending on whether avoiding damage depends on a moment of raw exertion (jumping out of the way of a giant boulder) or agility (dodging the masonry falling from a collapsing ceiling). Even Wits + Athletics might be used, if the ability to notice hazards matters most, (in which case the roll might be Defense + Athletics), such as the myriad of tiny holes concealing a torrential hail of poisoned darts.

Depending upon how widespread the area of effect is (and hence, how difficult to dodge) and what falls upon the victim, crushing Damage can range from 3 to 10. Similar to explosives, rockfalls and other crushing attacks inflict a certain number of Wound levels automatically; then roll the same number of dice and add any successes to the Damage. This is typically bashing damage but can be lethal or even aggravated damage, depending on the situation.

Environmental Hazards

Traps involving poisonous gasses, lava flows or water-filled rooms are all environmental hazards. Again, the best defense against these is avoidance, but when you are stuck in a water-filled pit, this can be difficult. Damage is based upon hazards found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 180–181. Unlike mechanical traps, these traps deal damage by their very presence; the victim soaks the damage directly.

Trap or Hazard	Damage
Simple Pit	Falling damage (World of Darkness Rulebook , p. 179)
Mechanical Trap	Weapon damage (World of Darkness Rulebook , p. 170)

Rock Fall	3 to 4 levels + equal dice bashing damage
Giant Rolling Boulder	6+ levels + equal dice lethal damage
Crushing wall or ceiling	10 levels + equal dice aggravated damage when they close: nobody survives becoming two-dimensional.
Fiery Pit	2 to 6 points lethal damage per turn; see World of Darkness , p. 180
Lava Flow	6+ points lethal damage per turn; see World of Darkness , p. 180
Drowning	per World of Darkness , p. 49
Toxins	per World of Darkness , p. 181

Detection and Avoidance

Detecting traps is the first step to avoiding or deactivating them, since most traps and their triggers are concealed. Careful Investigation and Perception are the tools of any explorer who wants to live past her first antechamber. The Larceny Skill, backed up by magic and proper research, allows intruders access into previously forbidden areas of a site.

Adamas

Many of the true Atlantean sites are constructed with adamas. This is not a specific material as such, but a process by which a building material's Pattern is fortified and rewoven into a new substance highly resistant to both magical and physical forces.

In most cases, adamas resembles the original substance but with strong undertones of crystalline strength — the structure even looks as if it possesses an unearthly strength. Adamas enabled the Atlanteans to indulge their architectural whims, letting them create soaring edifices that seem almost ephemeral while other structures were appropriately grim in aspect. Form followed function — a soaring temple to the Supernal needs to inspire the thoughts and souls of those within, while a citadel-outpost must convey raw Atlantean power to the surrounding barbarians.

Those places constructed after the Fall use less robust materials, but even the most degenerate builders interlaced these places with whatever magic they had to make the structures supernaturally durable. Only durable structures can survive the millennia intact enough to be recognized as an archaeomagical site, as most sites with less potent construction are usually mere rubble.

Adamas Construction	Durability	Reduced Successes
Standard Construction	8	1
Reinforced Construction	11	3
Secure or Military Construction	13	6

While adamas roughly corresponds to the Reinforced Materials rating of a Sanctum (5+ dots), adamas is a far superior material. Fixtures such as doors, windows or interior walls have a Structure of 5 + Size (usually a 5) + Durability making even casual Atlantean buildings remarkably durable. Since adamas can be opaque or transparent when created, any remaining windows are as durable as the walls.

Adamas construction is highly resistant to Arcane manipulation. This was deliberate, as the Atlanteans knew that other willworkers were the Atlanteans' most dangerous threat. Adamas construction automatically reduces the number of successes of any attempt to affect it magically depending on the grade of construction. Anyone attempting to use Space Arcana to bypass such materials is in for a rude (and possibly lethal) surprise.

Wonderful Things

After bypassing wards, surviving testing and outrunning any rolling boulders, Seekers can begin their investigation and seek their reward. What mage is not warmed by the thought of finding an unknown library of Atlantean grimoires or a fountain of pure tass?

All too often, however, whatever glories once dwelled in Atlantean sites have departed. Millennia may have passed since any human trod their halls. Once-exquisite stone carvings have crumbled into dust, taking the history and wisdom of the builders with them. The detritus of years covers mosaic floors with leaves, soil and worse things. Tree roots wrest apart blocks with the slow patience of years. Libraries have become the food of worms.

Only the hardest treasures remain intact in these places, hidden amid the wrack and ruin. Fortunately, these items are likely to be the very ones most valued by mages since Artifacts and Imbued Items often possess supernatural resistance to rot and ruin. On the other hand, perhaps nothing remains intact — except for hints that lead to other, better-preserved places.

Some places survive more-or-less intact because their magic preserves and sustains them against the ravages of time. Guardians and spirits maintained the halls and fixtures against the day their masters might return. A few sites even look as pristine as they did when their long-dead builders wrought them. Carvings and statues stand unblemished in unmarred atriums and vaulting libraries. The supernatural luster of orichalcum gleams against crystalline adamas, and ethereal-looking thaumium.

Some temples and palaces are filled with personal effects, magical tools and ritual objects of those who lived there. Sometimes, these objects are discarded as if their owners abandoned them to flee a sudden catastrophe. On other occasions, the places are neat and tidy, as if the owners just stepped out moments ago. Food remains unspoiled on plates, and experiments progress in laboratories. Other sites are clean of all signs of occupation, as if no one had lived there at all.

The style of these ruins varies, ranging from the opulent and aggrandizing halls of the Silver Ladder with their vast

chambers and ornate furnishings to the militant austerity of the Adamantine Arrow's outposts and training grounds. Other ruins were the citadels and shrines of outland barbarians, their battlements and altars still defying the might of Atlantis even today. Many rooms and facilities were used for purposes familiar to modern mages: living quarters, libraries, training rooms and so on. However, the forms these places take may differ radically from modern sanctums. Some ruins possess an otherworldly design aesthetic that modern mages may find disturbing. Some places within a site may not be immediately comprehensible to the discoverers and may take weeks or even years of study by experts before mages learn to harness their properties.

Many chambers are dedicated workshops and ritual chambers — often associated with the site's purpose. Some rooms are prepared for strange rites and unfamiliar — or impossible — magical rituals. One room might house the dead as they are prepared for mummification, and contain a ghastly array of ritual implements, embalming tables, natron pits and canopic jars. Another series of chambers might be built to house an ancient tome or protect some powerful Artifact from theft. In many cases, the wards are to prevent intruders from being used by a willful or corrupted item. What tomb is not complete without some powerful scroll that simply begs to be read — no matter what the cost?

One commonly found room is easily recognized by Atlantean order mages: arenas for the Duel Arcane. Disputes and feuds were apparently frequent in the "perfect kingdom," and Duels were common method of settling disagreements. Far more elaborate than any used today, these chambers provide each Duelist with an equal footing and entertain those watching. Many archaeomancers speculate that such challenges also served as an art form and as entertainment in addition to their legal function. The most exquisite battles were recorded for posterity on mosaics and memory stones such as Atroxi Crystals (see p. 81); some of which have survived to this day.

Apart from the various guardian creatures, Seekers may encounter magical servitors still following the orders of their creators. These may be the same sorts of entities used to protect a site — zombies and revenants, bound ghosts or spirits, animate statues and stranger things. (See Chapter Three for a selection.) These entities may double as guardians; the orders from their long-dead creators may include the gruesome death of any intruders. However, some creatures only perform domestic duties, and merely await new commands by someone who can show proper authority.

Knowing What You Have

Is a site pre-Fall Atlantean, post-Sundering Atlantean or from some other culture entirely? The Mysterium offers the following guidelines for recognizing who built an ancient site.

Use of the High Speech and Atlantean runes are the surest signs of Atlantean origin, or at least a strong Atlantean influence. Atlantean builders carved their glyphs and sigils into the walls, inlaid sigils upon floors and worked glyphs into the



architecture in many ways — anything from a carved band of fretwork that contains hidden runic script to a series of rooms and corridors whose combined shape forms a glyph.

At best, modern mages know a debased form of the original High Speech. Entering such ruins demonstrates just how far the modern understanding of the High Speech has degenerated. Such a potent exposure to the Supernal tongue may prove overwhelming as half-remembered meaning and new insight crashes over the Awakened explorer at every turn.

All the powers and functions within these places answer only to the High Speech. Words of command are woven in with prosaic information in a form that only the Wise might notice. Such precautions are typical of the Atlantean-era when only the Awakened could be trusted with such power. After the Sundering, the refugees and Exiles maintained similar attitudes, even though their lineages dwindled and fewer mages Awoke each generation.

Magic never became as powerful and reliable after the Sundering as magic was before. The *Mysterium* suggests that if a site clearly could not have been built without magic, the site probably dates from before the Sundering. These primal sites often feature extensive use of supernatural substances such as the magical metal orichalcum, or the enchanted stonework called *adamas*. Parts of the structure may be held together by spells: for instance, a stairway of disks magically suspended in the air. Unfortunately, such intensely magical sites are also the most fragile when exposed to the modern world, and tend to collapse if anything disturbs their ancient spells.

Atlantean sites often include draconic images in their ornamentation. The Atlanteans were not the only people who were impressed by dragons, though. “Barbarian” ruins from the age of magic also may include images of dragons. Atlantis and its outland rivals shared many other artistic motifs, too. Only an archaeomancer who has studied the documented ruins of the ancient world can spot crucial stylistic differences. Recognizing such differences can spell the difference between life and death: in some ruins, use of High Speech or Atlantean glyphs can mark a mage as one of the builders’ ancient enemies, and trigger terrible retribution.

After the Sundering, the heirs of the Exiles and refugees gradually blended with their adopted communities. Native motifs and architecture eventually came to dominate the builders of ancient sanctums, making these sites indistinguishable from the mundane ruins of the culture. The range of styles observed in the ruins is wide enough no one is *entirely* sure which are genuinely Atlantean — or even if there is only *one* genuine Atlantis.

Archaeomancers have attempted to collate the “known” Atlantean art and architecture to infer different periods with characteristic styles, but the mages have met with little success. The body of evidence is quite small (compared to the amount of information available on, say, Egypt or Assyria) and dating methods are poor to nonexistent, even with the help of Time magic. Scholars are further hampered by a lack of hard information to provide context — even something as simple as a list of kings or a tale of years would be a priceless resource.

Orichalcum and Lunargent

Plato said the Atlanteans decorated their palaces and temples with a metal he called orichalcum. Sleeper scholars speculate this “golden copper” or “mountain copper” was some alloy of brass. Seekers discovered long ago that orichalcum is “perfected gold,” a magically-refined version of the metal. Mages can still make orichalcum by sending ordinary gold into Twilight as ephemera, and bringing it back to material form again — the true meaning, perhaps, of the alchemical formula “Dissolve and coagulate.” Dozens of passages into Twilight are needed to produce pure orichalcum. This reduces the gold’s volume and mass by a tenth.

Orichalcum has a redder hue than pure but mundane gold and is also translucent. Orichalcum seems to catch and hold light, giving the metal a warm, fiery glow. Similar to mundane gold, orichalcum can be drawn into incredibly fine wires and beaten into leaf. This magical metal is even more resistant to corrosion than mundane gold; even the fiercest mundane acid cannot dissolve orichalcum.

Lunargent, or perfected silver, is made from ordinary silver the same way. This metal is likewise translucent, and holds a cool, slightly blue glow. Lunargent, too, is highly malleable and chemically inert.

The Atlanteans used orichalcum and lunargent for decoration as well as many of their potent magical treasures. Alloyed together with hermium (perfected mercury), orichalcum and lunargent form the wonder-metal thaumium. The Atlanteans used many other alloys of perfected metals, too. Similar thaumium, alloys of perfected metals require Prime and Matter to produce. An item of perfected metal grants a +1 equipment bonus to spellcasting to enhance or imbue an item; similar to thaumium, particular alloys may have other useful properties. (The subject is broad, however, and must await some other supplement.)

Exempla Loci: Places of the Past

The relics and remains of Dragon Isle, its rivals and their heirs vary almost as much as the lies spawned about them. Here are several locations to provide a taste of what explorers might encounter.

Ruins fall into several broad categories based on function, such as makers or providers, religious, military and scholarship. Also provided are the typical defenses and guardians common to such places, along with an example location suitable for Storyteller use.

Always remember that even the most innocuous or utilitarian Atlantean site might be occupied and reworked by later occupants. After all, a warehouse made from adamas is still an uncannily strong building, and therefore a good site for, say, a temple of abomination or a magical prison. Recycling like this can lead to nasty surprises for unwary Seekers.

Strongholds

Powerful artifacts, desperate criminals, ancient evils: all need protectors or jailers. These places hold the most deadly wards and traps augmented by the fiercest guardians, and with good reason.

Atlantean fortresses include numerous guardrooms, armories and training areas used by the mages, Sleepers and assorted creatures charged with the fortresses’ defense. Ritual chambers for recasting or reinforcing protective spells and wards are common, too. From these rooms, explorers may glean clues as to what other traps and wards defend the complex. Powerful spirits and constructs rove the corridors in an endless round of patrols. The spirits’ response to unauthorized intruders is invariably lethal since any hesitation could mean the spirits’ destruction.

At the heart of the complex lie the vaults. These chambers might contain some of Atlantis’ greatest Arcane treasures — or house the spells binding some eldritch horror away from the Fallen World. The vaults are certainly protected by the most virulent spells and traps their builders could devise.

Treasure-Houses

Atlanteans built numerous strongholds dedicated to the safekeeping their most powerful artifacts — ones that if used, might shake the Dragon Isle to its foundations. Both Exarchs and Exiles plundered these holdings during Atlantis’ death throes. After the Sundering, the survivors hid these weapons once more, for many of these potent Artifacts were too dangerous to use, yet impossible to destroy.

Other treasure-houses had a more traditional meaning as they “merely” housed the wealth the Dragon Isle plundered from subject kingdoms and barbarous principalities. Gathered into vast hoards of wealth and alien (to Atlantean) magic, these treasure-houses await discovery. Similar places built by the barbarian kingdoms indicate that not only the Atlanteans possessed vast wealth. The mages of later kingdoms built their own treasure-houses to protect the magic they looted from now-destroyed Atlantean ruins.

Prisons

Other places protected the Atlanteans and their contemporaries from internal threats. For all the Atlanteans’ enlightenment, they had criminals — and in the time of the Exarchs, at least, the Atlanteans had political prisoners. Any mages tainted by irredeemable treachery, degeneration or murder were captured and imprisoned. Sorcerous prisons might also hold captive barbarian mages. The Guardians of the Veil say their Atlantean forbears did try to rehabilitate criminal willworkers (though accounts differ about their success rate and the humanity of their methods). With the Celestial War, many prisoners escaped or were freed in exchange for pledges of loyalty. Other prisoners languished in their cells, abandoned to terrible and lonely deaths when their guards were pressed into service elsewhere. These long-dead willworkers may linger in their prisons as maddened ghost-mages.

Bound Horrors

The Atlanteans also imprisoned beings too powerful to readily overcome. Falling into this category were hostile spirit

lords and those acamoth that the Exiles managed to capture. In some cases, these beings were kept imprisoned, not because they were too powerful to destroy, but because destroying them would unleash even greater dangers. So long as the bound horrors remain under lock and key, they preserve the Fallen World from greater dangers. Often these powerful beings are sequestered in Pocket Realms for all eternity — their captors hoped. Despite the Sundering, many of these prisons continued their vigil, staffed by fanatic and unsleeping guardians.

The Prison of Black Jade

Originally built to contain some the worst Awakened criminals, the Hell of Black Jade hangs in nothingness, sequestered within its own realm of possibility. During the anarchy and chaos following the Sundering, Atlantean refugees hastily converted the Hell of Black Jade to imprison several of the newly emerging Abyssal entities.

The attempt failed. Before anyone knew what had happened, Abyssal horrors possessed several of the weaker Awakened. The guards were unable to regain control and abandoned the prison. After sealing the portals to the Pocket Realm, the guards destroyed whatever references to the prison that they could find.

Inside, the Reality Devourers quickly turned on each other in an orgy of bloodshed and betrayal until only the strongest remained. For thousands of years, the prison has slumbered. But now dreams afflict mortals who live near the site of an ancient portal as something inside the prison reaches out. Over the years, the being has influenced people who can bring about its release. The being's chosen make up a small cult. Now all they need is a willworker to reopen the way . . .

In the prison's prime, the Hell of Black Jade was heavily defended. It boasted a complex series of lethal wards and some of the toughest temple guardians the Atlanteans could construct. Millennia of abuse, however, leave the interior badly damaged. The walls and gates of jet-black adamas and crystal are scarred and disfigured from demonic battles. Artifacts and lore may still await anyone brave enough to venture inside, for the Ungula Draconis stripped its prisoners of their goods and stored them here; the fleeing jailers did not recover everything. Deep within the prison is a vault containing rows of spheres storing disembodied souls, a remnant from when the Jade Hell was still a prison for humans. Are these criminals? Which side did they serve in the Celestial War? Are any of them still sane?

Seekers must contend with the remaining Abyssal creatures stalking the corridors as well as any surviving guardians — both of which greet intruders with lethal force regardless of their origin.

At the core of the prison is the Jade Heart — the prison's soul and focus. Destroying the Jade Heart collapses the Pocket Realm utterly. Can modern mages succeed where Atlanteans failed? Can the mages escape afterwards without unleashing the horrors within?

Scholars and Explorers

Similar the Atlanteans' modern heirs, Atlantean mages were eager investigators of the supernatural. Modern Seekers especially prize the Demesnes and sanctums dedicated to research and Arcane exploration. Most of these places had a specific area of inquiry such as Verges, other supernatural creatures or experiments with particular Arcana, Supernal Realms or even the Tapestry itself.

A sanctum for scholarly Atlanteans invariably has an extensive library on the topic at hand, methods of communicating with other researchers and a robust capacity for defense. In the latter days of Atlantis and afterwards, these facilities became prime targets for raids by other willworkers. Some attackers were Atlantean, but outlanders also took advantage of the chaos to plunder the Atlanteans for a change. In addition, "field research" often entailed visiting dangerous locales such as werewolf-infested loci, various spiritual realms or quick expeditions to deprive non-Atlanteans of their Arcane lore. The explorers needed to protect themselves from any retaliation.

Some sites were devoted to the Atlantean practice of hesychia ("stillness," or trance meditation) and the incubation of visions and travel within the Astral Realms. These chambers look dark and featureless to a Sleeping eye, but are exquisitely tuned to help the Awakened to meditate and explore the Astral Realms. Such places have a greater sympathy with the Watchtowers and the Supernal than most places remaining in the Fallen World. Before and after the Fall, these sites gave crucial insights into Supernal reality.

Laboratories

Thaumatology, the study of magic, has innumerable facets. The Atlanteans expended great effort in mounting expeditions to the (now-inaccessible) Supernal Realms and various intermediate planes that brought back numerous artifacts and expanded the Atlanteans' knowledge of the Tapestry. Other groups made voyages of exploration into the Shadow Realm or expanded the boundaries of Astral Space. The mages' point of departure and home was a research sanctum. From here, they prepared their journeys and afterwards investigated their findings.

Other researchers were less ambitious. Their laboratories and experiments focused on the study of the Arcana and how the

material and the transcendent interwove to form the Tapestry of reality. Their studies of how the Supernal impressed itself into ephemeral and material substance remain critical for willworkers who want to imbue items with power.

Some Atlanteans investigated the cycle of souls and rebirth — attempting to contact the Celestial soul before it was enfolded in flesh, or to contact the soul after it had thrown off the shackles of mortal existence. If they found the purpose behind this mystic cycle, their records are lost — for now.

Common among these places were diexodos, or scrying chambers. These rooms greatly enhance the powers of sympathy and similarity, allowing mages to spy out foes and study distant phenomenon in relative safety.

Libraries

The promise of Atlantean lore makes ancient libraries and museums the favorite goal of archaeomancers. Fortunately, the Atlanteans seldom intended to make their Lorehouses difficult to find — at least before the rise of the Exarchs. As the Awakened empire split into factions, mages hid their lore from their foes. The Exiles guarded their sanctums of lore as ruthlessly as their fortresses. After the Fall, refugees hid their salvaged secrets from a barbaric world.

Wisdom is never given lightly, however, and Seekers who petition for entry into the ancient libraries find themselves thoroughly tested by the guardians. With the growing insularity of the Atlantean mages, many libraries forbade (or heavily restricted) mages whose order or Path differed from the owners. Libraries often have additional restrictions on their information, restricting access to certain parts of the collection until the Seeker possesses sufficient wisdom or ability. This is especially true of order or Legacy-specific libraries that might require the student to be of the proper level of initiation as well.

Interlopers unable to prove their bona fides bring down the wrath of spirit and spell. These Arcane defenses are usually drawn from the most powerful spells in the Arcana favored by the librarians. Before the decadence of Atlantis, however, defenses were rarely meant to be lethal: they existed as much to protect mages from powers they couldn't handle yet, as to protect the knowledge from unworthy seekers. Later on, wards, traps and gatekeepers became more deadly. In other cases, the enchantments compelling the ghosts and spirits within have failed, and they now vengefully prowl the stacks and study halls.

The information contained within these places can be almost anything the Atlanteans studied. Rotes and spells of a particular Arcanum or order are a frequent topic — Atlantean libraries once offered hundreds of variants available for study. Many of these rotes no longer work in the profane modern age, but they can provide students with insight into constructing their own. (Such libraries might provide Arcane Experience to reduce the cost of rotes related to their favored Arcanum or style). All too often, earlier visitors have looted these libraries, leaving only scraps — but even scraps of Atlantean lore are precious when so little of it survives.

While dusty rooms of scrolls or collections of rune-inscribed metal tablets are common motifs for post-Sundering and outland

libraries, the most celebrated Atlantean library was the legendary Cenacle of Sighs where the soul-stones and ghosts of long departed sages answered researchers' questions or shared their memories with the mystagogues. Chambers filled with complex illusions allow visitors to experience other lives and Supernal worlds while other rooms enabled the wise to journey within themselves and seek their answers on the Astral Planes. Although the original Cenacle perished with Atlantis, lesser libraries used similar techniques. The "texts" in a library may be imprinted on crystals using Mind magic, recited by spirits of knowledge or recorded any other way an ancient willworker could imagine.

Workshop of the Telescopes

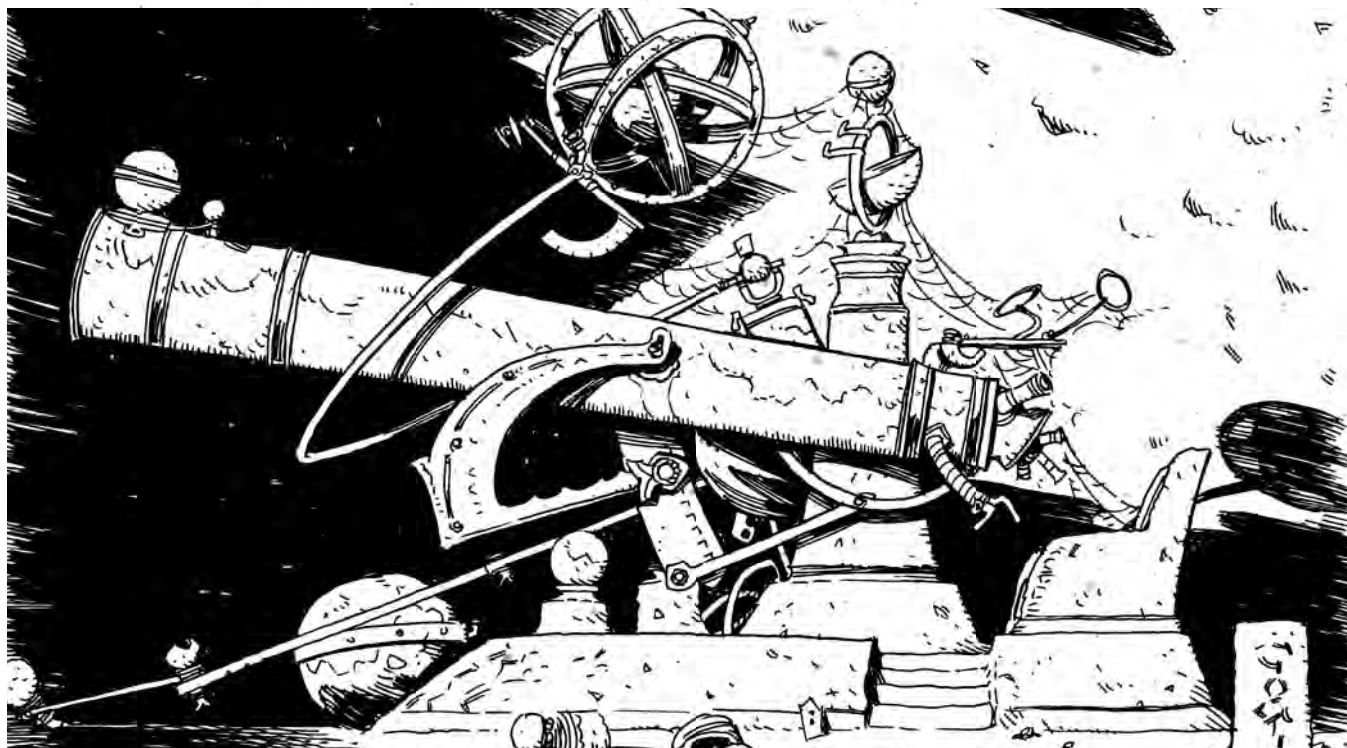
The legendary mage-smiths of Akazr crafted a set of magical lenses able to view the Supernal Realms. After the Sundering, the mages' workshops fell into disrepair. The survivors were forced to abandon their pursuits and leave their desolate mountaintop to take shelter with other Atlantean refugees.

Hidden behind a door with no key, the Workshops of Akazr are protected by a Labyrinth of false paths and illusions. Some creatures may have drifted into the site over the ages, and the departing mages left a few quick-and-dirty magical wards and traps, but the greatest challenge lies simply in finding the right path.

The decrepit ruins still contain relics of the departed mage-smiths. Among these might be the secrets of constructing their telescopes. The mage-smiths' records of their study of Supernal skies might be more valuable. Even without the secret of creating the telescopes, the surviving components possess a great efficacy in observing and affecting distant objects. (The lenses might even provide bonuses exceeding the normal limitations of sympathetic magic).

Worship

According to some scholars, organized religion played little or no role in the Awakened City. However, many Atlantean ruins appear to be temples, shrines or other places of worship where the Awakened could commune with a variety of Supernal, spiritual or Astral beings. The thought of state cults and formal religions does not sit well with many modern views of the Atlantean psyche, particularly their supposed submission to some Higher Power. In particular, Silver Ladder members prefer to believe the Atlanteans ruled or commanded the denizens of other Realms, and treated with Supernal powers as respected partners. Only the Awakened in the barbarian lands offered fealty to spirits or fouler supernatural entities. Other mages believe that religion and worship may have been the vehicle the Exarchs used to seize power from the gods themselves.



Beyond the Dragon Isle, however, many mages seem to have worshipped or bargained with occult entities. It seems ironic that outland mages may have offered worship and submission to gain protection from the Atlanteans. After the Sundering, many Atlantean survivors appear to have turned to such practices as well, seeking to augment their waning powers in any way they could. At least, Seekers claim to have found indisputably Atlantean temples, whose builders were not their masters.

For some mages, worship was integral to their magical traditions. Similar to those of their mundane counterparts, the temples, shrines and monasteries of the Awakened include a variety of cells, cloisters, sanctuaries and chambers where ceremonies and rituals are practiced. Great statues, portraying esoteric Supernal creatures, spirit-gods and revered heroes gleam in the shadows of long-desolate shrines. Only Seekers who know the proper rituals might hope to pass through the wards and gatekeepers placed by barbarian or Atlantean priesthoods to prevent theft or sacrilege.

Abandoned by their worshippers, the temples' guardians and wards often remain intact. Naturally, these spells are associated in some way with the entities worshipped; for example, a shrine to the Aetherial Phoenix draws on the powers of Forces and Prime. Similarly, spirits and other entities beholden to these gods are the most common types of guardians found in these places. For instance, a granite ape armed with an iron rod protects the Shrine of the Transcendent Monkey Sage. Traps are also common, put in place to protect the site by mortals less capable with the Arcane.

Supernal Temples

Atlantean-era conceptions of the Supernal were diverse, and the Atlantean temples reflect this. These places of worship

and meditation show few obvious similarities to each other. A few shrines resemble the motifs seen in the Watchtowers, though the shrines apparently predate the Watchtowers. Many temples appear to have been Demesnes, or at least charged with some form of Supernal power beyond the ability of modern mages to replicate. To the visitor, these places seem to be at once otherworldly and more real than their surroundings. Adamas and other magical substances are common. Many temples are simply waiting for the right visitor to rouse them from their slumber.

Propitiation of the Supernal entities cherished by the Atlanteans spread throughout the world after the Fall as the island's refugees blended with other cultures. In many places, the Atlantean practices intermingled with local belief-systems. Sometimes, Atlantean practices became the underlying source of ancient religions – a few of which continue to this day in one form or another. On the other hand, some mages argue the gods and religions truly came first, and the Atlanteans merely joined outlanders in their worship.

Spirit Shrines

Numerous magical traditions, both Atlantean and barbarian, propitiated local spirits and ephemeral entities. The sacred rocks and holy groves of these spirits became the center of cults and the focus of temples. Some shrines were built by "barbarian" mages who asked the Unseen Courts for the power to resist Atlantis. The Vox Draconis, however, built many shrines of their own to the multitude of spirits and powers that supposedly crowded the ancient world and the Supernal Realms. Officially, these shrines were embassies to inferior powers. These shrines did not always remain as such after the Fall.

Ritual and ceremony channeled Mana and essence to the spirits. In turn, they provide tass, rotes and lore of the Shadow

Realm to willworkers who pleased them. The spirits offered more worldly benefits, such as good harvests and protection from other supernatural entities, to their Sleeping devotees. Surprisingly few of these shrines are built upon loci, but were-wolves and other spirit-creatures likely took over any loci-based sites long ago and incorporated them into their own religious practices. Such powerful squatters make exploring such places hazardous in the extreme.

Fallen Cults

The best-hidden shrines belonged to forbidden and dangerous cults, especially temples built during the Celestial War and after the Fall when many Awakened turned to darker magic to survive. Barbarian mages also sometimes turned to dark and bloody powers that prefigured the horrors of the Abyss. From these cultists arose the original Scelesti and other foul traditions. Many of these lineages died out during the millennia, hunted down by the Atlantean orders or consumed by the lineages' vile masters — but often their secret lairs remain undiscovered.

Not all these fanes of iniquity were originally built for that purpose. Some of these unholy places originally served some other purpose and were refashioned by their degenerate inhabitants. Now dedicated to the service of Abyssal nonentities or demons, these places grate on the senses of most Awakened. Horrified explorers report glowing altars absorbing the life force of sacrifices, black grails that allow celebrants to share the Gnosis of their victims, grotesque and terrifying idols and vast libraries of blasphemous rites and liturgies.

With *almost* every mage's hand turned against them, these dark havens survived only through strictest secrecy. Spells of concealment and treachery make better shelter, and the resident creatures of murder and horror attempt to destroy intruders before they can warn others. Once the orders discover such a fane, they quickly organize magical strike teams (which now may include modern military hardware as well as potent magic). Many times in the past, however, the Scelesti fled or died, but the victors lacked the force to cleanse these temples of the Scelesti's taint. Sealed away with the spells of the Guardians or the Arrow, these places still fester in secret and may birth new guardians and new horrors.

The Flame Unconquered

A Flame once burned in isolated purity in Atlantis, the Flame's primal essence a celestial beacon for the Awakened. Despite the Sundering, the Flame burns yet, though its temple vanished with the Dragon Isle itself. Though its material form is long gone, the Twilight shadow of the temple remains and its bright flame burns unconquered. While many say this ghostly temple is not even the remains of the original one but some distant descendant, the temple's power is undeniable.

The Flame's numerous and powerful guard-

ians have preserved their "god" for millennia. They have also moved their ephemeral shrine several times. The guards include *djinn* who keep intruders from sullyng the Flame's golden purity with their impious gaze. Only the most powerful Obrimos might hope to gain passage, pitting their Arcane might and worthy deeds against the Flame's judgment.

Seekers who win past the gatekeepers are rewarded with a greater affinity to the Prime and Forces Arcana, as well as access to the rotes carved into the temple's orichalcum and lunar-gent pillars. In return, the Seekers must accept duties of justice and retribution to the Flame, just as it did from its worshippers in ancient times.

Warfare

Atlantis' power was founded upon raw power as much as wisdom. The Dragon Isle left fortresses, spy-holes and training grounds scattered across the world. Some housed strike forces, Arcane battalions ready to thwart attacks on Atlantis or impose its will on its neighbors.

Anyone investigating these places should be ready for a fight, as the Awakened City spared no expense in securing its peace. Any of Atlantis' many war-machines and battle-spirits might prowl the battlements or lurks in ambush in the ruins.

Citadels and Fortresses

From simple forts guarding distant mines and plantations to extensive citadels guarding colonies, critical passes or magical colleges, Atlantean fortifications were built to last. Others are the stuff of legend: castles and towers built among the Subtle Planes or in the Shadow Realm, guarding fabulous treasures. Unfortunately, the largest and most spectacular citadels also became prime targets during the Celestial War. Although most fortresses are constructed from mundane stone, brick and timber, the surviving ones were either tough enough to survive the Celestial War and the subsequent Fall or isolated enough to remain hidden or ignore. The surviving fortresses are a mixture of colonial depots, where mercenaries and Awakened enforced the Dragon Isle's will upon the surrounding world, and ragged fortresses torn by cataclysm. Some were built underground, like modern bunkers; others were buried by disasters or time. Whatever the fortresses' conditions, fortresses dating from the Sundering period are amongst the rarest finds; the struggles of the Celestial War destroyed most of them.

Usually the territory of the ancient Adamantine Arrow, these fortresses served as training grounds for mages and the warriors who accompanied them into battle. Citadels are filled with a bewildering array of barracks, training and exercise rooms, armories, smithies, commissaries, stables and guardrooms. Explorers have also discovered more esoteric features such as scrying-posts that keep magical surveillance on the surrounding lands, broken dock-towers for sky-ships

and magical gateways that allowed warriors to move from one citadel to another with a single step.

Outposts

Like sentry outposts on the edge of civilization, these small fortifications provided Atlantis with a source of military strength at far remove from her borders. The Adamantine Arrow often maintained these outposts as bases for war, training and research into Arcane combat. A garrison could hunt down renegades or rebels from the outpost. Such criminals were sent back to the Dragon Isle to face Atlantean (and later Exarch) justice.

These sites are minor as Atlantean finds go, but do provide insight into Atlantean ways. Most sites were abandoned as indefensible after the Fall; the surviving garrisons moved elsewhere to consolidate their strength. (A few, however, became the centers of petty kingdoms as their commanders turned warlord.) Outposts used for training might retain lore pertaining to the Atlantean military. Augmented or imbued military equipment might be found as well, but most troops stripped their bases of everything they could carry away. If they didn't, Seekers should wonder what force could destroy them or force them to leave so quickly: it may still haunt the ruin.

