Covenants

The covenant is the single most important character in most **Ars Magica** sagas, because it is the character that all the players contribute to. It is their home, a secure base, and the place where they study, improve, and create magical wonders. Thus, coming up with a concept for the covenant is very important, as it will have a strong influence on the feel of the saga. A saga based on a covenant located in a hidden regio in the heart of Constantinople will be very different from one based in a covenant occupying a large castle on an island off the coast of Scotland, and different again from one based in a covenant in a magical glade in the heart of a haunted forest in Brittany.

Although the covenant concept has an influence, it isn't all-defining. Many stories will, after all, take the magi away from their covenant, and if the troupe decides that it likes a particular sort of story, most of the stories may take place away from home. Covenants can even be moved, a proposition that will create a lot of stories in itself. This means that you should choose a concept you like when you start out, without worrying that you will be stuck with it forever.

*Through the Aegis*

*Through the Aegis* contains five fully developed covenants, one for each of the seasons and one that has been through Winter and returned to Spring. The magi and other important inhabitants are given full statistics, and the buildings and resources of the covenant are described in full. While they are nominally set in particular Tribunals, they could be moved to another Tribunal and serve as your troupe’s covenant; the players could even play the characters described there. They can also serve as a source of inspiration, and as places for the player characters to visit during the saga.

Aegis of the Hearth

The spell *Aegis of the Hearth* (page @@) is one of the most important spells in the Order of Hermes. While Parma Magica gives individuals magic resistance, *Aegis of the Hearth* (often just 'the Aegis') gives it to a whole covenant. The number of Hermetic covenants with no Aegis at all can most likely be counted on the fingers of one hand, and most covenants want to have the strongest Aegis that they can manage. Thus, if none of the player characters start knowing the spell, you should include it in the covenant library, probably as both a Lab Text and a casting tablet (see later), and make learning it a high priority for someone. Casting the Aegis from a casting tablet is possible, but it is risky in the long term. Note that if the covenant includes magi who are older than the player characters, the player characters need not be able to cast it.

Covenant Seasons

The Order of Hermes traditionally classifies covenants into four seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. These informal labels refer to the different stages of a covenant's life, and most magi agree on them most of the time. They are also an important part of the covenant concept, because a lot of features depend on the season.

Spring

Spring covenants are just getting started. They are recently established, have few resources, and are generally populated by few and weak magi. Many Spring covenants fail to reach a later season.

You should create a Spring covenant if you want a pioneer feel, with relatively young magi creating their own home from nothing. They may not be on a literal frontier, although they should be quite some distance from any other covenants to avoid immediate conflicts over resources.

In most cases, a Spring covenant already has basic buildings when the saga starts, and the magi have already created their own laboratories. Non-magi have been gathered, and the magi may even have been living in the covenant for a season or two.

However, it is perfectly possible to start with nothing but a Magic aura, and roleplay every stage of building the covenant. In some ways, this is a good way for new troupes to start, because there will be a lot of stories and not much laboratory work early on, which gives everyone a chance to become comfortable with the rules step by step. On the other hand, more experienced troupes who want to get straight into laboratory work might find that frustrating.

A Spring covenant could also be founded in the ruins of an older, failed covenant. This provides a good source of stories right on the covenant's doorstep, along with the chance of finding Hermetic resources as treasure (something that otherwise tends to be implausible).

Finally, a Spring covenant could refer to the state of mind of new, young members of a Winter covenant. The covenant has decayed so far that it isn't really a matter of reinvigorating it — the characters are effectively starting again. Much like the ruin, this provides the opportunity to find Hermetic resources lost within the covenant structure, and this is a perfect opportunity to have a beta-storyguide run all the 'covenant stories'.

Vernus

The covenant of Vernus is a Spring covenant, just starting out in the world. It is a weak covenant (see the Base Covenant Resources insert on page @@), and is Struggling (see page @@).

At the moment, the covenant consists of a number of tents pitched around a standing stone, in a clearing in the middle of a faerie forest. The stone and clearing exist in a magical regio (see page @@), although there are several ways to get into it. The base level has a Magic aura of 2, and the covenant itself is located on a level with an aura of 5. The magi hope that there are higher levels, where they will be able to put their laboratories, but they haven't found them yet.

The main concern for the covenant is mundane resources. They don't even have a regular supply of food, and the current plan is to cut a new village out of the forest, and fill it with peasants who will farm for the magi. Various schemes for getting mundane income, such as growing grapes, finding a silver mine, or pretending to find a silver mine and just creating silver, are all under consideration.

The covenant's only vis source is contested, with the faeries who guard it. The nature of the contest varies from year to year, and is never simple combat. The best thing to do is take a wide variety of characters, so that they will be able to handle whatever the faeries decide to throw at them.

Summer

Summer covenants are firmly established, and still growing. The length of a covenant's Summer determines its ultimate power, and has a strong influence on the length of time for which it endures.

A Summer covenant is still growing, but the player characters do not have to worry about establishing it. In addition, they are probably not the oldest members of the covenant, so they do have local older magi to turn to for advice and assistance, if necessary. This makes a Summer covenant an excellent choice if your troupe consists of one or two experienced **Ars Magica** players and several newcomers. The experienced players can share the job of storyguide for the covenant, and thus provide in-character advice and guidance as the elder magi.

On the other hand, Summer covenants are not normally so organized that the older magi can give orders to the younger magi. Thus, the player characters are generally free to follow their own plots.

Aestas

Aestas is a Summer covenant. It is of medium power (see page @@), and has become the Mundane Lord of the local village.

The covenant itself is a large castle, although the fortifications are not as up-to-date as they might be. Each magus lives in a separate tower in the curtain walls, while the central keep holds the library, council chamber, and dining hall. The covenfolk live in buildings built both inside and outside the curtain walls, and at the moment a lot of the covenant supplies are kept outside the walls, which rather lessens their value.

The magi have chosen one of their number, a magus with the Gentle Gift, to serve as their liaison with the outside world, and he has been forced to become good at politics. So far the covenant has managed to put off the need to swear fealty to any mundane by bartering favors and threats for a little more neutrality, but it is extremely unlikely that they will be able to put this off forever. They are thus trying to get a 'tame' noble who can accept the covenant's fealty but won't try to actually exercise his rights.

Aestas keeps a very low profile in Hermetic politics, and is always helpful and generous to visiting magi. They use their wealth to provide extremely good hospitality to Redcaps, and other magi are welcome to stay and study in their library. They even allow magi to copy books, for a small fee. As a result, most magi think that they are harmless and well-meaning, and as long as they avoid major interference with mundane politics they think the Quaesitores will leave them alone.

Autumn

An Autumn covenant is living off past glories, but has yet to go seriously into decline. The most powerful covenants in the Order are in Autumn, as the Autumn that follows a long and vigorous Summer can last for centuries.

There are, essentially, two ways to play an Autumn covenant. In one, the player characters are young members of the covenant, and have to work with the elder magi. In the other, player characters themselves are the elder magi.

Playing junior magi is a good option for players who like the idea of the game, but have no idea what their characters would do, as long as the storyguide does have ideas. The senior magi can send the player characters to accomplish certain tasks, and as they succeed and prove themselves they will naturally be granted more independence, so that as the players reach the point of wanting to follow their own projects, their characters have the freedom to do so.

Playing elder magi is only for experienced players, if only because the first step is creating elder magi, and that requires you to be familiar with the magic rules. It makes for a very different saga style, as the magi are extremely powerful. See the Sagas chapter, page @@, for suggestions.

Autumn covenants can be at various stages of their Autumn. A covenant just out of Summer would be vigorous, but turning more and more to conserving what it has rather than expanding. A covenant in the heart of Autumn would be focused on conservation, and doing a good job of it. As Winter approaches, conservation becomes less effective, but the members of the covenant are reluctant to strike out into new ways of doing things. At any stage, there might be some large threat at the heart of the covenant that could tip it instantly into Winter if uncontained, or some promise that could put the covenant back in Summer if it was understood. Both are possible, and both could even be the same thing.

Autumnus

Autumnus is a powerful Autumn covenant; a powerful covenant (page @@) with Autumn Power (page @@).

The physical structure is a single enormous building, covering the whole of a mountain peak and kept warm and habitable by magic. The entrances to the building are protected with magic as well as solid mundane doors, and the need to climb a mountain first makes a serious attack very difficult indeed. Inside, the halls and corridors are opulent, with minor enchanted devices all over the place.

There are over a dozen magi in the covenant, and the oldest four form a ruling council. They are the only magi with unrestricted access to the covenant's resources, and the most junior magi must obey orders from the council if they wish to retain their membership. The council is still composed of relatively wise magi (that is, relative to most magi...), however, so the orders are not onerous, and are for the covenant's good. Magi are still keen to join, as the resources available to even the youngest members are amazing.

Autumnus has another, much smaller, covenant in a different Tribunal under its protection. Young magi are often given the job of going to help this covenant, which is occasionally awkward, as they are younger than the older magi at the other place. However, having solid contacts in another Tribunal is politically extremely useful, as another strong Autumn covenant is a major rival. The origins of the rivalry are embroidered whenever they are told, but basically the Tribunal isn't big enough for two covenants of this power; they found themselves constantly stepping on each other's toes. The struggle has stayed within the Code so far, but if one side starts to clearly lose, it may not stay there.

Winter

Winter covenants are in decline, and on their way to oblivion. They are normally filled with old and peculiar magi, with little interest in recruiting new blood. However, sometimes new recruits are brought in, and the covenant moves round to Spring once more.

Pulling a Winter covenant through to Spring is a good saga concept for players who want the freedom of the Spring saga, but also want to be living somewhere with history, lost books, and whole towers where no-one has set foot in years. The difference from a Spring saga set in a Winter covenant is mainly that the player characters have to deal with the old inhabitants; magi who are far older and more powerful than they are, but who are interested only in their own bizarre research.

Experienced players might also want to play the old magi in a Winter covenant, concentrating on their own interests as the covenant slowly crumbles around them.

Hiems

Hiems is a Winter covenant. It is of medium power (page @@), and Winter Ruins (page @@). The covenant now has only six magi, whereas once it had over a dozen, and the number of covenfolk has shrunk by an even greater factor. As a result, the complex of caves, tunnels, and towers covering most of a magical forest is largely uninhabited. The routes between the residences of the remaining magi and the central facilities (library, council room, kitchens) are well-maintained, but there are other areas that no-one has entered for years.

