Editor’s Note

Almost ten years ago I wrote an afterword for *Dies Irae* in which I said it was “the last book in the **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** line that I will produce as Line Editor”. Strictly speaking, that remains true: Atlas did not hire me as Line Editor for this book.

When John Nephew approached me three years ago about preparing the manuscript for a definitive edition of the game, it did not take me long to decide that I wanted to do it. While I thought ten years ago, and still think now, that I am the wrong person to create a new edition of Ars Magica, I can claim to be the right person to bring together rules and background scattered across the forty and more books of the **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** line to create a definitive version of the core rules for that edition. The result is the book that you hold in your hands (or view on your screen, if you have the digital version).

As well as collecting rules, such as those for Mystery Initiation and integrating non-Hermetic magic, that could not be included in the original core rule book because they had not yet been written, it was also a chance to include clarifications and expansions that had been added over the years.

I also took the opportunity to gather errata from the online Ars Magica community, to correct errors that people had noticed over the last twenty years, and clarify things that had proved less transparent than I had hoped when originally publishing them.

If you have managed to avoid impostor syndrome so far, spending months gathering errata for books you were responsible for is a very good way to experience it.

This is not a new edition of the game. The fact that we were making a new book allowed me to spend more words on clarification than would have been possible for online errata, and I have made a handful of changes to better integrate rules with each other, but this is still **Ars Magica Fifth Edition**. All existing supplements remain fully compatible with it, and if you have the entire line and the errata, you already have virtually everything of substance in this book.

Of course, John and Michelle Nephew’s decision to release the whole Ars Magica line under an open license means that you will be able to get the text of the definitive edition free of charge. But that is far from being the main benefit.

The open license means that anyone can now write for the game, and make money from their creations. The definitive edition is most definitely not the end of the Fifth Edition line. Rather, it is the foundation for an unlimited future. Most of the final paragraph from my afterword for *Dies Irae* applies even more fully now.

“We have created a game line that I think is about as good as we could make it, and it fulfills my vision for Ars Magica. Its future lies with people who have a different vision, and can bring things to the game that I would not even imagine.”

I plan to be part of that future, as one creator among many.

David Chart

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