Before leaving, the garrisons usually trapped and warded these places, but the Awakened assigned to these outposts were not the most capable. Thus, any remaining defenses probably rely on traps and concealment rather than on powerful mystic wards.

Spy Holes

In the Awakened City's latter years, enemies surrounded Atlantis. Some of these enemies rivaled the Awakened City in mystic power, though not all of them were mages. However, the Wise ensured they would receive warning of danger. Throughout the world, the early Guardians of the Veil established a series of well-hidden refuges, secret holdings where they might spy upon their enemies. Such places were invariably protected by the best concealing magic the Dragon's Eye could devise.

The Guardians sent out their infiltrators, saboteurs and missionaries to watch their foes, rebel and barbarian alike. Hidden and usually meant to be temporary, these places have little in the way of internal defenses and certainly hold no devices or lore that could be used against the Dragon Isle. Concealment is these places' greatest (and often only) defense.

Atlanteans constructed these installations with an eye to minimal comfort and provided only the most basic accommodations — at least by Atlantean standards. These sites are sometimes only accessible through Space portals, or guarded by powerful Mind effects that twist the thoughts of passersby to other concerns. Within these places, Seekers can find interrogation chambers, storehouses and secret bolt-holes as well as extensive information about the surrounding communities. The Mysterium curses the Seekers of past ages who found but discarded dossiers about towns and people that vanished millennia before the Pyramids: such superficially trivial information could give context to many other enigmas from the Atlantean Age.

The Plague Pit

Buried deep beneath one of the world's largest cities is a terrible legacy of Atlantean cruelty.

In ancient times, a mighty city refused to pay homage to the Dragon Isle. As a result, a terrible plague ripped through the populace. When the Atlanteans demonstrated their ability to cure the Yellow Death, the city swore loyalty and paid tribute in exchange for succor.

The Guardians of the Veil spread the Yellow Death from a hidden vault sequestered in caves deep below the old city. As a surety of continued obedience, the Guardians left the plague pit intact and only sealed it with magic. The Yellow Death still lurks within, barely held in check by decaying magic. Recently, a mad apostate mage learned of the Yellow Death from an ancient stele in Mesopotamia and seeks to unleash the plague to cleanse the world of Sleepers.

Production Facilities

Similar to unAwakened people, the Atlanteans built huge numbers of the storehouses and workshops, which a civilization needs. Here, the Atlanteans crafted their most wondrous items or gathered the raw materials that supplied the busy craft-sanctums and filled the treasure-houses. However, since most of these places were not critical to Atlantean security, they often show the ravages of time more than other sites do.

These sites are both the least threatening and the least rewarding of ruins. One rarely hides a warehouse or defends a workshop strongly, so these places also usually were discovered long ago and stripped of anything valuable. Still, any place built sturdily enough to last millennia must have mattered a lot to *someone*. Wise explorers know that these goods must have arrived and departed during the heyday of Atlantis — often by means of portal or other Arcane transport — and use this lead to find more promising locations.

A simple warehouse or workshop has little in the way of wards or traps and is usually occupied only by chance denizens. Assuming the place wasn't completely looted and isn't too decrepit, loading automata or caretaker spirits and other servitors might remain. Workshops may include Arcane elements, such as fire-spirits dwelling in a pottery kiln, or tools enchanted with eversharp-charms or Durability enhancements. Over the millennia, though, spells and servitors might become dangerously erratic and create hazards the builders never planned.

Workshops of the Awakened hold some value for the Seeker, since they may still contain Arcane raw materials and enchanted tools. Even though a self-spinning potter's wheel may be of questionable worth to some mages, every sample of Atlantean magic gives another clue to the secrets of the Dragon Isle.

Farms and mines can become minor ruins as well. If an ancient farm or mine can be identified at all, it seldom contains more than the tools and devices required to process the harvest or the ore. Ancient tools, winepresses and smelters might also retain their imbued virtue to the present day.

A few mines or farms produced Arcane commodities (which may explain why they were built to last). For instance, a magical foundry might smelt a Hallow's tass into new forms for transport back to Atlantis. Any willworker might covet such a site, for what she could learn about storing and transforming Mana. The Garamantean vineyards, which produced the wines so prized by the Awakened, supposedly grew from a single vine-root taken from an Atlantean vineyard.

Retreats and Refuges

Some places were built as mystical retreats, where Atlanteans could regroup, heal between their struggles or simply pine for lost glory. Some of these refuges possess healing powers that were nothing short of miraculous, such as an enchanted spring or sacred grove to soothe wounds of body and mind for mages lucky enough to find the retreats. Rumors exist of some shrines capable of healing those blighted in soul, or restoring Patterns ravaged by time or Paradoxes.

These rare sites are not only some of the hardest to find without the right magic, they are among the best-defended locations known to the Awakened. If they were not so difficult to find, they would have been found, exploited and likely destroyed long ago. Anyone lucky enough to locate one of these oases of tranquility guards the location as closely as the ancients did. A healing refuge may have passed through dozens of owners since it was built, from cabals of mages to werewolf packs or cults of Sleepers, all of whom kept the secret for decades or centuries.

Tombs

Burial of the powerful was a serious affair in many cultures, and Atlanteans were no exception. Mourners laid such mages to rest with their most powerful magical treasures as well as mundane grave goods. Of course, most powerful Atlanteans arranged to be buried in Atlantis; their mausolea, which may have surpassed the Pyramids and the Taj Mahal, vanished with the Dragon Isle itself. Remaining sorcerous tombs are more commonly relics of non-Atlantean mages and the primitive tribes the refugee Atlanteans tried to civilize and rule. Guarded by curses and traps, these sepulchers often contain clues leading to other Atlantean sites for Seekers brave enough to disturb them.

Refugee Camps

These settlements housed the pitiful survivors of the Dragon Isle after the Sundering stripped many of them of nearly everything. Without shelter or supplies, surrounded by Atlantis' many enemies, these refugees could only rely on failing magical skills for survival. Most of these wretches perished, leaving no trace. An Atlantean Master left homeless without her mystic tools might still be a mightier willworker than any modern mage, however. An Exile or refugee who took shelter in a cave

might craft spells and appoint guardians who still endure. These refugees preserved few of the Dragon Isle's secrets or artifacts; any Arcane goods the refugees left behind, they probably created themselves for their convenience.

A refugee's hiding place probably contains little of power or value that survived the ages. In the rare instances when Atlantean refugees sought to leave some testament for future ages, they did not record their greatest secrets. A refugee camp is more likely to contain a primer of basic magic for an ignorant future than a grimoire for archmasters. A camp may also hold the sad treasure of a firsthand account of the Awakened City and its destruction.

Unidentifiable

Some discoveries cannot be neatly categorized. Among these are places so devastated by war or time that their provenance and purpose is impossible to determine. Such things happen far more often than archaeomancers like to admit. Other places have been so overgrown by the passing millennia or reworked by later occupants that little remains of their Atlantean heritage.

The Lash of Disbelief

The worst threat to these ancient places is neither the march of time nor the greedy feuds of the Awakened but the relentless pressure of Disbelief. The eye of a Sleeper archaeologist or historian confronted with the impossible can push relics of the Awakened past to the edge of reality and destroy unstable enchantments.

Similar to modern sanctums, most Atlantean sites reduce the chances of Paradoxes. Some sites go even further, being Pocket Realms or Demesnes in which all magic is considered covert — which is fortunate, since many ancient magical practices are flagrantly vulgar by modern standards. Thus, the shock of Sleepers intruding upon some primeval, sacred place can be devastating. Spells that lasted for millennia can unravel in minutes when confronted with Disbelief. Every vulgar effect suffers from the bane of Paradox as long as any Sleepers are present. Arcane servitors and eldritch machinery crumble and rot away to scraps of metal and shards of stone. In other cases, the ruins and their contents *change*. What were once Atlantean artifacts are now only mundane relics of some heretofore unknown civilization.

The presence of Sleepers within these places is anathema to the orders — and to those dwelling within! All present will bend every effort to slay these dangerous unbelievers before it is too late.

The Temple of Ebullient Contemplation

An ancient temple lies undiscovered in the Turkish mountains. Built by refugee Mysterium sages, the Temple of Ebullient Contemplation has survived (barely) since the Fall of Atlantis. For centuries, the Temple has remained hidden in the ruins of



an ancient Christian church. Recently, clues to the Temple's location have fallen into the hands of the Atlantean orders. Complicating matters, a group of archaeologists is investigating the ruins, endangering an already precarious site.

While hubris is the crime of Atlantis, there are other sins equally damning to the Awakened. The mages of the Society of Kittiarā never overcame their fear of hubris, and, in time, their passive contemplation destroyed them just as surely as any cataclysm.

A Refuge for Knowledge

Little can be learned about the Atlantean refugees who built the Ebullient Temple or of their wanderings after they fled Atlantis. They were primarily scholars from the *Alae Draconis*. After the Sundering, they hid from victor and victim alike (and in those days, it was hard to tell which was which).

The mages decided that if they could not find a new Atlantis, they would preserve its memory until a new Kingdom of the Wise arose. They build a sanctuary upon the site of a Gate that once led to Atlantis. One sanctuary existed in the material world; they also hid a copy within Twilight. Over the years, they drew in other refugees and grew into the Society of Kittiarā. As the Paths and Watchtowers arose, the Mastigos became most numerous among the group.

Eventually, simple hunters and gatherers made their way to the valley. They found the wise men there eager to share their wisdom. The sages taught the newcomers the secrets of bronze and pottery, herding and planting, but refrained from

displaying their power or dominating these humble Sleepers. When a few of the newcomers dreamed of the Watchtowers, the mages adopted those newcomers into the society.

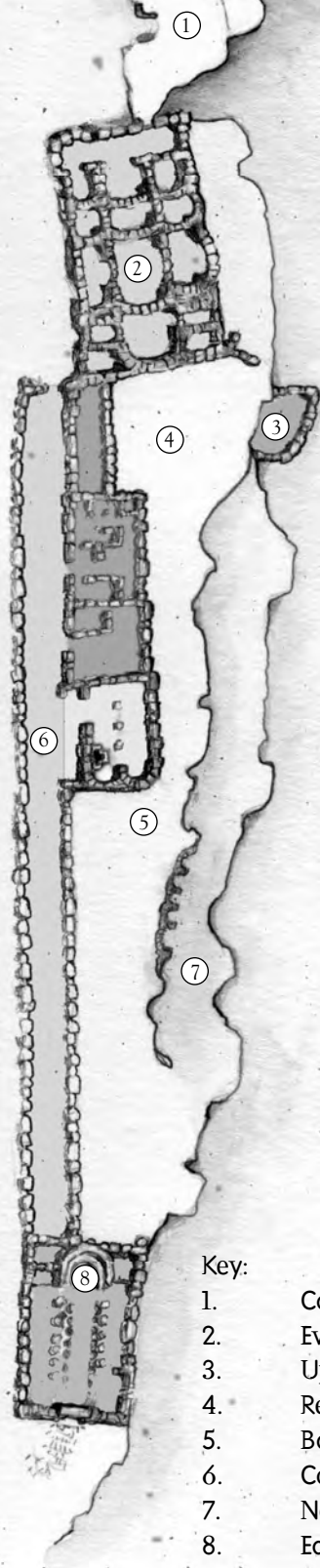
Time passed as the Society waited for others to rise in Atlantis' place, the mages too afraid of corruption and hubris to use their gifts. Slowly, the Society dwindled as fewer dreamed of Awakening. Other peoples arrived, bringing with them new ways and magic. Each was, in the eyes of the Society, barbaric and unworthy, and the librarian-mages despaired of passing on their heritage. What good was the wisdom of Atlantis when only barbarians ruled? Bereft of hope, the lineage died out long before the rise of Alexander. The material half of the Temple fell into ruin. The Temple's Twilight counterpart slept — except for the Librarian.

The Librarian's Tenure

One of the last mages of the Society of Kittiarā remains in the library. In intellect and wisdom, he was a worthy heir to the Awakened City. He died through a simple accident. Unable to accept his death and unable to move on, he paced the corridors as a ghost-mage.

During the second century AD, pilgrims built a church in the "pagan" cave-shrine. Encouraged and inspired by these newcomers, the Librarian influenced the minds of the monks. In turn, they built ever-grander churches to capture the essence of the radiant temple that haunted their dreams.

Unfortunately, the Librarian's unnatural existence attracted the notice of a powerful Abyssal creature: an acamoth. It now



Key:

1. Cave Complex
2. Evangelical Basilica
3. Upper Living Quarters
4. Refectory
5. Baptistry
6. Colonnade
7. Necropolis
8. Eastern Basilica

infests the Temple's walls, attempting to devour its contents. So long as the actions of diligent monks and scholars strengthened the Librarian, he kept the demon at bay. During the 10th century, however, an earthquake and fire laid waste to monastery. Without the unwitting assistance of these Sleepers, the Temple's magic began to fall under the acamoth's sway.

Each year, the demon absorbs more of the Temple, and the demon's presence corrupts and perverts its remaining gatekeepers. The Librarian retains considerable power to resist the demon, but, in the Librarian's current state, he does not realize how the demon is bound to him. So long as he clings to his false semblance of life, the demon continues to encroach on the Temple.

First Clue

The characters may become aware of the Temple through a variety of means. Perhaps they stumble upon a sketch or photograph in an archaeological text and notice Atlantean symbols, or see a glimpse of its architecture on a TV travelogue or while browsing the web. Perhaps a friendly Sleeper draws the characters' attention to the site's "peculiar" architecture. Failing that, the Mysterium might contact the characters to investigate a lead in exchange for a future favor.

A successful Research roll of Intelligence + Occult or Intelligence + Academics reveals more information. Pictures of the "Evangelical Arch" show glyphs of High Speech. They talk of the Temple of Ebullient Contemplation and a legacy waiting for worthy heirs of the Dragon Isle.

Alahan Monastery

The ruins lie in a valley between the Taurus Mountains and the Konya Plateau in southern Turkey. Local guidebooks describe the ruins as a "splendid example of Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture." No searching through trackless jungles or faring across Astral Space here — the broken walls and domes are visible from the local highway.

A narrow mountain road leads from the highway up to the ruins; an SUV can easily make the 600-meter climb to the site. In the Material Realm, the site is covered by Byzantine-era remains of the Alahan Monastery (so named by the British archaeologists who excavated the site during the 1960s). Despite extensive excavations in the 1960s, no one has stumbled upon the monastery's secrets — yet.

Finding The Library

Getting to the site is easy but entering the spectral shrine by accident is high impossible. The shrine is well hidden, even from magical senses. However, mages who rediscover the Temple's Gate and are versed in the ways of Atlantis might cross over into the otherworldly shrine, and, if they prove worthy, learn what secrets it retains.

Careful investigation of the ruins reveals several clues about the Library. The oldest part of the church is several caves. Over the centuries, countless smoky campfires have covered the church's paintings and murals with a thick layer of soot.

Roll Wits + Investigation to notice that a depiction of several Atlantean symbols roughly translating to “The Guardians are the Gate.”

Near the cave-church is the famous Evangelical Arch with several rows of broken columns and salvaged stonework. Grass grows from cracks in the stone flags, and rubble-strewn walls loom like broken teeth.

At the east end of the colonnade is a ruined fifth-century basilica. One of the first of its kind, the basilica rises from the cliff-face in a soaring paean of stone and faith. Only the wind blows where once hymns of praise rose to the Heavens, but sometimes visitors say they can feel an unseen presence. Along one column are carvings that depict the Apostles. A successful Intelligence + Academics roll reveals that these are not in the standard Orthodox arrangement of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John but are instead in the arrangement required by the gateway.

Carved into the cliffs above the complex is a small necropolis. The dozen or so tombs are simple rock-cut sarcophagi set into the cliff-face. A mage calling up the ghosts of these long-dead churchmen would learn they all dreamed of a shining temple.

A ruined fountain is located several hundred yards beyond the East Basilica. Not only did it once provide the complex with water but was also a powerful Hallow associated with contemplation (Hallow Rating of 4). The fountain is now dormant.

Looking into Twilight or across the Gauntlet does *not* reveal the Temple. This is due to the Temple being walled away from the rest of Twilight by a powerful version of the Hide Space spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 242). Mages with Spirit-based Perception can see the Temple *only* if they look through the Evangelical Gate. There, they can see the first chamber of the Twilight shrine. Anywhere else in the ruins, characters using Spirit Perception see a vacant, Twilight version of the material ruins. The only way to the Temple of Ebullient Contemplation is through the Gate.

The Evangelical Gate

One of the ruin's most striking features is the so-called Evangelical Gate. Standing at the entrance of a long-vanished church is a stone gate carved with (supposedly) the five symbols of the Apostles: a lion, an ox, an eagle, an angel and a man. (Astute characters may note five symbols for four evangelists – Matthew gets two.)

Mage Sight determines that, at one point, the arch was some sort of Gate, but it is now broken. Further examination determines that archaeologists have reconstructed the archway incorrectly. Moving the stones to the proper configuration requires a successful Enigmas check to determine the correct configuration. Putting the stones in the correct order restores the Gate.

Now, how to open it?

The test is easy for an Atlantean to pass. The builders only intended the Gate to keep out ignorant Sleepers. Over the millennia, the symbols and words familiar to Atlanteans became

muddled, misinterpreted and transposed by Sleepers. Passing the Gate requires touching each figure in sequence and naming the corresponding Watchtower in the High Speech.

A mage with High Speech can do this with a successful roll of Intelligence + Occult –2 (this is an obscure and highly archaic symbolism for the Watchtowers). Characters can also just experiment with different arrangements. The correct Watchtowers and their beasts appear below, starting from the left base and moving around the arch:

- Lion (Mark) – Acanthus
- Man (Matthew) – Moros
- Eagle (John) – Mastigos
- Angel (Matthew again) – Obrimos
- Ox (Luke) – Thyrsus

Once the Gate is repaired, a mage can simply walk through into the Twilight shrine after reciting the names of the Watchtowers in the above order. Mages can also force an opening using Spirit 3 “Spirit Road” (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 251) or Death 3 “Ghost Gate” (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 139). Gauntlet Strength is 3. This is vulgar magic.

Interruptions and Complications

The ruins present some risks. The rubble is crumbling, and the surrounding cliffs and paths are treacherous. Passing shepherds and Turkish peasants laboring in the fields below the ruins are all-too-frequent witnesses for a mage needing a little privacy. Tourists visit the ruins several times a day. At irregular intervals, a German tour bus parks along the highway, and the entire group jogs up the steep path to the ruins for an afternoon of exploration, picnicking and exercise. From time to time, a guard hired by the local government makes a desultory patrol of the site before returning to his shady table at the local teahouse.

Archaeologists from the British Institute of Archaeology frequent the site, continuing their investigations. Graduate students sketch the numerous carvings and inscriptions found on in the rubble. Seekers will have to persuade these Sleepers to go elsewhere or wait until later; at night, the ruins are deserted.

In addition to these *atsinei* (foreign gadflies), locals may take an interest too. Strangers, especially foreign-looking ones wandering the hills, make an irresistible lure for the village children. These youngsters display surprising tenacity and climbing abilities: If befriended, they can lead mages to a bewildering array of local ruins ranging from half-buried statues to hidden rock-cut tombs.

The Twilight Temple

Once Seekers pass the Evangelical Gate, they find themselves in a rough-hewn cave. In the center, a stone brazier sheds a flickering light. Behind them, an exit leads out onto a ledge. Before them is an archway.

The Twilight Temple's architecture progresses from primitive to the sublime. The changing styles reflect the rise of Atlantis, starting with stark simplicity of the Dragon Caves and ending with the Awakened City's grandiose authority.

From the outside ledge, there is little to see. Twilight and the spacial fold that hides the Temple exaggerate the natural cliffs to either side of the library: one side soars thousands of feet skyward and the other plunges into a bottomless abyss. Between these two extremes is the Temple. It has fallen upon hard times, and its once-intricate stonework looks somehow *corroded*. At the far end, a vaulted dome rises in unblemished triumph. Those observing the scene for a time notice that insectoid creatures like oversized aphids cling to the cliffs and stonework, gnawing at the stone.

First Challenge: Courage

When the archway is approached, a massive lion made from shadows and silver coalesces out of darkness before the characters. The lion speaks: "Who seeks entrance to the Library of Ebullient Contemplation?" Magically, everyone hears the lion speak her native tongue. Mages are welcomed, and the lion explains some of the Library's history if asked. The lion then asks them for the "key." Since it is impossible for the mages to know what this might be, they must undergo tests to see if they are worthy — just as the Society intended.

Whatever the mages' response, the lion nods its head and says, "Perhaps you are worthy heirs of the Dragon Isle. We shall see if you have courage." It opens its jaws and lets out a terrifying roar — and attacks.

The guardian has an Armor of 3 and a Defense of 5, which should make physical attacks difficult. However, those standing their ground (normal Defense is allowed, but not Dodge attempts or running away) are able to affect the guardian and ignore its armor.

The point of this challenge is to test the bravery of those seeking the Library's gifts. Those worthy of rebuilding Atlantis must be brave enough to face any threat.

Second Challenge: Knowledge

Once through the First Gate, the mages enter another chamber. Stone-carved vines and thorns cover the vaulted ceiling and pillars like a petrified arbor. An eagle trapped within the thorny vines perches over a set of heavily padlocked doorways.

The eagle asks the following riddle:

One door leads to the City of Truth, while the other door leads to the City of Liars. You are able to ask only one question to determine which door is which. The door that leads to the City of Liars always speaks lies, while the door that leads to the City of Truth always speaks the truth. What question do you ask to determine which door leads to the City of Truth?

Possible answers: You ask a door "If I were to ask the other door which door leads to the City of Truth, what would he say?" Then you pick the opposite door of what he tells you. No matter what the answer is, the eagle shrieks out a deafening "Wrong!" The stone vines animate, their thorns dripping poison. A mage may use an improvised Life 2 or Matter 2 spell to keep them at bay. Each success keeps the vines at bay for three rounds. Unlocking either door requires an extended roll of Wits + Larceny with five successes or using a Matter 3 Spell such as Plasticity or Alter Integrity. However, the door (Durabil-

ity 6 and Structure 16) is laced with adamas (see p. 63), which counters one success per roll of any spell used upon it.

The heritage of Atlantis is not for the thoughtless. Seekers must prove they can perform basic reasoning (not so common when the Library was built). Thanks to the rot pervading the Library, the test no longer functions as it should.

Third Test: Corruption

Originally, this chamber held a test of trust and compassion, two qualities that were in short supply during Atlantis' final days, but now the chamber has fallen into the grip of the Abyss. C'desith, the powerful acamoth (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 323) besieging the Library, has overwhelmed the original guardian.

Small spirits resembling thumb-sized aphids cover every surface of this once-great hall, feeding upon the very substance of the Library. A writhing pile of insects covers the gatekeeper's remains, a minotaur. Nearby is an ancient baptismal pool — narrow steps lead into the pool and out the other side. On the side of the room, an open gateway beckons. As the mages watch, the writhing mass of insects forms into a face. Their buzzing forms words: "Welcome to the Feast of Compassion, Children of Atlantis. We are all trapped here. Perhaps we might help each other escape?"

Anyone attempting to run through either arch reenters the room at the opposite side. A powerful Space warding prevents such an easy escape. The acamoth knows the way out and offers it in exchange for a small favor. Agreeing to help the acamoth causes a degeneration roll in anyone with Wisdom greater than 3, as this is a crime against magic itself. It's also disgusting, as the demon asks the person to open his mouth — and an aphid leaps in and wriggles down his throat! Successfully degrading a mage's soul in this fashion gains the acamoth three Essence. A piece of the demon is now lodged within a pacter's soul, just as if it accompanied them on an Astral journey.

Should the mages refuse to assist the demon, its minions attack. Bugs swarm over everything in the room in their thousands, sucking at the vital essences of their victims. This is similar to the Life 2 "Control Base Life" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 182). Unless kept at bay somehow, the swarming spirit-bugs inflict four dice of bashing damage at the end of each round. Anything containing Mana covered by the swarm loses one point of Mana each round. Armor is effective only if it covers the entire body, at which point Armor provides only half protection (rounded down).

Over the centuries, the demon has worked its way into the very substance of the room. Spells and weapons might slay the demon's aphid-minions by the score but hundreds more arrive through cracks in the walls and ceiling. All the while, the acamoth offers to spare the mage if only she does it one *small* favor.

The secret of this challenge is simply to walk down into the baptismal font and immerse oneself completely in its pure water. Anyone doing so is free to leave. Such lustral rites were once very common, baptism being a Christian variation on an ancient theme. A successful Wits + Occult roll identifies the pool's traditional use.

The Colonnade

Beyond the Baptismal Gate, the mages find themselves in a long colonnade with cliffs rising on one side and dropping on the other. A series of shrines line the way, each representing a different Atlantean virtue, Arcanum or hero. Whatever purposes they served is now lost, as they, too, have fallen to the insectoid scourge. At the far end of the colonnade are the Library's domed magnificence and a massive doorway leading inside.

If the characters cut a deal with the acamoth, they can pass unmolested through the creatures here. If not, the myriad insects surge forward immediately. Clambering down the pillars and walls are larger creatures resembling skeletal shadows (see the "Shadow Slave" in *Mage: The Awakening*, p. 255). All in all, the force arrayed looks overwhelming.

When hope seems lost, the Library door opens. Standing in the doorway is a middle-aged man carrying a short rod of jet and orichalcum. He wears gray robes, with a golden filigree armband. The man cries out in High Speech, "Depart, minions of C'desith! Depart to the void!" He brandishes the rod, and a green light bathes the colonnade, forcing the creatures to retreat. Turning to the mages, he says, in the characters' own language, "I am the Librarian. Are you the new apprentices?"

The Great Library

The vaulting ceilings of the Temple's library rise high above the mosaic floor. Central to the chamber is a fountain depicting the Five Watchtowers, its water almost visibly bubbling with tass.

Four Marmoreal Myrmidons (see *Mage: The Awakening*, p. 329) wander through the complex. They spend some of their time outside, repairing the gnawing of the acamoth's bug-minions. Throughout the Library can be found additional statues, some of which show brief signs of animation. Others appear lifeless and still. Niches in the walls contain Atroxi Crystals (see p. 81), many of which still glow with an inner light.

The Librarian escorts the mages into the library itself and says, "What have you youngsters to say for yourselves? You could have gotten hurt. C'desith isn't just some tame imp, you know." Without waiting for a reply, he gives the characters a whirlwind tour of the Library – or what's left of it.

The Librarian shows his "apprentices" amenities such as meditation areas, scrying chambers, ritual chambers and their new quarters (a small monastic cell). Curiously, there do not seem to be any kitchen or food preparation areas. If asked about this, the Librarian says that the acamoth devoured those areas, but since no one needs to eat here, it makes no difference. The Librarian's words may seem odd to hungry mages – and a clue to the true state of affairs here. If questioned, the Librarian admits he has not eaten in "several weeks," but he does not feel hungry. Every now and then, the Librarian stops and spends several seconds gasping in pain while bite-marks like those inflicted by the aphids appear on his body, then vanish. He admits to "A few twinges. Age, you know."

The crowning glory of the Library is a collection of several dozen Atroxi Crystals, each one containing knowledge culled from Atlantis itself (or so he says). Since the Fall, many crystals



have become unresponsive but (he says) repairing them makes a nice job for new apprentices. The acamoth has consumed many of the spirits that once resided in the Crystals.

The Temple's collection is a magnificently eclectic hodgepodge of nonfunctional rites, arcane histories, magical recipes and obscure references. Among the fragments are stories of Astral out-ports, manifests of Atlantean temple sacrifices and even cryptic notes on several expeditions into Supernal realms. Sorting through the dross to find any gems of wisdom requires years of research. Fortunately, the Librarian can direct his "students" to the appropriate information they require (assuming the collection has it). Unfortunately, he is obsessed with continuing the training of his new "apprentices" and is far more interested in questioning them about their magical education.

Stealing the Prize

Some characters may choose to steal the Library's treasures. Taking the Atroxi Crystals or tass from the fountain has dire results. The Crystals are one of the powers that allow the Library to resist the Abyss. If the Crystals are removed, the site falls to the Abyss immediately — an immediate gain for the characters, but a long-term loss for reality. Draining the fountain of too much tass causes the spells sustaining the Temple to collapse. Since the Temple's Hallow is dormant, the site must sustain itself on its own inherent Mana. Stealing more than a dozen points of tass from the fountain disrupts the Temple within a few hours and causes its collapse.

The Librarian has an Arcane link to both the Crystals and the fountain. If they are threatened, he and the Myrmidons immediately act to guard them with lethal force.

The Librarian cautions the characters that a few rooms have become unstable since the arrival of the demon "a few weeks ago." One room, in particular, he cautions that they never enter — it is too dangerous.

Oh, and leaving? The Librarian refuses to let the characters leave the Library until they undergo the same training regimen he took. With diligence and hard work, they can return into the Profane World (as he calls it) in a decade or so.

The Forbidden Chamber

This chamber once served the Society as their bath. The pools here would have made a Roman Emperor green with envy, but now the waters lie still and stagnant and the fountains are dry. Underneath the surface of one pool is a skeleton, its neck cleanly broken. This is an ephemeral remnant of the Librarian, who slipped and fell so long ago. The same gold armband the Librarian wears still circles the skeleton's arm.

Resolving the Situation

The characters' choices determine the Temple's fate:

- They can do nothing (or maybe just steal some Atroxi Crystals) and leave the Librarian trapped in the Temple, fighting a slow, painful and ultimately losing battle against the acamoth. If they try to return to the Library, they find it's gone: the Abyss has won.

- They can try convincing the Librarian he's a ghost. This provokes an immediate crisis (see below) that leads to the Temple's destruction, one way or another.

- They can try to destroy the acamoth. Good luck, and the characters should have their wills made out. If the characters somehow succeed, the Librarian no longer needs to defend the Temple. He transcends to whatever destiny awaits great and good souls — and the Temple vanishes with him.

Releasing the Librarian requires a mercy that puts wisdom ahead of greed. However, mages who free him from his long vigil find that their compassion may prove more useful in the future than "mere" Arcane power.

- The characters can try to destroy the Librarian's ghost. This destroys the Temple, and the characters gain little or nothing.

Freeing the Librarian

The characters probably soon guess that all is not well with the Librarian. His insanity has caused the slow degeneration of the Temple and the loss of many of its treasures to the Abyss.

Convincing the Librarian of anything contrary to his monomania requires an extended, contested roll pitting Manipulation + Persuasion against the Librarian's Finesse + Resistance. Characters can combine their efforts (see "Teamwork" in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 134). The leader receives a +1 bonus for each proof they have of the Librarian's deathly state. If they confront him with his own corpse, they receive four bonus dice. Each character who accepted the acamoth's offer has a -2 dice penalty — the Librarian instinctively dislikes them. Convincing him of his death requires five successes.

When the characters free the Librarian of his delusions, he looks aghast. He cries, "What have you done?" His body ripples and fades as he fights to remain intact. "You've woken me to the truth. Unfortunately, that means my end. And with my passing, the acamoth will have everything. Unless—"

The Librarian pulls a Crystal down and says, "There is a spell I — we could use. I am no longer alive, after all. We must undo the spell that created the Library. This is its heart. It must be destroyed, or the acamoth takes all." Dancing inside the Crystal is a spell of incredible complexity and beauty.

The Crystal Heart (Imbued Item) Durability 7, Size 1, Structure 8

The Crystal Heart creates and sustains the Temple of Ebullient Contemplation as a very

large "Spirit Manse" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 256). A version of "Hide Space" hides the Library from viewers in the material world. These spells have a Potency of 6. The Crystal also carries three points (not dice) of countermagic; the Crystal's Merit cost increases 1 further because its magic is continually active.

The Crystal and the Librarian sustain the Temple together. If either one is destroyed, the acamoth drags the Temple into the Abyss. Destroying the spell as the Librarian transcends destroys the Temple of Ebullient Contemplation — but saves it from the Abyss.

A Righteous End

Simply breaking the Crystal doesn't end the enchantment, though doing so does remove the countermagic. To unmake the spell and destroy the Temple, characters must use spells such as Prime 1 "Dispel Magic" (and have dots in Matter and Spirit, the Arcana used to create the Temple), Prime 3 "Controlled Dispellation," or Prime 4 "Supernal Dispellation" (no additional Arcana needed). If they break the crystal, they can attempt direct countermagic using Matter and Spirit: The spell's Potency must be overcome using both Arcana, though individual characters can devote their efforts to just one Arcanum. If they can dispel the Spirit Manse, the other spells unweave as well.

Overcoming the spell's Potency instantly imposes a -12 dice penalty. Dispelling the enchantment as an extended casting requires accumulating seven successes. Countermagic requires six successes for each Arcanum. If the Crystal isn't broken, the characters must also contend with its countermagic, of course.

The characters can attempt a group ritual to undo the Crystal's magic. If everyone spends Willpower and uses High Speech, they might undo the magic in one time increment. The Librarian can join the effort, too: he remains present as long as he focuses his mind on the spellcasting task. Characters also gain a +2 bonus to teamwork rolls, because the Librarian tells them exactly what to do.

As a third alternative, a character can try to claim the Crystal's magic as one of her personal spells. This can happen only

once the Crystal is broken. It's like relinquishing the spell to create an Imbued Item, only backwards: by sacrificing one dot of Willpower, a character links the spell to her own soul. Then she can dismiss the Crystal at will. The Librarian can't do this because the Temple fetters him to the Fallen World. His cooperation is needed to claim the spell, though.

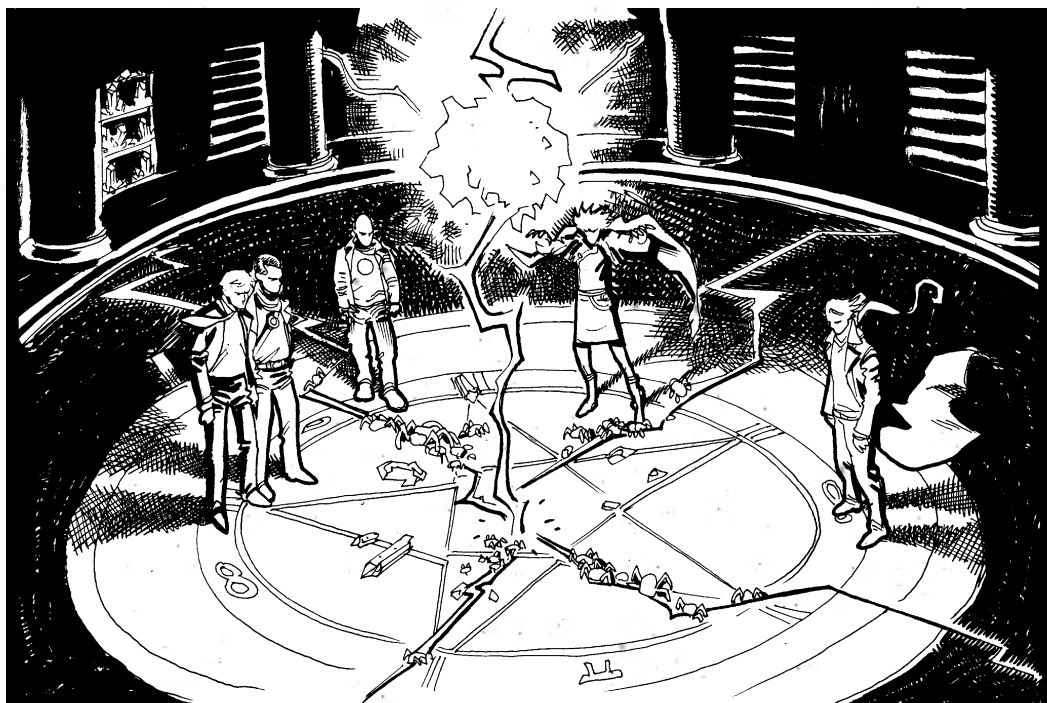
A character who cut a deal with the acamoth cannot participate in an attempt to unmake the Library, though he won't realize this at once. The player can roll dice to join in a dispellation attempt, but any successes rolled don't count. Any dramatic failure counts, though.