One of the old laboratories was in the lair of a dragon, and it seems that the dragon, or at least a dragon, has come back. The covenfolk have reported seeing it, and some have simply disappeared while traveling from one part of the covenant to another. Such disappearances are also attributed to the dragon.

Hiems, in its prime, had many vis sources, but now it hardly has the resources to harvest them all, and other covenants are trying to move in. Hiems has to contest the other covenants for the rights to use the sources, and it isn't clear how much longer they will continue to win.

Still, the covenant had more resources once, and many of them are likely to still be somewhere in the ruins. New magi could turn it back into the power it once was, or simply provide food for the dragon.

Covenant Situations

The situation of a covenant is largely independent of its season and power. A more powerful covenant simply has more resources available to deal with its situation. There are some exceptions, of course. A powerful covenant cannot really be struggling, for example. The following suggestions are nothing more than that; if your troupe wants a different situation, you can create one. The covenant of Aegaea in the Theban Tribunal, for example, is located in a palace within a Faerie regio on the floor of the Aegean Sea, which its members claim is the palace of Poseidon. Almost all the covenfolk are faerie tritones, and the buildings are opulent with treasure that certainly seems genuine, as long as it remains within the regio (*The Sundered Eagle,* page 81).

These situations are built out of Boons and Hooks, which are described in detail from page @@, and you can use them in the same way to build your own situations. The rules for this are given in Customized Covenant Creation.

Autumn Power

The covenant is a strong Autumn covenant, a position that brings its own problems in the form of rivals, political involvement, and hierarchy.

**Hooks:** Hermetic Politics (Minor), Protector (Minor), Castle (Major), Rival (Major), Superiors (Major)

**Boons:** Aura (Minor) x2, Edifice (Minor), Hidden Resources (Minor), Prestige (Minor), Curtain Walls and Mural Towers (Major), Wealth (Major)

Mundane Lord

The covenant has become the lord of a number of mundanes. This may be in direct breach of the Code, so the members likely spend a lot of time making sure that the Quaesitores never become too interested in their activities.

**Hooks:** Castle (Major), Mundane Politics (Major)

**Boons:** Edifice (Minor), Tower Keep (Minor), Wealth (Minor), Prestige (Major)

Powerful Location

The covenant is located in a place of great magical power. In many ways this is helpful, but it brings its own problems.

**Hooks:** Monster (Minor) x2, Regio (Major)

**Boons:** Aura (Minor) x5. (The covenfolk must live within this aura, so almost all suffer from warping. See page @@.)

Struggling

The covenant has few resources, and some enemies, and has to work hard just to survive. Stories are likely to concern very mundane issues, such as food supplies, at least until the crisis is resolved.

**Hooks:** Contested Resource (Minor), Poverty (Major)

**Boons:** Aura (Minor) x2, Regio (Minor), Seclusion (Minor)

Urban

The covenant is hidden in a regio in a city. While this makes reaching a market easy, it brings its own problems. Tolosa Paratge, in the Provençal Tribunal, is an example of such a covenant (*Faith & Flame,* page 38).

**Hooks:** Urban (Major)

**Boons:** Aura (Minor), Regio (Minor), Wealth (Minor)

Winter Ruins

The covenant is in part of the structure of a Winter covenant. It may be the current state of the old covenant, or a refoundation. The contents of the ruins are a major concern to the characters.

**Hooks:** Contested Resource (Minor) (x3), Monster (Major), Poverty (Minor)

**Boons:** Aura (Minor) x2, Edifice (Minor) x2, Hidden Resources (Minor) x3

Customized Covenant Creation

The covenant should be created by the whole troupe, working together. The first step is to create a solid covenant concept, before picking the numbers to fill it out. In covenant creation, the troupe can simply choose how powerful the covenant is, so such things need to be decided in advance.

Baseline

The base for covenant creation is a stone building with enough room to accommodate the magi and other covenfolk, located in a level 3 Magic aura. The covenant has no magical resources, but has sufficient mundane resources to ensure that the magi do not have to worry about day-to-day upkeep. There is about one grog (fighter) per magus, and there are about two other covenfolk, such as servants and craftsmen, per magus. The available craftsmen include a blacksmith, carpenter, and maybe a bookbinder, but more exotic specialists are not present. While the covenant is hard to get into, it could not withstand a serious military assault without the use of magic. The Aging Modifier for a basic covenant is 0.

The covenant could be an isolated tower on a hill, a group of buildings in a clearing in forest, a complex of caves, or any number of other things. At any rate, it is somewhat removed from mundane society.

Base Covenant Resources

The following three sets of covenant resources are provided as examples. If you want to save time, just pick one for your covenant. The Customized Covenant Creation rules on page @@ allow you to tailor the covenant more precisely to your needs, but it does take longer.

The Arts and Abilities covered by the books, spells available as Lab Texts or Casting Tablets, and types of vis available should be chosen based on the interests of the player character magi.

**Weak Covenant**

Library: Three Art summae (level 15 quality 12, level 12 quality 12, and level 6 quality 21), one Ability summa (level 4 quality 10), and four tractatus (qualities 11, 10, 10, and 9), on either Arts or Abilities.

Lab Texts: 200 levels of spells, none over level 25.

Vis: 1 or more sources, providing a total of 4 pawns per year. No stocks.

200 Build Points spent (see below).

This is suitable for a Spring covenant, or for the resources accessible in a Winter covenant.

**Medium Covenant**

Library: Eight Art summae (three at level 16, quality 15, five at level 6, quality 21), three Ability summae (one at level 5, quality 20, and two at level 6, quality 15), and seven tractatus on either Arts or Abilities (two quality 11, four quality 10, and one quality 9)

Lab Texts: 1,000 levels of spells, none over level 40.

Vis: At least three sources, each providing a different Art, yielding a total of 20 pawns per year. Vis stocks of 100 pawns, spread between Arts as desired. The stocks may all be of a single Art.

Enchanted Items: 200 levels of enchanted items, with a highest level effect of 40. At least 100 levels should be spent on lesser enchanted devices with an effect level of 20 or lower.

800 Build Points spent (see below).

This is suitable for a covenant in early Summer, or for the resources immediately available to young magi in an Autumn covenant.

**Powerful Covenant**

Library: Seventeen Art summae, at least one in each Art (one at level 20, quality 11; one at level 18, quality 13; five at level 16, quality 15; ten at level 6, quality 21), six Ability summae (three at level 6, quality 17, and three at level 5, quality 20), and thirty tractatus (12 quality 11, 9 quality 10, 9 quality 9), on either Arts or Abilities.

Lab Texts: Lab Texts for 2,500 levels of spells, with no upper limit on the level of individual spells.

Vis: At least five sources, each providing a different Art, yielding a total of 50 pawns per year. Vis stocks of 250 pawns, divided freely between the Arts.

Enchanted Items: 500 levels of enchanted items. At least one should have an effect level over 30, and at least 100 levels should be spent on lesser enchanted devices with an effect level of 20 or lower.

2000 Build Points spent (see below).

This is suitable for a covenant in high Summer, the total resources of a relatively weak Autumn covenant, or the resources available to young magi in a very powerful Autumn covenant.

Accessible Power Level

The first choice is the level of power within the covenant that is accessible to the player character magi. This is a simple choice, depending on the sort of saga the players want. Novice players should start with a medium or low power level.

**Power Level Build Points Maximum Lab Text Level/Level of Effect in Enchanted device Minimum Age**

Low 0-300 25 None

Medium 300-1250 40 10 years

High 1250-2500 No limit 50 years

Legendary 2500+ No limit 100 years

Maximum Level: The highest level of a single Lab Text or a single effect in an enchanted device. In the case of a device, the level includes all modifications (see Magical Enchantments on page @@ for more details).

Minimum Age: The minimum number of years that have passed since the foundation of the covenant.

Note that this is the power that the player magi can access at will. An autumn covenant with a strict hierarchy might only have a low level of accessible power, because the player magi are not allowed to use most of the resources.

Resources

Resources are very important to magi, as they determine how quickly they can learn and improve their Arts and other magical abilities. Books are described in the Long Term Events chapter (page @@), Lab Texts and Casting Tablets in the Laboratory chapter (page @@), and vis and its uses in the Hermetic Magic, Laboratory, and Long Term Events chapters. Enchanted items are described in the Laboratory chapter (page @@).

Library

The library is probably the most important resource in most covenants. Unlike vis, books can be studied over and over again, being used by all the members of the covenant. Rules for books can be found on page @@; there are two types, summae, which can be studied multiple times, and tractatus, which can be studied only once. Summae have a level, and once a character's level in the subject of the book equals that level, the book is no longer of any use. Tractatus can be used by characters at any level. The quality of a book is a measure of how good it is; higher is better.

**Art Summae:** Add level and quality together. Each summa costs one Build Point per point in the total. The level must not exceed 20; higher-level summae can only be obtained through play. The quality must not exceed 11 plus 1 for every point below 20 of the level, and must not exceed 22 in any case.

**Art Summa Cost: Level + Quality**

**Art Summa Level Limit: 20**

**Art Summa Quality Limit: 11 + (20 – Level), or 22, whichever is lower**

**Ability Summae:** Add quality and three times level together, and each summa costs one Build Point per point in the total. The level must not exceed 8. The quality must not exceed 11 plus 3 for every point below 8 of the level, and must not exceed 22 in any case.

**Ability Summa Cost: Quality + 3 x Level**

**Ability Summa Level Limit: 8**

**Ability Summa Quality Limit: 11 + 3 x (8 – level), or 22, whichever is lower**

**Tractatus:** A tractatus in either Arts or Abilities costs one Build Point per point of quality. The quality may not exceed 11.

**Tractatus Cost: Quality**

**Tractatus Quality Limit: 11**

Lab Texts

Lab Texts allow magi to research magical creations much more quickly than they could without assistance. By far the most common form of Lab Text is the Lab Text for inventing a formulaic spell, and most covenants have many levels of such Lab Texts in their libraries.

Five levels of Lab Texts cost one Build Point. See the power level table on page @@ for the maximum level of Lab Text that can be taken.

