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Introduction

Welcome to *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, the final volume in the *Houses of Hermes* series, covering Houses Flambeau, Jerbiton, Tytalus, and Ex Miscellanea.

House Flambeau includes the champions and knights of the Order, individual warriors who fight for glory and honor, both their own and that of the Order as a whole. The House admires bold adventurers who seek out and overcome fearsome opponents. Worthy opponents are chosen according to each individual magus's sense of honor, not external rules. As a result, many of the Order's Hoplites are from House Flambeau, as are many of the magi they hunt down.

House Jerbiton live lives in pursuit of beauty, and in pursuit of living beautifully. This requires interaction with the world beyond the Order of Hermes, both for the sake of the beauty found there and to avoid the stunted lives that result from living entirely within a covenant. Experts in the use of *Mentem* and *Imaginem*, followers of Jerbiton generally prefer to interact subtly with the world. The fall of Constantinople has, however, been a great shock to them, and has pushed the House onto a more active path.

House Tytalus thrive on, and admire, conflict. The main conflict they see in the world is between an individual's nature

and the rules imposed by society, but they believe this central conflict plays out in many, less abstract, contests. They are renowned for long-running rivalries with their Housemates, convoluted political schemes, and activities that skirt the edges of legality.

House Ex Miscellanea gathers together magi who do not fit into any other House, normally due to ties with a pre-Hermetic tradition. The House claims to embody unity in diversity, but the emphasis is definitely on the diversity. This book provides eight detailed examples of traditions within the House, complete with rules for their non-Hermetic abilities.

About the Authors

ERIK DAHL is neither Welsh nor particularly crafty, but did experiment with drawing mystic symbols around his office for inspiration. He and his very patient wife live in Davis, California. Erik's work on this book is dedicated to his very columbine and mechanical friend Mark Thomas, who possesses all the best qualities of these two traditions, and who first introduced Erik to *Ars Magica* mumbleteen years ago.

ANDREW GRONOSKY is a software engineer specializing in Intellego Aquam. Currently living in Massachusetts with his lovely wife Vesna, he commutes daily to Rhode Island in search of adventure and glory. This book constitutes his Wizard's Gauntlet as an *Ars Magica* author. He would like to thank the playtesters and his fellow authors for their support, particularly Erik Dahl for help with the Cult of Mercury.

Dedication: To Matt Ryan, eternal thanks for introducing me to Vesna.

TIMOTHY FERGUSON is a librarian who lives on the Gold Coast. He thinks cats are estimable animals. He'd like to dedicate his section of this book to Damelon Kimborough, for encouraging his first attempts at writing House Jerbiton.

JOHN POST is an attorney who lives and works in San Francisco with his lovely wife. His city is filled with a wonderful variety of misfits, outcasts, and other non-conformists. Although none directly contributed to his Ex Miscellanea traditions, they did inspire him to look beyond the conventional depiction of members of the House. He hopes that his traditions will similarly inspire *Ars Magica* players. He owes a debt of gratitude to the playtesters and his fellow authors for making his traditions better.

MARK SHIRLEY is an ecologist in the North East of England. His players have complained that he enjoyed writing the

Tytalus chapter entirely too much, and now shake every apparently innocuous event vigorously, expecting a devious plot to fall out. Despite rumors, he is not planning a career change from badger-botherer to back-bench parliamentarian. He would like to dedicate this book to the veritable miscellanea of family he has acquired throughout his life.

NICK SIMMONDS is a computer technician in Indianapolis, Indiana, and a daredevil adventurer in the confines of his own head. He splits his gaming time between running games and desperately trying to convince someone else to run so that he can play for once. Nick would like to dedicate his portion of this book to his dog Winifred, who may not have helped him write it by jumping on the keyboard, but who certainly thought she did.