Acamoth Attack

With the breaking of the Librarian's madness, the demon pushes itself through the walls as the barriers around the library weaken. The demon's myriad aphid-spirits swarm into the building and start to devour everything. If the demon can be held at bay long enough for the Crystal to be destroyed, the demon is banished. The Librarian might be able to hold it off long enough with his rod.

The worst case is if the characters break the Crystal and one of the characters made a deal with the acamoth. An aphid-creature bursts out of the character's mouth and jumps for the knot of unprotected spells. The characters have one chance to grab the creature before it leaps into the spell-weave and claims the entire Temple for the Abyss. This requires a successful Wits + Dexterity or Dexterity + Brawling roll, -4 for the small size and agility of the aphid-thing.

If the acamoth wins (for whatever reason), the Librarian screams as dozens of aphid-things rip through his skin and devour him. The Temple shakes, rots and twists into shapes of horror. The characters have one minute to run for the Evangelical Gate before the entire place falls out of reality.



Aftermath

With the end of both the Librarian and the sustaining spell, the Twilight ruins crumble with appalling speed to match their mortal counterparts. However, not all is in vain. If the mages helped the Librarian transcend, they find that as the Spirit Manse unravels, the Librarian glows with light, his eyes widen in surprise and he disappears.

For those helping the Librarian transcend, the characters' mystic perceptions follow his soul. They get one brief glimpse of the Supernal World. They also hear the acamoth scream in frustrated rage as the Temple and its keeper are snatched from the acamoth's jaws. From this, characters gain three extra Arcane Experience. As an alternative, the Librarian might return as a "friend on the Other Side" surprise Mentor.

In addition to this reward, characters find that several Atroxi Crystals remain behind (admittedly, in the Shadow Realm). What information they contain, if any, is up to the Storyteller. Much of it is trivia or descriptions of ancient rote mudras (especially from the Mind, Matter and Spirit Arcana) that no longer function in the current era. The centuries of the acamoth's influence has also eroded and twisted the knowledge, so important details may be missing or incorrect. However, the Crystals can provide clues for researching modern versions of these rites, provide clues to other Atlantean sites and secrets or otherwise supply hooks for further stories.

For what it's worth, the characters also learn the True Name of an acamoth. Maybe someone can find a use for this.

On the other hand, characters who assisted the acamoth or who took callous advantage of the Librarian's plight characters may face degeneration rolls.

Denizens

Lion Guardian

Background: This variation on the Marmoreal Myrmidon moves as swiftly as the lion it resembles but is as tough as stone.

Description: A massively built lion made from stone and shadows. Powerful muscles ripple underneath its exquisitely carved ebon pelt. Eyes like pits of starlit night glitter over a roaring maw filled with sharp teeth.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 5, Resistance 5

Willpower: 10

Essence: 11 (max 15)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 5

Speed: 18

Size: 8

Corpus: 13

Numina: Countermagic (dice pool 10). The guardian can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against any form of magic, including covert spells. One Essence is spent, and

Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes rolled for the lion equal or exceed those for the spell, the spell is countered.

Terrifying Roar (dice pool 10). This Numen has the same effect as the spell *Trigger the Lizard Brain* (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 191) except that this Numen affects everyone hearing it and costs one Essence.

Ban: The lion cannot attack someone who has successfully resisted its roar and does not Dodge or run away. Such individuals may enter the gate the lion guards without question.

The Librarian

Quote: Ah! You must be the new apprentices. You're late . . .

Background: Centuries ago, he tripped and fell and broke his neck. All his power could not save him. As one of the last of the Society of Kittiarra, he felt compelled to remain and pass on the legacy of the Temple.

In Twilight, the Librarian walks the corridors of his shrine to knowledge, unable to leave. Each day he looks for the apprentices he knows should be here, to learn the ways of Atlantis and receive his duty as caretakers of the Temple.

Description: An ordinary-looking man wearing gray robes of a vaguely Hittite design, with a gold filigree armband. He keeps his thinning, gray hair in a tonsure. The Librarian's gaze is disconcerting, as his eyes are solid green.

If asked about his eyes, the Librarian claims they have been that way since an accident. While he appears to be a living human being, he does not eat, breathe, sleep or have a heartbeat. That is, so long as he is not thinking about them.

Storytelling Hints: The Librarian is not sane. He is in a deep state of denial about his death and fanatical about passing on the legacy to those who are worthy of Atlantis.

He has spent more than 2,00 years here, though he does not realize it. The Librarian's manner is vague and distracted, constantly interrupting with some fact or question about occult trivia. He no longer remembers his name.

The Librarian defends his territory with a fanatical devotion. Only threats to his beloved collection deter him from using the most lethal "spells" in his arsenal.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 8, Finesse 6, Resistance 7

Willpower: 15

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 13

Defense: 8

Speed: 19

Size: 5

Corpus: 12

Influences: Scholastic Inquiry 1, Fate 3, Mind 5, Matter 4, Prime 4, Spirit 5

The Librarian frequently used its Scholastic Influence to inspire and aid the monastery's researchers. The Librarian can also use its Influence to distract investigators into spending their time examining the ruins of the Library, or to engage in study of Arcana (hardly a difficulty when mages are the target).

Numina: Countermagic (dice pool 14). The guardian can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against any form of magic, including covert spells. One Essence is spent, and Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes rolled for the Librarian equal or exceed those for the spell, the spell is countered.

Fate, Mind, Matter, Prime and Spirit Arcana. As a ghost mage, the Librarian can spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse to “cast spells” from these Arcana.

Lifebond (dice pool 15). Each time he is wounded, the Librarian shudders in agony, and the Library shakes with him. Arches collapse, gaps of nothingness open in the floor and many of the library’s treasures disappear forever into the Abyss. The effect of this Numen is similar to that of the Forces 5 spell “Earthquake,” but the area affected is the entire Library. These effects may extend into the Material Realm also.

Destroying the Librarian causes the total destruction of the Library. Everything collapses into rubble and then dissolves into nothingness. In this case, roll Power + Resolve minus the Defense of each affected person to determine bashing damage dealt. This Numen costs no Essence.

Ban: The Librarian cannot leave his charges. So long as he believes he is alive, he must maintain the Library that has been his life’s (and afterlife’s) work. Should he be convinced of his true state, he passes on. Those who humbly agree to study at the Library are welcomed and gain his protection.

Artifacts

Several Artifacts remain among the Library’s wreckage and might survive its destruction.

Atroxi Crystals (Imbued Item ●●●●)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

Created to aid research or answer the questions associated with their tasks, Atroxi Crystals are among the more frequently occurring items

in Atlantean laboratories, shrines and colleges. Each Crystal carries whatever information its creator thought was important, such as the knowledge of rites or Arcane lore. Similarly, explorers have discovered Crystals imbued with memories and thoughts, waiting to be experienced. The Crystal’s imprinted knowledge functions like the Mind 3 spell “Telepathy” (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 212), but a Crystal may carry a whole encyclopedia’s worth of knowledge. Anyone with Mind 1 can access the Crystal.

Superior Crystals carry complete skills. A mage could learn the skill through hallucinatory experiences passed by the Crystal. These Crystals are rated one dot higher. (Their magic is analogous to the Mind 4 “Hallucination” spell.) A few dangerous Crystals are rated at six dots because they carry the Mind 5 “Psychic Reprogramming.” Some Crystals may be traps; others perhaps were meant for benign purposes, but modern mages no longer know how to use them properly, and so may find their minds altered in dangerous ways.

The Librarian’s Rod (Artifact ●●●●●●●)

Durability 5, Size 2, Structure 7

Mana Capacity: 11

The Librarian’s rod of jet and orichalcum projects a Spirit 3 “Harm Spirit” effects (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 249) in its Spirit 4 version, which inflicts aggravated damage on spirits. The Rod’s attack pool is the wielder’s Gnosis +7 (or the Librarian’s Power +7); successes can be allocated to damage, area or other factors. Each use of this contingent effect costs one Gnosis.

Unfortunately, the Rod is not a material Artifact brought into Twilight; the Rod is an ephemeral object that never existed in the Material Realm — and never can exist there. The Rod won’t pass through Spirit Roads or the like (though the Rod can be moved into the Shadow Realm). From the material plane, the Rod requires Spirit 2 “Gossamer Touch” (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 247) to operate.





CHAPTER THREE: GATEKEEPERS AND TREASURES

The beam from Warwick's flashlight swept across a huge sapphire sitting on a pillar of black stone. Immediately, Warwick turned the light back on the fist-sized lump of glittering blue. Limanora turned her beam on it as well. She grinned at Warwick and said, "Ooh, shiny."

Then the flashlight beams slid off the jewel, swelled and became somehow denser, until human silhouettes of light stood before the two mages. The flashlights themselves went dark, but the figures shed a glow over the jewel and pillar, showing the serpentine carvings that covered it.

"Hold on," Warwick said unnecessarily. "Let's see what they want, first." He bowed slightly to the two light-figures. In the High Speech he said, *In the Voice of the Dragon, I speak peace to you. I bid you speak peace in return. What would you have of us?*

One light-figure raised a hand and pointed to the wall over the jewel. A beam of light shone from the figure onto blocks of varied glyphs and symbols. "Can you read any of them?" Limanora whispered.

Warwick shook his head but said, "The central writing's Atlantean glyphs at least... Oh! It's enchanted. I can almost hear... It says, *Leave this nameless place and touch nothing if you value your lives and your families. Do not unleash the horror on the world. No, really, you don't want trouble like this.*" He shrugged. "It's a free translation, of course."

Limanora puffed out her breath. "Okay... How about just once, the bold explorers heed the ancient warning? I don't like those carvings."

A new figure shimmered into visibility. Both mages recognized the older man, their rival. "Vandermast, no!" Limanora shouted as the other mage grabbed the jewel and took off running. The glowing figures winked out. Warwick and Limanora heard scratching, scuttling, skittering noises as several large somethings bestirred themselves in the darkness.

The Atlanteans took many steps to safeguard their temples and their treasures. They hid their places of power from ignorant rivals, set traps to test the wisdom of the Atlantean heirs and erected barriers to ward off curious Sleepers. But the Atlanteans also made use of mystic guardians — beings that can adapt to new threats against their homes, and ensure that only worthy Seekers acquire the secrets of Atlantis. Seekers often refer to these creatures as gatekeepers because they often block the entrance to an Atlantean site, or to a special chamber within a ruin. Nevertheless, guardians may occur anywhere within a ruin.

If Seekers can pass every test, break every ward, evade every trap and defeat every guardian, the victors — to be honest, the *survivors* — may win some of the greatest treasures known to the Awakened. The survivors return from their expedition bearing Artifacts of Atlantean wizardry that no modern willworker can reproduce. They also win great fame for their cabal, Consilium and themselves — but many Seekers would say that the magical power of Atlantean Artifacts is reward enough.

Gatekeepers

Atlantean gatekeepers are as diverse and mysterious as any remnants of the lost island. Seekers encounter the archetypal stone statues that spring to life and slay intruders. Strange spirits guide mages through tests of mystic skill and philosophical understanding. Angry ghosts wail in ruined sanctums, jealously protecting the fragments of the ghosts' forgotten civilization. Some gatekeepers even the Atlanteans didn't predict: beasts and monsters that interbred or arose spontaneously from magic, and scavengers who found their way into ruins and claimed them as their own.

The Atlanteans rarely chose a guardian without defining a way to bypass it, but they seldom recorded their methods. The simplest gatekeepers are programmed to submit to mages who present a certain sigil, speak a certain word or are of the correct Path, order or Legacy. If a gatekeeper is meant to test intruders, it may clearly present a series of rules and goals — or it may say nothing, or even lie about the test's nature to challenge an intruder's wits. Some gatekeepers never willingly allow access to their treasures, but were created with vulnerabilities that a clever or knowledgeable mage can exploit.

The keys to a guardian's defeat can be easy or nearly impossible to discover. Riddles, hieroglyphs and cryptic warnings mark the borders of many gatekeepers' domains, allowing any mage with a clear mind to proceed forward — or at least to know what he must do to prepare. To guard the Atlanteans' most precious treasures, the Atlanteans spread puzzle pieces among multiple ruins, requiring diligence and inquisitiveness from would-be Seekers. In dire situations, the Atlanteans destroyed all clues and records about their guardians, in hopes that only the mages who crafted a site's defenses could pass its wards.

Despite the best efforts of the ancients, however, mages have discovered many secret keys over the centuries. Every old mystagogue has a story about finding a clue in an otherwise worthless tome that proved vital to a gatekeeper's defeat.

A prudent Seeker learns how other willworkers passed the gatekeepers they faced; maybe the Seeker will encounter the same entity posing the same test. The corpses of explorers at the entrance of a ruin might tell a Necromancer what those explorers tried that *didn't* work, and maybe even what they should have done. A few shifty mages (or other entities) claim to sell the keys and passwords to ancient ruins. Because these vendors seldom tell the truth about how they obtained these secrets, Seekers can hardly judge a key's reliability in advance. Let the buyer beware; dead Seekers seldom ask for refunds.

Guardians maintain their supply of magical energy in several different ways. Most guardians draw Essence merely by fulfilling their duty: a spirit bound to guard survives by guarding. Other gatekeepers are compelled to serve, but are not inherently creatures of service. For instance, a spirit of elemental flame that struck a bargain with the Atlanteans might protect a ruin inside a volcano, and draw strength from the presence of magma. A few, rare beings (usually trapped cryptids) are thaumavores that eat tass generated by a site's Hallow.

Although gatekeepers are among the only living (or quasi-living) links to the Atlantean era, mages who hope to troll the thoughts of millennia-old guardians are usually disappointed. Most guardians lack the intelligence to possess useful memories, or are so single-minded that they know nothing beyond duty. Smarter gatekeepers rarely retain their sanity over so many years, making their recollections potentially deceptive. This doesn't mean that nothing can be learned from gatekeepers, of course; their mere existence provides insight into the magic of the ancient world and the motivations of their masters.

Not all guardians are devoted to protecting secrets. After thousands of years of entrapment, agendas change. Gatekeepers develop their own desires, escape their magical bonds or give in to despair when they realize their masters aren't coming back. The gatekeepers use the resources of their temples for new purposes, or lure mages to their lairs to gather power.

Occasionally, gatekeepers even leave their homes and threaten the modern world. This was the Atlanteans' intent, in some cases. Grave robbers who escape Atlantean ruins may be horribly cursed, terrorized by spirits or afflicted with plague wherever they run. In other cases, guardians find loopholes in their vows or shatter aging magical fetters, departing of their own volition. They may search for others of their kind, or simply indulge cravings denied them in isolation.

The Created

The Atlanteans created many of their guardians and gatekeepers using magic that modern willworkers can barely imagine. Although statues and golems are the gatekeepers most stereotypically "Atlantean," the ancients used many Arcana to spawn new beings. Monsters of pure shadow, bodiless psychic impulses of self-destructive paranoia, enormous fanged beasts out of a madman's menagerie and newborn spirits sculpted from ephemera were all given form and used as guardians.

A created gatekeeper can be made to fit its environment, customized so that the gatekeeper does not interfere with a

ruin's traps and defenses. A created gatekeeper can be part of the architecture of the ruin itself, or used to hide treasures: Space magic can conceal storage rooms in a monster's stomach, Life magic can encode rites in a beast's markings and Mind magic can hide records deep inside an animal's brain.

Created gatekeepers tend to have a measure of loyalty instilled in them at creation, making them the guardians most likely to stay at their posts. Nothing inherent in the creation process ensures their obedience, but few mages risk giving their servants more capacity for independent thought than necessary. To further avoid the risk of disloyalty, gatekeepers can be endowed with a spiritual or physiological need for (or addiction to) something found in their surroundings — a specific form of tass, a special quality of resonance or a rare non-magical element.

All this assumes that a gatekeeper was created intentionally. Abandoning a sanctum saturated with mystic energy can have unforeseen consequences. Spells can bleed together or be colored by new resonances, and inanimate matter can soak up Mana generated by a Hallow. Over time, life can emerge from this morass of energies. The grimoires within a library may infuse that library with sentience. Frog eggs laid in a magical pool may absorb that pool's energy, giving bizarre powers to the tadpoles. These "spontaneous" guardians are often as dedicated as their appointed counterparts: their temples aren't just assignments, but homes.

Gatekeepers created with Life spells or arising from animals warped by ambient magic also occasionally breed true, resulting in whole gatekeeper colonies. These guardians may lack the power of their forebears, but the number and unpredictability of these bred gatekeepers can make them just as dangerous. Urban legends tell of cults and micro-civilizations within some Atlantean ruins, comprised of intelligent, ritualist beetles or warped humanoids. Some mages deride these stories as the stuff of pulp fiction, but who really knows what magic can spawn over millennia?

The Compelled and Contracted

Mages didn't need to create monsters during the age of Atlantis. Magical creatures roamed the ancient world, and sorcerers enslaved spirits of great power. Necromancers delved into the borders of the Underworld, holding séances with ghosts and shadows. Terrible beings were within reach of any brave mage — and some Atlanteans saw those beings' potential as guardians.

Spirits and ghosts could be forcibly anchored with Spirit and Death magic. Cryptids could be bound with spells, fettered by thaumium chains or sealed in oubliettes and released in response to sorcerous alarms. Some Atlantean ruins double as prisons, trapping the worst remnants (and the worst mistakes) of a forgotten era. Guardians pressed into service are rarely subtle: often they unleash their rage against all intruders, save those the guardians are geased to obey. Clever gatekeepers, however, may search for ways to avoid their duties, and see intruders as potential avenues of escape.

The Atlanteans couldn't always bind their servants through sheer magical might, and many mages preferred guardians less likely to betray them. Not a small number of gatekeepers took up their duties willingly. Spirits of secrets, duty and greed were all suited to become guardians. Ghosts of Atlantean sorcerers often fiercely protected their belongings (whether the living were happy about it or not). Many spirits saw Masters of the Spirit Arcanum as princes of the Shadow Realm, to obey and honor as a matter of course. A few beings serve the memory of Atlantis to repay debts, honoring mages who rescued the entities from peril or who (in the case of ghosts) acted as their hands in the world of the living.

Lastly, many entities became guardians in exchange for payment. Atlanteans often formed contracts with magical creatures. Such contracts could be exceedingly simple or excruciatingly complex, depending on the temperaments of the parties involved. Guardians, in return for their service, demanded compensation ranging from the fantastic to the mundane. Very probably, neither side expected the contract to last for millennia, but a deal's a deal. The Silver Ladder greatly values salvaged records of ancient pacts (and the rites to enforce them).

Before a hired gatekeeper lets a Seeker pass, it may demand the same payments it received from its Atlantean master long ago. Essence, tass or Twilight objects are easy and ethical for modern mages to offer; souls or slaves are more difficult and dubious. Living creatures were often provided for ephemeral beings to possess. Some creatures demanded worship: cults of Sleepers still serve gatekeepers in remote regions, following ancient traditions and making pilgrimages to hidden temples.

Whatever the compelled gatekeepers' reasons for serving, many compelled gatekeepers are allowed relief under special circumstances. A spirit might be allowed to leave its temple from dusk until dawn every 1,001 years, or to escape bondage if the spirit can trick a mage into becoming its replacement. As a reward, a ghost might be granted mortal form every autumn equinox. A cryptid prisoner might be released after an eons-long sentence. Without the Atlanteans to oversee these conditions, of course, mistakes do occur — making guardians denied their anticipated relief very unhappy.

Usurpers

Not every guardian was placed by the Atlanteans. The sanctums of the ancients draw many entities to their doors, and some of those entities will not — or cannot — leave. When mages later explore these sites, they often mistake the newcomers for gatekeepers. This can be a grievous error, if Seekers assume there must be some key or password that makes a guardian step aside.

Some strangers have simple motivations. They came to an Atlantean site to dine on Essence, tass or lingering spell energies. These scavengers (particularly cryptids) often don't understand the value of their home's contents but ferociously protect their new territory. A ruin's traps may prevent the scavengers from departing, but the power within an Atlantean sanctum is often enough to keep prisoners alive indefinitely.

“False” gatekeepers can also be the creation of post-Atlantean mages. Any sorcerer who discovers a powerful Hallow or Demesne will undoubtedly want to protect it, even if she can’t penetrate its inner chambers and claim its greatest secrets. A guardian appointed by such a mage may pretend to be Atlantean to confuse later Seekers, but possess an entirely different set of weaknesses from the ruin’s original protector. Some of these gatekeepers have endured for centuries, long after the demise of their makers.

Every now and then, an entity finds another reason to pretend to be a gatekeeper. Clever spirits and ghosts find the deception useful for collecting gifts or Atlantean lore. A mage must be wary of sharing ancient secrets to complete the tests of a guardian: that guardian may not be what it seems.

A mysterious thing happens to many strangers that set up shop in an Atlantean temple: over time, they visit the outside world less and less often, and they gradually become more protective of their lairs. Their bodies and souls change, and they gain access to magic locked within their surroundings. This is one of many curses brewed by the Atlanteans: a being that destroys a temple’s protector may be doomed to take that protector’s place.

All Manner of Beast

Storytellers can use these creatures to challenge the players’ characters. Some of these gatekeepers have backgrounds tailored for ruins with particular origins. A clever Storyteller, however, can easily tweak a gatekeeper’s background to fit whatever ancient ruin the Storyteller wants.

These gatekeepers are all written up as spirits, although not all of them came from the Shadow Realm. As a convenience for Storytellers, most descriptions include examples of how a guardian can use each level of the guardian’s Influence.

Aesthrophobe

Quote: *Does your body betray you? Do your eyes deceive you? No. Let me tell you a secret: reality is what you perceive.*

Background: Long ago, an Atlantean mage studied the way of the five physical senses and forged them into a living weapon. Her creation had no body, existing only as a taste, a sight, a voice — whatever sense-form the creation chose to adopt — and as a mind. The weapon was playful and sadistic, tormenting creatures with endless deception and agonizing pain. The creation drove mages to the brink of madness with sensations that seemed to have no source, and led hapless Sleepers to their doom like a will o’ the wisp. The creation’s master saw it as a perfect gatekeeper.

The Aesthrophobe isn’t an especially powerful guardian, but few of its victims realize it exists before they meet their doom. The Aesthrophobe cannot be fought in any conventional manner, since the spirit has no body even in Twilight. Only Mind spells affect the Aesthrophobe with any reliability, though a few obscure tomes refer to special perfumes and hypnotic mirrors that the gatekeeper’s master used to subdue it.

If asked, the Aesthrophobe disputes the notion that it is a cre-

ated being. The Aesthrophobe says it comes from primal origins, and that it was born a twin to sensation itself. But then, the Aesthrophobe probably isn’t a reliable source of information.

Description: The sound of a ringing bell. The smell of honey and asparagus. The touch of a million tiny legs. The taste of starch and unripe peaches. The sight of silver flecks in the corners of one’s eyes. The sensation that something, somewhere near, is watching.

The Aesthrophobe can only take on one sense-form at a time. When the gatekeeper can be heard, it cannot be seen, and when it can be felt, it cannot be heard. It enjoys confusing and torturing its victims and discovering new sensations. While it is intelligent, it isn’t a deep thinker. The Aesthrophobe only cares about its pleasure here and now.

Storytelling Hints: At first, characters will probably attribute the sensations created by the Aesthrophobe to the strangeness of the ruin the spirit guards. If it can, the Aesthrophobe uses that impression to lead intruders astray — the sound of running water might lead characters into a trap, or the illusory sight of a solid floor could send foes tumbling into a pit. The Aesthrophobe might try to hurt or disable mages, “burning” or blinding them at seemingly random times. If the characters voice any expectations about what they’ll encounter next, or what they hope to find, the Aesthrophobe shapes its deceptions to play on those expectations.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 7, Resistance 4

Willpower: 7

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 11

Defense: 7

Speed: 20

Size: 5

Corpus: 9

Influences: Sensation 5. The Aesthrophobe can create any sensation in nearby creatures based on the Aesthrophobe’s current sense-form.

- **Strengthen:** At its first level of Influence, the Aesthrophobe can only distract individuals by strengthening some sensations to drown out others. For instance, it could interfere with a character’s hearing by strengthening the sound of his own pulse. The target’s penalty on Mental, Physical or Social rolls equals the number of successes on the Aesthrophobe’s Power + Finesse roll. The Aesthrophobe can also increase the pain from injuries to impose a general penalty on all the actions of a wounded character.

- **Manipulate:** The Aesthrophobe can edit the target’s sensations so she won’t see a pit, hear a partner’s warning or feel the deadly spider landing on her shoulder. The Aesthrophobe can also change existing colors and alter perspectives, change a person’s tone of voice to make an innocent statement sound threatening, or work other sensory distortions.

- **Control:** The Aesthrophobe’s third level of Influence can induce a blinding, deafening, nauseating or otherwise dis-

abling sensation. This requires winning a contested roll of the Aesthephobe's Power + Finesse against the target's Resolve + Gnosis. If a nauseated victim moves more than half his Speed in a turn, a reflexive Stamina + Composure roll is required to avoid vomiting for that turn. While vomiting, the victim cannot take any other action, though he still gains his Defense.

Just as importantly, at this level the Aesthephobe can control a victim's nerves to induce completely false sensations. This only requires rolling a simple success.

- **Create:** At the fourth level of Influence, the Aesthephobe can cause physical harm through intense sensation. Successes on the Aesthephobe's Power + Finesse roll indicate the amount of bashing damage inflicted.

- **Mass Create:** At the fifth level of Influence, the Aesthephobe may control or manipulate the senses of multiple targets: this only requires a simple success. The Aesthephobe has no limit on the number of subjects the gatekeeper can affect, but its roll takes a penalty for multiple targets, the same as a mortal spellcaster.

Numina: Countermagic (dice pool 10). The Aesthephobe can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against magic (including covert spells) from any Arcanum *except* Mind targeted on the gatekeeper or used to interfere with its mission. One Essence is spent, and Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes equal or exceed the successes rolled for the spell, the spell is countered.

Ban: If drawn into Astral Space, the Aesthephobe's "body" in the material world ceases to exist. In Astral Space, the Aesthephobe can no longer use its Numina or Influence (though it can still choose its sense-form); the senses of the soul are too refined to be affected by the Aesthephobe's crude powers.

Ansalkan

Quote: (in Atlantean) *Enlightened eyes may see too much, trespasser, and damn your soul. It is out of mercy that I snatch away the light – think me merciful for not putting out thy eyes.*

Background: The ansalkan – the cloaks of light – most often haunt ruins that knew the sway of the ancient Visus Draconis, but may be found in other Atlantean sites as well. These tiny spirits remain in Twilight without the ability to affect the physical world around them, until they encounter an area of light.

Ansalkan can literally "possess" a patch of light and wear it like a cloak. An area of brightness can separate from its original source and obey the movements and commands of the spirit that has donned it. Torches and lanterns continue to burn their fuel, and nothing has inhibited the flow of electricity within a flashlight; the thing simply doesn't shed light any longer, for ansalkan has stolen the light to make a body for itself. The light-cloaks simultaneously deprive intruders of sight (at least until they can cast dark-piercing spells) and give themselves a body to use in the defense of the ruin.

Description: When one of the ansalkan takes up a patch of light to use as its own, the light seems to flicker for a moment. Then, as the source of light slowly dims, the illuminated area

warps and shifts, as though it were a bag that something had just climbed into and was shifting about for comfort. Then the ansalkan acts quickly, either fleeing the location and leaving intruders stranded in darkness, or immediately attacking.

Storytelling Hints: Ansalkan are usually found in temples and ruins that contained information or other things the builders did not wish seen by outsiders. To this end, the Atlanteans created creatures with the ability to snatch away light, and to shatter those spells that grant the ability to see in the dark.

Ansalkan usually flee those from whom they steal light. The spirits gather outside the range of the intruders until enough ansalkan manifest to make a mass attack. Then, the light-cloaks come blazing out of the darkness, bent on blinding and burning their foes into flight. Ansalkan are usually content to follow intruders closely if they flee, lighting the way out for them – though on occasion, ansalkan lead Seekers into other traps or guardians instead.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 7, Resistance 3

Willpower: 6

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 7

Speed: 16

Size: 3

Corpus: 6

Influences: Light 3.

- **Strengthen:** Ansalkan use the first level of this Influence to produce blinding flashes of light. Each flash costs these spirits one Essence. The light-cloak's roll of Power + Finesse is opposed by the target's Stamina + Composure; if the ansalkan rolls more successes than the target, the target is blinded for one turn per net success.

- **Manipulate:** These spirits can bend light to distort shadows, as a way to hide things or deceive intruders. For instance, a Seeker might shine a light parallel to a wall, looking for the crack of a hidden doorway; the light-cloak eliminates the revealing shadow. To frighten intruders, an ordinary shadow might be warped into something monstrous. Ansalkan also use this level of Influence to shape their light-patch bodies into new forms, if this seems useful.

- **Control:** This level of Influence enables ansalkan to quell the source of the illumination they inhabit. They can also redirect existing light to create simple illusions. For instance, a Seeker might see a torch's flames stretch out to form a leering, demonic face.

Numina: Blast (dice pool 11 +2/point of Essence spent; inflicts lethal damage in the form of small pulses of burning light), Innocuous, Materialize (dice pool 11; ansalkan can only materialize within the radius of a light source, and they take over that source of light in the process)

Ban: Ansalkan have a sympathetic connection to the thing that made the light they took for their bodies. If the darkened torch, flashlight or other source of light (which cannot be relit

as long as the ansalkan has its body) is used in sympathetic magic, the source is considered an Intimate connection.

The Bull of Immortal Might

Quote: <thunderous snorts and stamping hooves>

Background: The bull has long been a symbol of strength and vitality. The Atlantean sorcerers who created this enchanted bull disliked the thought of a guardian that would wither and disappear as its domain crumbled into dust; instead, they wanted a beast whose vigor would bolster their temple and allow it to endure through the ages.

The creature they created is an exemplar of its race: beautiful, mighty and possessed of a terrible rage. The Immortal Bull was born of an ordinary cow, but Atlantean magic turned the guardian into something greater than flesh and blood. The spells upon the Immortal Bull ensure that its home will stand as long as it lives.

The Bull remains, ready to test any challengers. The Atlanteans hoped it would drive out all but the strongest men and the gentlest women, and that it would destroy its treasure before accepting defeat. The bones of gored victims attest to the success of their plan.

Description: The Bull of Immortal Might is an aurochs, the dark brown wild cattle from which modern cattle descend, as seen in the cave-paintings of Lascaux. The Bull is the size of a rhinoceros, and the ground trembles as the Bull moves. Its horns, curved like the crescent moon, could skewer tree trunks. The Immortal Bull's steaming breath seems hot enough to boil rivers. If the Bull views a creature as a rival or an intruder, the guardian glowers and tenses for battle; all other beings are beneath the Bull's attention.

Storytelling Hints: Unlike most gatekeepers, the Bull was not appointed by the Atlanteans to test Seekers' magical might. Instead, defeating the Bull requires the strength of a hero or the kindness of a maiden with an innocent heart.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 9, Finesse 4, Resistance 7

Willpower: 16

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 11

Defense: 9

Speed: 28

Size: 15

Corpus: 22

Influences: Masculine Aggression 1

- **Strengthen:** The Bull often uses its Influence to goad male intruders into an unwise fight. Make a contested roll, the Bull's Power + Finesse against the target's Willpower. The Bull can use this power against females, too, but the guardian's Influence suffers a -5 penalty.

Numina: Countermagic (dice pool 13). The guardian can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against any form of magic, including covert spells. This costs one Essence and requires a Power + Finesse roll. If successes rolled for the Bull equal or exceed those for the spell, the spell is countered.

Lifebond (dice pool 16). Each time the Bull suffers damage, the ruin the guardian protects shudders. Masonry comes toppling down, crevasses form in the floor and precious treasures are buried or shattered. Roll Power + Resistance. The effect of this Numen resembles that of the Forces 5 spell "Earthquake," but the area affected is the entire site the Bull guards.

A killing blow to the Bull causes the total destruction of the site, reducing it to a pile of rubble. In this case, roll Power + Resolve minus the Defense of each affected person to determine bashing damage dealt. This Numen costs no Essence.

Ban: The Bull adopts a submissive manner under two circumstances. A character who keeps the Bull immobilized in a grapple for three full turns subdues the beast, and compels it to leave the grappler and his companions alone. If the Bull is harmed after its release, however, the guardian enters a rage that cannot be quelled by grappling.

Alternatively, the Bull can be subdued by a woman who touches its face without malice. Roll Presence + Animal Ken versus the Bull's Resistance. Success calms the Bull and renders it (relatively) obedient to the woman. It leaves its ruin only with great reluctance, but otherwise follows and protects its tamer. If the roll is failed, the woman loses her Defense if the Bull responds with an attack, but she can still try again without penalty next turn.

The Drowned God

Quote: *Do you know what it's like, waiting centuries to see the reason for your existence destroyed? Standing by helplessly while the object of your devotion erodes? Of course not. That's why you cannot understand me.*

Background: The cultures beyond Atlantis had many gods: war gods and fertility gods numbered in the thousands. Gods of the sun and moon were barely less common. But gods of wisdom and learning were rare and neglected in illiterate societies struggling with basic survival. So when the refugees of ruined Atlantis sought shelter among the barbarians, a god of lore and memory felt a bond with the newcomers that he had never felt before.

The Atlanteans beseeched the lore-god to protect the secrets they brought with them. In so doing, the god abandoned his people — but although the god grieved, he agreed the cause was worthy and the need was great. The Atlanteans raised a temple, carved their words into its columns and its walls and used runic magic to bind the god within.

His tribe is now forgotten.

Centuries passed. The Atlanteans died. And the temple began to fill with water.

Every year for thousands of years, a few drops seeped and dripped down the temple walls. Every year, the stones carved with Atlantean lore became a little smoother. The god could do nothing but weep as the water rose to his knees, his chest and his eyes; water was not his dominion.

The carvings washed away, and the flooded temple was wiped clean of knowledge. The god drowned, and his nature changed. At last, the runes that bound the god were destroyed, and the anguished deity left his home forever.

For 50 years, now, the Drowned God has lived in the city. He spends his days in museums and by the waterfront, listlessly letting time go by and wondering what became of his people. Only one thing brings him out of his ennui and stirs him to action: the discovery or use of Atlantean lore.

After what his loyalty to the Atlanteans cost him, the Drowned God loathes the memory of Atlantis. He hunts archaeologists on the verge of discovery, and alters their minds to deny them success. He destroys newly discovered Atlantean ruins, unweaving spells of preservation. First, though, he may assist a site's guardians in killing the intruders who would learn the secrets of Atlantis — especially mages.