**Lab Text Cost: 1 Build Point per five levels**

Casting Tablets

Casting Tablets allow magi to cast Formulaic or Ritual spells that they do not know (see page @@). Not all covenants have such things, and those that do normally have them for spells that they do not need very often. Some covenants cast their *Aegis of the Hearth* from a Casting Tablet, but that is rather risky.

Five levels of Casting Tablets cost two Build Points, and use the same level limits as Lab Texts.

**Casting Tablet Cost: 2 Build Points per five levels**

Vis

Vis sources, which provide vis every year, are extremely valuable resources for a covenant. Vis stocks are also useful, and most covenants try to have some in store for emergencies. See page @@ for more information on raw vis, and page @@ for information on vis sources.

**Vis Sources:** Vis sources cost five Build Points for every pawn of vis available each year.

**Vis Supplies Cost: 5 Build Points per pawn of vis per year**

**Vis Stocks:** Vis stocks cost one Build Point per five pawns of vis in store. Once vis stocks are used, they are gone until the characters can find, in play, more vis.

**Vis Stocks Cost: 1 Build Point per 5 pawns of vis**

Enchanted Items

An enchanted item costs two Build Points for every five levels of effect, including modifications. See the power level table on page @@ for the maximum level of any individual effect.

**Enchanted Item Cost: 2 Build Points per five levels of effect, including modifications**

Specialists

Specialists are non-magus NPC members of the covenant with useful skills. They are defined only by the abilities they use to serve the covenant, rather than by a full character sheet, and can include guards as well as teachers and craftsmen. Characters created as grogs or companions need not be paid for with Build Points.

**Teachers:** A teacher bought with Build Points is employed by the covenant, and available to teach as directed by the magi two seasons per year. The cost is the sum of his Communication and Teaching total and his highest score in the Abilities he will teach. Teachers cannot have The Gift, and thus cannot teach the Hermetic Arts. They may have other Supernatural Abilities, however. Their Abilities are limited by his age, as for newly created characters (see page @@).

**Teacher Cost: Communication + Teaching + Highest Ability Score**

**Score Limits: By age (see page @@)**

**Others:** Other kinds of specialist are less expensive, costing a number of Build Points equal to their highest score in the Ability they use to serve the covenant. Their Ability scores are initially limited by age, as for teachers.

**Specialist Cost:** **Highest Ability Score**

**Score Limit: By age (see page @@)**

Hooks

Hooks are features of the covenant that lead to stories. Hooks come in two kinds, Major and Minor, just as character Flaws do. However, there are no Hooks that simply weaken the covenant; they are all concerned with story ideas. A covenant may have as many Hooks as the players want, but as these choices are indications of the stories that the players want, the troupe should not take so many that some never come up. That would just disappoint the players who wanted that sort of story. Hooks do not provide Build Points. Instead, they allow the players to take Boons (see page @@) for the covenant. A Major Hook provides three points that can be spent on Boons, while a Minor Hook provides one point.

The Hooks listed below are merely examples. A Hook can be anything that the troupe thinks will make the saga more interesting, and *Covenants* provides many more examples.

Minor Hooks

**Contested Resource:** Access to one of the covenant's accessible resources is contested with someone, or something, else. Thus, getting the resource requires a story. As a rule, one story means that the resource is available for five years. The resource in question should be of sufficient importance that the magi will want to bother with the story.

This Hook may be taken multiple times to cover multiple resources. It may be Unknown when the saga starts, and only become known when the first contest comes due.

**Favors:** The covenant owes favors to someone or something, possibly another covenant, or possibly a mundane lord, bishop, or supernatural creature. This person cannot give the covenant orders, but the covenant is really obliged to help if they are in difficulties.

This Hook could be Unknown, if the obligations were incurred by other members of the covenant who have neglected to tell the player characters.

**Hermetic Politics:** The covenant is engaged in the elaborate game of trading of favors that passes for politics in some Hermetic tribunals. When the saga begins, the covenant owes favors to three other covenants, but is owed three favors as well. The Coenobium Rhodanien, in the Provençal Tribunal, is notorious for its involvement in Hermetic politics, preventing the foundation of any covenants that it does not control over a substantial area of the tribunal (*Faith & Flame,* page 128).

**Monster:** A powerful supernatural creature lives near the covenant. The creature can be aligned with any realm, and should be too powerful for the player characters to defeat at the beginning of the campaign. This Hook may be Unknown. Circulus Ruber, the oldest covenant in the Hibernian Tribunal, is plagued by a Cailleach, an evil faerie hag who would love to tear the tower down, but cannot breach its *Aegis of the Hearth*. She takes her frustration out on travelers to and from the covenant (*The Contested Isle,* page 81).

**Poverty:** The covenant has only one Lesser source of income, with little or no surplus. This may suffice for day to day matters, but resources for major expenses require a story. This Hook can be Unknown, but probably not for very long

**Protector:** The covenant is responsible for protecting something, such as a village, a magical grove, or another, weaker, covenant. This Hook may be taken more than once, to represent multiple protectorates.

**Regio:** There is a regio on the covenant site, although the covenant is not in it. The magi do not know everything that is in the regio.

If the regio is not a Magical regio, being Divine, Faerie, or Infernal, that counts as an additional minor Hook. This Hook can be taken if the covenant is in a regio; in that case, it simply refers to a second regio.

**Rival:** Someone or some group is working to undermine or stymie the covenant. This rival may be much weaker than the covenant, as long as he is capable of causing problems worthy of stories. This Hook may be Unknown.

**Road:** The covenant is on an important mundane road, river, or sea route, so that people often turn up at the covenant, bringing or causing stories.

**Superiors:** The player characters are not in charge of the covenant, and while their superiors cannot order them about the player characters do not have control of covenant resources.

**Urban:** The covenant is in a small market town. Many of the inhabitants are not part of the covenant, and the covenant does not rule the town. Schola Pythagoranis, in the Stonehenge Tribunal, is located in the town of Cambridge, and deeply involved with the young university there (see *Art & Academe,* page 111).

Major Hooks

**Beholden:** The covenant owes favors to someone or something, possibly another covenant, or possibly a mundane lord, bishop, or mystical creature. The external party can give the covenant orders, although the covenant gets to decide on the best way to carry them out.

**Castle:** Castles serve three functions. A castle acts as a refuge from military forces, so it defends territory. A castle acts as a staging ground for armies, so it threatens to assault its neighbors. A castle costs a fortune to create and maintain, and in many places requires the permission of the king to build, so it communicates the status of its owner. A castle, then, is a claim to political power, backed with the threat of force.

A brigade of knights, supported by a castle, can travel about twenty miles in a day. This means they have the ability to raid targets up to ten miles away, and return to barracks before nightfall. All people who live within that radius, or have interests there, will rapidly become aware of the existence of the castle.

The temporal and spiritual authorities of an area cannot ignore a covenant that builds a castle. Covenants that hold castles must either be so secluded that there are no neighboring nobles to alarm, or must come to terms with the secular and religious powers of an area. *Covenants* provides more detail on the forms that castles can take, but this Hook applies to any structure that the local nobility see as a threat.

**Monster:** A powerful mystical creature lives inside the covenant. The creature can be aligned with any realm, and should be too powerful for the player characters to defeat at the beginning of the saga.

**Mundane Politics:** The covenant is deeply ensnared in mundane politics, and must keep the Quaesitores from becoming too interested in their activities.

**Poverty:** The covenant has no source of income at all, and no mundane resources to speak of. Even providing daily food requires stories. Note that this will set the tone of at least the beginning of the saga.

**Regio:** There is a regio on the covenant site, although the covenant is not in it. The magi do not know everything that is in the regio, and inhabitants of some sort occasionally come out and cause problems. If the regio is not magical, that counts as an additional Minor Hook.

**Rival:** Someone or some group is working to destroy the covenant, and has the resources for this to be possible. Thus, the rival must be of comparable power to the covenant. The Scholomance, in the Transylvanian Tribunal, is a school for future apprentices, agents, and companions. However, it is in a regio that is not always accessible, and has gained a reputation as a school for sorcerers, run by the devil himself. A papal legate has been ordered to investigate these rumors, and has established himself in the area (*Against the Dark,* page 91).

**Road:** The covenant is on an important mystical trail of some kind, so that supernatural creatures, from one or more realms, often turn up at the covenant. The covenant of Didyma, in the Theban Tribunal, is linked to the city of Miletos by the Sacred Way. This is an important mundane road, but also a major route from the faerie realm to the mundane world, and faeries often appear on it (*Through the Aegis,* Chapter 4).

**Superiors:** The player characters can be given orders by the ranking members of the covenant, which they must obey.

**Unknown:** An Unknown Hook is taken on by one of the players, who will act as storyguide for that aspect of the saga. The other players have no idea what sort of stories this Hook will generate. This must be something that the characters could realistically be unaware of.

The player who will storyguide the Hook chooses a Minor Hook to be the unknown Hook, but this counts as a Major Hook for the purposes of balancing Boons. Note that, if you do not want to play troupe-style, Unknown Hooks are inappropriate.

**Urban:** The covenant is in a city. The vast majority of the inhabitants are not part of the covenant, and the covenant does not rule the city.

Boons

Boons are things that make the covenant better. Each Minor Boon costs one point, while a Major Boon costs three points, and they must be paid for with Hooks. They cannot be bought with Build Points.

Minor Boons

**Aura:** A minor Boon increases the Magic aura of the covenant by one point. The players may take this Boon up to seven times, for a covenant in any Magic aura up to ten. All the covenfolk must live within the aura.

**Edifice:** An edifice is any major building erected to inspire awe. Covenants rarely need edifices: they could function equally well with many small buildings, made of cheaper and less ornamented materials. Many covenants, however, have at least one, to mark their wealth and power, to beautify their covenant, to arouse the envy of their peers, and to mark their covenant’s priorities. Edifices do not require the Castle Hook unless several of them, grouped together, form a structure as threatening as a castle.

The powerful covenant of Aedes Mercurii in the Provençal Tribunal has two sites, one of which is centered on a majestic stone edifice known as the Temple (*Templum).* The other site is carved out of the Pic du Midi d’Ossau, and contains many spectacular chambers (*Faith & Flame,* page 83).

