

Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Judicial Procedure.....	29	Laborers.....	62
WELCOME TO TOWN!	5	Sentencing.....	30	Covenant Craftsmen.....	62
THE HERMETIC ORDER		Prison.....	30	CRAFTING ITEMS	63
IN MYTHIC EUROPE	5	SHOWS OF FEELING	31	THE WORKSHOP	65
I. Towns & Cities	7	TOWN PROFILES	31	Workshop Innovation.....	65
URBAN VS. RURAL	7	Florence.....	31	Raw Materials.....	66
ORIGINS	8	Constantinople.....	32	BASIC CRAFTSMAN PRODUCTION	67
TOWN CHARTERS	8	London.....	33	Finished Goods.....	67
Becoming a Townsman.....	9	Brugge.....	33	Shoddy Quality Items.....	69
The Lord.....	9	Acre.....	34	Superior Items.....	69
Noble Lords.....	9	Ipswich.....	34	Excellent Quality Items.....	69
Ecclesiastical Lords.....	10	Kolding.....	35	Wondrous Items.....	70
Supernatural Lords.....	10	Anizy-le-Château.....	35	Assistants.....	73
Common Privileges.....	12	Ilium.....	35	Craftsman Manuals.....	73
Town Governance.....	13	II. Labor	37	Workshop Exertion.....	73
Families of Town Charters.....	14	LABOR AND LIVELIHOOD	38	Reputations.....	74
Communes.....	15	Improving Wealth and Social Status..	38	Selling Finished Goods.....	74
STRUCTURE	15	Overwork.....	38	Basic Laborer's Service.....	76
Topography.....	15	Labor Points from Stories.....	39	DAMAGED GOODS	77
Defenses.....	16	Investing Time.....	40	Repairing Damaged Goods.....	79
Open Spaces.....	17	Money and Investment.....	40	V. Travel	80
Zoning.....	17	III. Guilds	41	MEANS OF TRANSPORT	80
Streets.....	17	GUILD MEMBERS	43	Roads.....	80
Markets.....	18	Guild Apprentices.....	43	Bridges.....	80
Places of Work.....	18	Journeyman.....	45	Construction.....	80
Places of Prayer.....	18	Guild Masters.....	47	Defense.....	84
Places of Learning.....	21	Senior Masters.....	49	Ferries and Fords.....	84
Other Public Buildings.....	21	Guild Officials.....	49	Stops.....	81
Housing.....	22	Guild Dean.....	50	Innkeepers.....	81
POPULACE	23	CRAFTSWOMEN	52	Rivers.....	82
Family Life.....	24	CRAFT GUILDS	53	River Folklore.....	82
DIET	24	SERVICE GUILDS	54	Area Lore: The Hinterland	
Grain and Bread.....	24	SPECIFIC GUILDS	55	as a Resource.....	82
Drink.....	25	Blacksmiths.....	55	VESSELS	82
Meat, Vegetables, and Fish.....	25	Tanners.....	56	Land Vessels.....	82
Famine.....	25	Glass Makers.....	56	River Barges.....	82
DISEASE	25	Armorers.....	57	AREA LORE EASE FACTORS	83
Leprosy.....	26	Clothiers.....	58	Seagoing Ships.....	84
The Ague.....	27	Shoemakers.....	58	Comparison of Traveling Speeds.....	85
St. Anthony's Fire.....	27	Masons.....	59	Comparison of Traveling Costs.....	85
Tarantism.....	27	Bakers.....	60	SHIP COMBAT	86
Childbed Fever.....	28	Slavers.....	60	Softening the Enemy.....	86
The Bloody Flux.....	28	IV. Crafts	61	Boarding and Melee.....	86
Worms.....	28	CRAFTSMEN	61	Sea Monsters.....	87
Abscesses.....	28	SEA TRADE	87		
CRIME	28				

Adding Places to the Land Trade Map and
Naval Trade Tables..... 87

VI. Fairs & Markets 91

MARKETS 91
 COMPETITION 92
 GOODS ON SALE 93
 GOD OF COMMERCE 95
 INFERNAL TRADING 96
 FAERIE TRADING 97
 FAIRS 97
 LAW & FINANCE 99
 Grant of a Fair 99
 Trading Law 100
 Weights and Measures 101
 The Group Responsibility
 for Quality Control 101
 Royal Prise 101
 Paying Up 102
 Jurisdiction at the Fair 102
 TRADERS AND GOODS 103
 THE GREAT FAIR CYCLES 104
 The Champagne Cycle 104
 The Five Fairs of Flanders 104
 England's Great Fairs 105
 Hermetic Mid-Summer Fair 105
 Thessalonica 106
 REGIONAL AND LOCAL FAIRS 106
 Examples 106

VII. Trade 107

VIRTUES AND FLAWS
 FOR TRADERS 107
 Companies 108
 New Virtues 108
 New Flaws 109
 THE URBAN MERCHANT 109
 Scale of Affluence 110
 Investments Suited
 to all Merchants 110
 Charity 110
 Commodity Speculation 110
 Drawings 111
 Marriage Broker 111
 Stories Suited to All Merchants 111
 Archeological Find 111
 Market Changes 111
 Marriage and Dowries 112
 Hard Time 113
 Legal Action 114
 Legacy Puzzle 114
 Magical Item 114
 Mania 114
 Murder of or by Benefactor 114
 Natural Disaster 114
 The Prodigal Returns 115
 Public Snub 115
 Street Gang of Children 115
 Superior Going to Pieces 115
 Unraveling Economy 115
 THE LOCAL CARRIER 115