Description: The Drowned God now chooses to look like a middle-aged man with white hair and a white suit. A few blue threads stick to his clothing, like veins in white marble. His skin is cool and clammy, he smells like a damp cave and he bleeds pure water when cut.

He is soft-spoken and articulate, concealing his rage and grief beneath a sociopathically calm exterior. On a good day, the Drowned God can pass as an eccentric modern gentleman, but he rarely hides his true nature from anyone who would understand.

Storytelling Hints: The Drowned God stalks his victims patiently and effectively, rarely letting emotion get in his way. He claims to eliminate the remnants of Atlantis out of revenge for what the Atlanteans did to him — but, in actuality, he loathes himself for abandoning his people so long ago. He believes that redemption is beyond him, so hatred is all he has left to carry him through existence.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Power 10, Finesse 10, Resistance 5

Willpower: 15

Essence: 25 (max 25)

Initiative: 15

Defense: 10

Speed: 25

Size: 5

Corpus: 10

Influences: Water 4

The Drowned God can do just about anything with water, from strengthening the water in a shower to drown a person to creating geysers in the floor of an Atlantean ruin.

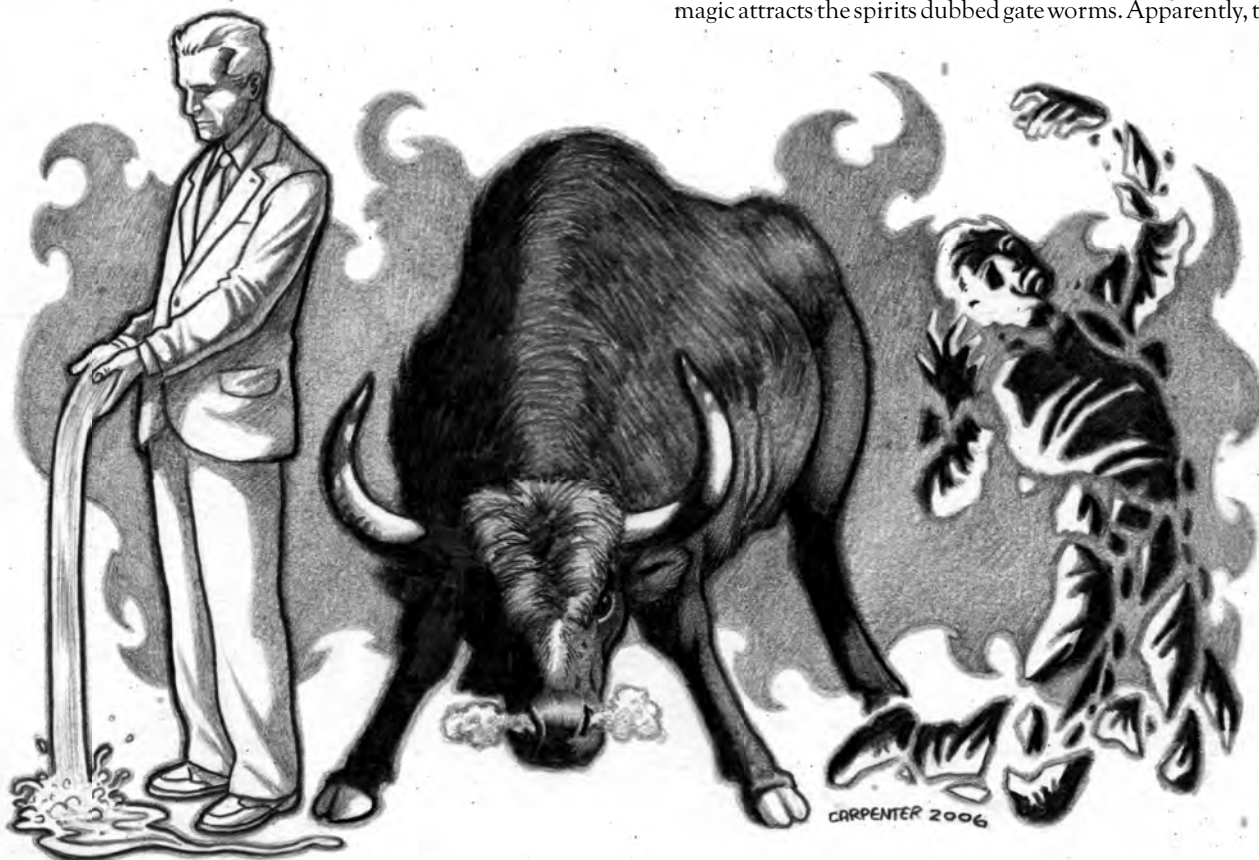
Numina: Discorporation (dice pool 15), Innocuous

Breach the Vault of Memory (dice pool 20). As the Mind 4 spell of the same name. Roll Power + Finesse versus the target's Resolve + Gnosis. Each use of this Numen costs two Essence.

Ban: The Atlantean techniques used to grant the god physical form and lock him in the temple could once have been used to prevent him from re-forming after "death." Since the god of lore became the Drowned God, however, his nature changed sufficiently to render the old runes useless. If the Drowned God's original name — that spoken by his first followers — could be discovered, it might be enough to make the Atlantean arts work again.

Gate Worms

Background: The distortion of the Tapestry caused by Space magic attracts the spirits dubbed gate worms. Apparently, these



creatures can only manifest in the ripped apertures between two actual places. Mystagogues claim to have found references to these creatures in a set of Southeast Asian ruins they believe date back to the post-Sundering Atlantean diaspora. These inscriptions speak of terrible, ravenous worms that rose up from the depths of nothingness beneath the Fallen World.

According to this account, these worms are driven to consume the stuff of the Fallen World, devouring gross and subtle matter alike. The text hints that someone called these creatures of the void into the Fallen World, but Awakened scholars dispute the translation of this passage. The inscription clearly states, however, that the Vox Draconis bound the fate of these ravenous things and forbade them from entering the Fallen World — material or spiritual — in any fashion.

These creatures now knew their terrible hunger, and could not return to a world where there was nothing to consume, so they fled to the only places not forbidden to them by this great ban: the myriad small tunnels, rips and pocket dimensions created by the Space Arcanum.

To this day, passages between locations in the Fallen World are sometimes opened to reveal a terrible and ravenous worm. The gate worms never appear in newly crafted passages; these creatures are only a danger when passages already created, and usually very old, are used.

No one knows how gate worms find their way into such passages. Mages who study gate worms surmise that they simply remain in a portal until the passage becomes so old that it can no longer be accessed, and collapses in on itself.

The worms themselves are mindless and ravenous, attempting to cram anything in their vicinity into their maw. When either end of an aperture inhabited by a gate worm opens, the creature erupts out of the passageway and begins to pull things toward itself. In fact, a gate worm can emerge from both ends of a portal at once. Where one Space portal is infested, any others nearby probably are as well, so prudent mages avoid opening further apertures near places where gate worms are sighted. A worm might jump to the new portal.

Description: Gate worms look like strange, chitinous worms that completely fill the dimensional tunnels they inhabit. Their glossy black chitin reflects the light with a dull blue gleam. The end of the worm has no eyes of any kind. The end is simply a ringed hole in the chitin, holding a strange, writhing darkness within. Tendrils of black nothingness curl out from the mouth to clutch at nearby architecture and creatures, trying to pull them all toward the worm's maw and annihilation.

Storytelling Hints: The gate worm is not a gatekeeper in the traditional sense. No sane mage would want gate worms near him, and even the mad mages lack a means of compelling gate worms to do the mages' will. Gate worms simply happen upon the holdings of mages, lured on by the ample spatial manipulation often found in such a place. Gate worms have no motive but to consume.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 6, Finesse 7, Resistance 5

Willpower: 10

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 12

Defense: 7

Speed: 0

Size: 10

Corpus: 15

Influences: Spatial Rifts 1.

- **Strengthen:** Gate worms use their Influence to preserve the spatial rifts in which they manifest. They can also use this ability to fight effects designed to collapse or close such rifts. The mage who tries to affect a gate-worm's portal wins an opposed roll against the creature's Power + Finesse. Each attempt at resistance costs the gate-worm one Essence.

Numina: Discorporation (dice pool 11; gate worms immediately reappear into another spatial rift somewhere in the world), Materialize (gate worms automatically materialize when they arrive in spatial rifts, with no roll necessary), Tentacles of Nothing

Tentacles of Nothing: Gate worms attack, lashing out with dark tentacles of their strange non-substance. These attacks are made by rolling Power + Finesse – the target's Defense, and ignore armor that does not come from Death or Space magics. Each success on this roll inflicts one point of Ability damage as the target fades into nonexistence. The first success removes one point of Strength, the second removes a point of Stamina and so on, alternating between the two Attributes. If either Ability drops to 0, the target is drawn into the worm's maw and annihilated. Lost Abilities recover at a rate of one point per day, or by infusing the victim with Mana to restore her patter (one Mana per Ability point restored).

Ban: Gate worms cannot leave the spatial rift in which they appear. If the gate worms are compelled to do so, the spatial rift is rent apart as it enters the Fallen World (either material or Shadow), thanks to the curse laid on the rift in ages past. If a spatial rift where one exists is somehow collapsed, the creature within it is destroyed.

Ghost Out of Time

Quote: *Where am I? What am I? What are you? Why have you called me?*

Background: Necromancers have long compelled ghosts to guard valuable locations and artifacts. After all, ghosts are patient. They don't need to be fed or sheltered, and they don't grow feeble with age.

But ghosts are only as strong as their anchors, and anchors can be stolen or destroyed. So, with spells lost to modern sorcerers, ancient Necromancers combined Death, Fate and Time magics to anchor a ghost to a treasure and thrust that treasure into the future. With the ghost's anchor gone, the ghost disappeared as well, flung somewhere between eternity and the Underworld.

Only a mage who performs the proper ritual or who casts the right spells can make the treasure reappear in normal time. The ritual might entail a ceremony in an Atlantean temple

during a planetary conjunction, or the utterance of a certain phrase by the descendant of an Atlantean king; the Storyteller can set whatever details seem appropriate. Yet in recovering the treasure, the mage springs a trap — unwittingly drawing the bound spectre back to the land of the living.

Being thus hurled through time has driven the Ghost mad (not that ghosts are terribly sane in any case). The Ghost's pain and confusion quickly become rage. Memories of the Ghost's previous life are lost or fragmented, and the only magic the being wields is that granted by its unfortunate state. The Ghost attacks with berserk fury, trapped by an anchor in an age not the Ghost's own.

Description: The Ghost resembles a black-and-white photograph of its former self that has been crumpled, torn and reassembled. A series of afterimages trails behind the Ghost whenever it moves, and the stench of ozone surrounds.

Storytelling Hints: A mage persistent enough to retrieve a time-lost item from an Atlantean ruin probably isn't willing to give that item up, even if that item is a mad ghost's anchor to the world. But while the wraith probably can't be reasoned with, it might be calmed enough to admit its desire to return to the grave. If not, powerful Death spells may be the only way to be rid of the Ghost.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 6, Finesse 7, Resistance 6

Willpower: 12

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 13

Defense: 7

Speed: 23

Size: 5

Corpus: 11

Numina: Ghost Speech (dice pool 13), Telekinesis (dice pool 13), Terrify (dice pool 13)

Chronos' Curse (dice pool 13). As the Time 4 spell of the same name. Roll the ghost's Power + Finesse minus the target's Composure. Each use of this Numen costs three Essence.

Destroy Mana (dice pool 13). As the Death 5 spell of the same name. Roll the ghost's Power + Finesse minus the target's Resolve. Each use of this Numen costs four Essence.

Shifting Sands (dice pool 13). As the Time 3 spell of the same name. Roll the ghost's Finesse + Resistance versus the target's Composure + Gnosis. Each use of this Numen costs two Essence.

Ban: The Ghost cannot directly affect its own anchor, and disappears during any period when the anchor is removed from normal time. In addition, any Time spells used by mages to affect the anchor affect the Ghost as well.

Hunt-Spawn

Quote: <the sound of a guttural, snarling hiss from directly above>

Background: Not all the temples found by Awakened Seekers are wondrous storehouses of enlightened Artifacts and knowledge. Some of the temples were clearly sealed during

the days of Atlantis, for the entities worshipped therein were too horrible and blasphemous for humans to risk knowing the truth about them.

In particular, there seems to have existed a nation that stood either in the last days of Atlantis, or after its Fall. The nation has no name, for the Atlanteans struck it from reality. The acamoth-haunted sorcerer-kings of the Nameless Empire considered the Atlantean search for enlightenment and Supernal wisdom to be a terrible blasphemy against the natural, sinful nature of humanity.

This nation must have been quite large, or maintained colonies, for Seekers have found ruins of Nameless origin in northern Africa and in the mountains of eastern North America. Some Awakened observe that during the age when the continents formed the theoretical Pangaea, these places would have been right next to each other.

The ancient magi who sealed these temple-tombs populated them with hunt-spawn. These horrible, ravenous creatures exist only to eat other creatures and then return to deathless hibernation, until the scent of the living awakens the hunt-spawn once more. However hunt-spawn came to be — spirits bound into flesh, living automata given the breath of life, animals or insects warped and transformed by magic — these creatures do their work well.

Hunt-spawn cannot exist outside the ruins they inhabit. To ensure that these horrors do not accidentally escape the sealed fanes of Nameless blasphemy, the magi somehow imbued the hunt-spawn with the inability to live outside the temple they guard. Even if taken to another temple haunted by these creatures, the hunt-spawn dies quickly.

Within the boundaries of their temple, however, hunt-spawn have tremendous recuperative power. If the new moon finds the corpse of a hunt-spawn still within the ruins it was set to guard, the thing's remains become the cocoon of a new hunt-spawn.

Description: Hunt-spawn possess six clawed and chitinous limbs. The forward pair are wicked scything instruments similar to the grasping legs of a praying mantis. The middle two possess delicate taloned digits capable of fine manipulation, while the rear legs are strongly muscled and designed so the hunt-spawn can leap great distances.

The segmented, barbed chitin that covers hunt-spawn makes them dangerous to attack unarmed. A hunt-spawn's heavily-armored, wedge-shaped head seems to have a strong lower jaw. When the hunt-spawn feeds, however, the pointed "jaw" splits and unfolds into a pair of serrated mandibles.

A hunt-spawn's body has three sections, like an ant or wasp — but they are seven feet long, with an abdomen four feet wide. In instances in which the hunt-spawn's bulky abdomens prevent them from following their prey through a small opening, hunt-spawn have been known to attack one another and rip away their bulky last segment to allow them to give pursuit.

Storytelling Hints: As gatekeepers, hunt-spawn are meant for one thing: to exterminate anyone who enters their haunt. Ruins guarded by hunt-spawn were never meant to be explored.

The ancients clearly believed that it is better to kill interlopers than to risk the blasphemous secrets of the Nameless Empire escaping into the world again.

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Presence 3, Manipulation 0, Composure 1

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Willpower: 4

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 15

Size: 6

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Scythe-arms	3L*	9

* A hunt-spawn's serrated, razor-sharp scythe-arms grant these attacks the Armor Piercing 2 trait.

Health: 12. Hunt-spawn do not suffer from wound penalties.

Special: Hunt-spawn heal one lethal or bashing Health level per minute and completely regenerate lost limbs in a matter of hours. Hunt-spawn also have the ability to see perfectly in complete darkness.

Additionally, by spending a point of Willpower and not moving during that turn, the hunt-spawn may attack with both scythe-arms on the next turn, with a -1 penalty to both attacks. On turns when the hunt-spawn do this, they gain no Defense rating.

Jibril al-Ifriti

Quote: (in Arabic) *Enter, and be at peace. But do not go beyond the rose door – that is where the treasure lies, and it is forbidden to you.*

Background: Jibril al-Ifriti remembers a time before he heard the word of the Prophet. He remembers a simple life devoid of mortal concerns; he had no name, no purpose and no knowledge of the world. He remembers being called by a human and striking a bargain, and becoming guardian to a palace that turned cold and decrepit as the centuries passed.

But Jibril's childhood ended when another human visited him – the first Jibril had encountered for untold ages. This human wielded the same strange powers as the last, but treated Jibril with kind fascination instead of disdain. The man said that Jibril was a *djinni*, a being of "smokeless fire." The man taught Jibril to read and brought many books to the ruined palace, and helped Jibril understand his place in God's world. The man helped Jibril choose a name.

By the time the man departed, Jibril's outlook on existence changed. He would fulfill his vows to the sorcerers of the old world and remain a guardian – but he would also become a pious scholar and spend his days in prayer and contemplation. He read the books left behind by the ancients, but he preferred the works written during the millennia since. Now, he awaits the next visitors to the palace, hoping that they'll prove themselves as worthy as the ancients' heirs.

Description: Jibril is a true spirit, ordinarily anchored in Twilight in the ruins of his palace. To those who can see him (or when he materializes), he appears as a tall, beautiful man dressed in simple white robes. His eyes are pits of white fire, and his feet never touch the ground.

Jibril speaks quietly and thoughtfully in archaic Arabic. He is unfailingly polite to strangers, but distrusts anyone who doesn't share his faith. While he enjoys a good debate, he remains dedicated to fulfilling his vows and can't easily be convinced to permit access to the palace's treasures.

Storytelling Hints: As part of the bargain he struck with Atlantean sorcerers, Jibril cannot give strangers access to the palace's treasures unless they meet certain conditions. However, the same bargain prevents Jibril from revealing those conditions or the terms of his agreement. Jibril secretly hopes to be freed from his task once he meets the treasures' worthy heirs, but he is also patient – he will not twist the meaning of his contract to escape more quickly.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 6, Resistance 3

Willpower: 8

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 9

Defense: 6

Speed: 19

Size: 5

Corpus: 8

Influences: Phantasms 4

Jibril controls the holy flame that composes Prime-based phantasms. He can create any inanimate object out of Essence the way mages create phantasms out of Mana, and then strengthen, manipulate or control it however he wants.

Numina: Materialize (dice pool 11), Material Vision (dice pool 11)

Burning Curse (dice pool 8). Jibril can bestow a curse upon trespassers and thieves that denies them the use of tass. Roll Power + Resistance versus the target's Resolve + Gnosis and spend three Essence. Whenever a cursed mage handles tass, the tass is immediately consumed and destroyed by white fire. Imbued items and Artifacts that have their own Mana pools are also affected, but to a lesser extent – such items lose one Mana point each turn they are within the mage's possession.

Jibril can remove the curse at any time. Otherwise, the Prime 4 spell "Supernal Dispellation" can undo the effect. Treat the successes gained on the initial Numen roll as the curse's Potency.

Celestial Fire (dice pool 11). As the Prime 3 spell of the same name (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 224). Roll Power + Finesse minus the target's Stamina. Each use of this Numen costs one Essence.

Siphon Mana (dice pool 8). As the Prime 5 spell of the same name (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 231).

Mana Conversion (no dice pool). Jibril can channel Mana from the Hallow within the temple he guards, and convert the

Mana into Essence. He does the same with Mana siphoned from intruders.

Ban: Included within the lost contract that binds Jibril to his palace are mudras that play on the spirit's weaknesses. If these mudras are utilized in combination with a mage's magic, the mage gains an extra two dice when targeting Jibril with Spirit spells.

The Living Palace

Quote: *We remember an age when we were spirit. An age when your kind had power. That age is over.*

Background: The ruin of one Atlantean stronghold hides more than tass, lost rites and the soul stones that make the structure a Demesne. The palace's marble pillars and archways stand like bones filled with black, tarry marrow. Mana flows down crystal conduits along lengthy hallways, pumped like blood through the ruin's "heart." At the stronghold's center, celestial fire dances among bizarre sculptures like synapses firing in a human brain.

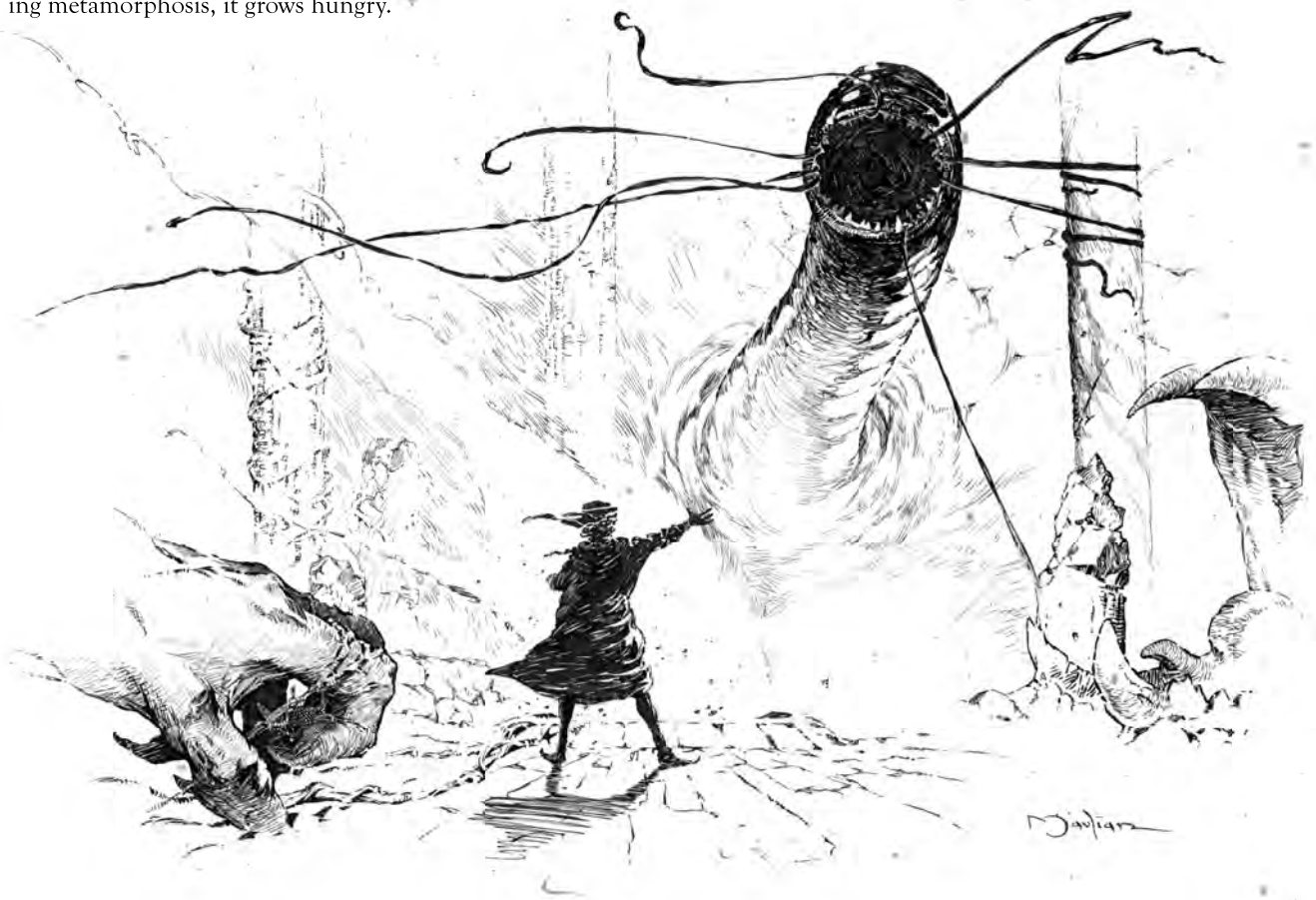
The ruin is neither alive nor dead. But it is *aware*. Bound into the foundations of the stronghold is a Marquess spirit of godlike power and unfathomable nature. Over the millennia, the spirit has attempted to escape by forcing its body through the cycle of souls, ascending from matter into flesh and from flesh into spirit. The spirit has fully merged with the Demesne, but the spirit's transformation is only beginning — rock now turns to meat and bone, chambers become alien organs and air and water become blood — and like any creature undergoing metamorphosis, it grows hungry.

The orders have known about the Living Palace for a long time. Each order explains the ruin in the order's own way. The Adamantine Arrow claims its forebears bound the spirit into the Demesne to defeat the spirit, sacrificing the sanctum in the process. Secret scrolls belonging to the Guardians of the Veil say the Atlanteans struck a deal with the spirit, knowing it would protect the treasures in the ruin the spirit devoured. Scelesti say their ancestors crafted the Living Palace as slow-growing supernatural cancer in the world. Whatever the explanation, all records agree that the spirit cares little for humanity — and few mages who enter will ever leave again.

Description: In most places, the Living Palace resembles a typical Atlantean ruin. The spirit's nature is revealed in the subtleties: veins in marble writhe or seem to ooze with fluid, corridors twist unnaturally and a rhythmic pulsing can be heard by pressing one's ear to the floor.

Where the spirit exerts its power, walls warp into skin and water churns and turns dark. Doorways suck themselves closed, and the air becomes foul. The ruin's transformed interior is almost too bizarre to be gruesome, despite its clearly organic, unnatural state.

Storytelling Hints: The spirit isn't interested in the affairs of mages or Sleepers, but it possesses a hunger for more soul stones and magical power, as well as a sense of self-preservation. The Living Palace attempts to delay and disorient intruding mages by reshaping itself, hoping eventually to use its Claim Numen and absorb the willworkers' magic.



Mages who attack living segments of the spirit with Death magic discover that, instead of “dying,” those segments of the ruin return to stone. In effect, the ascension from matter to flesh is reversed.

Rank: 5

Attributes: Power 15, Finesse 10, Resistance 15

Willpower: 30

Essence: 50 (max 50)

Initiative: 25

Defense: 15

Speed: None

Size: 40 (ruin)

Corpus: 55

Influences: Demesne 5

The Living Palace can extend hallways, raise chambers, seal doorways and otherwise change its interior however the spirit desires. For example:

- **Strengthen:** For one Essence, the Palace can increase an area's Durability or repair a wall, door or furnishing damaged by intruders.

- **Manipulate:** For two Essence, the Palace can change the appearance of a room or hall. Seekers who backtrack their steps can find themselves in a place that looks completely different.

- **Control:** Three Essence allows the Palace to animate a room or hall to attack intruders. Floors heave, walls extrude tentacles tipped with venom-dripping claws and doorways squeeze shut like sphincters — and vanish.

- **Create:** Four Essence enables the Palace to create whole new halls or chambers, or absorb ones that already exist, changing its own layout. The Demesne can also flood a passage with digestive enzymes (an environmental hazard dealing no more than one Wound level per turn).

- **Mass Create:** For five Essence, the Palace can produce guardian creatures to attack intruders. Columns transform into leathery, yellow-eyed serpents, and buttresses become bat-winged monsters. For every two successes on a Power + Finesse roll, the Palace creates one quasi-biological horror from the Palace's own substance. Base these creatures on the Marmoreal Myrmidon (**Mage: The Awakening**, p. 329, except the creatures lack any Influence).

Numina: Claim (dice pool 25), Harrow (dice pool 25), Soul Snatch (dice pool 25)

Ban: By finding and destroying the soul stones at the foundation of the Living Palace (and thus making it no longer a Demesne), a mage traps the spirit in the stronghold, denies the spirit the use of all powers and ends its metamorphosis.

Any formal Ban the spirit possessed before it was bound remains undiscovered.

Mana-Reaver

Quote: <a high-pitched whine followed by an electrical crackle>

Background: For all the destruction wrought by the formation of the Abyss, Paradoxes did provide a fascinating subject

of study for eccentric Atlanteans. Upon witnessing the chaos of Havoc Paradoxes, one cabal sought to replicate that chaos as a means of self-defense. The cabal members were not entirely successful, but they managed to bind an Abyssal spark within a ruby and placed the gem inside one of their sanctums. There, the spark fed on Atlantean magics and awaited further meals.

The Mana-Reaver is not truly sentient. It is more a force than a spirit, drawn to devour spells and excreting light and energy. The Mana-Reaver is purified mystic chaos imprisoned in a fetter, and is as dangerous to the environment the force “guards” as to intruders.

Atlanteans opposed to the Mana-Reaver's creation feared that the force would draw Abyssal entities to the Atlantean sanctum, ultimately resulting in the destruction or corruption of Atlantean lore. Perhaps the Atlanteans were right. At the very least, any other magical defenses used in the domain of the Mana-Reaver must have been terribly warped through the years.

Description: A jagged, starry gap in space just over a foot across — a churning dark void speckled with light and centered on a seething red jewel. Air ripples and hisses around it as if boiling away. Purple lightning leaps from the gap every now and then, scorching whatever it touches.

Storytelling Hints: In its role as guardian, the Mana-Reaver is a vicious reminder that magic is not always the most effective solution to a problem. Casting spells only gives the Mana-Reaver more chances to regain Essence and more chances to create Havoc Paradoxes.

Nonetheless, some mages could find the Mana-Reaver a tempting object of study. A few mages believe that Paradoxes can be controlled, and this curious creation of the Atlanteans might provide insight into the nature of Havocs and the ripples the Abyss first sent through the Fallen World.

Rank: 1

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 3, Resistance 1

Willpower: 5

Essence: 10 (max 10)

Initiative: 4

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Size: 3

Corpus: 4

Numina: Blast (dice pool 7)

Wreak Havoc (dice pool 7). The Mana-Reaver can use this Numen reflexively to alter magic (including covert spells) targeted on it or used to interfere with its mission. Spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse minus the caster's Resolve. If the Mana-Reaver is successful, the caster's spell becomes a Havoc Paradox (even if the spell is not vulgar or improbable).

Ban: If no spells are currently active nearby and no new spells are cast during the next turn, the Mana-Reaver reverts to the form of an “ordinary” ruby. Unless the ruby is destroyed, however, the Mana-Reaver can manifest again as soon as it feels the presence of a spell.



Musul Akade

Quote: (sound made by the buzzing of locust wings) Get—out

Background: Swarms of scarab beetles in Egypt. Carpets of venomous centipedes in mainland China. Swarms of killer bees in the African veldt. Masses of fire ants in the American South. Sheets of spiders in the Black Forest of Germany. In some ancient, magical ruins, the ambient magic causes insects and related creatures to act with unnatural unity and hostile intelligence. Does the ambient magic of a place somehow over-excite the simple nervous systems of these creatures? Do they react to deliberate geomantic manipulations when the sites were built, or to spells laid afterward?

Writings that some Awakened archaeologists ascribe to Lemuria tell of the Musul Akade, the insect demons set by barbarian sorcerer-kings to guard their taboo places. The Musul Akade do not have physical bodies for themselves. Instead, they act through swarms of insects or arachnids, wearing masses of insects in the same fashion that ghosts can wear shrouds of ectoplasm.

The Musul Akade gather up large numbers of insects or other arthropods — any insects of a single kind — and then possess the resultant swarm. These swarms are inexorable and feel no pain. However, the Musul Akade themselves are not entirely in control of these masses of insects: just as the bodies of the insects accede to the desires of the insect-demon, the spirits themselves partake somewhat of the essential nature of the creatures the spirits possess. Spider-possessing Musul Akade are driven to create elaborate traps and wait in hiding for intruders, while fire-ant-spirits approach the defense of their tombs ravenously and without pause.

Swarms driven by a Musul Akade can be killed, but this does not harm the demon itself. The demon is simply rendered impotent to affect the physical world until the Musul Akade can gather another swarm to serve it. Only the Spirit Arcanum and other spirit-affecting magic can truly harm the Musul Akade.

Awakened Seekers may enter a tightly-sealed ruin that houses a Musul Akade without an insect body. In such instances, the Musul Akade often goes unnoticed as it lurks in Twilight in some well-hidden nook. If the ruin is left unsealed, however, the insect-demons always escape and return to punish interlopers. More than one expedition has reported few problems getting into a temple or tomb, only to discover huge swarms of ravenous insects trying to deny the mages exit.

Description: When possessing a swarm, Musul Akade are hard to miss: the swarm is active, inquisitive and utterly aggressive.

In the Shadow Realm or Twilight, Musul Akade look like oval lumps of hard, honeycombed, waxen material, a deep brown in hue. When they control a swarm, the pupal lump takes the shape of the arthropod controlled, while spiritual versions of those insects or arachnids crawl in and out of their honeycombed bodies. Musul Akade have possessed insects, arachnids (including scorpions) and myriapods (centipedes and millipedes). A single report of a Musul Akade guarding an undersea ruin in the Bering Sea using a mass of Alaska king crabs has not been confirmed.

Storytelling Hints: These extremely territorial spirits eventually come to regard the ruin in which they were trapped as their home. They defend it as instinctively and ferociously as killer bees protecting their hive. Musul Akade that possess a swarm are difficult to speak with, for the demons tend to view

everything through the lens of insect impulses, but Musul Akade can shape insect-noises into a semblance of speech.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 3, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

Willpower: 8

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 6

Speed: 6

Size: 4

Corpus: 8

Influences: Insects/Arthropods 2.

- **Strengthen:** Musul Akade can increase the effective size of a swarm for purposes of inflicting and receiving damage, though the number of living insects doesn't increase. The real bugs spread out more, and ectoplasmic doubles fill the gaps. Each success on the insect-demon's Power + Finesse (9 dice) roll adds 1 to the effective size of the swarm, to a maximum of twice the swarm's initial size. This lasts for one minute per success (unless the spirit spends more Essence), and is often activated right before the swarm descends on a foe.

- **Manipulate:** Musul Akade use their second level of Influence to gather swarms for the spirit to possess using its Claim Numen. Roll the spirit's Power + Finesse while the spirit spends its Essence; the number of successes indicates the initial size of the swarm, per the chart for the Life 2 spell "Control Base Life" (see p. 182 of *Mage: The Awakening*).

Numina: Claim (dice pool 9; Musul Akade can use this on large groups of insects and arachnids, but only of a single type at any given time), Gauntlet Breach (dice pool 9)

Ban: Musul Akade are driven out of their swarm by anything that is poisonous or otherwise harmful to their hosts, such as insecticides. This does not include phenomena that are harmful in general, such as fire, but does include the spirits of natural predators to the creatures that make up the swarm, such as bat-spirits or sparrow-spirits for flying insects, anteaters for ant-spirits and praying mantis-spirits for nearly any insect.

Nemesis

Quote: *To stand here is to die. To fight me is to meet your doom. Leave this place; do not rush toward destiny so eagerly.*

Background: The ancient masters of Fate believed wisdom was the ability to straddle the line between destiny and desire — the ability to remain true to one's oaths without being controlled by them. Such masters expected no less from anyone seeking their temples and treasures. As a test, the mages created the Nemesis Sisters — beings with the power to reshape themselves and challenge a person's fidelity.

A Nemesis is a deadly combatant that strikes at any intruder. She is swift and strong, but her real power is her ability to test a foe's oaths. She knows all the vows and curses that bind her opponents, and can change her form and her weapons to take advantage of that knowledge.

Description: In her natural form, a Nemesis is a seven-foot-tall stone statue. Her features are simple and not particularly lifelike, although she is clearly the work of a skilled craftsman. She is dressed in plain robes and carries a sword, bow or other weapon. Her voice is clear, cold and resonant.

When a Nemesis changes form, the change is complete — her voice, body language and even her style of combat alters along with her shape. She knows how to use any weapon or object she creates, and readily shows her pleasure when an opponent meets his doom.

Storytelling Hints: A Nemesis takes dark satisfaction in forcing her foes into circumstances in which they must break their oaths. She sees fate as the ultimate doom of all creatures, and views anyone who defeats her with mixed hatred and respect. Her bitterness grows from her inability to escape her own destiny — she is bound to remain a guardian by oath-spells of unbreakable power, and tires of millennia of solitude.