**Hidden Resources:** The covenant has 250 Build Points of resources that are not immediately available to the player characters. These might actually be lost within the covenant, or be sections of the library that are only open to more highly-ranked magi. This Boon may be taken multiple times.

**Important Building:** The covenant has an additional large and important building, not mentioned in another Boon. This Boon may be taken multiple times, indicating a new structure each time. These buildings do not normally require the Castle Hook.

**Prestige:** The covenant, and its members, are well-regarded. This may be as a result of previous actions, such as defeating a monster, or because of continuing features of the covenant, such as a superb library. The covenant has a Reptuation score of 3 (see page @@). This Boon may be taken multiple times, with the prestige applying to a different group each time.

**Regio:** The covenant is located in a Magical regio which can be entered in several ways. The covenant may take measures to limit entry into the regio, but these are never perfect. The lost covenant of Val Negra, in the Provençal Tribunal, was one of the first covenants of the Order, founded by Flambeau himself, but it suffered greatly in the Schism War and now even its precise location is lost. It is generally believed to have been in a regio, and to have been lost because people forgot how to enter it (*Faith & Flame,* Chapter 9).

**Seclusion:** The covenant is in a very remote location, and very rarely gets visitors. This Boon cannot be taken in conjunction with the Road or Urban Hooks, and may be inappropriate for other Hooks. Redcaps still come to the covenant; this Boon restricts the number of random visitors.

**Shell Keep** (requires Castle): The shell keep is a modification of the motte and bailey castle. A motte is an artificial mound of earth, between ten and one hundred feet tall, on which a wooden tower is built. This tower overlooks and defends a courtyard that is surrounded by a ditch, embankment and wooden palisade. This courtyard is called the bailey. Some noblemen still build motte and bailey castles in 1220, although Hermetic magi rarely do.

Most motte and bailey castles have been strengthened since their creation with stonework. A problem for a nobleman planning improvements is that the motte dominates the bailey, and so cannot be ignored, but is not strong enough to hold a stone tower keep of the style found in more modern castles. They usually build a shell keep.

A shell keep is a stone wall, usually two stories high, that replaces the wooden palisade atop the motte. The wall is thin compared to other fortifications, between eight and fifteen feet, and has a crenelated walkway. Some structures like this are so large that it is not clear if they are a shell keep or a small inner bailey: Restormel in Cornwall is 40 yards across. Within its ring, buildings are constructed. These are usually wooden, or thin stone, and lack defensive use, but are far more spacious, airy and comfortable to live in than those of a conventional keep. The center of the ring of buildings is usually a courtyard.

The wooden palisade around the bailey has also been replaced, by a thick stone wall about thirty feet high. This has a crenelated walk. Entry to the castle now lies through the lowest story of a square tower, two stories high.

**Tower Keep** (requires Castle): Most tower keeps were built during the twelfth century and are, generally, four stories high and square or rectangular. Entry is via an external stairway to the second floor. The keep is usually topped with crenelated battlements. Newer keeps may be polygonal or, most recently, round in plan.

As an example of size, the two largest keeps of each type in Britain are Pembroke and Colchester. Pembroke is 80 feet high, 53 feet in diameter and has walls 16 feet thick at the base. Colchester’s keep is 151 feet long, 111 feet wide and over three stories high. Covenants that have works on this scale, which are relatively simple with Hermetic magic, will awe the local nobility.

The great tower of the covenant is surrounded by a courtyard, which contains wooden or stone buildings of no tactical value. The courtyard’s wall is made of thick stone, and is about thirty feet high. It is topped with a crenelated walk. A small tower, two stories high, defends the gate.

**Wealth:** The covenant is wealthy, even by the standards of other magi and the nobility. One existing Typical source of income is upgraded to Greater, providing enough money for the magi and covenfolk to live very comfortably, with a large surplus for spending on luxuries.

Major Boons

**Aura:** The aura of a limited area of the covenant increases by one point. It is only worth taking this if the aura of the whole covenant is already 5, as this then allows the covenfolk to live and work mostly outside the level 6 (or higher) aura, and thus avoid Warping. The covenant of Hedyosmos, in the Theban Tribunal, is built in a labyrinth of caves of steadily increasing Magic aura. Rumor has it that there is a gateway to the Magic Realm, the Underworld, or both in the strongest area of the aura. The magi of the covenant are famed for their mastery of magic of the earth, the dead, and curses, and light and speech are forbidden in common areas, giving the covenant a sinister reputation (*The Sundered Eagle,* page 66).

**Curtain Walls and Mural Towers (requires Castle):** A curtain wall is a crenelated wall around the bailey. The wall is around thirty feet high and between eight and twenty feet thick. It has an exterior of dressed stones and is filled with a rubble core. Mural towers protect a curtain wall.

Most mural towers built before 1200 are square in cross-section. Round and semicircular towers are the preferred types for contemporary building. Most towers are enclosed buildings, but some, particularly semicircular towers, have no masonry on the inside face, so that if they are captured, they do not provide the enemy with cover. Others are closed until they reach the level of the parapet, and are then open.

There are many covenants where the towers are badly sited, and many more where each tower is so filled with personal material that it impedes defense. Some castles have towers as far from the obvious avenue of attack as possible. This is because the towers were built before crossbows beaome popular weapons of siegecraft: they are intended as residences, and so have been placed away from harm.

The Bell Tower built at Dover Castle in 1189 exemplifies an opposite extreme, the archery tower. It is an octagonal, three story tower. Each story has six positions for crossbowmen, with the other sides used for a stairwell and a latrine. During peace, the tower is used for storage and to barrack its crossbowmen. A tower like this could not be used as a sanctum, unless the magus was willing to have his laboratory removed swiftly as enemies approached.

Magi understand that their desire to claim a tower on the curtain wall can seriously impair the castle’s effectiveness. Many covenants compromise between the residential and military possibilities of the tower, by having the lowest floor designed as a foxhole and filled only with those materials easily removed or destroyed, and the roof used as a sentry post and sniper’s nest.

A covenant designed with this Boon has as many mural towers as suits the troupe. Framlingham has thirteen towers, including two for its gate, while other castles built at the same time are rectangular baileys with a fat tower at each corner and two at the gate. There are two disadvantages to having a dozen towers: they are expensive to build, maintain and garrison, and they declare to all of your neighbors that you expect to rule the county someday. Every extra tower makes a castle more difficult to ignore.

This Boon includes one of the minor keep Boons given earlier (shell or tower).

The covenant of Montverte in the Normandy Tribunal occupies such a castle, and uses it as a base for raiding, as permitted by the Peripheral Code of that tribunal. They share the castle with its mundane lord, an arrangement that draws great suspicion. So far, however, the magi have managed to convince the Tribunal that they do not interfere in the lord’s mundane affairs (*The Lion and the Lily*, page 58).

**Prestige:** The covenant is famous. Its members are well-treated, as far as the Gift permits, and people are reluctant to cross the covenant openly. Within the Order, this would apply to domus magnae, or to the oldest and most powerful covenants. A covenant that repeatedly aided and defended its mundane neighbors could get such a reputation in the mundane world, although that level of activity would draw the attention of the Quaesitores. The covenant has a Reputation score of 9 (see page @@). This Boon may be taken several times, with the prestige applying to a different group each time.

**Regio:** The covenant is located in a Magical regio which can only be entered if people are guided by a native. The oppidum of Tablinum, in the Transylvanian Tribunal, is a storehouse of information and artefacts under the control of House Tremere. It exists in numerous regiones, which can only be entered by the use of spells, all of which require the possession of an Arcane Connection to the regio in question. Fortunately, the head of the oppidum, known as the curator (currently Nestor of Tremere) has a collection of these Arcane Connections (*Against the Dark,* page 58).

**Wealth:** The covenant is fabulously wealthy. One existing Typical source of income is upgraded to Legendary, providing enough money for the most sumptuous of quarters and the purchase of the most expensive materials and equipment. Such fortunate magi can live in kingly luxury, as can the covenfolk.

Covenant Loyalty

The mundane members of a covenant do not necessarily feel any strong loyalty towards it. They live and work there, and so they have a vested interest in its success, but they could have a wide range of feelings towards the resident magi. The effects of The Gift mean that most new residents at a covenant have serious doubts about the rulers of their home. For game purposes, this is captured by Prevailing Loyalty, the average 'Loyal to Covenant' Personality Trait of the covenant's servants, specialists and soldiers. It is determined by the social penalty of The Gift of the covenant's magi, the governance style of the covenant, and the individual actions of the magi. Its score determines how loyal the average member of the covenant is towards the ruling council and the covenant as a whole; this quantity also reflects the general morale of the covenant, and the willingness of the average member to act for the good or ill of its residents. More details on Prevailing Loyalty are given in *Covenants* (pages 36–41).

The 'Loyal to Covenant' Personality Trait of any individual within the covenant (such as a grog) can vary by up to three points either way from the average Prevailing Loyalty of the covenant, although in general a player character may choose any Loyal to Covenant value they wish. However, if this score is dramatically different from that of the covenant, taking a Personality Flaw to account for this difference is appropriate.

Sample Prevailing Loyalty Scores

Prevailing Loyalty Attitude of covenfolk

–6 The covenfolk are deeply unhappy, and only remain with the covenant out of fear of retribution. They are on the verge of revolt, and are likely to complain to the nobility or the clergy over the treatment they have received at the hands of the magi. If they do so, they will mention the involvement of dark magic. The average servant or grog is surly and uncommunicative, and obeys a magus only under threat of violence. Productivity (in terms of cost-saving measures and income which relies upon covenfolk) of the covenant is halved due to desertion and rebellion.

–4 The covenfolk as a whole are not happy working for the magi, but it is a steady form of employment, and their immediate needs are cared for; so self-interest keeps them in place. They do not believe that their masters will help them if they get into trouble, and have no illusions over their own position in the covenant.

–2 The covenfolk will not betray their masters under most circumstances, unless offered an appropriate inducement. Knowing that if the covenant fails they will lose their home and sustenance is usually enough to keep them in line. They are still wary around the magi.

0 The covenfolk are moderately content. They have learned to ignore the social penalty of The Gift of their masters in the main, and treat them as they would normally treat a member of the gentry.

+2 The covenfolk are unusually loyal to their masters. They are close-mouthed about their secrets around strangers, and resist most inducements to betray them.