Scale of Abundance 116
 Stories with Local Carriers 116
 Abduction or Elopement 116
 Accidents 116
 Brigands 117
 Oasis 117
 Smuggling 117
 Stowaway 117
 Transporting the Dead 117
 Vanished Village 117
 Writ of Reprisal 117
 THE MERCHANT ADVENTURER 118
 Stories for Merchant Adventurers 118
 Ventures 118
 Amphibious Assault 119
 Antique Sailing Instructions 119
 Convoys and Caravans 119
 Customs Agents 119
 Finding Investors 120
 Pirate Hunting 120
 Remittance Shipments 120
 Seeking Things 120
 Warfare and Blockades 120
 THE FACTOR 121
 Scale of Affluence 121
 Stories with Factors 122
 Change of Government 122
 Company Neighborhood 122
 Exercising Power 122
 Foreign Rivals 123
 House Reputation 123
 Assassination 124
 Bribes 124
 Piracy 124
 Sabotage 124
 Spying 125
 Theft 125
 Treachery 125
 Loss of Capo 126
 Recovering Wrecks 126
 Repossession 126
 Resisting Nobles 126
 Setting Up a Factory or Town 128
 Withdrawal from a Region 128
 Young Talent 128
 THE CAPO 128
 Scale of Affluence 128
 Stories for Capos 128
 Factor Work 129
 Personal Pleasure and
 Aggrandizement 129
 Political Activity 129
 Selecting Factors and
 Founding Branches 129
 TRADE AND THE
 ORDER OF HERMES 130
 Creating Wealth Using Magic 130
 Novelties 130
 Stories for Magi 132
 Cheap and Missing Ships 132
 The Dead of Ascalon 133
 Espousal to the Sea 133

Rhine-Main-Danube Canal 133
 Silver and Serica 133

VIII. The Goods of Europe 134

BULK GOODS 134
 MANUFACTURED GOODS 137
 LUXURY GOODS 137
 COMMERCIAL SOURCES
 OF TRADE GOODS 138
 Africa 139
 Baltic Sea 139
 Black Sea 139
 British Isles 139
 France 139
 Germany 139
 The Holy Land and
 Ionian Asia Minor 139
 Iberia 139
 Italy, Adjacent Islands,
 and Dalmatia 139
 Low Countries 140
 Romania and the Byzantine
 Successor States in
 Europe and Aegean Islands 140
 Southern Russia, Poland,
 and Hungary 140
 Places So Far as to
 Verge on the Mythical 140
 PRICES OF GOODS 140
 Weights and Measures 140

Appendix: Price List 145
 MEDIEVAL MONEY 143

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Introduction

Welcome to Town!

Unless your saga is set right on the very fringes of the civilized world, the magi and covenfolk will inevitably come into contact with urban settlements and the activities centered upon them. Even though there may be some skilled craftsmen who live and work in a covenant, sooner or later something will be needed that must be bought from outside — perhaps a flawless glass candelabrum for an enchantment or a pair of finest kidskin gloves for a maga no longer able to bear the touch of iron. Few covenants are self-sufficient in even day-to-day commodities, and covenfolk may be sent to purchase cheese from the local market or to order shipments of wine at an annual fair.

This book provides background information on the urban centers of Mythic Europe, craft activities and the guilds that control them, the lives of mer-

chants, and the trade that is the lifeblood of towns and cities.

The Hermetic Order in Mythic Europe

It is important to remember that the Hermetic Order is a part of the fabric of Mythic Europe. Nobles and the Church are generally aware of the existence of the Order, and peasants may be aware of a local covenant. Within the town, townsmen may also be aware of a nearby covenant, particularly if the magi or grogs frequent the market; craftsmen,

in specialized fields, may occasionally manufacture laboratory goods for magi; and mercantile factors may deal with the covenant's purchasing agents, or even buy produce from the covenant. Of course, broader Mythic Europe is likely to be misinformed, and prejudiced, about the precise details of the Order of Hermes, but the Order is nonetheless an obscure rather than a secret group.

This does mean that it is impractical for most covenants to shun all contact with the mundane world. Magi or covenfolk who travel to town need to make many decisions about the knowledge they reveal, the material wealth they display, and the power they demonstrate to the townfolk. Covenants populated by very large numbers of grogs (greater than 100) may even be mistaken

for small towns by the mundane world.

Fortunately, many Tribunal rulings have asserted that it is *possible* for magi to interact with the mundane, but by the same token, many a magus has been sanctioned for thus "bring[ing] ruin on [his]



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sodales." Some activities — flooding the market with magical goods, or the devastation of towns, for example — are clearly violations of the Code, but the legality of many other activi-

ties is contestable. In fact, Tribunal politics is a very important factor in determining whether a particular interaction with the mundane is, or is not, a violation of the Code. A magus

who is politically powerful within his Tribunal has more latitude in his affairs with the mundane, although he may also have more enemies seeking opportunities to sanction him.