A mage who releases a Nemesis from her bonds might gain her gratitude — if she doesn't have a different fate in mind. And who can guess how the other Sisters would react if one of their own were freed?

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 9, Finesse 4, Resistance 9

Willpower: 18

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 13

Defense: 9

Speed: 19

Size: 6

Corpus: 15

Influences: Doom 4

A Nemesis can adapt her shape and possessions to meet the conditions of a foe's destiny (Fate-determined or not). The Nemesis can adapt to multiple foes' fates simultaneously (so long as the adaptations aren't mutually exclusive), but each adaptation counts as a separate use of Influence. A Nemesis instantly knows a character's oaths, Bans and Fate-triggered spells at a glance — no dice rolls or Essence expenditure needed.

- **Strengthen:** A Nemesis can strengthen the power of an oath so that she fulfills its terms merely by a change in appearance. For instance, a real oath to obey a mentor wouldn't apply to a person who merely looked like that person; but by spending one Essence and succeeding at a Power + finesse roll, the Nemesis extends the oath to include herself.

- **Manipulate:** A Nemesis can alter her own form so that she fulfills the conditions of any oath or Ban placed on a character. For example, a Nemesis could become an owl when facing a person with the Destiny Merit whose bane is nocturnal birds.

- **Control:** Fate triggers upon spells count as an aspect of oaths and Bans. At cost of three Essence, a Nemesis can take control of such triggers, to activate or block such spells. For example, a Nemesis could sing a song that functions as the conditional trigger of a prepared spell cast upon a mage.

A Nemesis can also offer to change any oaths or Bans upon a character. She can do this, if the number of successes on her Power + Finesse roll exceeds the Potency of the oath-spell. However, the Nemesis also adds a ban to the changed oath: the character may not fight the Nemesis or continue his quest to take whatever she guards.

- **Create:** By spending four Essence, a Nemesis can materialize any props she needs to fit within the terms of an oath, or to challenge a character's oath. For instance, a Nemesis could create a weapon that matches the parameters of an opponent's doomful item.

Numina: Countermagic (dice pool 13). A Nemesis can use this Numen as reflexive countermagic against Fate magic (including covert spells) targeted on her or used to interfere with her mission. One Essence is spent, and Power + Finesse is rolled. If successes equal or exceed those of the spell, the spell is countered.

Oathbound (dice pool 18). A Nemesis has sworn an oath to guard her temple. The oath allows a reflexive Power + Resistance roll for the Nemesis to act in circumstances that would normally forbid action.

Ban: A Nemesis cannot actually kill a person who has sworn a binding oath to find the *specific* location or treasure the Nemesis guards. It may terrify the person, and bring her within an inch of death, but if the person truly accepts death before dishonor, the Nemesis cannot destroy her.

Pythagorean Sphinx

Quote: (in Greek) *One step before the other leads thee astray. Corners go to places that do not lie beyond them. Walk upon walls, fall toward ceilings. Flee this place now, before I cease my games and become annoyed.*

Background: The sphinx has long been a symbol of conundrums and confusion. When spirits of unsolved questions and riddles manifest in the material world, they often appear in the form of a sphinx, the Fallen World's manifestation of the Platonic concept of enigmas meant to be solved.

The first recorded instance of a Pythagorean Sphinx came in the classical era, from a cabal dedicated to unlocking the Supernal truths within the teachings of Pythagoras. One day, the cabal members encountered a Sphinx that posed them a riddle. However, this puzzle was not one of words and logic, but of space and geometry, as they entered their sanctum to find its lines all ajumble while remaining straight, surfaces conjunct with others in angles that should not be and spatial connections broken and disjointed. Since then, Seekers have encountered Pythagorean Sphinxes in a few Atlantean or post-Atlantean sites.

Like all sphinxes, Pythagorean Sphinxes demand that mortals whom the Sphinxes test solve the riddles — a difficult task for mages who are not well-versed in advanced mathematics. Solving the riddle can mean anything from discovering the way out of a four-dimensional labyrinth to shooting a game of pool on a table with the relativist distortion of space near a spinning black hole.

And, similar to all sphinxes, the Pythagorean Sphinx will consume anyone who fails to solve its riddle.

Description: A Pythagorean Sphinx looks like a hunting cat of a size that dwarfs the largest lion or tiger, with a set of great wings and a human head. In the case of the Pythagorean Sphinx, its cat body is covered in white fur that shimmers with a slight bluish tinge, while the large wings are raven-black. The head is that of an elderly Greek man with a long white beard and delicately ringed snow-white hair. The Sphinx gazes at its foes with eyes of hematite, and as it sits on its haunches, its great obsidian claws idly sketch out patterns of geometric shapes and angles — which may be the only clue it offers to its riddle. Pythagorean Sphinxes speak only Latin, Greek and Atlantean, and woe betides those who cannot understand the Sphinxes' clues, for the mages' tasks become difficult.

Storytelling Hints: Unlike some gatekeepers, Pythagorean Sphinxes welcome Seekers, for the Sphinxes are usually forbidden to use their powers on the area around them except as a means to foil intruders.

A Pythagorean Sphinx usually appears to Seekers by landing with a great roar in their midst. The Sphinx uses its powers to scatter the intruders while shifting the ideas of “down” and “across” so the characters end up “lying” on different surfaces of the room. The Sphinx then sits back on its haunches, smiles smugly and gives a small clue, whether verbally or in the form of a geometrical theorem.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Power 9, Finesse 12, Resistance 9

Willpower: 18

Essence: 25 (max 25). Pythagorean Sphinxes can regain their Essence in places or situations where spatial geometry or similar mathematic principles are in use: mathematics classes, engineering and architectural firms, construction sites and the like. As characters attempt to reason their way through the Sphinx's puzzle, they recharge its Essence.

Initiative: 21

Defense: 12

Speed: 10 (15 in flight)

Size: 8

Corpus: 17

Influences: Spatial Geometry 4

- **Strengthen:** The Pythagorean Sphinx may use its first level of Influence to strengthen spatial geometric principles, countering magical effects that alter them. In practical terms, the Pythagorean Sphinx can unravel Space magic by spending one Essence and rolling Power + Finesse. If the Sphinx's successes exceed the spell's Potency, the spell is destroyed.

- **Manipulate:** The Sphinx can use its second level of Influence to redirect a mage's Space magic. For instance, a portal could lead where the Sphinx wants, not where the mage intends. Again, the Sphinx can do this if its successes exceed the spell's Potency.

- **Control:** The third level of Influence enables the Pythagorean Sphinx to manipulate the spatial geometry around it.



This is how the spirit turns up to down, warps hallways back on themselves and makes corners to lead to places they don't normally go.

- **Create:** The Pythagorean Sphinx would rather warp present spatial features rather than create new ones, but its fourth level of Influence allows the Sphinx to create entirely new spatial structures. It can manifest zones of Escher-like spacial distortion and recursion at will. If intruders fail the Sphinx's puzzle, the Sphinx may try to catch its victim in a bubble of warped space. Inside, the bubble is large enough to hold a mage; outside, the bubble is small enough for the Sphinx to swallow like a grape.

Numina: Discorporation (dice pool 18), Harrow (dice pool 21, creating a sense of terrible confusion as the mind of the target is flooded with theorems and abstract calculations), Materialize (dice pool 21), Reaching (dice pool 21 – Gauntlet)

Ban: If mortals solve the spatial riddle of a Pythagorean Sphinx, it is driven back into Twilight for 24 hours. The Sphinx will not trouble those characters again, unless compelled by a stronger spirit or powerful magic.

The Rmoahals

Quote: (in High Speech) *Who goes there?*

Background: The piecemeal Atlantean texts recovered by the Mysterium often speak of the Rmoahals. Some scholars theorize the Rmoahals were the tribal people of Atlantis: older than the humans, physically formidable and protective of an identity as a cultural group, yet willing to accept the rule of the wizard-kings and orders. The texts imply Rmoahals were valued slaves and servants. Rmoahals apparently fought in their own divisions in the Atlantean army as it ventured forth to defend the Awakened City from savage hordes and vile, occult horrors – or conquering missions of imperial arrogance, depending on which scholar's interpretation you believe. As usual with matters Atlantean, the evidence is inconsistent and the scholarship mostly guesswork. The story of the aboriginal Rmoahals goes some ways, however, toward explaining the ones who guard a certain ancient temple, left behind to watch a Verge and never relieved when Atlantis sank.

Even now that the temple has fallen into ruin, this small group of Rmoahal watchmen wait. They hunt deer and rabbits for food and tell stories of home around the fire. They wish they could go back to a land that vanished thousands of years ago, but remain bound by faith and duty to stay by their posts.

Description: Rmoahals are sad-eyed, black-haired giants, male and female, with smooth skin of shining indigo. They wear nothing but sandals, loincloths and harnesses of leather straps from animals that became extinct millennia ago, but adorn their long hair and bare chests with jewelry made from painted seashells, beads and animal teeth. For weapons, they carry long, flint-tipped spears and the occasional treasured Atlantean sword. They rarely smile, and they speak a slightly mannered dialect of High Speech.

Storytelling Hints: They may be eight feet tall, blue-skinned and dressed in nothing but sword-belts and seashells, but the Rmoahals are still men and women. They're still people, not inhuman creatures from the Shadow World. The Rmoahals have lost track of time and have no idea how long they've kept their guard. It might have been a couple of years as far as they know. They treat each other as comrades and friends, and maybe lovers too. If they see their friends harmed or killed, they will grieve, feel anger and seek revenge, just like anyone else.

Having said that, the Rmoahals are still the remnant of an alien culture. These Rmoahals were never conquered or pressed into fighting for the Atlanteans: the Rmoahals volunteered as sentries. Their entire being and worth centers around their duty. A Rmoahal's word is more binding than any enchantment. Duty has sustained them past the Sundering and the passing of ages. Just because a Rmoahal's Ban comes from his own will doesn't make it any less powerful.

The Rmoahal guards are reasonable, intelligent and willing to tell everything they know about Atlantis. Unfortunately, they're still just common soldiers from a tribal culture. Their lives consisted mainly of hunting, raising families, running farms and fighting in wars against enemies whose names they never bothered to learn — the Rmoahals know hardly any mystical lore, just a few deeds of their sorcerous lords they witnessed without understanding. Perhaps, however, the fact that these lonely and deathless warriors were, in the end, just men and women is a significant occult revelation in its own right.

If a mage were to find the correct form of the relief order that will allow the Rmoahals to leave their posts, the most likely outcome is that they'll cheerfully pack up and head across the Verge for other Realms, no doubt looking for their homes. They'll listen to anyone who tells them that their home isn't there any more, but they'll want to see for themselves nonetheless.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 4, Resistance 5

Willpower: 10

Essence: 10 (max 20)

Initiative: 9

Defense: 5

Speed: 15 (species factor 6)

Size: 7

Corpus: 12

Influences: Feats of Arms 1

• **Strengthen:** In combat, a Rmoahal can spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse (9 dice) as an instant and reflexive action. Each success gives the Rmoahal a bonus to combat dice pools for the next minute. Any hand-to-hand weapon thus becomes unnaturally lethal in a Rmoahal warrior's hands, and Rmoahals may apply their bonus dice to counter any penalties in combat. Improbable feats such as throwing a dagger to knock a weapon from a foe's hand, or pole-vaulting over a foe with a spear to strike from behind, are easy for Rmoahals — or at least such feats are less difficult than for merely mortal warriors.

Numina: Wilds Sense (dice pool 10). This sixth sense covers the Verge the Rmoahals are bound to guard: this was part of the original enchantment keeping the Rmoahals in this place. Surprising a Rmoahal guardian is impossible.

Ban: The Rmoahals vowed to stay at their post until relieved, and never to let anyone past without the password. Although they will be glad to talk with anyone who approaches in a friendly manner, they *must* keep to their duty, and *must* fight anyone who tries to pass without the password. Likewise, they can only leave their post if someone gives the correct relief order. Finding the words to allow a group of Rmoahals to leave their posts could form the basis of a story in itself, or even

a story arc or short chronicle.

These antediluvial warriors also carry a more sinister Ban that only becomes clear if they are freed from their duty and go looking for Atlantis in the material world. Though flesh and blood, they are still survivors from a reality that changed millennia ago. Indigo-skinned giants are strange but just barely believable for Sleepers — but the Rmoahals are still subject to a slow unraveling before Sleeper eyes. If a Sleeper sees a Rmoahal out in the workaday world, roll the Sleeper's Resolve + Composure and compare the successes to the Rmoahal's Resistance (instead of the Potency used for unraveling a spell). Check every 10 minutes. When the accumulated successes exceed the Rmoahal's Resistance of 5, the Atlantean warrior sickens and will die within hours.

The Se'ir

Quote: <dead silence, broken by a quiet, high pitched chuckle>

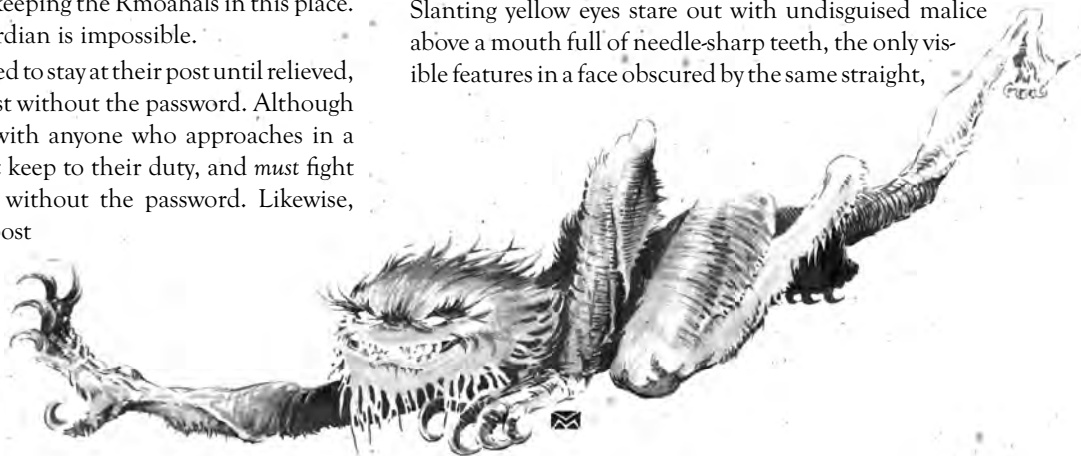
The painting on the temple wall is faint and chipped, but the intruding mage can just barely make out the image. It shows a chamber where a number of corpses lie, each a man with his neck snapped and his face contorted with fear. Another man, clearly a robed magus, stands erect and brandishes something like a seal or a symbol — it's difficult to tell exactly what he holds, since the paint has flaked badly from that part of the image. Something crouches across from him. Despite the cracked and faded paint, skillful brush strokes still hint at a terrible malice.

But apart from the wall painting, the temple seems uninhabited. The mage shrugs and takes the scrolls away without any opposition. As he leaves the temple, he doesn't notice that the painting has changed. There is now one fewer figure in the painted chamber.

In his lodgings that night, the mage gets a visit.

The following morning, the mage's friends find him lying on the floor of his room, his neck broken and twisted, his dead eyes bulging from their sockets. The scrolls he brought back are gone.

Description: A Se'ir is the size of a man and has two arms and two legs, but its limbs are too long and slender for a human frame. Long, coarse, black hair covers its slender body. Slanting yellow eyes stare out with undisguised malice above a mouth full of needle-sharp teeth, the only visible features in a face obscured by the same straight,



black hair. The Se'ir moves more like a spider than a human. Its hands and feet appear to have more fingers than they should; each long, thin digit ends in a hooked, black claw. The thing doesn't smell of anything, and makes no sound — not even a footfall — apart from a quiet, high-pitched laugh.

Storytelling Hints: Some magical texts say that King Solomon tamed the Se'irim, the demons of the night. Whether it's true or not, the Se'irim make terrible vehicles of vengeance against seekers of lore and tomb robbers. These demons can be bound within pictures or statues of themselves. If anyone takes anything out of the temple, the Se'ir leaves its home, takes vengeance on the thief and retrieves the stolen item.

You cannot reason with a Se'ir. If you fight it off, it vanishes back to its pictorial form — until the following night. Then the Se'ir tries again. It keeps trying every night until the Se'ir has either been destroyed or has killed those who robbed its home and returned the stolen goods to the temple.

The Se'irim count ideas as things that can be stolen. An individual who makes copies of writings and inscriptions, or takes photographs of the Se'ir's guarded precincts, incurs the demon's wrath as surely as a tomb robber who hacks carvings from the walls and strips jewels from idols.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 7, Finesse 5, Resistance 4

Willpower: 7

Essence: 7 (max 17 — three points are bound in the demon's picture)

Initiative: 9

Defense: 7

Speed: 17 (species factor 5)

Size: 5

Corpus: 12

Influences: Retrieval 2

- **Strengthen:** The first level of a Se'ir's Influence grants a Se'ir an Intimate connection to everything within the place the Se'ir guards. The demon can find the location of anything removed from its lair, as with the Space 2 version of the spell "Finder" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 233).

- **Manipulate:** Using the second level of a Se'ir's Influence, a Se'ir can move instantly to the location of something stolen from the Se'ir's lair and located using the first level of Influence. This acts like the Space 4 "Teleportation" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 241), with the limits that the Se'ir can only travel by night, and only between its representations and goods or ideas stolen from its home temple. On the Se'ir's Power + Essence roll, the Se'ir's successes must exceed the Potency of any spell to conceal the item or block teleportation — but the demon can reroll every night and accumulate the successes.

Numina: Graven Image: As long as a visual representation of the demon exists, the demon has a place to hide and *cannot* be destroyed. The Se'ir knows whether any other images have been made, and can use any representation of itself as a home by permanently investing three points of Essence in the object, which is removed from the Se'ir's maximum Essence

pool. (So a Se'ir with two homes can only have 14 points of Essence, and so on.) The Graven Image removes the need for any other Numina of manifestation, and anchors the demon in the Material Realm without the need for further expenditure of Essence.

Ban: The Se'irim can only act by night. Also, none of the Se'irim can directly approach a holy symbol or seal, presented with force. However, a mage holding off a Se'ir with a crucifix would do well to remember that the mage has only blocked off one approach; a Se'ir is easily bright enough to think of attacking from another direction.

Sirians

Quote: *Do not be afraid.*

Background: Some Atlantean kings had allies from the star Sirius — at least, that's the claim from Sumerian texts of dubious provenance, and an interpretation given to various legends from Africa. Modern mages, displaying a skepticism that's a bit rich given a world full of ghosts, werewolves, vampires and spirits, are reluctant to believe that these "Sirians" were actually visitors from another planet. Maybe they were spirits whose powers were governed by Sirius, the mages say. Perhaps these Sirians came from a spirit-realm with a name that resembled the Atlantean name for the Dog Star. Other mages suggest that maybe the Sirians didn't exist at all in any factual sense; they were just a metaphor for something else.

The Sirians vanished long ago, but every so often rumors of spirits guarding temples and Lorehouses already abandoned before Atlantis fell bear a strong resemblance to the stories of wise, benevolent — but tricky — Sirian visitors.

Description: Accounts of the Sirians vary. They're usually more or less humanoid; but sometimes they're fishlike, sometimes leonine and sometimes they look like humans with fine features, almond-shaped, golden eyes and easily visible, crystalline haloes of light surrounding their fragile bodies. Some accounts suggest there may even be three separate Sirian races. Although the putative Sirians occur in threes and fours, they never appear in mixed groups of different forms. They usually seem kindly — at first.

Storytelling Hints: These beings adopt the role of teacher and guide. They say they agreed to guard an Atlantean site for some great purpose in the future, but they mean no harm. First, they try to talk Seekers out of intruding further into the place the Sirians guard. Along the way, they claim they brought civilization and wisdom to humanity, and are indeed the first teachers of magic and guides to the Supernal World. Really, why do the Seekers need the site at all? They can just ask the Sirians, and receive whatever lore they want — and that's suitable for their degree of enlightenment, of course.

Sirians are unfailingly polite, in an arrogant and condescending way, and are prone to delivering sermons about wisdom, compassion and other Supernal virtues. It all seems profound when they say it, though a Sirian never gives advice you couldn't find in *All I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* or *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Their mystic lore is also a

lot less useful than it sounds. Some mages insist the Sirians gave them the clue they needed to devise a new rote or imbue an item, but nobody's ever found independent corroboration for anything a Sirian said about Atlantis, the Supernal World or much of anything else.

When sweet reason and the promise of Supernal lore don't work, Sirians resort to their mind-bending powers to eject Seekers from the temple. Sometimes Sirians can even make Seekers forget, at least for a while, that an Atlantean site was ever there.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 4, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

Willpower: 8

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 6

Speed: 15 (species factor 5)

Size: 5

Corpus: 9

Influences: Mind 3

Storytellers may presume that Sirians can use their Influence to duplicate any Mind spell up to Mind 3, though they specialize in seeming impressive and persuasive. Their Influence also enables them to achieve a few more powerful effects. Favored Sirian tricks include the following:

- **Strengthen:** For one Essence, a Sirian can strengthen its thoughts to give itself a Mental Shield, resembling the Mind 2 spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 208). Each success on the Sirian's Power + Finesse roll adds 1 to the Sirian's Resistance against Mind effects. Spending more Essence extends the Duration.

A Sirian can also strengthen feelings of religious awe inspired by its appearance, words and manner. This makes the Sirian seem wise, holy and worthy of reverence and obedience. This resembles the Mind 2 spell, "Emotional Urging" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 207). This calls for a contested roll between the Sirian's Power + Finesse and the mage's Wits + Composure. If the Sirian scores more successes, its every word seems like a pearl of Supernal wisdom.

- **Manipulate:** Sirians are skilled mind readers. They can coax out memories and deeply hidden thoughts that let them better assess an intruder's motives, and say what he wants to hear. This resembles the Mind 4 spell "Read the Depths" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 215). The Sirian must win a contested roll of its Power + Finesse against the target's Composure + Gnosis, while it spends two Essence. If the Sirian succeeds, the target won't realize his mind was read.

- **Control:** A Sirian can use its third level of Influence to eradicate an intruder's memories — particularly the memories of the Atlantean site's location, the ways to bypass defenses and the presence of the Sirians. This works like the Mind 4 spell, "Breach the Vaults of Memory" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 214). The Sirian makes an opposed roll of Power + Finesse against its opponent's Composure + Gnosis to activate this

power. Sirians may spend extra Essence to extend the Duration of the selective amnesia.

Numina: Banishment (dice pool 10): A Sirian can teleport someone out of their territory. The guardian spends four Essence and rolls Power + Finesse (the victim counters with a reflexive roll of Stamina + Gnosis); if successful, the victim is teleported instantly to a location not more than 50 yards from the bounds of the temple's entrance. Sirians often use this right after erasing a Seeker's memory of the site they guard.

Ban: Sirians cannot inflict a physical injury. They can inspire others to do the Sirians' dirty work for them, and they can even inspire their opponents to injure themselves, but Sirians never personally inflict an injury on a living human being (so vampires don't count).

Uritu Yupanqui

Quote: *My sanctum is forbidden to imbibers of the yin-yang elixir. Make — my — day!*

Background: Somewhere within a vast stretch of wilderness, a series of crystals focuses sunlight from the sky above into the depths of an Atlantean temple. Far below ground, this light is channeled into the head of an ancient mummy. The mummy is sealed from the neck down in a pyramid of black stone, but the beam of light reveals every movement of its hollow eyes and desiccated lips. The dead air echoes with the mummy's words: the slogans and taglines of 1,000 products in a dozen different languages.

Local legends call the ruin's guardian "Uritu Yupanqui." Who he was originally, none can say; inscriptions on his tomb suggest he was a sage, priest or other keeper of lore. When he was buried, his tomb was enchanted so that he could bathe in sunlight forever — although he might never leave his resting place, he would not be denied the joys of the day.

Perhaps this was the way things were for thousands of years. But 20th-century science brought radio and television into the electromagnetic spectrum, and they, too, were channeled into the head of Uritu Yupanqui. The sage's magic allowed him to translate static into language, and new media pummeled his brain day and night. In the 21st century, media programming is nearly all that remains of Uritu Yupanqui's mind; the secrets of Atlantis have been driven out and replaced by news, entertainment and advertising.

Uritu doesn't consider this a tragedy. He doesn't consider much at all. He still knows his duty, though — to protect his temple from orders and cults who would use its power for ill — and interprets his duty to the best of his ability. To this end, he inflicts his curse upon adventuring mages who bear the symbols of his foes. Name-brand clothing, bottled water, national flags and similar markings all identify his enemies. Only a mage who comes owing loyalty to no one and questing for personal enlightenment can win Uritu's approval.

Description: Uritu's head is the capstone of the seven-foot-high black pyramid where the rest of his body is sealed. His face is loosely wrapped in painted leather bands whose colors have nearly faded. His skin (where it can be seen) is shriveled and

brown. A brilliant beam of yellow light descends from a crystal in the ceiling above him, illuminating the entire pyramid but focused on a pearl embedded in leather atop his skull.

Although Uritu's mind is saturated with the flotsam of modernity, his manner is that of an ancient king. He uses slang and pop culture references without truly understanding his words or the world they come from. To Uritu, religions are absolute and incompatible, loyalty to tribe (or country, or corporation) is paramount and education is the province of the aristocracy. He doesn't necessarily see the "old ways" as superior, but he also doesn't realize they no longer hold true. Given the current state of his mind, maybe he *can't* realize that things have changed.

Storytelling Hints: Uritu Yupanqui often comes across as senile; his keen mind is too inundated with radio transmissions to leave room for anything else. He has virtually no long-term memory, and struggles at times to hold a basic conversation. He still regards himself as an authority on magic and his Atlantean ruin, yet resorts to clichés when questioned.

Blocking the beam to Uritu's head might boost his capacity for complex thought, but won't help him regain his lost memories. Forcing him to understand what's happened could even be considered cruel.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Power 12, Finesse 9, Resistance 6

Willpower: 18

Essence: 25 (max 25)

Initiative: 15

Defense: 12

Speed: 22

Size: 5

Corpus: 11

Influences: Electromagnetic Radiation 2

- **Manipulate:** Uritu Yupanqui can no longer use his Influence systematically. Once he becomes aware of Seekers, however, he blocks any of their attempts to communicate by radio. Attempts to use satellite phones or walkie-talkies pick up Uritu's mad babbling instead.

Numina: Telekinesis (dice pool 21)

Branding Curse (dice pool 21). This Numen allows Uritu to place a powerful curse upon an intruder carrying brand-name items. Spend three Essence and roll Power + Finesse versus the victim's Resolve + Gnosis. A bonus or penalty to the Numen roll from one to three dice may be appropriate, depending on how prominently the victim displays brands; if a mage only wears a backpack bearing an American flag pin, the penalty might be -2, whereas a +3 bonus would be appropriate for a mage wearing numerous articles of branded clothing and a famous cologne.

A cursed person is afflicted with a magical disease. The disease can only be cured with Life magic (or at the whim of Uritu); the number of successes required is equal to the successes achieved on the cursing roll. The cursed character develops red scars and welts that eventually take the appear-

ance of corporate logos. One point of lethal damage is accrued every hour the character remains in Uritu's ruin, or every day while outside.

Force Barrier (dice pool 18). Uritu can use this Numen to erect a telekinetic barrier around himself (as he usually does to protect himself while sealed in his pyramid). Spend four Essence and roll Power + Resolve. Divide the successes as desired between the barrier's Durability and Structure. Treat the barrier as cover for the purpose of ranged attacks. To make a melee attack through the barrier, a combatant must first force her way beyond the barrier with a Strength + Athletics roll with difficulty equal to the barrier's Durability. This deals no damage to the barrier, and a combatant who wishes to leave the barricaded area must roll again to force her way out.

Ban: Uritu does not waylay mages who do not carry branded objects. In addition, Uritu may align himself with certain brands that echo his Atlantean affiliations. He might associate a particular cola with his ancient Legacy, or view a popular rock band as one with his Path. A mage who discovers these links could convince Uritu that she shares his allegiances.

The Yellow Virus and the Helian Spore

Quote: <a sound like a dying fish, thrashing on the floor>

Background: Sometimes, the guardians of Atlantean ruins are not so much obstacles as tools of vengeance. Although some of the less benevolent archmasters of the ancient world knew they would not need their treasures after death, they still did not want anyone else to have them. Their tombs hide eldritch creatures that visit a slow death on presumptuous Seekers who dare to steal from the creatures' long-dead masters.

These ancient horrors include the Yellow Virus (named for its effect on its victim, rather than for any characteristic of its own) and the Helian Spore (so-called because one text ascribed it to the tomb of Helio Arcanaphus, an early Atlantean king). The Yellow Virus and the Helian Spore differ in shape and how they kill, but are more or less identical in their purpose. They infect and kill those who would steal from their homes. Both have two forms, a native form and the form of an infection in the body and mind of their victim. A tomb guarded by these creatures holds several of them, at least enough to attack and infect every villain who would dare to rob their home.

In a fraction of a second, the Yellow Virus wraps itself around its victim's neck and forces itself down the victim's throat. The creature dissolves into the victim's system. As time goes on, the tomb-robber's breathing becomes labored, and he feels constant pain. He develops the symptoms of severe jaundice. Gradually, he wastes away, becoming skinnier and skinnier, no matter how much he eats. He also finds himself unable to talk about his malady.

Eventually, the Virus re-forms itself, and bursts out of its victim's body, killing him.

The Spore works differently, in that it destroys its victim from the outside in. The Helian Spore ejects a small cloud of spores across its victim's skin and then collapses and appears to die. The spores cause an itchy rash. By the following morning, greenish

mold appears on the victim's skin. A day later, the mold covers one side of the victim's body, and deep, round, green bloodless rents have opened in his flesh. At first, there is no pain. A few nights later, however, the victim wakes up to hear a voice saying he shall die for his crime. The rents have become toothless, sucking mouths. Then the pain begins. The mouths open wider, spread, join together and cover his body. His flesh eats itself away, and in another week there is nothing left of him but blackened bone that crumbles when touched. In his ribcage, a new spore grows.

Description: The Helian Spore looks like a slightly flattened, beach ball-sized seed pod. Along its seven ridges are small holes, which eject spores when someone touches the pod in any way. Although the seed pod appears immobile, it moves without being seen — one minute it's over *here* and a second later, it's over *there* — meaning that a tomb-robber cannot avoid brushing past it and releasing its spores.

The Yellow Virus, on the other hand, appears as a narrow, leathery, tapeworm-like creature. It's pale brown and about two feet long. The Yellow Virus slithers and thrashes at a terrifying speed, and can wrap itself around its victim's neck and force itself down her throat before she can do anything.

Although both creatures infect their victims, neither can be said to ride or Claim anyone as such: rather, they infect. Both the Virus and the Spore tell the victim exactly why he's infected, but nothing more.

Storytelling Hints: The Yellow Virus and the Helian Spore are both entirely alien. They're more like semi-sentient diseases than separate creatures in their own right. Their victims don't know why they're hiding their symptoms; they only know why they're suffering (that is, they're thieves — the infections don't say what they've stolen or from where, only that their hands are sullied by stolen goods, and that they will die for this).

The Spore and the Virus pursue the inheritors of a stolen object after the original thief has died. Finding out where exactly

an apparently cursed object came from, or even which object is the cause of the supernatural disease, may be the cause of a story in its own right.

An infected mage who desperately seeks the source of an Atlantean object may also have a hard time convincing his friends to help him, since unless he's very strong-willed, he probably cannot say what's wrong with him, why he searches for a tomb and why he's so ambivalent toward the ancient relic that he carries at all times — an object he openly loathes, but that at the same time he guards with his life.

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 8, Finesse 8, Resistance 6

Willpower: 12

Essence: 20 (max 20)

Initiative: 14

Defense: 8

Speed: 22 (species factor 6) — this goes for the Helian Spore as well as the Yellow Virus, although the Spore can only move when no one is looking, having no visible means of propulsion.

Size: 2

Corpus: 8

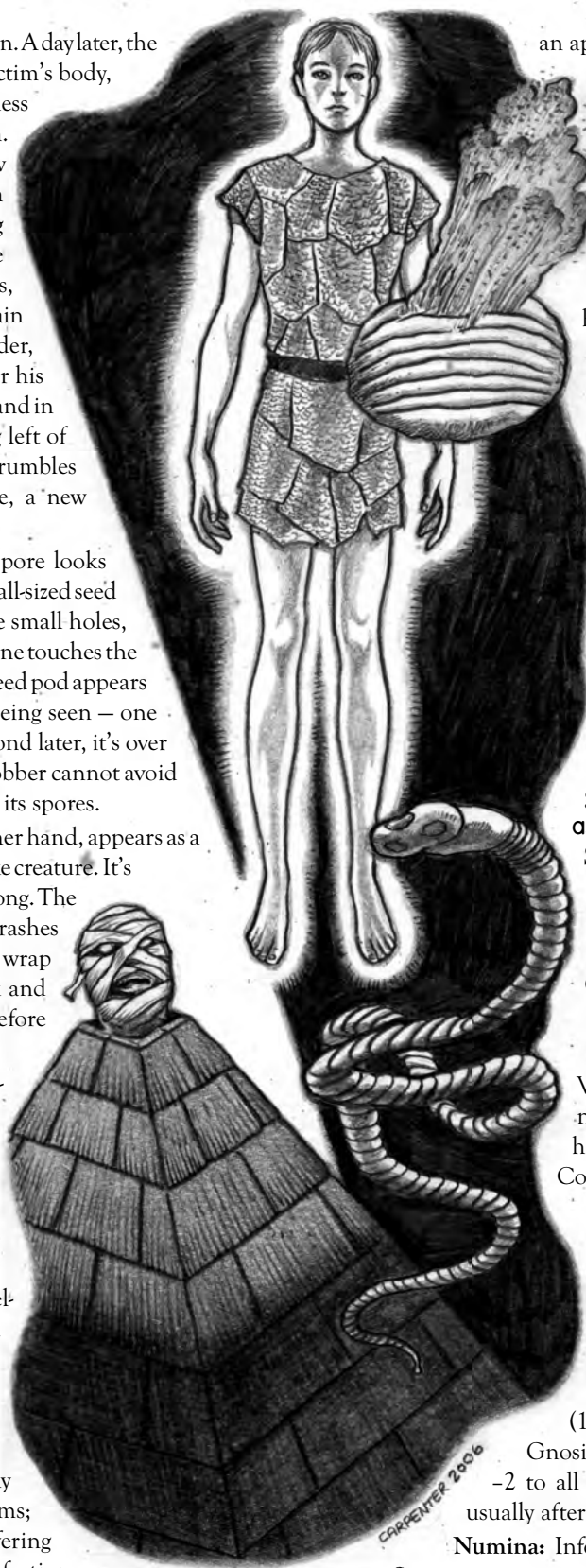
Influences: Agony 4

Unlike many spirits, the Spore and Virus use their Influence for only one, narrow purpose: to inflict pain. They have no Strengthen, Manipulate or Control effects.

• **Create:** The infection itself is painless, but the Virus and the Spore can inflict pain on the victim whenever they want, and usually at times when they communicate. The creature spends four Essence and attempts a contested roll of Power + Finesse (16 dice) against the victim's Stamina +

Gnosis. If the entity wins, the victim suffers -2 to all dice pools until the pain wears off, usually after a scene.