+4 The magi are treated as staunch friends or honored as benevolent rulers, and most covenfolk treat them as they would close family members. They will not betray the covenant except under the most severe duress.

+6 The covenfolk go to extraordinary lengths in the service of their masters; it is not unknown for a grog to lay down his life for one. Covenant productivity is increased as the covenfolk go about their daily tasks with zeal. At this level of loyalty, the magi of the covenant are treated as near gods, and there is probably a great deal of superstition and ritual associated with daily life.

Calculating Prevailing Loyalty

To calculate Prevailing Loyalty, calculate the total modifier for each magus in the covenant as given in the nearby table, then divide by the number of magi in the covenant.

**Base Loyalty = total of Gift modifiers / number of magi**

Make a note of this Base Loyalty, for if the membership of the covenant changes, adjustments will need to be made to Base Loyalty without affecting any later modifications in loyalty due to player actions. The total **loyalty points** are calculated by applying modifiers to the Base Loyalty according to the environment of the covenant, their treatment by the magi, and the actions of the members of the council. Total loyalty points are converted into a **Prevailing Loyalty** score using the Advancement table for Abilities (ignoring any negative sign).

Gift Modifiers to Base Loyalty

The Gentle Gift or No Gift 0

The Gift –30

The Blatant Gift –105

Modifying Loyalty Due to Covenant Situation

Loyalty points are gained and lost for the equipment and provender given to the covenfolk; however, all of these things eat into the resources of the covenant. The covenant might offer better wages than is normal, or continue to care for retired members of their turb, in the manner of the Romans, by providing a pension. If the covenfolk have to work with inferior equipment, this impacts on loyalty, but likewise, soldiers given brand-new weapons and armor are more loyal than those who have to steal from vanquished enemies. Living conditions, which are determined by the local environment, also influence loyalty. Finally, competent specialists put in charge of the covenfolk increase loyalty through diligence and hard work. The covenant can employ up to three specialists who deal with the covenfolk on their behalf, rather than dealing with them directly. The **turb captain** mediates between the magi and the grogs, the **steward** mediates between the magi and the specialists and the **chamberlain** mediates between the magi and the servants. A single individual may perform up to two of these tasks (commonly steward and chamberlain), such a person is often called the **autocrat**. In this case, add loyalty points for both roles.

Situational Modifiers to Loyalty

**Living conditions**

Covenfolk have a –2 Aging modifier for living conditions –20

Covenfolk have a –1 Aging modifier for living conditions –10

Covenfolk have no Aging modifier for living conditions 0

Covenfolk have a +1 Aging modifier for living conditions +10

Covenfolk have a +2 Aging modifier for living conditions +20

**Equipment**

Covenfolk have only Inexpensive equipment –10

Covenfolk have Standard equipment 0

Covenfolk have Standard equipment and one piece each of Expensive equipment +10

Covenfolk have access to any equipment (within reason) they need +20

**Money**

Covenant grants no salary –20

Covenant grants a miserly salary (half standard Wages) –10

Covenant grants a standard salary (standard Wages) 0

Covenant grants a generous salary (1 ½ standard Wages) +10

Covenant grants a lavish salary (twice standard Wages) +20

Covenant provides a pension upon retirement (half Wages until death) +10

**Specialists**

Turb Captain + Prs + Leadership

Steward + Prs + Profession: Steward

Chamberlain + Prs + Profession: Chamberlain

Familiarity

Covenfolk gradually grow used to the magi with whom they live; more specifically, they grow to ignore the social penalty of The Gift. This only applies to the magi of the home covenant; 'foreign' Gifted individuals suffer the usual suspicion and distrust. Over longer periods of time, covenfolk are born into the covenant, and thus grow up familiar with their magi. For every year that a covenant exists it gains two loyalty points. The maximum number of points that can be gained through Familiarity is equal to the base loyalty points of the covenant (that is, those imposed by The Gift of the magi).

Changing Loyalty Due to Actions & Events

The actions of the magi may have an effect on the loyalty of the other members of the covenant. Unfortunately, it is easier for magi to reduce the loyalty of the covenfolk than to increase it. The nearby insert gives some examples of actions that might reduce Prevailing Loyalty. The column for Local Events reflects the fact that the magi are also blamed for events that are outside their control; the covenfolk may well believe that the magi could have prevented any problem.

These penalties should only be applied for events that happen in play, or that the players agree happened offstage. If the players choose not to describe something, it was not important enough to affect loyalty.

Loyalty can also be increased by the actions of the magi, if they personally do things that benefit the covenfolk. This is particularly true if the magi use obvious magic to benefit them. Use the penalty guidelines to judge how many points should be awarded. If one magus deliberately undoes damage inflicted by another magus, that might well avoid any effect on Prevailing Loyalty, although the covenfolk may come to have different attitudes to those magi.

Local events only increase loyalty if the magi are clearly responsible for them, most likely through the use of magic.

Example Loyalty Point penalties

Points Attitude Punishment Wound Local Event

1 Rudeness Minor Humiliation Superficial injury Minor hardship

3 Oblivious Public Humiliation Light Severe hardship

6 Malicious Restraint Medium Tragic event

9 Callous disregard Infliction of Pain Heavy Prolonged hardship

12 Deliberate Cruelty Brutal Punishment Incapacitating Widespread hardship

15 Heinous Malfeasance Brutal Punishment clearly enjoyed by magus Death Devastating event

Covenant Finances

Covenants almost always need some source of mundane wealth to obtain things like food and clothing. Even those that are entirely self-sufficient have a source of mundane wealth — it just provides food and clothing directly. It is entirely possible to play the game while leaving these matters entirely in the background, but this section is for troupes that want a bit more detail in the finances of the covenant, so that they can tell stories about increasing its wealth, or about dealing with threats to its mundane income. The *Covenants* supplement has a lot more detail on this topic, and *City and Guild* provides more general rules and background for craft and trading that covenants could also use to make money.

The Mythic Pound

Prices in this chapter are quoted in Mythic Pounds. This conveniently ignores the fact that Mythic Europe consists of a multitude of different realms with different coinages, whose relative value may be subject to significant variation. *City and Guild* and the Tribunal books contain more information on local currencies, but most sagas do not need that much detail.

One Mythic Pound is equivalent to a pound of silver, the annual income of a typical peasant, or enough money to maintain an average Hermetic laboratory for a year.

Income

Most covenants have a single source of income, although some have diversified with two or more distinct sources, and impoverished covenants have none. Broadly speaking, a source of income is a single large enterprise which provides a significant portion (usually most or all) of the covenant's income. For the sake of simplicity, a group of related enterprises (for example, agricultural land with a variety of crops, or a trading business with multiple trade routes plus incomes from rent) can be counted as a single source. It is probably not worth accounting for any trivial sources of income (for example, selling surplus honey for a few shillings at the local market), unless they provide several pounds or more per year. Each source of income comes in one of four categories, specifying broadly how much income it provides (see insert).

Source of Income Categories

**Source of Income: Relevant Hook or Boon: Typical Annual Income (pounds)**

(none) Poverty Hook (Major) 0

Lesser Poverty Hook (Minor) 40

Typical (none) 100

Greater Wealth Boon (Minor) 250

Legendary Wealth Boon (Major) 1000

Baseline

The base for covenant creation (a standard covenant with no Hooks or Boons relating to income) is a single Typical source of income. An alternative base option is to take two Lesser sources of income instead of one Typical source. (Although this provides a lower total income, there are benefits to such diversity. Should one source of income fail, the covenant has a backup, plus there are double the opportunities for income growth and for stories.)

This provides a fairly modest income by Hermetic standards (although a considerable sum by mundane standards), usually enough to cover the covenant's expenses. Unless a relevant Hook is taken, the source of income may be assumed to be mostly stable and discreet — something that the magi will not need to frequently concern themselves with. The annual income of 100 pounds is just a guideline, and assumes an average-sized covenant of about six magi. If your covenant has more magi, you may wish to adjust the income upwards by 15 pounds per additional magus. Likewise, if you have fewer magi, you may reduce the income by the same amount. For a covenant with only one Lesser source of income, the adjustment should be only six pounds per magus. If need be, you may also tweak the starting income relative to the starting yearly expenditure, so that at the start of the saga, the desired surplus or deficit is attained. Probably you will want to start the saga with the covenant having a small annual surplus, say 10 pounds or so, enough to cover a modicum of sundry expenses.

Sources of Income

The following sources of income can serve as inspiration for your covenant. *Covenants* contains more detail on all of these options, and any source can supply any level of income.

**Agriculture:** The foundation of medieval society, and unlikely to cause conflict unless the covenant has no right to the land it is using.

**Charity:** Someone is giving the covenant money, which is great, as long as they do not stop.

**Crime:** Hermetic magic can support some very effective robbers, and maybe the covenant can play (or even be — this is about the right period) Robin Hood.

**Fishing:** The watery equivalent of agriculture, and also unlikely to cause conflict.

**Forestry:** In addition to selling the wood, the magi might hunt and harvest the animals of the forest.

**Hospitality:** The covenant provides food, drink, and shelter to wealthy travelers.

**Livestock:** Cattle, sheep, and horses can all be raised to provide income.

**Manufacturing:** If the covenant employs enough craftsmen, it can make goods for sale.

**Mining:** Metals, salt, and coal are good, if unglamorous, sources of income. Dressed stone can also be sold. Gold or silver mines are spectacular, but may draw unwelcome attention.

**Money:** If the covenant has money already, it can invest or lend it to make more. The Church often disapproves of this, unfortunately.

**Service:** Skilled covenfolk might be able to sell their skills to others, everything from entertainers to mercenaries.

**Toll-Gathering:** A covenant that controls an important route can charge people to use it.

**Trade:** This involves moving goods from somewhere they are cheap to somewhere they are expensive, and selling them there.

**Wizardry:** Wizards can sell the products of their magic. This is looked down upon by many magi, and the Quaesitores may take an interest it, but handled well it can make a lot of money for relatively little effort.

Expenditure

The successful running of a covenant requires a multitude of different supplies and goods, which, if the covenant does not produce them itself, need to be purchased. At the most basic level, there is the need to feed, clothe, and shelter the covenfolk, and to provide laboratory equipment and writing materials for the magi. Beyond that, the grogs need weapons and armor, the defenses need to be maintained, luxury items might be purchased, construction may be undertaken, travel and hospitality need to be paid for, and so on. Even for a small spring covenant, these costs can easily amount to 50 pounds per year; larger covenants may spend five or even ten times that much.