Numina: Infect (dice pool 16): The Virus or the Spore can enter its victim as if infecting him with a revolting degenerative disease. In order to initiate the infection, the creature has to spend one Essence and make one successful attack (Power + Finesse - target's Defense). The attack inflicts no damage, and the creature appears to die (in the case of the Spore) or dissolve inside the victim's body (in the case



of the Virus). After three days, the Spore and the Virus can cause damage to their victim in the manner of a disease, by spending three Essence and making a contested roll of Power + Finesse against the victim's Stamina + Resolve + Gnosis. Each success inflicts one Resistant, lethal wound to the victim. This damage upgrades as usual and heals at the normal rate (one point of lethal damage every two days). The infection can make the roll once every seven days, so the disease can appear to be in remission for a few days, before a new attack happens. The supernatural nature of this infection means that ordinary medicine is useless against it. The infection becomes impossible to hide when the victim has less than three Health levels that are not filled with aggravated damage. Removing the Spore or Virus would require both Life and Spirit magic — and some idea what you were dealing with.

Psychic Concealment (dice pool 16): Although the infection doesn't hinder the victim's free will in other ways, the Virus or Spore does stop the victim from talking about his infection. The creature spends two Essence and attempts a contested roll of Power + Finesse against the victim's Resolve + Gnosis. Success means the victim cannot tell anyone about what happened to her or what she's going through, even when the disease cannot be hidden. The victim can try at any time to tell someone about the disease, but can do so only if she succeeds in a contested roll of Resolve + Gnosis against the creature's Power + Finesse, and must make this roll every time she tries to tell someone, even if she previously succeeded.

Ban: The Yellow Virus and the Helian Spore may only infect individuals who have taken hold of one of the treasures the spirits guard, with the intention of taking the treasure away. Likewise, both must abandon the infection and leave their victim behind if the item they guard is returned to its rightful place.

Atlantean Artifacts

The Atlanteans crafted many wonders of magic. Modern mages duplicate them only with great difficulty, if at all. These sample treasures are all written up as Artifacts. A few of them could be duplicated as Imbued Items, but even this might challenge a cabal's skills and resources.

Altar of Hallows (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 5, Size 8, Structure 13

Mana Capacity: 14

Seekers have found these massive Altars in Atlantean temples the mages believe were constructed before the Sundering. The Altars weigh tons, making them difficult to move. They are crafted of pure white marble shot through with tracings of orichalcum in perfect arcane geometry. The Altar's top is set with a small orichalcum bowl, while the front is inlaid with a pentagram sigil marked with unknown signs. Each arm of the pentagram holds a socket for a soul stone. The Mysterium has not seen the five symbols in any other context. Some archaeomancers believe the symbols represent the Paths — but not every Seeker believes the Paths existed as such before the Sundering and the appearance of the Watchtowers.

As the name suggests, an Altar of the Hallows functions only when linked to one of these upwellings of mystic power. The Altar is always secluded within the inmost adytum of an Atlantean temple, locked away from the uninitiated and protected by wards, traps and gatekeepers.

Plato noted that Atlantean religion did not involve blood sacrifice — the enlightened nation only offered fruits and flowers. Mysterium scholars speculate that this Altar could account for Plato's myth, for the Altar of Hallows dissolves all items of Size 2 or smaller into pure Mana. This effect duplicates the Prime 4 "Siphon Integrity" spell. The Mana is stored within the Altar itself.

Moreover, the Altar may be used to tap the Hallow upon which the Altar sits, in an effect similar to the Prime 3 "Channel Mana" spell. All such Mana harvested is not gained by the mage, however — it likewise is stored within the Altar. To use the stored Mana, one must fill the bowl with pure water, then dip out the water and pour it over a person's head. This acts similar to the Prime 3 "Imbue Mana" spell, save that the Mana comes from the Altar's store instead of the mage who performs the baptismal rite. Each baptism from the Altar of Hallows transfers one point of Mana.

The Altar of Hallows incidentally disguises the Hallow on which the Altar sits, as the Prime 3 "Disguise Resonance" spell. The disguise has a Potency of 5.

BijDava (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 3, Size 4, Structure 7

Mana Capacity: 11

This peculiar device looks like an elongated and ornately decorated metal seed pod on a swirling golden tripod. The ungainly but strangely beautiful BijDava ("medicine seed") was once used as a medicinal aid. When a mage activates the device and points the opening of the "pod" at an injury, the BijDava sends out a warbling, multi-tonal hum that heals the wound. This effect duplicates the Life 3 spell "Healing Heart," as if cast by someone with Life 5, thus healing bashing, lethal and aggravated wounds.

The device has to be about three feet away from the patient, and has to be directed by the mage who has activated the device for as long as the patient's wound takes to heal.

One point of Mana from the BijDava's reserve heals three bashing or one lethal wound. Healing one aggravated wound costs two Mana. If the patient suffered different kinds of Wound levels — for example, he's suffered two aggravated wounds, one lethal wound and four bashing wounds — the device heals the Health levels on the right first, and expends Mana separately for each wound. In this example, the BijDava would expend seven points of Mana (one for the first three bashing wounds, one for the remaining bashing wound, one for the lethal wound and two each for the two aggravated wounds). Each Wound level takes one turn to heal, no matter how serious the wound is. The BijDava doesn't heal Resistant Damage. During the High Atlantean Age, mages apparently never suffered from this kind of damage; the makers of the BijDava had no conception that such a thing could exist.

Crystalline Skull (Artifact ●●●●●)

Durability 4, Size 2, Structure 6

Mana Capacity: 11

Not every Atlantean Artifact has an immediately apparent function. For instance, take this accurate and life-size facsimile of a human skull, beautifully sculpted in solid rock crystal. It weighs 12 pounds. Over the last century, Seekers have found several Artifacts showing similar workmanship, and equally enigmatic purpose. In addition to skulls, these crystal Artifacts have been shaped like demons, predatory animals or other intimidating shapes. Sleepers have also found crystal skulls in Maya territory, but Time magic easily reveals the merely mortal provenance of these objects.

When activated, the Skull glows with a gentle, pale light, as if lit from inside. (an effect that could be duplicated using the Forces 3 spell "Light Mastery"). The light is almost, but not quite, equal to the light shed by a small desk lamp – enough to read by if you're sitting next to it, and enough to be visible, but not enough to illuminate a large area. The light shines brightest from the eye sockets. The Skull keeps on shedding light until the Skull is deactivated; it spends one point of Mana for each full day of light the Skull generates.

The Skull is certainly a beautifully made sculpture, and its light does have an eerie quality, but what was it for? Some archaeomancers speculate the Crystalline Skull was a ritual object. Others think the Skull was part of something else – a

larger Artifact, long since lost or destroyed, or a key to some unknown Atlantean site. Now, however, the Skull has little practical use. The light it sheds is barely enough to make it useful as anything other than a paperweight-cum-desk lamp.

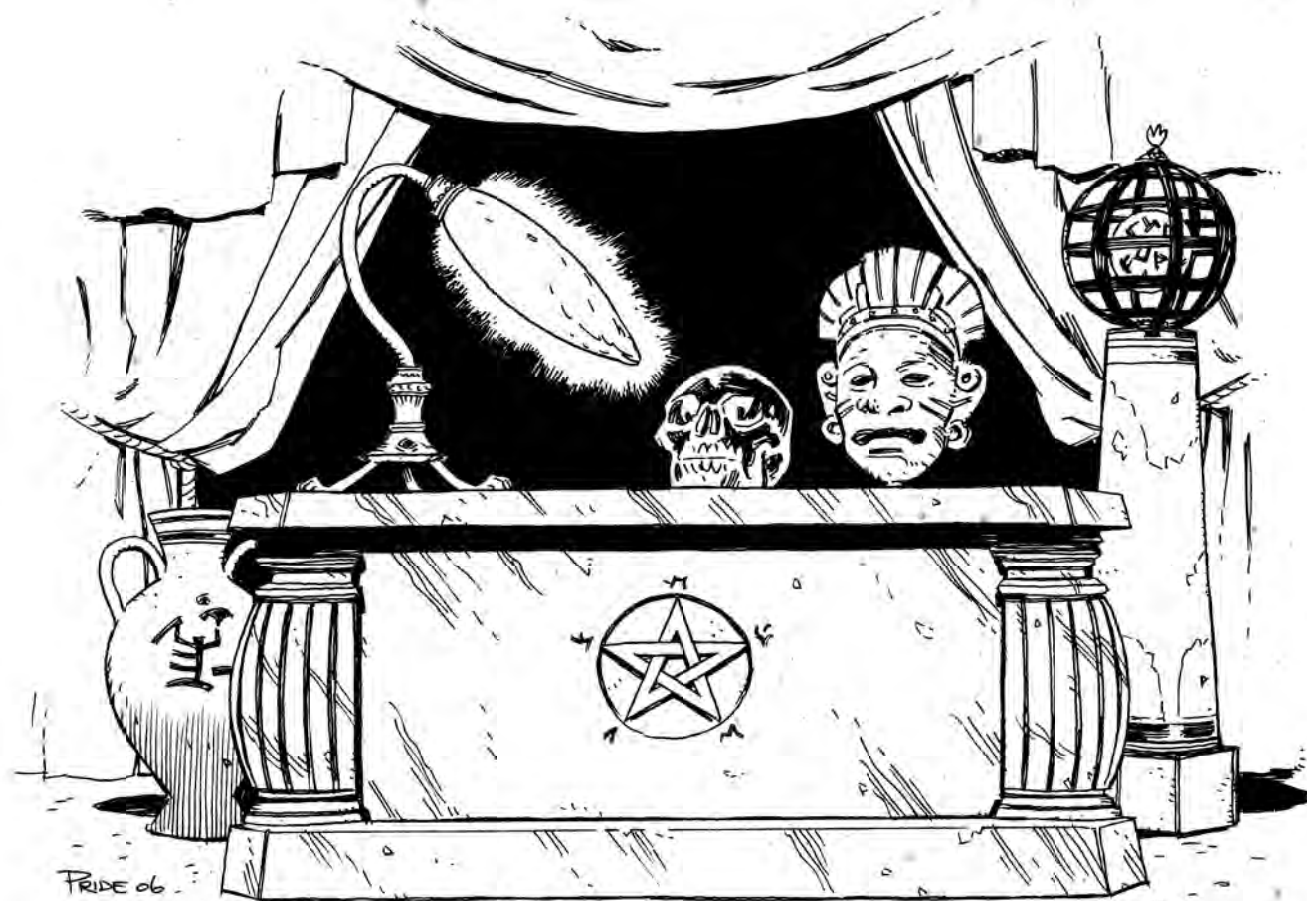
As a result, the Crystalline Skull is at once priceless and worthless (except to a collector of peculiar *objets-d'art*). Even when an Atlantean relic proves itself less than a revelation, owning one still carries great prestige – and what if some cleverer (or luckier) mage discovers the Crystal Skull's true purpose? A cabal that owns the Crystalline Skull may find the cabal's mages beset by other mages eager to possess the Skull. A few waggish mages observe that Artifacts such as the Crystalline Skull are most useful as bargaining chips to buy favors from other mages – who don't know that their new Artifact, while undoubtedly Atlantean, doesn't actually do anything.

Dionysian Key (Artifact ●●●●●)

Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 5

Most information about the mystical wine called Syrah Atlantide comes from the *Oinomanteia* of Carolus Strobilius (or Karl Strobl), a 16th-century Austrian mystagogue. *Oinomanteia* also recounts many other legends and mystical uses of wine. One of the more unusual tales describes the vintage Strobilius dubbed the Dionysian Key.

In brief, the Key is an amphora of Atlantean wine. The stonework jug holds four gallons of potent, spiced wine. Anyone who drinks the wine quickly becomes stupefied and



dreams of walking through an Atlantean temple. This is no mere vision, though: the person really *has* sleepwalked into a shrine built within a bubble of extra-dimensional space. In Strobilius' account, a group of unwitting Sleepers found the amphora and got drunk. They vanished; one returned, because he sleepwalked out of the extra-dimensional temple again. When he regained consciousness, though, the amphora was gone. Strobilius says he collected the story directly from this lone survivor.

Strobilius' sorcerous inquiries led him to believe the Atlantean vintage was the key to a portal. The Dionysian Keys acts similar to the Space 2 spell "Follow Through" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 234); the Earthly terminus of the portal is linked to the amphora. Even a Sleeper can use the Dionysian Key without risk of a Paradox or unraveling from Disbelief, because the Sleeper will be too drunk to count as a conscious witness. Strobilius suspects the Atlanteans may have created other Dionysian Keys to extra-dimensional sites, so he advises Seekers to look for wine-jars when they search Atlantean ruins.

Oinomanteia omits a few details about the Dionysian Key. The relatively small amphora holds up to four gallons of wine, or 16 uses of the Key, since a person must drink at least a quart of the wine to sleepwalk into the temple. Six quarts are already used. Any liquid tass placed in the amphora becomes more wine, so the amphora can be used indefinitely. On the other hand, the wine loses its power within minutes of leaving the amphora, though, so the Key's owner cannot multiply the mystic vintage indefinitely. The amphora also loses its enchantment if it's ever empty of the sorcerous wine, and becomes an ordinary (10,000-year-old) wine-jar. Even though the wine is made from tass, the Key does not possess a reserve of free Mana for its owner to call upon.

Strobilius incidentally claims (without giving his reasons) that Dionysian Key vintages can spontaneously appear if wine is made from tass grapes grown on the Hallow that powers an Atlantean site. The connection from the Hallow to the site passes into the grapes, and from thence to the wine. An imbibor may sleepwalk into an extra-dimensional portion of the site, just as with the Atlantean vintage, or the magical wine may provide some other way to bypass wards or guardians. For instance, the wine might impress the words needed to bypass a guardian onto the imbibor's befuddled brain. In this case, the vineyard itself is the Artifact, though casks or bottles of the wine seldom become Dionysian Keys, and the vintage cannot be regenerated as with the Atlantean amphora.

Mask of Aztlan (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4

Mana Capacity: 12

In the early 1930s, a Mysterium archaeomancer discovered this Mask in one of the pyramids of Chichén Itzá. She discovered the Mask in an extra-dimensional chamber that hid a variety of Atlantean relics, as well as a grimoire of Awakened magic written on gold plates in Atlantean and Nahuatl. The heavy, thickly-carved golden mask depicts a face surrounded by a fringe of feathers. The archaeomancer named the Mask

for the legendary ancestral homeland of the Aztecs that some Awakened believe is a memory of Atlantis.

The Mask grants its bearer the ability to interact with the spirit world and spirits in Twilight, as though she were under the effects of the Spirit 3 "Reaching" and the Spirit 2 "Peer Across the Gauntlet" spells (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 250 and 247). Both of these effects are contingent effects, activated by donning the mask.

Mestorian Bracers (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 5, Size 1, Structure 6

Mana Capacity: 12

Mestorian Bracers, named for one of the legendary Ten Kings of Atlantis, are actually six rods of orichalcum and copper. These rods are pointed quite sharply at the end, and with good reason — to don the Bracers, the six rods must be inserted just beneath the skin of the forearm and worked down its length until the point emerges at the other end of the arm, near the wrists. The bloody, painful process deals one level of lethal damage, but the wearer can heal this normally with time or magic. Amber plugs connected to one another by lengths of fine copper chains then cap both ends of the rods.

Once donned, the Bracers become potent weapons for controlling and drawing upon the powers of lightning and electricity. The wearer can generate a blast of lightning, similar to the Forces 4 "Thunderbolt" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 173). This contingent effect is activated by touching the Bracer on one arm to the other, then pointing. Each blast consumes one Mana, with an attack dice pool of 12. Each success inflicts one Health wound of lethal damage (not aggravated, despite the Mana expended).

More subtly, however, the wearer of the Bracers can use the Forces 3 "Control Electricity" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 168), allowing him to redirect electricity already extant in the area by hand gestures as a contingent effect. This does not cost Mana. Again, the dice pool is 12.

Vimana Engine (Artifact ●●●●●●●●)

Durability 5, Size 3, Structure 6

Mana Capacity: 14

If some mystics and visionaries are correct, the flying chariots of the Mahabharata, the so-called Vimanas, are a mythic memory of the conveyance of choice for the mage-kings of Atlantis. The Agra Revelations include a brief reference to "the kings' bright Vimanas." Someone, at least, built powerful, magical flying machines long ago. The long-dormant wreckage of what, for want of a better word, might be a Vimana lies in the tomb of one Atlantean general. The machine looks like a chariot with wings instead of wheels, elongated and heavily decorated with sigils and scrollwork in metal alloys that don't exist any more. Unfortunately, a cave-in buried and crushed one side of the machine. It'll never fly again.

But its engine remains intact. A conical pillar of silver metal supports a spherical cage in which a small, rune-engraved ball of orichalcum floats, suspended in air. The pillar holds spiral

tubes filled with hermtum, or alchemically-perfected mercury. The whole assemblage weighs 50 pounds. All a mage has to do is remove the engine and attach it by magic to some other conveyance: a boat, maybe, or an automobile. (A version of the Matter 3 spell "Repair Object" would be quite adequate). Attaching the Vimana Engine to a vehicle turns it into a new Vimana. An enterprising mage might, for example, insert the Engine in the place of an automobile's steering column — the Engine is about the same size and shape, after all. (Other mages may crack jokes about "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," though.) Or the mage could place the Engine in the stern of a speedboat, where a normal engine and propellor would go. The Engine will not work if placed on any vehicle more than 30 feet long (a small yacht), or weighing more than 20 tons (a light tank).

A mage must touch the engine to activate a Vimana. He becomes its pilot. A nimbus of light engulfs him, and then the vehicle. His perceptions extend to the vehicle. He becomes one with the newly made Vimana. The sensation of being part of the machine is euphoric, blissful, but has its cost; the pilot gains the power of the Vimana, but he also becomes another component of the Engine, and a potential source of fuel.

The Vimana can fly (per the Forces 5 spell "Flight") and can travel at quite terrifying speeds (as per the Forces 5 spell "Velocity Mastery," with up to five automatic successes, multiplying the flight speed up to 32 times.) Shooting projectiles from a Vimana is impossible, since the same "Velocity Mastery" effect magic that protects the passengers of the sky chariot from acceleration g-forces also stops things escaping from within the Engine's magical field. Bullets (or shells, in the unlikely event that anyone would be deranged enough to turn a tank into a Vimana) simply hang at the edges of the Engine's magical field, then drop to earth when the device lands and the field lapses, all kinetic energy spent. This effect does not inhibit magical attacks.

The Vimana uses a lot of energy. The Mana cost doesn't depend on the mass of the vehicle; instead, the Engine consumes Mana based on the number of higher life forces present in its field: one Mana per turn per person or animal riding in the machine. For instance, a Vimana containing three mages and a dog spends four Mana every turn. On the other hand, a Vimana containing three mages, a dog and a vampire still only spends four Mana per turn, since a vampire isn't a living thing.

In the Atlantean age, the Vimanas were handled by vastly powerful mages, with huge resources of Mana. A modern mage just isn't that powerful. A drain of energy that an Atlantean archmaster would find a minor inconvenience can leave one of the modern Awakened a charred, lifeless husk in a matter of minutes. When the Vimana exhausts its own energy reserve, the Engine draws Mana directly from the pilot. If it takes more Mana per turn than the mage has the Gnosis to spend, the Vi-

mana draws energy directly from the mage's life force, inflicting one point of lethal damage for every point of Mana the Engine must rip from the mage's Pattern. If the mage didn't have any Mana to begin with, the Vimana draws *all* the energy as points of lethal damage. The pilot doesn't feel any pain from this while he's controlling the Vimana, and must succeed at a roll of Wits + Stamina to notice and break his deadly connection with the Engine. If all the pilot's Health levels are filled with lethal damage, he still has to roll Stamina to remain conscious every turn (per the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 173.) If he falls unconscious, he breaks the connection and the field fails.

Other people near the pilot can see his skin blackening and shriveling, and can try to tell the pilot what's going on; the pilot still has to roll Wits + Stamina to disengage. It takes two turns to bring a fast-moving Vimana to a safe, slow landing. It might take more if the Vimana flies above terrain where it's unwise to land (for example, a glowing 1968 Chevy Malibu flying above open sea is going to sink if the pilot turns off the mystical engine). A Vimana with a dead, unconscious or disengaged pilot simply drops out of the sky. If there's another mage in the machine, though, she can try to reactivate the Engine and bring the machine down.

Disbelief can unravel the magic of a Vimana. A Sleeper who sees the glowing, flying Vimana in action rolls Resolve + Composure (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 274). If the cumulative successes from the Sleeper's rolls exceeds nine (using the Artifact's dot rating as the Potency of its magic), the Vimana stops working. Even before then, however, the Vimana has to spend an extra Mana each round after a Sleeper rolled successes, on top of the Mana already spent to operate the device, to counteract the effect of Disbelief and keep flying. A mage can probably flee a single Sleeper witness; a crowd will deactivate the magical vehicle in short order. For what it's worth, UFO enthusiasts may count as Sleepwalkers in this case, at the Storyteller's option.

Atlantean Mechanisms

The Vimana is an example of Atlantean magical technology. Atlantis — or at least, one version of Atlantis — built devices that superficially resemble machines. Certainly, the Atlanteans knew the principles of clockwork and basic hydraulics.

Beyond that, however, nothing works by real, scientific principles. The devices are *ideas* of machines, operating by magic. Mechanisms are engraved with glyphs and arcane diagrams.

Crystals draw power from ley lines instead of batteries or generators; they are usually built of perfected metals. And, of course, they do magical things such as making vehicles fly.



3. *WILLIAM*

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LIVING TEMPLE – ASTRAL MYSTERIES

Serena had lost the ability to distinguish her voice from the echo of her voice. Nor could she feel the joints in her fingers as she worked her hands into mystic signs; her limbs seemed like spectral afterimages, dragged in the wake of physical reality.

She wondered if that meant she was performing the ritual correctly, then cursed herself for thinking. Dragged out of meditation by her own curiosity, she opened her eyes and looked about.

She sat within an outdoor temple floating in the depths of a green sky. The temple reminded her of the Parthenon (and of her third-grade teacher, Elsa Higgins, who taught history from a textbook with the Parthenon on the cover) except that nothing supported the roof. This made sense to Serena — the stars above were probably suspending the roof with chains.

Wait, she thought. That doesn't seem completely right.

Before she could consider the matter further, Serena heard a hiss behind her. She pushed herself up, stumbling for an instant before turning around. The drawstring of her running pants whipped her thigh.

A few yards away, a serpent as tall as she spiraled through the air. It kept turning its head to keep one yellow eye focused on her. "Welcome to reality," the serpent said.

"Dream," Serena corrected, and wished she had worn something more ceremonial.

"Oh?" the serpent said. "Your world runs on muddled ideas and random chance. My world is pure and eternal. Which seems more likely to be a dream?"

"Yours," Serena said. Even in dreams — especially in dreams — she knew better than to trust a snake.

But when something slips out of our consciousness it does not cease to exist, any more than a car that has disappeared round a corner has vanished into thin air. It is simply out of sight.

— Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols*

Mythic Atlantis was founded on dreams. Dreams drew men and women to the island; dreams offered Astral paths to the Supernal Realm and dreams rekindled the flame of magic after the Abyss sundered the cosmos.

But just as dreams shaped the Atlantean world, the Atlantean world shaped dreams. The Temenos—the unconscious Realm of the human soul—was marked in a thousand ways by the deeds of mages, spirits and stranger beings. Masters used now-lost spells to build temples and citadels within the Temenos itself, storing wisdom or nightmares as libraries store books. Monsters and gods that once terrorized Sleepers were literally banished to the recesses of human memory. Conceptual archetypes and universal truths found in Astral Space are said by some modern mages to be echoes of *real* people and sciences from the Atlantean Age.

Most scholars of Atlantis hunt for concrete evidence—artifacts and sanctums and spells. Such things are not found in the Temenos. There are no facts in the world of dreams, where everything is fluid and subjective. Nevertheless, Astral Space holds treasures of its own, secrets that have timeless value and defy changing theories of history. And just as in the physical world, these secrets have their guardians.

Atlantean Realms

In many ways, the Atlantean Realms within Astral Space resemble earthly ruins. The Realms are hidden in remote places, mysterious in nature and saturated with magical power. Despite these broad similarities, however, experience in Earthly ruins is no preparation for a journey into the Temenos.

The most obvious difference between material and Astral ruins is the absence of decay in the dream world. Most Astral sites appear as vibrant and pristine as the day they were built; some are even populated by semblances of their original inhabitants. But these are not pocket enclaves of the true Atlantean world. The dream world changes with the hearts of its dreamers, and what looks like a piece of history is merely what humanity wants or fears to remember.

This results in a more profound difference between Earthly and Astral sites: Astral “ruins” are subjective. Historical knowledge gleaned from the Temenos is only as accurate as the memories (conscious and unconscious) of humanity. Even correct information may be mixed with symbolism or colored by emotion. Astral denizens are still less reliable sources: as irrational and biased as real people can be, people made of dream-stuff are far worse at speaking objectively.

So why take an Astral journey? The truths found in Astral sites come in the form of ideas and archetypes. An Atlantean shrine built within the Temenos won’t say much about Atlantean architecture or history, but might offer insight into how the Atlanteans perceived themselves in relation to their objects of veneration. A student of Atlantean High Speech might ex-

perience an epiphany in an Astral library where words, magic and thought intermingle. Sometimes, mages catch glimpses of forgotten beliefs or times, grasping the last dreams of a culture utterly annihilated in the waking world. Deciphering the symbols in an Astral site can be a frustrating process (and mystagogues have written volumes on different theories of interpretation), but it can be rewarding nonetheless.

Excavating Dreams

Astral Space cannot be mapped any more than a soul can be dissected. A mage who explores the Temenos at random every night is unlikely to ever stumble upon Atlantean secrets. Given the difficulty of finding anything in the world of dreams, it’s no wonder that few mages try.

Mages *do* discover new Astral places, however. When it comes to an Atlantean-influenced site, the trail usually comes in one of three forms.

Called in Dreams

The simplest (and least predictable) way for a mage to learn of an Astral site is through sudden inspiration. Figments from an Astral site may appear in a mage’s own dreams or nightmares, pressing out from the Temenos and into the mage’s personal Oneiros. Alternatively, a mage may experience brief hallucinations similar to a mystery play, themed around the Astral site in question.

How and why this happens is a subject of substantial debate; determining who will be led into Astral Space is like determining who will Awaken. Some mages believe that Astral inspiration is evidence of reincarnated souls recalling the dreams and memories of their previous lives, whereas other mages suspect that a willworker’s interests and obsessions—the resonance of his mind and soul—create “gravity” in the Temenos that pulls toward sympathetic Realms. Individuals with strong ties to the Astral world (e.g., characters with the Dream Merit) are the most likely to experience sudden inspiration, but have no more control over the phenomenon than anyone else. Even Sleepers may experience such dream-calls, so some archaeomancers pay serious attention to Sleeper occultists and fringe archaeologists who claim they receive knowledge of Atlantis through “psychic intuition” or similarly dubious means.

Guides, Native and Otherwise

Mages who actively seek Astral Realms often turn to guides for help. The best-known guides through Astral Space—daimons, inner demons and other Goetic creations—can be ill-informed about sites of ancient origin, since they are typically drawn from the modern human mind. Therefore, Seekers find assistance elsewhere.

Chimerical beasts (see p. 119) often take shelter in ancient Astral sites and eagerly help dreamers. The beasts’ price (when

they don't betray a mage altogether) commonly involves assistance in reaching or influencing the physical world.

Acamoth use a mage's Oneiros as a pathway to the Abyss, and often know about dreadful Astral Realms that were spawned by the destruction of the Celestial Ladder and humanity's suffering after the Fall. A mage who hasn't established a pact with an acamoth might be able to force the spirit's aid, but acamoth are reluctant to take anyone to their places of refuge and power.

Lastly, certain ghosts — whether those of ancient Goetic sorcerers or of Astral denizens who never truly lived — can describe specific Astral sites.

Hit the Books

Records of Astral Realms also exist in the physical world. Some Atlantean writings mention sites of importance in the Temenos, and many ruins contain chambers used for the practice of *hesychia*, the Atlantean system of meditation for Astral voyaging. Seekers who discover clues pointing to Astral Realms sometimes pass over the clues in favor of leads that are more tangible, or misinterpret them as referring to locations in the waking world. The Silver Ladder tells a fable about a mage who sought an Atlantean artifact for decades, only to discover that he seized it nightly in his dreams.

Breaching Barriers

Knowing that an Astral site exists is different from knowing how to get there. Although some guides can take a mage directly to her destination after she enters the Temenos, reaching a site can also be an endeavor in itself.

Those mages who lack any clear path must resign themselves to taking the long road. After reaching Astral Space, they proceed from Realm to Realm, seeking directions from the inhabitants of the dream world and signs from the dream world itself. Such an odyssey is never guaranteed to end in success; even if all goes well and the travelers overcome the dangers they face, they must still ensure that their physical bodies remain healthy. Reaching an Astral Realm without guidance can take days or weeks — a long time to leave one's sleeping body unguarded.

Some Astral sites can be reached via specific sympathetic rituals. Such a ritual must resonate with the nature of an Astral site and be performed in a location important to the site's dreamers. For Atlantean sites, this often means finding an Atlantean ruin and attempting an appropriate feat: climbing the thousand steps to the top of a temple without pausing, ingesting a mixture of local tansy and herbs, leaping from a great height to knock one's self unconscious and so on. The usual meditation to cross into Astral Space must still be undertaken after the ritual, but the mage (if successful) arrives in the Astral Realm desired. Sympathetic rituals are always discovered, never invented; they're a byproduct of the connection between the waking world and dreaming, not a doorway crafted by Atlanteans.

Instead, Atlanteans practiced special meditative techniques to enter and navigate Astral Space. Modern mages usually refer

to the form as *hesychia* (from the Greek word for stillness), though mages from non-Western cultures use terms derived from their own esoteric traditions. Atlantean *hesychia* strips away awareness, conscious thought, language and passion so that the practitioner's perceptions shift to the pure Realm of the soul. Specific Atlantean Demesnes and Hallows allowed access to specific Astral Realms when *hesychia* was practiced therein. Additional rituals were codified to send meditating sorcerers to other known Astral locales. As with all Atlantean lore, only pieces of hesychian practice survive — but these suffice to usher determined mages into Astral Space.

New Merit: Atlantean Hesychia (•)

Prerequisite: Awakened, High Speech

Effect: Your character has acquired an in-depth understanding of Atlantean *hesychia*. While any mage can learn and perform basic meditative rituals, master hesychians can travel to Astral Space with greater ease.

Each Composure + Wits roll made as part of the extended meditation action to enter Astral Space takes only 15 minutes for your character, instead of the usual 30 minutes. In addition, your character can try to enter Astral Space from Hallows rated less than 5; for each dot below 5 the Hallow is rated, add four successes to the meditation roll's target number.

A character with this Merit still cannot enter Astral Space outside a Demesne or Hallow.

Hesychia has its drawbacks, as well. Finding an Atlantean sanctum is no easy task; neither is locating, translating and interpreting instructions for entering a particular Astral Realm. There is also the risk that such instructions may be outdated: Astral Realms can change dramatically over millennia as human memory and perception shift, and modern hesychians can find their Astral bodies arriving in unexpected places.

Still, *hesychia* may be the most reliable way for an astrally journeying mage to reach her destination. Any mage attempting Atlantean *hesychia* must have the High Speech Merit, but the Atlantean Hesychia Merit is only necessary for advanced practices. During the day preceding the mage's Astral voyage, the mage must control her passions — she must not regain Will-power by indulging her Vice or Virtue. Conservative hesychians moderate their intake of food and drink during this time, and avoid speaking unnecessarily. Once fully prepared, the mage visits a Hallow or Demesne. If the location is of Atlantean origin, the site may lead directly to a known Astral Realm; otherwise, the mage must have learned the proper meditative ritual from an ancient source to travel to her intended destination. Either way, the normal extended meditation roll to enter Astral Space must be performed, but the target number is reduced by half (eight successes to reach the Temenos).

Dream Projectors

The Atlanteans possessed a complete science of dreaming, from hesychian meditation to rites that reshaped Astral Space. But some modern mages say there was another aspect to Atlantean dreaming science. Archaeomancers claim to have unearthed clues about ancient, magical machines:

devices that pulled dreams into the material world and converted matter into dream-stuff.

These "dream projectors" filled whole rooms with crystal lenses and beams of Forces-born light. Supposedly, the Atlanteans used these projectors to enter Astral Space without leaving their bodies behind or to superimpose Astral Realms onto physical reality. These feats might not be possible for modern magic, but the Atlanteans performed many "impossible" feats. Are dream projectors so hard to accept?

There is another possibility: the machines might be real, while also performing a far different function than modern mages expect. Will-workers have misunderstood Atlantean artifacts in the past — and devious souls have forged Atlantean documents for sinister purposes.

Astral Locations

Most Atlantean mages lacked the power to create new Astral Realms. Permanently altering the Temenos and marking the collective human soul was left to the mightiest of sorcerers. Instead, Atlanteans reshaped the existing Astral landscape to suit their needs. The Adamantine Arrow erected fortresses to guard against nightmares, the Mysterium founded colleges of the profound and abstract, the Guardians of the Veil recorded the dreams of their adversaries and the Silver Ladder built shrines to ideals of law and governance.

But just as often, the trail the Atlanteans left in the Temenos was unintentional. Their dreams rippled through the ocean of the unconscious mind in the same manner that humanity's dreams do today. For the most part, the dreams of the Atlantean Age were little different from those of any other era — but the Atlanteans dreamed bigger, and some say they dreamed first. Did the peoples of the Atlantean era have myths of a Golden Age, as so many cultures do now? Or was Atlantis the first Golden Age, embedded in human consciousness and permanently established in dreams?

As Atlantis faded from human memory, many of the Awakened City's Astral outposts faded as well. Those that endure do so because humanity cannot forget them entirely, or because Atlantean magic refuses to let them die. Many Realms whose natures aren't tied to one era have transformed to reflect the modern age, forsaking crenelated towers for skyscrapers and libraries of scrolls for computer networks. Other Realms are

intimately linked to a past humanity cannot remember; in these, an idealized version of history fills the gaps.

The following categories of Atlantean sites do not cover the full range of possibilities (which is as broad in scope as the human soul), but represent the most common examples mages encounter.

Lighthouses

The least of the Atlanteans' Astral creations were lighthouses, landmarks erected within Dream Realms and at crossroads between Realms, designed to guide hesychians out of the physical world and to their destinations. These landmarks take the form of signposts, groves and literal lighthouses, blending into their surroundings.

A lighthouse often carries clues about the nature of the local Astral landscape and warnings about known dangers. Depending on the lighthouse's creator and environment, a lighthouse could be carved with obscure pictograms, spotted with colors designating Astral hazards or constructed to resemble a map when viewed from above. A few lighthouses — diving bells, elevators and carriages — even double as modes of transportation, ushering a user to any of a set of predefined Realms.