To start with, you should determine the normal yearly expenditure of the covenant — the costs of the things which are the same every year. First, you need to determine how many people of each type live at the covenant (see the Covenfolk Categories section below). Then, total up the number of points of inhabitants, weapons and armor, and laboratories, and determine the cost in each category of expenditure listed below, or refer to the Yearly Expenditure summary. This total usually remains static unless the point totals change (for example, the covenant employs more covenfolk, or the magi upgrade their labs).

Every year, there is also at least one pound's worth (usually considerably more) of sundry expenses — one-off items of expenditure, such as travel, or the purchase of books. More details of such exceptional expenses can be found in *Covenants* and *City and Guild.* These extra costs should be noted, totaled at the end of the year, and added to the normal yearly expenditure to give you that year's total expenditure. Subtract this from the income for the year, and add any surplus to (or if there is a shortfall, subtract it from) the covenant's stores.

Covenfolk Categories

For the purposes of accounting, the covenfolk (that is, everyone living at the covenant apart from magi and companions) should be separated into the following categories. (For characters that have a dual vocation, simply pick the most appropriate category.)

**Craftsmen**: People with a Craft Ability, employed by the covenant to practice their craft and produce wares for the covenant, such as a smith, a carpenter, or a weaver. Craftsmen allow for cost savings in one or more categories of expenditure — the covenant does not need to spend so much on buying wares from outside. The exceptions are book-binders and illuminators, who do not save costs, but instead allow the covenant to produce quality books.

**Dependents**: Residents supported by the covenant who do no useful work, such as children, idle spouses, the infirm, and retirees. Children should only be counted from the age of five onwards (children younger than five can be assumed to consume a negligible amount of resources). Once they are old enough to work, children can be moved to another category.

**Grogs**: Full-time soldiers whose primary vocation is the martial defense of the covenant and its magi.

**Laborers**: Workers who gather food for the covenant, such as farmhands, herders, fishermen, or hunters. Laborers allow for cost saving on Provisions, since the covenant does not need to buy so much food.

**Servants**: Essential folk who prepare and serve the food, clean, and perform other household tasks, such as maids, cooks, bakers, errand-boys, stablehands, and the like.

**Specialists**: Individuals who occupy some important role in the hierarchy of running the covenant, such as an autocrat, a steward, a chamberlain, a turb captain, or a scribe. Hermetic apprentices also count as specialists.

**Teamsters**: People who are employed to procure provisions and supplies from elsewhere and transport them to the covenant, typically one or more market buyers and a team of wagoners or hauliers. Some covenants are served by traveling merchants, in which case the teamsters do not belong to the covenant. However they still need to be paid and accounted for, since it is more expensive to buy wares on your doorstep than to travel to market and buy them there — either way, the covenant has to bear the haulage costs.

You may employ as many or as few of each type of covenfolk as you like, except that there is a minimum required number of servants and teamsters. There is also a limit to the number of laborers and craftsmen that can be usefully employed (see the Cost Saving section below).

To determine the minimum number of servants and teamsters for your covenant, proceed as follows: Total up the points of inhabitants (see insert), including everyone *except* laborers, servants, and teamsters. For every 10 points of this total, you need 2 servants. Add the points for these servants to the total. Now, subtract *twice* the number of laborers. For every 10 points of this total, you need 1 teamster. Finally, recompute the total points of inhabitants, including all laborers, servants, and teamsters.

**Number of servants required: 2 for every 10 points of (all inhabitants, excluding laborers, servants, and teamsters)**

**Number of teamsters required: 1 for every 10 points of (all inhabitants, excluding laborers and teamsters - 2 \* number of laborers)**

Points of Inhabitants

Typical Spring or Winter covenant Typical Summer or Autumn covenant

Inhabitant Points Living Conditions Modifier Points Living Conditions Modifier

Magus, Noble 5 +1 10 +2

Companion 3 0 5 +1

Specialist, Craftsman 2 0 3 +1

Other Covenfolk 1 0 2 +1

Horse 1 n/a 1 n/a

Do not include characters of independent means who pay for their own upkeep, nor any characters who work for one of the covenant's sources of income. By sacrificing their privileged lifestyle (and the better Living Conditions Modifier), impoverished magi may reduce their point cost to 3. By adopting the same privileges as standard covenfolk (the same food, wages, and living quarters), magi and companions may even reduce their point cost to 2. However a covenant with such pauper magi will likely develop a negative Reputation, as the Redcaps quickly spread word of their lamentable standard of living!

Points of Laboratories

Laboratory's Upkeep score Points

–5 1

–4 2

–3 3

–2 5

–1 7

0 10

+1 15

+2 30

+3 60

+4 100

+5 150

Multipliers (apply only to maintenance costs, not construction costs)

Light use (average of 1 season or less per year) x0.5

Typical use (average of about 2 seasons per year) x1

Heavy use (average of 3 seasons or more per year ) x1.5

Take the total of the points for all the laboratories in the covenant. For an Upkeep score of between –5 (the lowest possible) and +5, the number of points per laboratory is as specified in the above table. For example, a standard laboratory (Upkeep 0) equates to 10 points. Beyond +5, the number of extra points gained per level of Upkeep increase is equal to the new Upkeep score times ten. For example, increasing the Upkeep from +5 to +6 increases the number of points by 60 (+6 multiplied by ten), taking it from 150 to 210. Thus, for a laboratory with an Upkeep of +2 or greater, the number of points is equal to ten times the number of experience points needed to buy an Art score with the same value as the Upkeep, as specified in the Advancement Table, page @@. For example, a lab with an Upkeep of +15 equates to 1200 points, ten times the cost of an Art score of 15 (120 experience points). There is no upper limit on an Upkeep score, except the covenant's ability to pay for it!

Points of Weapons and Armor

Inexpensive Standard Expensive

Weapon or shield 1 4 16

Partial armor 2 8 32

Full armor 4 16 64

Ballista or light catapult n/a n/a 16

Heavy catapult or trebuchet n/a n/a 32

Add up the points of the weapons and armor possessed by all the characters at the covenant, as well as any the covenant itself has stored. For the sake of simplicity, you may wish to simply estimate the average number of points per grog.

Yearly Expenditure Categories

The regular expenditure of the covenant can be divided into the following categories. It is worth noting that the Buildings, Consumables, Provisions, and Wages totals usually sum to exactly one pound per point of inhabitants, and form the bulk of the expenditure. Thus, a very rough rule of thumb is that a covenant can afford a number of points of inhabitants equal to its income in pounds, provided it has a moderate amount of cost saving.

Buildings

The covenant's buildings need to be properly maintained, decorated, and furnished, to prevent them from falling into disrepair. For example, damaged roofing and stonework has to be patched up, old furniture might need to be replaced and there are often plenty of minor repair jobs for a carpenter to do.

**Buildings cost: 1 pound for every 10 points of inhabitants.** Add 2 pounds for any Minor Boon, and 5 pounds for any Major Boon, that adds to the size, magnificence, or quantity of the covenant's buildings or fortifications.

Consumables

There are a whole host of minor tools, equipment, and consumables that are necessary for the smooth running of a covenant, which need to be replenished and repaired, including candles, carts, clothing, fuel, kitchen utensils, barrels, brooms, and so on. Special materials required for books and laboratories are accounted for separately.

**Consumables cost: 2 pounds for every 10 points of inhabitants.**

Inflation

Most covenants have a gradually corrosive effect on their local economy and the magi would be wise to be careful how they spend their money, to avoid inflating the prices of the things they need to buy.

The effects of inflation can be crudely modeled by simply adding a flat cost in pounds to the yearly expenditure. In the covenant's first year, the inflation cost should be zero. As a rule of thumb, it is suggested that it increase by one pound per hundred pounds of expenditure every year, although in favorable years (if there is a good harvest, for example) the inflation may not rise, or in bad years (perhaps when the magi have spent profligately, for example) it may increase by several pounds. Also, it is suggested that the inflation not increase during a year in which the covenant's expenditure drops (for example, as a result of new cost saving measures).

Laboratories

Unsurprisingly, magi are willing to spend a significant portion of their money on their own laboratories. To maintain a laboratory at its existing level requires a steady supply of replacement equipment (especially glassware) and precious ingredients, as well as more basic items, such as fuel for heating and candles for lighting. The cost for each laboratory depends on its Upkeep score (see Chapter 8: Laboratory). For example, a standard laboratory (with an Upkeep of 0) costs one pound per year of typical use.

**Laboratories cost: 1 pound per 10 points of laboratories.**

Provisions

With usually many dozens of mouths to feed, one of the covenant's major items of expenditure, often the largest of all, is the purchase of foodstuffs. A typical covenant consumes grains, meat, fish, vegetables, cheese, spices, salt, ale, and wines, and needs fodder for its horses.

**Provisions cost: 5 pounds for every 10 points of inhabitants.**

Tithes

Some covenants need to regularly pay off their masters, just like many folk in medieval Europe. Such yearly payments might take the form of a tithe to another covenant, taxes to a feudal overlord or the Church, or debt repayments. The amount of these obligations is determined by the situation of the covenant, and development of the saga.

Wages

Covenfolk are not usually paid a daily wage; they instead receive food and lodging in return for their service. Nevertheless, it is common for them to be given a modest weekly or monthly stipend, so that they may occasionally buy things for themselves. For example, a grog in a typical Spring covenant might get one penny per week, enough to buy a dozen mugs of ale. Although magi do not get paid wages per se, they nevertheless often have some kind of allowance for discretionary personal spending. This caters for minor purchases such as clothing, jewelry, and the like, which need not be accounted for separately. The "wages" for horses can be assumed to be spent on the extra food which they require.

You may adjust these wage costs as appropriate for your covenant, but bear in mind that the more you pay them, the happier the covenfolk will be (and vice-versa). The standard wage costs listed here make no adjustment to Loyalty; if you increase (or reduce) them, you may gain the benefits (or penalties) to Loyalty as outlined earlier.

**Wages cost: 2 pounds for every 10 points of inhabitants.** (This is equivalent to one penny per point of inhabitants, per week.) Add 1 pound per each penny that is paid daily to any professional soldiers in the covenant's service.

Weapons and Armor

Almost all covenants have a turb of warriors, who are outfitted with weaponry and armor, and some have an additional store of weapons, or even an arsenal. This equipment needs to be regularly cleaned, repaired, and (every so often) replaced. However for a small turb with modest outfitting, this cost is likely to amount to only a couple of pounds per year.

**Weapons and armor cost: 1 pound for every 320 points of weapons and armor.**

Writing Materials

Writing is a costly business, since parchment and inks are expensive. As a rule of thumb, one pound provides enough materials for the writing of four books, without embellishment. Typically, a magus uses such a quantity in one year. For example, two seasons of labwork (in which a Lab Text is produced), one season of book writing, plus diaries, accounts, records, letters, and so on, would amount to this much. Writing costs can be reduced for magi who are absent from the covenant or undertake little labwork or scribing, however. Specialist craftsmen (scribes, binders, illuminators) allow better quality books to be produced, but add to the production costs (see *Covenants* for detailed rules). Precious materials used for resonant bonuses on books are more expensive still, but are counted as sundry expenses (see below), on a case-by-case basis.

**Writing materials cost: 1 pound for every magus, scribe, bookbinder, or illuminator.**

Cost Saving

There are three main ways in which a covenant may be able to reduce its expenditure (apart from scrimping or laying off staff): by employing laborers, by employing craftsmen, and by utilizing magical items (or Ritual spells) which substitute for the work of one or more humans. The benefits of adding laborers and craftsmen are threefold: Firstly, there is a modest net saving in overall expenditure. Secondly, by producing more of its food and wares locally, the covenant becomes more resistant to crises caused by any interruptions to its outside supplies. Lastly, by adding more points of inhabitants, the cost saving limits (as detailed below) increase in real terms, allowing the covenant to exploit economies of scale. For example, adding laborers actually allows you to potentially make greater use of your existing craftsmen, who find themselves with more work to do, such as creating and repairing the tools used by the laborers.

Laborers

Each laborer working for the covenant reduces expenditure on Provisions by one pound. (As detailed above, every five laborers also makes one teamster redundant, indirectly saving one pound.) The maximum amount of money which can be saved by laborers is half of the Provisions total. A covenant with craftsmen producing foodstuffs can save more money on Provisions, as described below, possibly all of it if there are enough different types of sufficiently skilled craftsmen.

Craftsmen

Craftsmen employed by the covenant come in two types. Common craftsmen, such as blacksmiths, leatherworkers, and brewers, are those found in almost every village of any size in Mythic Europe, and are relatively easy to come by. Rare craftsmen, such as glassblowers, goldsmiths, and percamenarii (who make parchment) have a much more specialized trade and are encountered less frequently. They are harder to find and recruit, but are consequently more highly valued by a covenant. A common craftsman reduces expenditure by a number of pounds equal to one plus half of his Craft Ability, rounded down. For example, a craftsman with an Ability score of five saves three pounds. A rare craftsman reduces expenditure by a number of pounds equal to his Craft Ability. Craftsmen may save money in various categories of expenditure, as detailed in the insert. For each category, there is a limit to the amount of savings that can be achieved with each particular craft. For example, a typical covenant with 100 points of inhabitants spends 20 pounds per year on Consumables, before cost saving. At most 20% of this (four pounds) can be saved in any one craft. Thus, no matter how many blacksmiths the covenant has (or how skilled they are), the maximum which can be saved by blacksmithing alone is four pounds. However, the covenant could (potentially) save its entire spending on Consumables by employing at least five different relevant types of craftsmen. In some cases, you may wish to make common-sense adjustments to the cost-saving limits. For example, if only a handful of your grogs carry bows, the cost-saving limit for a bowyer should be much less than 50% of the Weapons and Armor expenditure.

Cost Saving Limits by Craft

Category of Expenditure Example Craftsmen Cost Saving Limit (per Craft)

Buildings stonemason, carpenter, furniture maker, 50%

thatcher

Consumables blacksmith, carpenter, candlemaker, tinker, 20%

weaver, leatherworker, cooper, cobbler

Laboratories glassblower, goldsmith, silversmith, 20%

lapidary, mechanic, toolmaker

Provisions brewer, vintner 20%

Weapons and Armor swordsmith, armorer, bowyer 50%

Writing Materials percamenarius, ink-maker 50%

Magic

Magic can also be employed to save money. For example, the fertility of the covenant's lands may be improved, or the magi might magically create tools or lab equipment, instead of purchasing them. A magical item might reduce the Consumables costs, for example, an oven which requires no fuel. Alternatively, it might save on labor, for example, a broom which sweeps by itself. In the former case, one or more pounds is saved directly; in the latter case, you can achieve the same results with fewer covenfolk (thus saving money indirectly). The minimum required numbers of servants and teamsters may thus be reduced. Magical items can also perform the work of laborers and craftsmen, and may be treated as such for the purposes of cost-saving. As a very simple rule of thumb, each magnitude of effect in such items can save one pound per year. Each casting of a Ritual spell may save approximately five pounds per magnitude, although this depends on the nature of the effect (and the discretion of the storyguide). Although Ritual spells may make dramatic improvements, such as creating a barnful of grain, they are somewhat rarely employed, since most magi value the necessary vis at more than five pounds per pawn. At the storyguide's discretion, non-ritual Rego craft spells, if cast repeatedly over an extended period, may save money as per magic items.

Emergency Savings

Sometimes, a covenant will find itself out of money (or credit), with its expenditure exceeding its income. If it cannot suddenly increase its cashflow, it will need to reduce its outgoings. There are a number of possibilities, which are a good source of stories. As detailed in the Points of Inhabitants insert above, the more privileged members of the covenant may voluntarily dispense with some of their perks and luxuries. (The points of magi or companions may be reduced to less than 5 or 3 points, respectively, and the cost saving limit on Provisions from laborers may be increased from 50%, as the covenfolk rely more on their own produce.) Alternatively, the wages may be cut, but the covenfolk's Loyalty will suffer. Some of the covenfolk could be laid off, turning them into disgruntled vagabonds, possibly with an axe to grind against their former employers. As explained above, there is a minimum number of servants and teamsters needed to keep the covenant running smoothly. If you have fewer than these minimums, it will adversely affect the functioning of the covenant — the storyguide should determine the appropriate story consequences, such as overworked staff, or magi having to forage or cook for themselves! In more severe cases of shortage or emergency, the magi might neglect entire categories of expenditure, allowing the buildings, laboratories, or weapons to go unmaintained, or letting the covenfolk starve, which will likely cause severe penalties to Loyalty.

Yearly Expenditure Summary

**Buildings + Consumables + Provisions + Wages**

1 pound per point of inhabitants

Extra buildings and fortifications: 2 pounds per each relevant minor Boon; 5 pounds per each relevant major Boon

Paid soldiers: 1 pound per penny paid daily

**Inflation**

Starts at 0; increases by an average of 1 pound per 100 pounds of expenditure per year

**Laboratories**

1 pound per 10 points of laboratories

**Weapons and Armor**

1 pound per 320 points of weapons and armor

**Writing Materials**

1 pound per magus, scribe, bookbinder, or illuminator

**Cost Saving**

Laborers: For each, subtract 1 pound

Craftsmen (common): For each, subtract 1 + (Ability / 2) pounds (rounding down)

Craftsmen (rare): For each, subtract (Ability) pounds

Magic items: For each magnitude of effect, subtract 1 pound

Ritual spells: For each magnitude of effect, subtract 5 pounds

Cost Saving limits: For laborers, 50% of the Provisions total; for craftsmen, either 50% or 20% of each total per relevant craft (see above insert)

Add any **Tithes** and **Sundry Expenses**

Expenditure — A Simple Example

Vernus is a typical starting spring covenant. It consists of 6 magi (30 points), 4 companions (12 points), 3 specialists — a chamberlain, a steward, and a turb captain (6 points), 10 grogs (10 points), and no dependents, laborers, or craftsmen, for a provisional total of 58 points. It thus needs 12 servants (12 points), taking the total to 70 points. Finally, it also needs 7 teamsters (7 points), giving a final total of **77 points of inhabitants** (from 42 people). It has **60 points of laboratories** (6 standard laboratories) and **320 points of weapons and armor** (Standard cost outfitting for each grog — full armor, a shield, and three weapons).

It has **no cost savings** at all (purchasing everything it needs) and its Yearly Expenditure is as follows:

**Buildings + Consumables + Provisions + Wages**: 77 pounds

**Inflation**: 0 pounds

**Laboratories**: 6 pounds

**Weapons and Armor**: 1 pound

**Writing Materials**: 6 pounds

**Total**: 90 pounds

After 10 years of expansion, Vernus has acquired a small plot of farmland and has added 20 laborers (farmhands and huntsmen), 6 craftsmen (4 of various common types with a Craft Ability of 6 which produce wares for the covenant, plus a bookbinder and an illuminator who do not provide cost savings), 10 more grogs, and has acquired 10 dependents. Thus it now has 6 magi (30 points), 4 companions (12 points), 3 specialists (6 points), 20 grogs (20 points), 6 craftsmen (12 points), and 10 dependents (10 points), for a provisional total of 90 points. It thus needs 18 servants (18 points), taking the total to 108 points. Subtracting twice the number of laborers (2\*20 = 40) from this gives 68, so 7 teamsters (7 points) are needed. Adding these, plus the 20 laborers (20 points), gives a final total of **135 points of inhabitants** (from 94 people). It still has **60 points of laboratories** but now has **640 points of weapons and armor**.

Its Yearly Expenditure (before cost savings) is now as follows:

**Buildings + Consumables + Provisions + Wages**: 135 pounds

**Inflation**: 10 pounds

**Laboratories**: 6 pounds

**Weapons and Armor**: 2 pounds

**Writing Materials**: 8 pounds

Its Cost Savings are as follows:

**Laborers**: –20 pounds

**Craftsmen**: –16 pounds

**Total**: 125 pounds

The Organization of Covenfolk

The organization of grogs in a covenant may have been arranged when the covenant was founded and reorganized deliberately as the covenant grew in size, or it may have developed organically over its history. This section presents a few concepts around which a covenant organization can be built. Naturally it is possible to mix-and-match; for example, a covenant's soldiers might be organized in a hierarchical fashion, but its servants and specialists might be divided into nations. The manner in which the grogs are organized can be an important determiner of the mood and feel of a covenant, and the troupe should put a bit of thought into which system they prefer. These questions, and the lives of covenfolk more generally, are discussed in greater detail in *Grogs,* Chapter Two.