The same traits that make a lighthouse useful — its longevity and its call to travelers — make some lighthouses hazardous. An Astral Realm that has changed over the centuries may contain a lighthouse with out-of-date information — data potentially useful to historians, but misleading to anyone else. In some Astral Realms, particularly clever and vicious beings lie in wait near lighthouses, watching for new arrivals to prey upon.

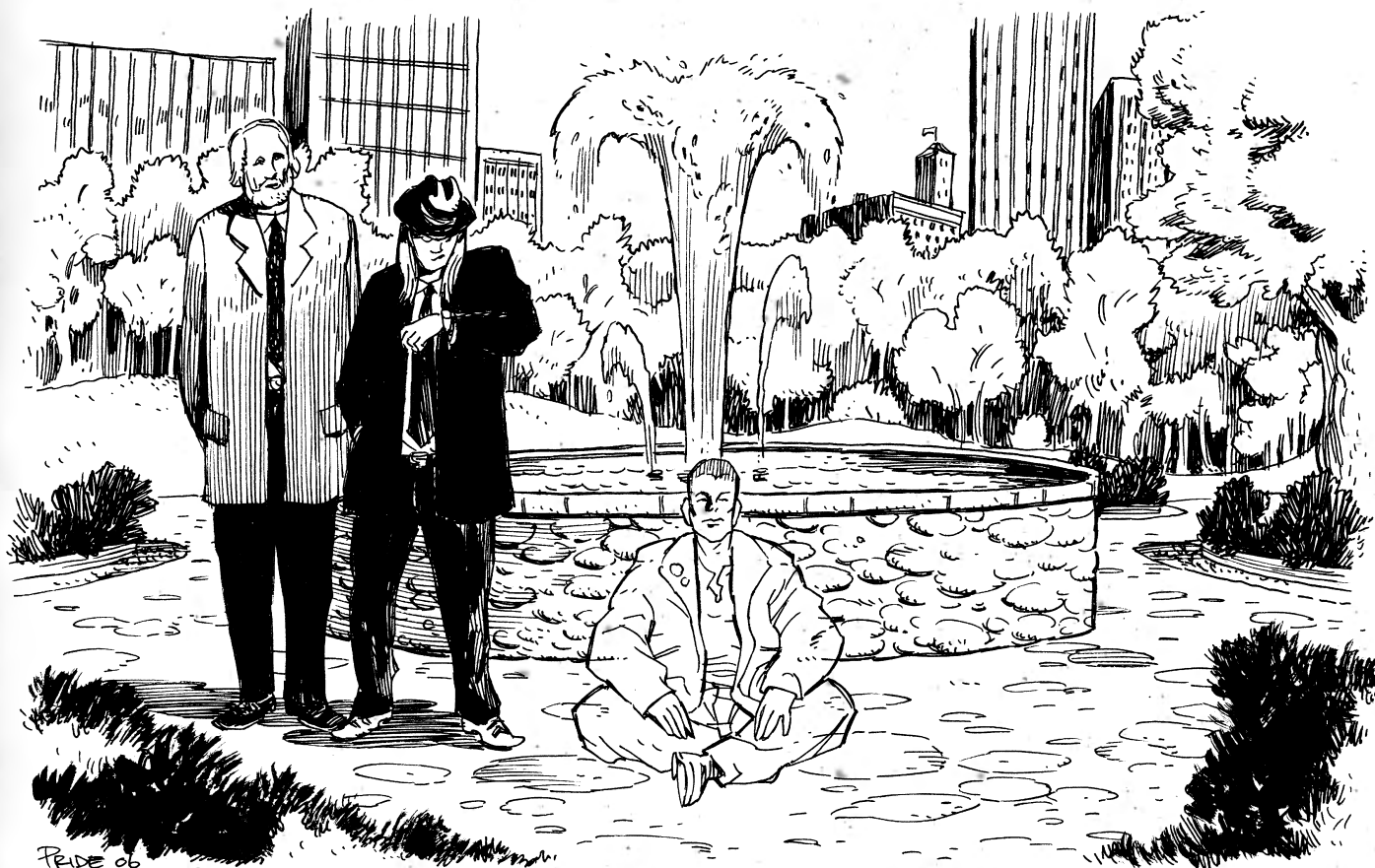
The creation of lighthouses was among the most basic magics Atlanteans worked in Astral Space, but lighthouses are a mystery to modern sorcerers. By all rights, the psychic tides of the Temenos should have destroyed the landmarks ages ago. Some mystagogues suggest that lighthouses use an Astral equivalent of soul stones to maintain the landmarks' integrity, but no one can explain how a soul might be distilled in an entire plane composed of soul-stuff. Certainly, no one has found a recognizable soul stone in an Astral lighthouse.

The Chanting Fountain

A whispered mantra doesn't sound so different from the murmur of bubbling water. A mage who learns the right mantra and who meditates upon it can find proof in the form of the chanting fountain, an Atlantean lighthouse that guides willworkers who echo its words.

The fountain sprays from a bottomless stone basin the width of a large car. The fountain stands at an Astral crossroads represented by a city park surrounded by wide streets and tall buildings. Each street and building, in turn, represents an adjacent Astral Realm in the Temenos. The fountain smells faintly of mildew, but the mist tastes clean and pure.

The basin is filled with water nearly to the lip, but a person who looks at the inner walls finds them covered in graffiti. The graffiti is mostly written in modern languages, with a few fading Atlantean runes. The notes contain short, cryptic bits of advice left by other travelers: "Watch out for the tortoise," "Left, blue, center, red," "The eyes of the skull are empty" and other riddles.



Shrines

Astral shrines were the Atlanteans' means of honoring the spiritual side of the Temenos. The shrines appear as cairns, statues, gardens and graves, and although most shrines also double as landmarks, no one is sure of their primary use. They vary dramatically in size and intricacy, much like houses of worship in the physical world. Some shrines are simple and austere; others are extravagantly decorated with symbols of their Realms.

Each shrine is built over a Realm's focal point — in some respects, the Astral equivalent of a Hallow or locus. A shrine might be a pile of bones in a Realm centered on violence and strife, or a circle of pillars around a luscious fruit tree in a Realm epitomizing the slaking of lusts. Shrines are often the goal of Astral pilgrims, and sometimes lure natives of Astral Space, as well: figments and beasts have been known to flock to shrines like desert animals to an oasis.

Some shrines bestow gifts and prophecies upon Seekers who empower the shrines with a word, sigil or sacrifice. A battle shrine might speak of a pilgrim's greatest vulnerability when splashed with the blood of the pilgrim's inner demons, and a shrine to repressed memories might require one memory be forgotten in return for revealing another. Other shrines contain seemingly worthless relics or lack any evident power at all. The Astral denizens around shrines rarely say anything useful about the shrines themselves, not recognizing them for what they are.

One subject of debate among Astral explorers is whether the Atlanteans mapped Astral focus points and built shrines

on these locations, or whether the Atlanteans built shrines to create focus points. If the former hypothesis is correct, one can assume the Atlanteans were trying to tap the power of Astral Realms. If the latter hypothesis is correct, new questions arise about the Atlanteans' goals and methods. What does it mean, exactly, to build the symbol of a dream?

Thought Control

A popular notion among the Free Council's Astral explorers is that Atlantean shrines were built to control human consciousness. Supposedly, each shrine exerted (and may still exert) influence over its Realm, enhancing desirable dreams and archetypes and diminishing troublesome ones. Some shrines seeded Realms with previously unassociated concepts — planting fear into dreams of foreign lands, or adding structure and law to dreams of civilization.

No one has ever proven that alterations to the Temenos have any effect on humanity, but this doesn't dispel believers' concerns. Many cabals — Free Council and otherwise — have fought over control of shrines. The idea that any one mage might gain control over an aspect of human nature is too worrisome to ignore.

The Letterkeeper of Alphabeta

A hedge maze extends endlessly toward a golden horizon while letters drift from the sky like autumn leaves. Glittering bees carry the fallen letters to different sections of the maze, sorting them by alphabet and hanging them from branches. A few gardeners tend to the land, arranging the letters into words such as “healthy,” “growth,” “maze” and “puzzle.” A white gazebo barely peeks above the maze’s walls, hidden off an overgrown path.

This is Alphabeta, one of several Astral Realms centered on language and communication. The gazebo is an Atlantean shrine preserved by a gardener—the Letterkeeper of Alphabeta. He is a burly, bearded, dark-skinned man dressed in overalls and plaid flannel, carrying a rake and easily mistaken for a real human.

No one speaks in Alphabeta. The gardeners are mute, and visitors find that letters spill from their lips instead of sound. Written communication is effective enough, although the gardeners won’t write anything themselves. The Letterkeeper is the only exception: if shown the word “Atlantis” in High Speech runes, he gains a dull, raspy voice and will talk to his visitors. They, in turn, can talk to him in the normal way.

The Letterkeeper spends his days maintaining the gazebo (touching up paint, replacing rotten boards and so on) and raking fallen letters. His rake catches only the most unusual letters—characters from forgotten or imaginary scripts and symbols that were never matched with any script at all. He won’t say whether the Atlanteans gave him this duty or it’s a habit he developed during his millennia as a gardener. To the Letterkeeper, he has always been who he is, and the gazebo has always been part of Alphabeta. He doesn’t even acknowledge that the word “Atlantis” affects him, despite the fact that the term obviously does.

Mages occasionally visit the gazebo to contemplate Alphabeta or to trade with the Letterkeeper. Sorcerers preparing to cast or confront spells utilizing runes often hope to find powerful letters or “counter-letters” to aid their thaumaturgy, while scholars search for a Rosetta stone hidden somewhere in the gazebo’s structure. Once convinced to speak, the Letterkeeper reluctantly trades his rare letters in exchange for certain goods: honey from Alphabeta bees (they have a nasty sting), word games from the material world (he’s somehow accumulated a complete collection of *New York Times* crossword puzzles, and is very picky about what games he’ll accept) and, of course, samples of other rare scripts.

Astral Caretakers

Colleges and shrines are rarely warded by the kinds of fierce gatekeepers that prowl material ruins. Instead, Astral Realms naturally tend to hide their treasures from visitors who cannot understand them; so additional protections only hamper the worthy. A few archeomancers speak of soul-twisting spells that lock mages inside Astral Space or banish them to nightmare Realms,

or of monsters bred from fear and aggression, but such defenses surely guard only the most valuable locales.

Much more common than wards are caretakers: Astral entities created or controlled by Atlantean magic, bound to maintain sites of interest. These creatures are generally indistinguishable from the “normal” inhabitants of their Realms—at least to the untrained eye. On close inspection, a Seeker finds that caretakers tend to stay within the bounds of their territories and apart from other creatures. When caretakers do stray, they do so only to gather materials to maintain their domains. Their original instructions are often colored by their surroundings until they themselves don’t realize why they serve as they do. After all, dreams don’t have to make sense.

Colleges

The drive to explore, learn and understand is powerful among mages. The Atlanteans were no different in this regard—but while modern sorcerers must hide their magic and limit their ambitions, the ancients readily traveled to the frontiers of the soul and sought the knowledge bound up in pure consciousness. They built whole colleges and laboratories in the Temenos, both to uncover the mysteries of Astral Space and to teach from raw conceptual sources.

Surviving colleges commonly resemble institutes of learning appropriate to their setting—everything from mosques to hospitals to modern universities. Long since abandoned by their creators, most colleges are dark and overgrown; only a few have caretakers or squatters living on their grounds. Their libraries, exhibits and laboratories have also suffered, and finding a book whose pages haven’t faded or a painting whose surface hasn’t become a greasy blur can be difficult.

The colleges were at the forefront of experimental Astral magic. Students transformed the resonance of dream-essence, captured and observed Astral creatures and studied the relationship between the material world and the Temenos. Portals linking colleges to one another and to distant Astral Realms were built for use by the wisest mages, guarded by tests and wards.

The Guardians of the Veil say their forebears, forever eager to gain insight into the ways of the soul and the psychology of humankind, encouraged many areas of research. In particular, their forebears developed means of learning about a person’s nature by studying objects removed from that person’s Oneiros. Such objects were useful as evidence, weapons and blackmail material, as well as for educational purposes. Rumors in the order tell of Astral colleges hiding secret galleries full of dream-objects stolen from the ancient Guardians’ foes—and that the order’s masters still use some of these dream-vaults.

Colleges also encouraged non-magical courses of study. Students hoping to learn the meaning of particular emotions,

myths, cultures or concepts explored their seats in human consciousness from the safety of college walls. A soldier could prepare for the emotional cost of war by studying in a Realm of grief and pain, following the extensive tutorials prepared by generations of scholars. Nearly every college had at least one mage dedicated to teaching psychic health—a necessary precaution, given the dangers of spending time in the Temenos.

Modern mages sometimes use Atlantean colleges as meeting places. This is especially true for mages in disparate parts of the world: Astral colleges serve as useful neutral ground and are secure from most perils. Some Consilii have discussed reopening colleges, despite failed attempts during previous centuries. Inevitably, the difficulty of simultaneously maintaining a material sanctum and an Astral domain puts an end to such ambitions.

The Citadel of Remorse

Built in the heart of a terrible inferno in a Realm of caverns and fire, the Citadel of Remorse stands charred but strong. Seemingly carved from a single granite slab, the college is a spiraling structure that leans to one side. Ornate, stained glass windows speckle the walls, but all of them have cracked or melted in the flames and been rendered incomprehensible. Inside, the Citadel is a honeycomb of spare stone chambers and wilting gardens.

The Citadel of Remorse (a modern name; the Atlanteans' name for the college is a mystery) had a tighter focus than most Atlantean colleges. So far as psycho-archaeologists can tell, the Citadel was a place where mages could explore the positive purpose of self-deprecating emotions such as guilt, doubt and loathing. Most literature on the subject has faded to nothingness, but some of the Atlanteans' experimental apparatus survive.

Bizarre devices resembling torture equipment sit in some rooms, purportedly used for psychic alchemical processes in which souls were purified through exposure to distilled misery. Other rooms contain guilt-suits, donned by mages seeking to experience negativity from the emotion's point of view. Most of the apparatus no longer functions properly, or cannot be used without lost Arcane knowledge; however, no one has performed a full inventory of the college.

Over the centuries since the college's discovery, more than one mage has hypothesized that the Oracle who erected Pandemonium's Watchtower was either a student or a founder of the Citadel of Remorse. Although little hard evidence supports this claim, the college has nonetheless become significant in Mastigos mythology. Warlocks who doubt themselves or who wonder why they were chosen for their path are sometimes advised to travel to the college and seek its wisdom. Even if there's no insight into the Realms Supernal to be found, a mage might get a glimpse of what drives her soul from within.

Fortresses

Not all Atlantean outposts in the Temenos existed to serve the quest for knowledge. In particular, the ancient Adamantine Arrow and the Guardians of the Veil recognized the strategic implications of Astral Space. Unlike the Shadow Realm, Astral

Space did not parallel the physical world. Astral Space was an infinite expanse of new hiding places, new frontiers and new potential dangers. Atlantis had to control that Realm, lest the enemies of Atlantis seize it first.

From a modern perspective, the Atlanteans' attempts to control the Temenos appear to have failed. Any successes they achieved fell with the fabled city, disappeared in the ages since or were carefully hidden from view. Nonetheless, evidence of their efforts remains.

The Adamantine Arrow's traditions say Arrows tried to counter the threat of Astral invaders (enemy mages or dream-beasts) by erecting sentry posts and garrisons in important Astral Realms. These outposts were typically enchanted to alert their defenders to intrusion. Some outposts stood at the center of invisible psychic webs whose threads, when touched, triggered alarms. Other outposts acted as Astral whirlpools, pulling anyone entering a given Realm to the site of the nearest outpost. Still other outposts acted as mystic radio antennae, "broadcasting" mantras to disrupt intruding willworkers' meditation and force them back to the waking world. Outposts generally resemble military encampments — rusting metal towers, crumbling concrete forts or shacks surrounded with barbed wire fences. Unlike most Astral sites, outposts blend in poorly with their surroundings. Perhaps this is why so few outposts endure, and why they look derelict.

The Dragon's Talons also tried to fortify Astral Space with walls between the Realms. However grand these may once have been, the tides of the soul have worn them down and left them rare finds. The walls were both quasi-physical and magical, combining intricate spells with "material" structures — rune-carved bricks, chanting silk curtains and flesh-rending winds were a few of the forms tried. But dreamers slipped through cracks, often without realizing that their destinations were supposedly protected. Natives of Astral Space threw themselves angrily at the barriers, breaking them down within days. The walls were better at trapping creatures inside Realms than keeping intruders out, and a few nightmares were made into prisons and sealed off. Some mages say that certain dreams were hidden — that the greatest Atlantean walls still stand, and they conceal entire Realms in the Temenos.

Where the Adamantine Arrow saw threats, the Guardians of the Veil saw opportunities. They built Astral spy posts in Realms of interest; disguising the outposts with physical and psychic camouflage. Inside, a mage (or Astral construct) could wait and watch other Astral travelers, gazing through one-way mirrors, scrying pools or, in Realms where modern times have overtaken the dreams, television screens. The Guardians also built safehouses where their souls could hide or where Guardians could store dreamed treasures. Spy posts and safehouses are usually small, solid places: a locked mausoleum in an Astral graveyard, a heavy bomber in an aerial battlefield or a safe (bigger inside than outside) in an office complex.

Larger safehouses sometimes doubled as luxurious prisons for Goetic demons. These demons were lured or kidnapped from the minds of their creators, then pressed into service through bribery or torture. Goetic demons informed Guardians of the

demons' makers' secret weaknesses, and the Guardians kept the demons in reserve as weapons of psychological torment. A Goetic demon's prison was normally built in an Astral Realm suited to the temperament of the demon, then augmented with binding spells to keep the demon from straying. The demons took to their new homes with relative ease, suffering neither hunger nor age — but if any of these inner demons survive to this day, who can guess what they're like now? Trapped in the Temenos for millennia, their creators long dead, they might be almost unrecognizable.

The Dreamforge

In an Astral Realm of endless gears, catwalks, chemical pits, conveyer belts and elevators, workers in gloves and hard hats fold origami paper into a billion consumer goods. This is a place of endless labor and minimal compensation, where the psyche sleeps while the body toils.

Above a waterfall of molten metal stands a cylindrical iron fortress, its solid walls covered in rust and razor wire. The fortress doesn't quite match the rest of the Realm, and workers occasionally try to tear the fortress apart with industrial drills and acetylene torches. No one ever puts more than a dent in the fortress, though, and no one has found the trigger to its secret entrance — a lever tucked behind a bucket in a utility closet that, when pulled, opens a tunnel beneath the factory.

The fortress was once a garrison for mages of the Adamantine Arrow: barracks, armory and forge in one, a place for Atlantean soldiers to gather when preparing for dreaming wars. No soldiers man the fortress today, and the cloth maps of the Temenos that hung on the walls are faded and torn. Beneath floors of bunks and conference rooms, however, is an acrid workshop where sparks still fly from a green-flamed furnace.

Here, Atlantean mages melted down dreams and reshaped them into weapons and armor. The teeth of inner demons were embedded in the blades of swords. Reeds buffeted but unbroken by the eternal winds of airy Realms were woven into shields. Murderous fantasies were distilled into poisons that coated the tips of arrows. The tools the Arrows used are rusted and brittle, and their machines appear broken, but the furnace is still hot. A modern mage who put the workshop to use would have little trouble melting down dreams. Shaping them into new forms would be a difficult challenge.

Difficult — but rewarding. The essence of a dream is more important than form in the world of the soul, and how better to manipulate that world than with dream-forged tools? How better to kill ideas than with other ideas? Secret manuals surely survive that elaborate on the techniques of the ancient dreamsmiths: the knowledge of the Dreamforge was too precious to be left to human memory. And perhaps some mage already possesses those secrets, and seeks the fortress where the forge awaits.

History's Ghosts

True history is always forgotten. The world is shaped by billions of individuals, and the wars, cultures and heroes we remember are necessary abstractions of a more complicated

and fluid truth. Humans — Sleepers and mages alike — must view history as a series of key events, each symbolic of its time. But what happens when the key events are forgotten? When the symbol of an age is lost? Littered throughout the Temenos are history's ghosts: Astral Realms created from the psychic echoes of forgotten places and times.

Just as other memories represented in the Temenos, ghost memories are never accurate. At best, they are incomplete reconstructions of the real world, with holes left gaping. The citizens of a ghostly city may refer to a building that isn't there, or lines of forgotten poetry may transmute into gibberish. More often, holes are filled with supposition and stereotypes. The core truth of a memory is compromised by its surface elements, forcing mages to excavate layers of symbolic thought to acquire that which they seek.

Ghost Realms often arise from memories purged from creation — cultures subjected to genocide, annihilated religions and libraries burned for their heretical contents. Excesses such as these took place in the Atlantean Age as they do now, as mages fought to ensure that their ideologies reigned supreme. The advocates of dangerous philosophies (domestic or foreign) were vanquished: the Adamantine Arrow toppled the towers of barbarian mages, and the Guardians of the Veil quashed cabals and cults that taught spells forbidden by Atlantean law. Apologists for Atlantis say that such actions were just and necessary, and that the only mages who search Astral Space for purged lore are Seers, Scelesti and fools. Broader-minded (or credulous) mages claim that Atlantis fell due to its narrow vision, and that Atlantean "heresies" could usher in new schools of magical thought.

Other ghost Realms are the product of memories denied, not purged. Especially during the pre-Atlantean era, there were times and places so terrifying or horrific that humanity could not stand to remember them. Sleeper Disbelief, too, relegates certain memories to the Realm of Dreams. Fear of a primordial time when humans were prey to enormous beasts influences Realms in the Temenos, and many Thyrus believe these places are the shadow of a literal prehistory. Other Realms portray primitive humans as slaves to unseen monstrosities, the incomprehensible lords of blood-stained cities of stone. A few messianic mages believe in Astral Realms depicting a lost paradise that humanity cannot bear to recall having lost, but suppressed collective memories are rarely so positive.

Lastly — often tragically — memories can be lost because there's no one to remember them. In the pre-industrial world, more than a few cultures rose and fell in isolation without leaving any mark on broader civilization. All that remains of their traditions and beliefs rests within the Temenos, and mages are the only people who might lay those psychic ghosts (and occasionally, *real* ghosts) to rest — or return their cultural treasures to humanity.

Secrets, too, can be lost in this manner. Atlantis had its share of conspiracies and hidden societies, but conspirators can die by accident or happenstance without ever being discovered. As means of reshaping the soul, Legacies easily leave an impression on the Temenos — yet the first Legacies had only a

handful of practitioners, and many were lost when Atlantis fell. Ancient, inhuman tutors lurk within the Temenos, hoping to one day revive their Legacies and be remembered in the material world.

The Colony of Stonebrook

Before the construction of the Celestial Ladder, before Atlantis' civil war, there were mages who looked about and predicted the coming tragedies. Of these mages, a few reached a simple conclusion: magic bred power and hubris. Wisdom could only be achieved by forsaking magic. Thus, Atlantis was fatally flawed.

Joined by a company of Sleepers, these mages — mockingly called “Timori” — fled the great city. They sought distant shores where they might found a home upon a simpler, purer foundation. Before they departed, their most powerful wizards stripped Atlantis of their spells and their libraries, so as not to allow their secrets to be abused by the power-hungry. No Atlantean ever knew what became of the exiles.

That is the story told by the people of Stonebrook: Their Astral Realm reaches out to the dreams of the physically and spiritually lost — mages who doubt their magic and who wander the Earth without direction. Those not called must take the long route there, journeying through the Temenos until they reach the Realm's borders.

Stonebrook is a simple village built on a rocky beach at the edge of a forest. Physically, the buildings and people resemble those of early European settlements along the North American coastline. The lives of the colonists revolve around hunting, fishing, meditation and the study (but never the conjuring) of the Supernal Realms.

The colonists are willing to discuss Atlantis when asked, but their stories are muddled and contradictory. Even their reasons for leaving are confused: some colonists say they left by choice, while others claim their leaders were exiled for crimes invented by the Silver Ladder. The colonists are friendly to strangers who agree not to practice magic in the village; mages who refuse to abide by the rules are shunned, but not harmed.

The three leaders of the village are Joseph, Isaiah and Judith. They are powerful sorcerers, and each possesses a vast store of books they collected before their conversion and exile. They refuse to show the books to anyone but mages they deem sufficiently wise. Unfortunately, the books contain nothing but modern proverbs and aphorisms (“All that glitters is not gold,” “Early to bed, early to rise” and so on). Joseph is the only leader who admits that the dream-books aren't what they once were.

Every night a dreamer spends in Stonebrook, one colonist disappears. The other villagers notice, but don't like to talk about it. They admit to fearing an endless black void beyond the forest, and attribute their losses to some force within it. Inquiring mages may find that the people of Stonebrook do not know why their real colony disappeared, or why its disappearance is repeated again and again in the Temenos.

The colonists' unavoidable fate is not what bothers the colonists the most, though. When pressed, they reveal that

they understand they're not truly real (although they don't know what they are), and they fear that their philosophy and their discoveries will be lost forever. Worst of all, they don't remember the core of their scriptures. They want to pass on their beliefs, but those are lost even to them.

Banishers often dream of Stonebrook, and typically find that it reinforces their determination. At least in its dreaming form, Stonebrook is clear evidence of magic's corruption and the happiness that comes from its elimination. Other mages who find the colony often come away frustrated: there appear to be so many secrets trapped within, all just beyond reach.

A Thousand Utopias

The Temenos is a place of archetypes and singular truths. But some myths, however universal, become fractured. When the true Atlantis (if it ever existed) faded from memory, the myth of Atlantis spawned a thousand utopias and a thousand tyrannies in the Realm of Dreams.

When young mages uncover an Atlantis in the Temenos, they often believe they've found the real thing. After all, the Atlantis matches their expectations perfectly — its architecture, its social structure, its inhabitants and its philosophies. Even if logic asserts that the civilization is unsustainable, dream-logic smoothes over practical considerations. The island is a miraculous discovery. Or it would be, if it weren't one of many.

More experienced mages know that for every belief in an earlier, unified age, there is an Atlantis in the Temenos to match. They use many names (Iram, Shambhala, Dilmun and Eden, to list a few) and are clothed in different cultural trappings. There are perfected Realms of golden domes and marble pillars, where benevolent sorcerers teach and defend grateful Sleepers and where no one ever thinks a discontented thought. There are monocultural theocracies where everyone understands God's singular truth, and there are multicultural anarchies where magic ensures that peace and equality prevail.

Bleaker versions of Atlantis exist in equal number — versions of what mages fear Atlantis may have been, or what Sleepers fear about magic. Members of the Free Council sometimes see Atlantis as a dead Realm of stifling tradition, and that repressive, fossilized Atlantis awaits them in Astral Space. The Temenos holds worse dreams of Atlantis, too, the nightmare hopes of twisted minds, such as Atlantis-Realms where Sleepers are no more than toys for cruel willworkers. Even the Scelesti have their dream of Atlantis, where they ruled in the name of their dark masters and herded the Sleepers like cattle into sacrificial abattoirs.

The fall of Atlantis is reflected in as many ways as there are dreams, but no Realm lacks a black seed promising the age's destruction. In many versions of the city, the coming Fall is predicted subtly. Corruption afflicts the aristocracy, barbarians grow jealous of the city's glory or pity leads masters to confuse themselves with slaves. In other versions, the Fall plays out with the construction of the Celestial Ladder or an unequaled natural disaster. The Fall may seem tragic, inevitable or accidental depending on the Realm's nature.

Some Goetic sorcerers question whether the 1,000 incarnations of Atlantis are separate Realms in Astral Space, or if the incarnations are facets of a single Realm. For most purposes, the distinction is academic. Either way, it's possible to move from one Atlantis to the next. Each city has a trail, a doorway, an arch or a cavern that leads to another interpretation. The denizens of Atlantean Realms avoid these gateways without consciously acknowledging them.

More than one mage has hoped to piece together an image of the real Atlantis by visiting each of its interpretations. Given the dangers present in some of the Realms, this is a risky gambit; however, if Atlantis *were* real, it makes sense that each of its dreaming incarnations would contain some aspect of the genuine article. But sifting truth from fiction in the world of the soul is a challenge few mages are equal to.

Umpauli, Island of Many Temples

Above the sea are the swamps. Above the swamps are the forests. Above the forests are the cliffs. And above the cliffs is the Realm of gods. This is Umpauli, the Island of Many Temples.

Umpauli is a civilization literally stratified. At sea level live monsters and spirits. Barbarian outsiders are permitted to dock and trade in the swamps. Umpaulan Sleepers dwell in wood and mud villages in the forest. Mages build their homes into the cliffsides, striving to reach ever higher. One's worth is based entirely on where one lives, and most residents are resigned to a wretched existence.

The mages of Umpauli are obsessed with the refinement of the soul. Mages who have not adopted a Legacy are relegated to the houses and temples at the bottom of the cliffs, while each Attainment in a Legacy earns one a higher place. The mages at each level of the cliffs communicate less and less with one another as their Legacies diverge. Only one mage attends to each of the highest temples, and these mages do not communicate with anyone. The Umpaulans do not rank any Legacy as superior to another — all that matters is one's development, not one's beliefs.

The paths up the cliffsides become steeper and steeper as one proceeds skyward, until they disappear into the cliffs' flat white stone. Supposedly, a mage who perfects his soul can proceed above the cliff and join the gods. However, since the mages of different Legacies are concerned exclusively with their own paths, they do not think to pool knowledge to achieve their goals.

Although Umpauli's Sleepers, spirits and monsters claim to accept their lot, they secretly resent their treatment by the mages. The Sleepers, spirits and monsters provide the mages with food, clothing, sacrifices, slaves, fodder for experiments and Sleepwalker children, and receive nothing in return except assurance that they have done their duty. They show no interest in rebelling, but a visiting dreamer might change that.



Atlantis and the Dreamtime

What do plants and animals remember of the Atlantean age? What sigils did history's greatest mages inscribe upon the soul of the world? How did the ancients interact with the Anima Mundi, and how did those interactions affect their island's fate?

Humanity does not easily affect the Dreamtime. A righteous society, a cruel society and an arrogant society all look the same to trees, ants and mountains. Most civilizations never leave their mark at all. Despite this, some modern mages fervently believe that Atlantis *must* have marked the Dreamtime, and spend their lives searching for evidence.

Certain Thyrsus mages tell of Dream Realms depicting an era when the Earth was shackled by human magic, worked and battered until the Earth unleashed its fury and beat back its oppressors with volcanoes and earthquakes, storm-winds and tsunamis. Other mages say that the Dreamtime contains the memory of an era when humans and animals called down the Supernal Realms with equal ability. It may be that both ages existed, and that neither relates to Atlantis. It may be that these ideas come from mages unable to interpret the dreams of the world, who project their own hopes and fears onto the Anima Mundi.

If there is any genuine Atlantean lore to be found in the Dreamtime, the lore does not reveal itself easily. If the Atlanteans built outposts, shrines and libraries inside the soul of the world, those places vanished like cities in the heart of a jungle. But for mages who see the Temenos as only a piece of history's puzzle, the Dreamtime is an irresistible lure.

Chimerical Beasts

The denizens of the Temenos arise from the depths of the human mind. Like the Realms in which they dwell, the beings embody myths, icons, hopes and fears. But unlike Astral Realms, Astral beings can *think*. They have desires. And not all of them are content to be creatures of other beings' dreams.

Mages call beings that cross from the Temenos to the material world "chimerical beasts," no matter what their form. Such creatures are rare, to say the least, but they do exist; how and why is a subject furiously dissected by Awakened cryptozoologists. Some mages conflate chimerical beasts with cryptids, but while these groups may overlap, accurate categorization

is no clear-cut task. The line between a spirit and a chimerical beast is not always easy to draw. The *essence* of hatred lives in the Shadow Realm, while the *idea* of hatred exists in Astral Space, but humans can find the distinction tough to grasp when they both manifest in the material world.

Once physically incarnated, chimerical beasts react in a variety of ways. Unintelligent creatures respond like any animals removed from their natural habitat. Often they seek dark places to hide or lash out violently. Intelligent beasts sometimes scheme to achieve incarnation for years, and have planned extensively for material existence. No encounter with a chimerical beast should be taken lightly—a being able to endure in the Temenos is a being with the power of an eternal icon.

Breeds of Beast

Chimerical beasts come in many different forms. Often, mages familiar with one type of beast are entirely unaware of others. The spawn of dreams tend not to view themselves as a unified group at all: originating in the Temenos doesn't link them together any more than originating in the physical world makes humans and hyenas treat each other as brothers.

Myth

Why do so many creatures of myth exist within the Temenos? Did dragons, basilisks, *djinn* and Nagas once live in the real world, only to fade into memory? Or do stories of monsters create monsters in the human mind, built from the stuff of fear and awe, eventually to manifest in the material world?

Either way, monsters do exist in dreams, and monsters do incarnate in reality. Mythological chimerical beasts resemble cryptids in most respects, though the chimerical beasts are more likely than cryptids to reveal themselves to Sleepers. Unlike traditional cryptids, chimerical beasts haven't found ways to hide in the modern world. Unless they know better, they're likely to treat humans the same way they did in legends. Fortunately, chimerical beasts rarely incarnate in densely populated areas, but nothing prevents a mage from guiding a beast to human prey.

Mythological beasts often demonstrate "affection" for the culture that first told stories about them. They may hesitate to attack modern representatives of their culture, or they may feel betrayed and angry if men and women from their culture don't behave according to tradition. (Imagine a dragon that can't find a better princess to kidnap than the local prom queen, and then becomes furious because no knight will come forth to do battle and rescue her.) They may be drawn to culturally significant locations or population centers, desperately seeking the familiar in anything from religious institutions to museum exhibitions to ethnic restaurants. Even the trappings of a culture can be enough to appease some beasts: a Nigerian mage who does his research may be better prepared to face a hydra than a Greek American mage who ignores her roots.

Not all beasts care about their origins, of course. The more cross-cultural myths a monster appears in, the less likely it is to feel tied to a particular group. Some monsters are even

eager to embrace the modern world and adapt their behavior accordingly: a phoenix might build its nest in the fires of a steel mill, and a troll might kidnap homeless children and carry them to its home in the storm drains.

Eikons

Gods and saints play an important role in affairs of the soul, yet relatively few appear in the Temenos. Religious mages advocate a theological explanation for this mystery, and say that a *true* god — a god whose presence extends across the Fallen and Supernal Realms, and who isn't "merely" an artifact of human thought — cannot be imitated in Astral Space. Most sorcerers, though, say the varying interpretations of different worshippers prevent gods from coalescing in Astral Space.

There are deities, however, whose worshippers see them so clearly, whose images and doctrines are so well-defined, that their avatars incarnate in the Realm of Dreams. An eikon is the manifestation of a god built from human thought. Eikons are considered blasphemous by some mages, who call them idolatrous simulacra built from the flawed mortal soul. Other mages say that an eikon is the reflection of a god cast in the sea of the human mind, and thus a true avatar of the divine. Whatever the case, once an eikon incarnates, it needs only take one step further to achieve physical, chimerical incarnation.

Eikons typically manifest from deities with extremely small, extremely devout groups of followers — groups usually considered cults. Sometimes, a single faithful advocate is enough to revivify a fading eikon within the Temenos. An eikon-deity usually has an ancient heritage, but has never been widely recognized; even in an eikon's prime, its worshipers were carefully selected and practiced their rites in secret. Such gods are commonly lesser deities from polytheistic religions, or obscure angels, demons, devas or similar entities. Some eikons, however, begin as idiosyncratic versions of well-known deities, espoused by small and fanatical cults whom most believers would consider heretical, or at least deeply peculiar.