Hierarchy

A hierarchical organization of a covenant's grogs is perhaps the most commonly found. It is the least work for the magi, as they have a small number of officials reporting to them, who then marshal their subordinates to complete the tasks at hand. The two most significant hierarchical models adopted are those of the noble household and the military.

A Noble Household

Covenants who employ a large number of servants and specialists often adopt an organizational structure that mimics that of the noble household. This is a natural model to adopt, since examples of how well it functions can be found throughout Mythic Europe. However, this level of complexity is only really needed if the covenant is a large one, or is masquerading as a lord of the manor. At its most basic level this organization approximates the norm for covenants since the three chief officials in a noble household are the **steward**, the **chamberlain**, and the **marshal**.

The steward (or seneschal) is in control of the lord's lands and the keep, and is often a knight. The steward sometimes has an under-steward called the steward of the household, or fills this role himself in smaller households. Any miscellaneous specialists, such as craftsmen employed directly by the household, fall under the steward's purview.

The chamberlain (or treasurer, or wardrober) is the chief clerical officer, and is occasionally a subordinate of the steward. The wardrobe is a special room where valuables are kept, and serves as the noble's treasury.

The marshal is the leader of the household knights or men-at-arms. He is also in charge of the horses and needs of the stables. In some households, he is considered subordinate to the steward, but in most covenants using this model, this is not true.

More information on the disposition of a noble household is given in *Lords of Men*.

Military Hierarchy

Rather than dividing the covenfolk by role, a covenant can take a more military approach. In this organizational system, the covenfolk are divided into squads, each of which consists of soldiers and their auxiliary staff. An army in Mythic Europe is largely free of intermediate ranks. The marshal is in charge of his lord's household troops, including the knights and men-at-arms. If his lord goes to war, the marshal takes charge of the men-at-arms, while the lord commands the knights; otherwise, he leads the knights himself (in lieu of the tenant-in-chief, thus the later rank "lieutenant") and appoints a captain to command the men-at-arms.

This model is appropriate for military-minded covenants, but not necessarily only them. In a similar way to dividing covenfolk into nations (see later), this structure can fill a role where, for example, the covenant is divided over several geographically separate sites. The difference to the system of nations is that, in a military hierarchy, each squad is not independent of each other.

*Example: Traditional covenants like to follow the early Roman model, where the* manus *("hand," singular and plural)*, *comprised of a squad of four men plus their leader (the quincurion), is the basic unit. A* decuria *is made of two manus, with the leader of one manus, the* decurion*, superior to the other. Up to 10 decuriae make up the* centuria*, commanded by a* centurion*.*

Nations

Another method of organizing grogs is by nation. A nation of grogs consists of servants, specialists, and soldiers — possibly even companions and magi. The identifying feature of a nation is that it cuts across roles. One's nation may be determined by a number of methods. Sometimes new members are assigned at random, either by lot or in order to fill gaps in the ranks. Otherwise, a recruit might join the nation of the person (magus or otherwise) who inducted him into covenant life. Alternatively, the nations themselves might decide, holding an auction or contest whenever new recruits join the covenant, perhaps having recruits be members of no nation until sufficient numbers of unplaced grogs are accrued. Finally, recruits could be born to a nation, either as the child of a grog, or a member of a specific ethnic group.

Nation-level organizations are common in covenants where magi are relatively independent of each other. Each nation might be dedicated to the service of a single magus, or led by a companion instead. Members of nations often have a Loyalty Personality Trait specific to the nation as well as to the covenant.

The most natural nations form around familial bonds. Old covenants, in particular, have covenfolk who were born in the covenant and have served the magi all their lives. These families can stretch back generations, each one tracing its ancestry back to one of the original servants of the covenant, or even one of the magi. Alternatively, a covenant might, at its foundation, have incorporated folk from the local area who were already strongly divided along family lines.

The student bodies of some universities in Mythic Europe are divided into nations, with each nation responsible for the conduct and protection of each of its members (*Art & Academe*, page 94). These nations are usually loose geographical groups; the closest ethnic groups are well represented, whereas more distant students are lumped into much wider categories. Some covenants, particularly ones that straddle borders or have been formed from the merging of two or more turbs with distinct racial identities, use this structure.

Nations may also form where a covenant is split over several geographically separated sites, or has deliberate spatial separation of its turb. There may be some separation of function in these nations; the nation that lives offshore probably has more sailors and fishermen than the nation that occupies the nearby hills, but both nations need their own specialists, soldiers, and servants.

Guilds

An alternative to nations is guilds; that is, organizing the grogs by their function. Many covenants simply divide their covenants into servants, specialists, and soldiers, and consider these three "guilds" sufficient — and often they are. However, the larger covenants get, the more need there is to divide the grogs into smaller guilds with more defined functions. A covenant that has more than one source of income often institutes guilds as a means to organize collecting the revenue and conducting the necessary business that keeps the income sources operational.

There is also a tendency for grogs to self-organize. If there are a lot of craftsmen, then they tend to band together to mimic the guild structure of the outer world. If the covenant uses light cavalry as an elite unit, then these individuals may not want to fraternize with common foot soldiers.

Note that the division of grogs into guilds does not necessarily mean literal guilds; that is, a political unit that can arrange simultaneous withdrawal of services in order to coerce better conditions for their masters.

Professional Guilds

Clearly a good model for covenant organization is the craft guilds, service guilds, and merchant guilds that are becoming more widespread in Mythic Europe in the 13th century. Once confined to big cities, guilds can now be found almost anywhere, at least in the West, and they regulate the quality of the goods produced by their members. A guild consists of all craftsmen that use the same or a group of closely allied Craft or Profession Abilities. However, at a covenant, a guild might exist for each Martial Ability, or perhaps even for select groups of Arcane or Supernatural Abilities. The guild provides incomes for the destitute and disabled, pays for the funeral services of deceased members, holds its own religious ceremonies, and sometimes even provides schooling for their members' children.

At the head of a guild is the **dean**, elected by the guild members from among their number. The dean is supported by the **aldermen** (guild officials), who police the guild, ensure the quality of the work, and enforce the guild rules. Below the aldermen are the **senior masters** and **masters**. A master has sufficient skill to run his own shop, and has the right to attend meetings at the guildhall and have a say in the running of the guild. Senior masters have been masters for ten or more years, and may run more than one workshop, which can prove very lucrative. Each master might have one or two **journeymen** and several **apprentices**, who form the lowest rungs of the guild ladder. More information about guilds can be found in Chapter 3 of *City & Guild*.

The difference between a professional guild and other forms of governance is that the guild exists because its members want it. They have an expectation of advancement through the guild's ranks, and to one day have a say in how it is run. A guild might be a more familiar system for players who are used to concepts of social mobility and providing benefits for the hard workers, although this is an anachronism for much of Mythic Europe outside of the professional guilds.

Monastery

A monastery is designed along a guild structure. Unlike the clear hierarchy of the noble household, the abbot of a monastery designates officials to manage each aspect of the daily life of the monastery. These officials are then responsible for meeting the monastery's needs in their department, and can requisition manpower and finances as needed. This is a good model for a small covenant, where staff need not be permanently designated as a cook or a chambermaid, but instead take on such roles as requested.

The **abbot** is the secular and spiritual leader of a monastery. He appoints various senior obedentiaries to care for different departments, so the **terrar** is in charge of the estate, the **cellarer** in charge of food, the **bursar** in charge of money, and so forth. Rather than having a staff or workforce assigned to each, these positions permit their holder to request the assistance of the other monks in the completion of their tasks. For more information on the internal structure of monasteries, see *The Church,* Chapter 4.

No Formal Structure

Some covenants have never instituted any sort of structure at all among their covenfolk. This is usually only possible for very small numbers of covenfolk; without some sort of organization, important tasks are likely to be forgotten or neglected. In fact, if left to their own devices with no formal organization imposed upon them, covenfolk usually seek some sort of structure by themselves; it is natural for humans to seek social order.

If the covenfolk form a strong cohesive group, they can all work together toward the common good without needing a formal social structure. This is not to say that everyone does not know who is in charge, but there are fewer differences between servant, soldier, and specialist since everyone lends a hand in each task.

Rivalries and Tension

Any sort of social structure can lead to rivalries among the covenfolk. One nation may have deep-seated prejudices against another (perhaps arising from racial or cultural incompatibilities), or a guild might consider its tasks more important than those of the other guilds, and seek an improved status for its members.

In addition to tension between groups of covenfolk, there can also be tension between prominent individuals. If the covenfolk are split into families, there may be a long-standing feud between the leaders of two families; or there could be a power struggle within the turb over who deserves to be captain, once the present incumbent has retired. A common rivalry occurs between the steward and the chamberlain over precedence; many stewards believe that they should be the superior of the chamberlain. The turb captain need not be excluded from such rivalries; it is common for the captain to think himself more important than either, and he uses the armed men under his control to enforce this point.

The covenant of Tolosa Paratge, in Toulouse in the Provençal Tribunal, is completely split between two factions, the White and the Black, and this rivalry may bring the ancient covenant down completely (*Faith & Flame,* page 38).

The Covenant in Play

Covenants do not gain Build Points while they are being played. Instead, the characters create enchanted devices, write books, and trade for further resources.

Events in play may lead to the covenant gaining or losing Boons or Hooks.

If a Boon is lost, the characters should be given story opportunities to regain it. In effect, the lost Boon becomes a Hook.

If a Boon is gained, the covenant should gain a corresponding Hook, representing the reaction of the rest of the world to the change in its fortunes.

If a Hook is lost, because the situation is resolved, that is fine, and part of the natural growth of the saga.

If a Hook is gained, again, that is fine.

Not all Hooks can be removed, but if a particular Hook can be overcome it should take at least half a dozen stories for a minor Hook, and around twenty for a major Hook. The Hooks are supposed to drive a significant portion of the saga, so they should not be resolved until they have done so.