Eikons often shepherd their faithful in dreams, guiding their followers in worldly and magical affairs. Eikons rarely seek mages as acolytes because they fear a mage's ability to confront them in Astral Space. Of the various chimerical entities, however, eikons are the most likely to succeed at physical incarnation: they are usually very smart, have access to earthly servants and possess the desire to meddle in worldly affairs.

The Forgotten

Powerful monsters and wrathful gods can leave deep scars in the human psyche — and still be forgotten when their time passes. Often (though not always) residents of ghostly Astral Realms, these beings hunger to be remembered and begin their climb out of the Realms Invisible. They are the deities of long-dead cults, the horrors that could only exist in a primitive, inchoate world and the worst mistakes of mighty mages. These monsters are fears humanity has gratefully left behind.

Often, a mage or a curious Sleeper reawakens a forgotten creature. By poring through records of the Atlantean Age, by using magic to coax color into long-faded cave paintings or by

studying the monuments of a lost civilization, the scholar learns enough to reinforce a Primal memory. From the depths of the Temenos, the creature is drawn to the scholar, urging her in dreams to learn more, to give spiritual flesh to the creature's faded image. Research and imagination give the monster strength and vigor. Recovering a name may be the final step necessary to solidify a creature's Astral incarnation.

Once forgotten creatures get a taste of the physical world, they aren't easily satiated. But a scholar's obsessive need to reconstruct a myth may not extend to making that myth a reality. She may have no interest in helping her discovery achieve physical incarnation. If a forgotten being can't coerce the scholar into providing a pathway out of dreams, the monster uses its newfound power to search out other ways. Other dreamers may serve the creature, or ancient secrets may guide it.

Still, it's rare that a forgotten entity doesn't retain a link to its rediscoverer — a person can't truly reconstruct a myth or memory without providing a bit of herself in the process, forever sharing something intimate with a bygone monster. The link may take the form of shared dreams or waking emotions, or just the knowledge that something else is *out there*. For a mage, the link provides an intimate sympathetic connection — one that functions both ways.

Incarnation

The incarnation of a chimerical beast is a mysterious and unpredictable process. Depending on the beast and its resources in the dream world, the beast may take material form through the whims of fate or as part of a painstakingly implemented plot. Nonetheless, incarnation can broadly be described as a three-step process.

First, many people must have a clear image of a chimerical entity. A vague abstraction or an indistinct memory cannot survive entry into the physical world. If only a few people imagine an entity, they are more likely to maintain a consistent image — but they might not be enough to draw the entity into the material world. If many people know a myth, they may hold different images of a creature — but enough people may agree on an entity's appearance, abilities and character for a "critical mass" to build and a dream to achieve an independent existence.

No one knows how many dreamers it takes to bring a specific being to life in the Temenos, or what factors cause people's dreams to align. The arts can help, by popularizing a particular mythic image — but chimerical creatures can slip into the Oneiroi of artists to encourage the beasts' depiction in the material world. Some mages try to tip the balance by using literature, pop culture or advertising. For instance, some Libertines suggest that a music star with the right look and the right voice might generate dreams of sirens. Some mages even suggest that chimerical beasts will eventually take the forms of cartoons, corporate mascots and video game characters. Attempts to "artificially" create an entity in the Temenos through powerful Mind magic or Life spells cast within Astral Space have thus far failed, however.

Once a beast's dream-image is crystallized, the beast must find a way to escape the Temenos — a bridge between Astral Space and the material world. This requires one or more human souls. Experts in Astral matters are quite sure the plant, animal or mineral souls that shape the Dreamtime cannot provide escape from the Temenos: the world doesn't dream that way.

Humans chosen by a dream entity as a pathway into reality need not be willing (or even aware), but the entity cannot travel the path until the beast establishes a sympathetic connection between dream and flesh. Ideally, the body and soul of a person the entity chooses as its bridge resemble the entity's own form and nature. Some cults assign one member the task of imagining themselves as their god's bridge, holding its image in mind through repetitive mantras and incredible concentration. Other cults kidnap Sleepers who physically resemble their eikons, dressing and adorning them to perfect the connection. Some beasts search in dreams for a person whose hunger, hatred or greed mirrors their own. Mages occasionally build bodies for dreaming entities with Life or Matter spells, using their own souls as the bridge to transport the beasts to their new homes.

In other cases, though, the sympathetic connection between dream and flesh is less direct. A location with resonance matching that of the dream creature can provide the required connection (so long as the dreamers acting as the bridge occupy that location): Actions can create a bridge, too: a person who re-enacts the deeds of a mythic entity can create a sympathetic bond. For example, a person who knowingly eats human flesh might channel a dreaming Wendigo, even if the dreamer doesn't know that legend.

With a clear Astral manifestation established, along with a sympathetic connection to the material world through a human soul, an entity can undergo the final phase of physical incarnation. At this stage, mystic energy must be gathered to power the conversion from imagination into reality. A creature can spend its own Essence for this purpose. Alternatively, any willing mages whose souls are being used as a bridge can spend Mana. The total cost in Essence or Mana is equal to at least twice the beast's Rank; exceptional circumstances can increase this cost. (Note that chimerical beasts are not spirits, and their Rank represents only a rough measure of power — not their status in any hierarchy.)

An incarnating beast or eikon can possess an existing body, transform an inanimate object or appears from nothingness. A greedy CEO could channel an Astral dragon, eventually metamorphosing into a monster while merging his personality with the dragon's intellect and instincts. An archaeomancer who discovers the statue of a forgotten god could power that statue's transformation into a flesh-and-blood vessel for the god's Astral memory. A woodland monster born of an urban legend could use the dreams of camping children as a gateway, appearing out of thin air one night and slinking off with no one the wiser.

Once incarnated, all but the weakest chimerical beasts must gather Essence or feed on tass to survive. Chimerical entities

acquire Essence in accordance with the beast's nature: a lorelei gains Essence by drowning men, a dragon by hoarding treasure, a bloodthirsty eikon by receiving sacrifices and so on. One point per day is usually enough to maintain a beast's existence, though overtly magical beasts have a greater appetite. If a chimerical entity is denied its magical diet, the beast withers and fades until it returns to Astral Space; any body the chimerical beast possessed returns to its original form, perhaps one day to be possessed again.

Killing a chimerical beast's material form — difficult though it may be — puts a permanent end to the creature. Sort of, anyway. While that particular manifestation of the beast is gone, along with its memories and personality (though a possessed mortal might become a ghost-version of the creature), nothing prevents a similar being from re-forming in the Temenos. Indeed, given the eternal nature of the Temenos, it's likely that any mythic archetype that crystallized once will eventually crystallize again. Perhaps the only way to *truly* destroy a chimerical beast is to alter human consciousness itself.

The Lost Baku

Quote: (in Japanese) *This world is not home. This world is not the world of baku. But this world — its taste is so sweet.*

Background: According to Japanese myth, a baku is a creature that eats nightmares and grants dreamers good luck. For an aging mage steeped in guilt and regret, this myth offered a chance at redemption. The mage spent his life serving acamoth and bringing inner demons into the Material Realm, and he sought a way to undo what he had done.

He studied baku myths and folklore and located a baku deep within the Temenos. One night, he wrote Atlantean runes on a centuries-old painting of the creature, and a real baku sprang out of the canvas. The mage died providing the Mana to fulfill the incarnation, but the chimerical beast understood why it had been called. It sought the mistakes of the mage in the Fallen World and devoured them one by one.

But the baku was not meant for material existence. The taste of incarnated vice and corruption was exquisite, as was the taste of material food and drink. When the baku's task was complete, the creature couldn't bear to fade away and return to Astral Space. Instead, the baku has spent decades hiding in cellars, alleys and abandoned buildings, gorging itself on alcohol, chocolate and the dreams of men and women. Other dream-born creatures sate the baku most of all, but they are a rare treat.

Description: The baku possesses the trunk of an elephant, the mane and paws of a lion and the body of a large boar. At first glance, the baku appears calm and tranquil — but a closer look reveals a suppressed, overstimulated tension. The baku's speech is slow and resonant, its voice mournful and confused.

Storytelling Hints: The lost baku can serve as ally or antagonist. On the one hand, the baku serves a useful purpose when devouring stray Goetic creations and fellow chimerical beasts. On the other hand, the baku's habit of eating the dreams of

innocents causes a quiet, suffering madness in many Sleepers. A clever acamoth might even partner with the baku, feeding its addiction to nightmares in exchange for a loyal servant.

The baku knows it isn't following its duty, but doesn't have the strength to break its habits. If confronted by mages, the baku is far more likely to flee or attack than to listen to reason. Not that the baku couldn't find redemption if it had the right guide.

Rank: 2

Attributes: Power 6, Finesse 4, Resistance 4

Willpower: 10

Essence: 15 (max 15)

Initiative: 8

Defense: 6

Speed: 15

Size: 4

Corpus: 8

Influences: Dreams 3

- **Strengthen:** For one Essence, the baku can draw forth any dream a mortal has dreamed before. Feeble, long-forgotten dreams impose a penalty on the baku's Power + Finesse roll; the unforgettable horror-dreams of an acamoth pacter could give a bonus.

- **Manipulate:** The baku can shape a sleeping person's dreams however it wants. Forcing a dream down paths a

sleeper doesn't want may call for a contested roll against the dreamer's Willpower.

- **Control:** This level of Influence enables the baku to consume other dream-entities, such as Goetic demons. If the baku wins a contested roll, its Power + Finesse against the target's Willpower, the baku consumes one point each of the target's Willpower, Essence and Corpus. The baku can strike from surprise to gain a bonus to this attack. The baku can also use this level of Influence to erase a dream from a person's memory — one of the few ways an acamoth pacter can escape the memory of Abyssal nightmares, and breaking any connection between the dreamer and the acamoth.

Numina: Dream Traveler (dice pool 10). This works as the Mind 4 spell of the same name (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 214). Roll the baku's Power + Finesse versus the target's Composure + Gnosis. Each use of this Numen costs two Essence.

Lucky Blessing (dice pool 8). As the Fate 3 spell "Superlative Luck," except the luck affects a person chosen by the baku and lasts an entire day. Roll the baku's Finesse + Resistance and spend three Essence.

Ban: If a person recites a line from an ancient Japanese poem that refers to the baku, the baku is compelled to seek and devour one dream-spawned creature the speaker desires (such as a Goetic demon or another chimerical beast). The poem is recorded in the notes of the baku's original summoner.

APPENDIX: HIGH SPEECH AND ATLANTEAN RUNES

Not all the relics of Atlantis are physical. Perhaps the most important bequests Atlantis left to mages are High Speech and the system of runes and glyphs willworkers can use to augment their magic. These are also two of the most mysterious legacies of Atlantis — more mysterious, perhaps, than some mages realize.

High Speech

The orders routinely include High Speech in their members' training. Student mages learn that by chanting selected phrases in this ancient language, the mages increase the chance of their spells' success, and more easily add to the spells' power. One theory among mages is that High Speech is the native language of the Oracles and Exarchs. Either these Ascended beings deliberately shaped the Fallen World so phrases in their tongue would have power, or speaking their language creates a sympathetic link between a mage and the Supernal Realm.

Students quickly learn that High Speech is a distinctly incomplete language. High Speech seems to consist entirely of formulas for casting spells. A mage can learn enough of these formulas to mix and match phrases, and so devise new incantations to go with improvised spells. A mage could not hold an actual conversation in High Speech, however. A mage could command the veils of Time to part and show her the future, but she could not say, "Meet me tomorrow for lunch."

Mages also know that Sleepers cannot learn to understand High Speech. Over the millennia, willworkers have tried to teach Sleepers the tongue of magic, in hopes they would Awaken. It hasn't worked.

Until the last few centuries, most mages accepted the powers and limits of High Speech without question. As the science of philology — the study of languages — developed, however, mages have studied High Speech in hopes of penetrating its mysteries and gaining greater power. All the orders now accept a theory largely developed within the Free Council, about the origins and nature of High Speech. As usual with mages, not every individual willworker believes the theory, but no one has suggested a better explanation — yet.

The Structure of Language

As everyone knows, language is a way for intelligent creatures to send information back and forth. Most human languages are spoken; history began when people started representing spoken words through written marks, but writing is very recent compared to speech. Recently, a few gestural languages have been invented for (and sometimes by) the deaf, and the idea of writing has been extended to recording information in machine-readable formats such as phonograph records and digital files. In the beginning, though, was the spoken word.

The nature of human vocal anatomy limits the number of distinctly different sounds (called *phonemes*) that humans can produce. No language makes use of all the possible phonemes, and the world's languages vary widely as to which sounds are significant and which are not. For example, some Asian languages do not treat "r" and "l" as distinct and separate sounds. A person raised speaking Mandarin Chinese, therefore, has trouble with English words in which the difference between "r" and "l" is distinct and important. On the other hand,

many dialects from India distinguish between a sound made with the tip of the tongue curled back toward the roof of the mouth and one in which the tongue is not. English doesn't make that distinction, so a person learning these dialects can have trouble hearing the difference. Nevertheless, Englishmen, Chinese and Indians all have the same vocal anatomy, and can learn to speak each other's languages if they try.

Mages have the same tongues, lips and vocal chords as Sleepers. (Well, unless the mages have experimented with Life magic.) In terms of phonemes, High Speech is not unusual at all. A Sleeper who hears High Speech does not hear anything intrinsically strange — just a language he does not understand. If he listens closely, he might get a nagging feeling she has heard its like before.

Languages also differ in how they put sounds together to form units of meaning (called *morphemes*), and combine these units of meaning to form words. Some words are morphemes, but so are prefixes, suffixes and other “sub-word” units of meaning. Once again, languages vary enormously in their rules for combining morphemes. Some of those rules are more complicated than in English, some are easier and some are just different. Similar to dealing with phonemes, however, any person can learn any human language's morphology — the language's rules for combining units of meaning. High Speech's rules are fairly simple compared to, say, the intricate prefixes, suffixes and infixes of Basque.

The last major structural level of language is *syntax*, which governs how sentences are constructed. An English speaker can “understand” Lewis Carroll's poem *Jabberwocky*, for instance, because it follows proper English syntax, even though many words are nonsense.

Similar to language differences in morphology and phonology, languages can have very different syntaxes. Adults learning a second language may well make mistakes similar to those made by children. For example, an English-speaking child might say, “I hurted my foots” to mean, “I hurt my feet.” The sentence structure is there, but the child is still learning the irregular words and forms; no one taught the child the incorrect forms, the child generalizes the rule based on his or her native language input. With practice, though, the syntax of any language becomes habitual.

Regardless of where one is born, a child will acquire functional fluency in her native language by about four years of age — even when the language is Basque, sometimes considered the most difficult language in the world. The acquisition of this system is so fast and so complete that it is, itself, a kind of magic. In fact, human brains are *genetically programmed* for language: if you throw together people who don't share a common language, they invent one. Philologists have seen this in colonies of the deaf: within a single generation, they create unique gestural languages with a fully-developed syntax. Most amazingly of all, language systems are open-ended and creative. With a little bit of thought, anyone can construct a sentence that has never been uttered before in the history of language. (This book contains many examples.)

Given that mages and Sleepers have the same vocal apparatus and the same inborn capacity for language, why can't Sleepers learn High Speech? Mages have found some possible answers.

Jargon

Apart from structure, languages differ in the conceptual frameworks they impose on the world. When people create a language, they make decisions about what aspects of reality matter to them, and code them into their vocabulary and grammar. The most familiar example is the Inuit having lots of words for different forms of snow — fresh snow, packed snow, crusted snow and so on. In the Inuit environment, recognizing different qualities of snow matters a great deal.

More subtly, languages encode notions about reality in their syntax. For instance, many languages assign a gender to every noun: everything in the world, not just living creatures, is male or female. English does not. Is it a coincidence that English people, with a language that strips gender (and the implication of being alive) from the world, also became some of the first and most determined industrialists of Europe? At least a few linguists think there's a connection.

People who engage in specialized occupations tend to develop specialized vocabularies — jargon. From doctors to plumbers, professional people need to describe phenomena in their special areas of concern with greater precision than ordinary language provides. To a doctor, a “myocardial infarction” means a lot more than “chest pain.” She needs that precision to talk to other doctors about curing you.

Some mages compare High Speech to technical jargon. If you don't have the background, “myocardial infarctions,” “quark-gluon interaction” or, for that matter, “Hail Mary pass” are all meaningless gobbledygook. Words in High Speech refer to Supernal powers and procedures for changing reality by direct act of will. High Speech enables a willworker to define more precisely how he wants to invoke and shape Supernal power — and that makes his spell more likely to succeed, just as a doctor has a better chance of curing you if she can define precisely what's wrong.

By definition, however, no Sleeper has the background to understand these concepts. However, you can show a person anatomy diagrams and football plays. With patience, you can guide a person through physics until she knows what a quark-gluon interaction is. Teaching High Speech to Sleepers is more like teaching people blind from birth about color. How do you show a Sleeper the Supernal underpinnings of reality that his soul won't let him see?

Many mages suspect the problem in teaching High Speech goes even deeper, though. High Speech is connected to the Supernal World. High Speech is part of magic — and Sleepers have difficulty perceiving magic and acknowledging it for what it is. Perhaps the same soul-deep censorship that makes Sleepers flinch back from willworking also closes their minds to High Speech. What their ears hear, their souls will not accept.

Members of the Free Council have tested this guess by

recruiting Sleepers to try memorizing phrases in High Speech without any hint of what they mean. These mages claim the Sleepers have significantly greater difficulty remembering High Speech phrases than phrases of truly meaningless gibberish. These studies impress mages who think the scientific method has anything to offer them, and are ignored by those who don't.

Speculations and Applications

Theories about High Speech still leave many questions without answers. Mages of the Atlantean orders increasingly join the Libertines in studying High Speech for its own sake, in hopes of finding new uses and unearthing clues about Atlantis. Orders and Consilii now ask Seekers to record *every* High Speech inscription they find in an Atlantean ruin — not just ancient spells and rites.

The Speech of Atlantis?

One mystery is how High Speech relates to the common speech of Atlantis. All the surviving fragments of High Speech seem to be technical jargon for working magic — but did that jargon grow out of an ordinary language, or was the jargon artificial and magical from the beginning? If High Speech grew out of everyday speech, modern mages might be able to extend High Speech just by defining new words for Supernal operations, the way any profession coins new words. If that doesn't work, it suggests the degree to which the Exarchs have shaped the Fallen World to their will. On the other hand, if High Speech has no connection to ordinary language, that suggests that High Speech is a pre-existing part of Supernal reality woven into the Fallen World. High Speech is something *beyond* the power of the Exarchs — a flaw in their mastery of reality that mages might exploit to chip away at the Lie.

Philologists know that many times through history, people with different languages wanted to talk to each other, but no single group could establish linguistic dominance. Examples include laborers gathered by colonial masters or trade languages between nearby tribes. The first step is a pidgin, a crude language of words borrowed from different languages, with very simple grammar. In a few generations, though, the people refine the pidgin into a real language called a creole, which may draw upon the syntax of one language and the vocabulary of another, or several. Haitian Creole, for instance, mixes French with African dialects. Swahili is a creole of Bantu languages with Arabic. English itself is a creole of Germanic and French dialects, with bits of Celtic and Latin as well. Modern migrations from the Third World to Europe and America are creating new creoles as philologists watch, such as Spanglish among American Hispanic teens.

Some mages think the same process happened on Atlantis. The dragon-dreams attracted people from around the world to one location. Even with magic, and the ability to mold reality, the initial settlers of Atlantis had to get on with the daily tasks of life such as cleaning, cooking, hunting, fishing and building homes. No doubt, Mind magic made communication

easier, but the settlers still had to talk to each other — and not every dreamer Awakened. Very quickly, the settlers must have devised a pidgin, which evolved into a creole. Over the generations, the Atlanteans refined their language so it could express concepts that are more abstract. Different occupations coined specialized words — including a jargon of magic that became High Speech.

Not all archaeomancers accept this hypothesis in every detail. For one thing, some mages do not take for granted that the Atlantean settlers spoke different languages. Some mages suggest the myth of the Tower of Babel refers to the Celestial Ladder, and that before the Sundering everyone spoke the same language. As evidence, these mages point to a few Sleeper philologists who believe they can reconstruct a primal language from which all tongues descend.

Such skeptics agree, however, that if High Speech grew out of Atlantean common speech, bits of that ancient tongue might be reconstructed from the jargon that survives. The mages might even be able to connect Atlantean to other reconstructed languages of prehistory, such as Indo European or Austronesian. To do this, however, archaeomancers need far more samples of Atlantean speech than they have at present.

Not all mages believe this is possible. Many willworkers believe High Speech has no human origin. As Seekers bring back more samples of Atlantean writing, however, this view becomes harder to defend.

Whispers Out of Time

On a more immediate level, Seekers can use High Speech to find lost relics of magery. Sometimes, a phrase in High Speech does leak into Sleeper speech or writing, often as part of Sleeper myth or occultism. Of course, such fragments are usually quite distorted through centuries of repetition by people who don't know their meaning. Mangled High Speech may turn up in the "barbarous words" of incantations written in bogus grimoires. The name of a local god, demon or sacred site occasionally resembles a phrase in High Speech, too.

Some Seekers follow these slender linguistic clues. Now and then, Seekers discover a cult or secret society that began as a Guardians of the Veil front group the order lost track of long ago. Just as often, the Sleeper group turns out to be an old pawn of the Seers of the Throne, or some long-dead mage's cult of personality. These have their own value for mages (and their own risks), and most Consilii appreciate their discovery.

Occasionally, though, a distorted phrase of High Speech leads to an Atlantean ruin. The cult or tribe may be hereditary guardians, the unwitting servants of mages dead for millennia. Or, they might worship an entity residing in the ruin, and have acquired bits of High Speech from their "god."

Talking in Their Sleep

Whatever the source of High Speech, it has power now. Even though Sleepers cannot learn truly to speak High Speech, they do sometimes acquire or repeat phrases without understanding them. Sleepwalkers, in particular, lack the mental blocks

(or soul blacks) that inhibit most Sleepers from even paying attention to High Speech — and not every Sleepwalker knows he's a Sleepwalker, or has contact with a mage.

Occasionally, a Sleeper repeats a phrase in High Speech near an Atlantean Artifact, a ruin or a spirit bound long ago by Atlantean spells. Either the sound is the password or key to activate ancient magic, or the words seem to carry power of their own. Whatever the reason, the words trigger a response. The result may be an Artifact wreaking havoc as its magic operates without control, a Sleeper possessed by a spirit guardian, or even stranger things. Accidental magic loosed into the modern world almost never results in anything good. The orders all teach their members to exercise caution when they use High Speech, to prevent accidents they may have to clean up later. For safety's sake, all samples of High Speech (including phrases transcribed in modern letters) should be kept out of Sleeper hands.

On the other hand, sometimes a mage wants a Sleeper to say a phrase in High Speech, without the need for understanding. For example, a mage who can't confront a rampaging Atlantean spirit directly (perhaps because it wounded him in its rampage) might send a Sleepwalker ally to give a High Speech command that sends the spirit back across the Gauntlet (just as the command of "Gort! Klaatū Baradā Nikto!" in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*). Any sensible or responsible mage would prefer to have another willworker face the spirit and give the command, but sometimes that just isn't possible.

Atlantean Runes and Glyphs

Speech is universal among human societies; writing is not. According to Sleeper archaeology, the idea of using marks to represent sounds has provably appeared only twice as an original invention: in the Middle East about 5,000 years ago and in Central America considerably later. A few other cases are dubious. Chinese writing might be an independent invention, and while Mesopotamian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics appeared at about the same, time, one script might have been inspired by the other. Mages, of course, believe writing began in Atlantis and inspired *all* the scripts known to Sleepers. If so, the inspiration was quite remote.

The scripts known to Sleepers all began as picture-writing. To represent an ox, an ancient scribe drew a picture of an ox-head; to represent water, he drew ripples. Words that couldn't be represented directly were assembled like a rebus. For instance, how would you write "golf handicap" if you'd never heard of writing? You might draw a golf club for "golf," then a hand, an eye and a cap for "handicap." Over time, the drawings were simplified and distorted until they lost their connection to their original images. The Roman letter "A," for example, began in ancient Phoenician script as a drawing of an ox's head — turn the letter upside down and you still see the tapering head with the horns sticking up — because it was the first sound of *aleph*, Phoenician (and later Hebrew) for "ox."

The alphabet known to Western people, however, is not the only writing system. Some languages use syllabaries, where

each symbol stands for a distinct syllable. Japanese kana and Korean Hangul symbols are modern syllabaries. Other writing systems, such as Chinese, still use highly stylized logographs or ideograms in which each symbol stands for an entire word. As another complication, scripts may include marks that represent inflections (such as the exclamation mark and question mark) or structural elements (such as quotation marks) that don't correspond to any spoken element. Sometimes, written symbols can cross back from letter to ideogram — X marks the spot! Egyptian hieroglyphics use all three strategies: some hieroglyphics stand for whole words, others for syllables and some for single sounds — or a character might stand for any of these, depending on context.

When mages study Atlantean runes, they soon learn that this writing system is like none other. Atlantean runes show no hint of the evolution that later writing systems experienced. These symbols were never representations of everyday things. Willworkers who use Mage Sight to view the Tapestry in detail find that as they block the surface sensations of sight, sound and form from their consciousness, objects dissolve into shimmering, interwoven strands of Mana and resonance — and the bends and twists of these threads look like a lot like Atlantean runes strung together in ever-changing patterns. Other scripts represent sounds or words. Atlantean symbols represent reality itself. Some mages say Atlantean symbols *are* reality itself.

Therefore, Atlantean runes were never intended for jotting down grocery lists or recording a king's proclamations. The symbols embody Supernal powers and processes, not sounds or worldly objects. The Atlantean mages who discovered the runes used them to explore how Supernal forces interacted to create and transform reality and, then, to record their findings in rotes and sigils of power.

Nevertheless, once the Atlanteans had the idea of writing, they apparently decided it *would* be useful to record inventories, contracts, proclamations and other worldly matters. They used the symbols they had on hand. As a result, the runes gained inferior meanings as well. The Atlanteans, and later mages, devised several writing systems to record High Speech and other languages. The runes have been used as alphabets, syllabaries and ideograms, as well as magical glyphs. In fact, a single inscription may incorporate all four functions at once. A mage may need to study an inscription for some time to determine which functions the writer intended.

Ordinary Writing

Ironically, inscriptions in which Atlantean runes are used to write ordinary words are some of the hardest for mages to understand. Just as modern mages don't know enough of High Speech to hold ordinary conversations, modern mages don't know enough to read inscriptions that aren't about magic. To make things more difficult, the Atlanteans and their heirs apparently never standardized their script. In one ruin, a runic inscription might use the runes as an alphabet. (And over the millennia, mages have devised several alphabets using Atlantean runes, with no connection to each other.) In another ruin, the runes might be assembled in twos or threes to form a syl-

labary of simple glyphs. In a third, runes might be combined in glyphs of varying complexity to form ideograms similar to those of Chinese. If a mage can't recognize which system an ancient writer used, translation is impossible.

Translating a runic inscription that isn't magical, therefore, calls for an extended Research roll, accumulating however many successes the Storyteller considers appropriate. This assumes a translator already knows High Speech — and that an inscription is in High Speech. Translation won't be easy, because modern mages know so little of this mystic tongue, but a Seeker can win some renown just by revealing something new about the language. Translating a passage in an unknown language, using a script whose characters have unknown meaning, with no parallel text in a known language, is quite simply impossible. Seekers often encounter such frustration.

High Speech Extended

Saying that High Speech can express concepts unrelated to spellcasting is a significant change from how **Mage: The Awakening** describes this mystic tongue. Ancient inscriptions that provide clues and warnings, however, are a classic and important part of stories about exploring long-lost ruins and seeking ancient lore. Atlantean ruins need inscriptions, and characters need some way to read them. Instead of creating a separate Atlantean language and writing system, it seems easier for Storytellers to extend the possibilities for High Speech and Atlantean runes.

Given time, Seekers may discover enough High Speech to treat it as a real language, instead of a jargon for spellcasting. In this case, the character must buy a separate Language Merit, "Atlantean."

Of course, modern mages can assemble their own writing systems using Atlantean runes. These writing systems tend to be simple ciphers, used to write in everyday language — just using an Atlantean rune to represent a letter in English, a Japanese *kana* syllable or the like. These ciphers are easily decrypted, given a large sample of text. Slightly more erudite mages use Atlantean runes to write in Hebrew, Latin or other traditional tongues of occult lore. The orders recognize that such ciphers are magically worthless; however, they may find use to hide mages' communications from Sleepers. Mages of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and other literate cultures sometimes used ciphers like this, to the occasional bafflement of archaeologists.

Magical Symbolism

The Atlantean runes consist of a few dozen characters composed of straight lines, curves, loops and dots. Some represent Arcana or Practices. These simple characters are combined into glyphs, such as the Practice-plus-Arcanum symbols. Complex

glyphs can describe the nature of a spirit, the interests of a cabal or the spells within a grimoire.

Just as rites codify magic practice based upon research, so, too, do Atlantean glyphs allow mages to record and refine magical knowledge. Tasks such as creating, developing and codifying a new rite, or tracing the development of a spirit's Ban are best accomplished with a writing system that describes Supernal phenomena, such as the best combination of Practices and Arcana to achieve a desired effect. Mortal writing could not hope to describe the necessary concepts. In addition, the same runes can be combined in different ways to emphasize particular Practices or Arcana, giving flexibility to a highly rigid and formulaic system. Combining runes to form magically potent glyphs and sigils — or analyzing such glyphs to find their meaning — requires some artistic intuition as well as technical knowledge of magic.

Spellcasting

Atlantean runes find their most important use in spellcasting. Through Atlantean runes, a mage may be able to work greater wonders than normal due to the knowledge and power recorded in the glyph. Droll willworkers have called glyphs bookmarks in reality — shortcuts to the Supernal Realms that allow a mage to focus her magic and leverage her power. This stronger connection to the Supernal helps stabilize a spell so it lasts longer.

Much like High Speech, however, the power of Atlantean script depends on a mage who can understand its meaning. A Sleeper cannot invest glyphs with a sympathetic link to the Supernal Realms — at least, not often. Freak events do occur. Sleepers who meditate on the glyphs engraved on an Artifact, or inscriptions copied from an ancient ruin, sometimes gain flashes of insight. Most of the time, Sleepers forget what they learned just as quickly, or their mind twists the insight into channels that don't require throwing out everything they know about reality.

For instance, James Churchward claimed that hundreds of flat, clay dolls unearthed in Mexico were actually tablets inscribed with "Naacal" characters he interpreted through "psychic intuition." Archaeomancers are sure Churchward's revelations are nonsense, but they can't rule out that the decorations of a few dolls might include a few Atlantean runes. Less happily, Sleepers (or unwitting Sleepwalkers) have activated Artifacts and unleashed dire things by thinking too hard on Atlantean glyphs.

Enchantment

As a natural extension from using runes and glyphs to extend a spell's duration, mages also use Atlantean symbols to invest permanent magical power into material objects. The Atlanteans themselves inscribed glyphs on their Artifacts; many of the more complex sigils now used in grimoires, Enhanced Items and Imbued Items were originally copied from such Artifacts or from inscriptions found in ruins. The visible form of a glyph ties the threads of Mana into a knot of power, and binds that mystic structure into a physical vessel.

Unusual Formats

Runic inscriptions and glyphs are not always obvious. Over the millennia, cunning mages have devised ways to hide Atlantean symbols so Sleepers don't see obviously magical sigils in a book, painting or architectural ornament. These methods have analogues among Sleeper artistry.

Muslim calligraphers and architects, for instance, sometimes hide Arabic script among the interlacing borders of an illuminated manuscript or a mosaic band around the wall of a building. Mages can do the same. Runes strung together in a cursive script can be disguised with lines and marks to form an ornamental band. For instance, a grimoire could be disguised as an ordinary book with arabesque borders around its illustrations: the rites are actually coded into borders.

Chinese calligraphers work a similar trick. In addition to the familiar forms, Chinese amulet-writers developed variant scripts in which the ideograms became smooth, squiggly lines, blocky fretwork or rounded blobs. Calligraphers hid the squiggly-line script in illustrations such as the ripples drawn on a stream, or the twists of a cherry-tree's branches. The lumps and hollows of a carved inkstand or meditation stone could encode the blobby script. Ideograms in ordinary script could be stretched and twisted into new forms; for example, a drawing of the God of Literature made from the two characters of his name, with a few extra brush-strokes to complete the image of a human face and body. Asian mages often hide glyphs and sigils in similar ways. A skilled and perceptive mage can reconstruct a glyph's original form, if this is needed.

For other possibilities, glyphs could be hidden in the elaborate filigree of a piece of jewelry. The short streaks and daubs of pain in an Impressionist or abstract painting could disguise glyphs as well. A patient mage could even take a cue from the cherry-tree example and grow bonsai whose twisting branches form runes, for a living talisman.

Runes might even be "represented" in non-physical ways. For instance, a mage casting a ritual spell might twist her body into a yoga posture that echoes the form of a rune. The steps of a dance could also trace the path of runes and glyphs, invisibly writing sigils of power on the ground.

Conclusions

When the Exarchs and Oracles broke the cosmos in their war, the surviving mages lost much of High Speech and the Atlantean writing system. The Atlantean orders preserved only specialized words and glyphs used in their rites. As the orders pulled away from each other in mutual suspicion, bitterness and anger at the destruction of Atlantis, still more of the Supernal lore was lost.

What aspects of Atlantean language and writing could be recovered if mages once again worked together? If the orders cooperated in a systematic program of Seeking, and shared the fruits of their explorations? What tomes, Artifacts and rites await discovery, adding not only magical power to individual mages, but expanding all willworkers' knowledge of the Atlantean High Speech and Atlantean glyphs?

A few idealists suggest that a complete knowledge of Atlantean language and writing could offer a greater treasure than any rite or Artifact. They hope that by assembling non-magical evidence for Atlantis, such as a language and writing system that existed millennia before any others known, they can prove the lost land's existence to Sleepers. This would be a significant blow against the Lie, and a step in liberating Sleepers from the secret rule of the Exarchs. If the Sleepers would believe in the Awakened City, and in the powers its residents possessed, perhaps more people would Awaken — enough to build a new, better Atlantis in the modern world. These mages say it's not enough to loot the last treasures of Atlantis from the Ruined Temple. The great challenge for today's willworkers, these mages insist, is to build the Temple anew.

Some things are best left forgotten.

But why should that hold us back?

The ancients hoarded their magic and sealed it in secret redoubts, hidden from Sleepers and the debased spells of our age. The lords of these storehouses are long gone, but their enchantments remain, enigmas to confound us, their heirs in magic. In some of these places, the guardians charged with their protection still wait, ready to destroy interlopers.

But I have a map, and I know certain secrets.

Are you with me?

— Athos, Mysterium explorer

This book includes:

- The legends of Atlantis throughout the ages, including many forgotten versions of the myth of the Awakened City
- Temple guardians, enchanted items, and all manner of creatures found near Atlantean ruins
- The secret Atlantean “temples” of Astral Space



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