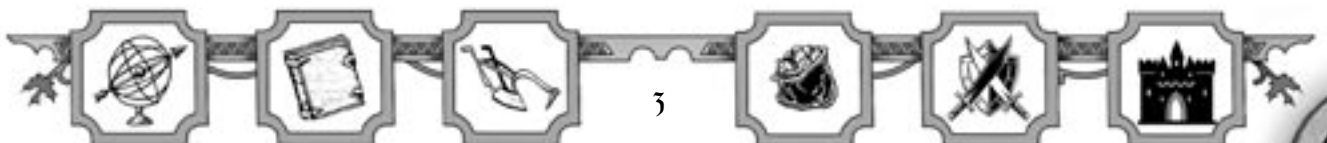


Table of

Contents

Chapter I: Introduction	4	Chapter VI: Vis Sources	72
Chapter II: Boons & Hooks	6	Chapter VII: Library	84
Paying for Choices	6	The Manufacture of Books	84
Site	6	Extended Suggestions on the Quality of Books	87
Fortifications	11	Magical Libraries	91
Resources	16	The Hermetic Book Cycle	93
Residents	17	Prices for Books	95
External Relations	20	Alternatives to Books	101
Surroundings	22		
Covenant Situations	25	Chapter VIII: Sanctum	103
Table of Boons and Hooks	28	Common Types of Sancta	103
		Defending the Sanctum	103
Chapter III: Governance	30	Standard Hermetic Laboratory and Sanctum (Map)	105
Forms of Governance	30		
The Council Meeting	31	Chapter IX: Laboratories	106
The Charter of Covenant	32	Laboratory Personalization Rules	109
Prevailing Loyalty	36		
		Appendix: Play Aids	125
Chapter IV: Covenfolk	42	Sample Charter of Covenant	126
Troupe Styles and Covenfolk	42	Record Sheets	129
Saga Settings and their Covenfolk	42		
Making Covenfolk Interesting	48	Contributors	139
Magical Alternatives to Covenfolk	49		
Fantastical Covenfolk	53		
Thematic Covenfolk	55		
Chapter V: Wealth & Poverty	56		
Income	56		
Expenditure	63		
Price List	71		



Chapter One

Introduction

Designing the covenant can be one of the most enjoyable elements of playing *Ars Magica*. It augments character design by encouraging players to imagine what their characters are doing when not risking death in strange places. It encourages players to communicate about the sorts of stories they want to tell. It provides an enduring symbol that carries through those stories, reflecting the triumphs and failures of the player characters. The covenant can be the saga's most important character.

The Role of the Covenant

Firstly, and most straightforwardly, the covenant is the home of the characters, the place where they live. It is the place they defend most fiercely, because it is where they keep those things they love the most. The covenant is where the characters feel most secure, so it is where they express their desires most openly. The covenant

is more than a place for the characters to resupply between journeys to dangerous places. The covenant is the reason that the journeys seem worthwhile. The covenant is thus at the heart of the saga's stories.

Secondly, the covenant design process involves choices, which forces players to discuss the stories they want to tell. This draws to the surface assumptions about the saga that troupes should discuss. A saga set on a ship that chases prosperity around the frozen ports of the Baltic Sea can be just as enjoyable as one that takes place at a covenant that floats on a cloud, defended by grogs that ride winged lions, so long as the players can agree on which they prefer. This book offers many options to encourage players to discuss what they want their Mythic Europe to feel like. Ideas for the saga's stories lie at the heart of the covenant's design.

Lastly, the covenant is an important character in its own right. The covenant grows and develops whenever you tell stories that feature it. A troupe need not

detail their covenant before beginning play, beyond a vague idea of what it looks like, and where it is. As the players design laboratories and sancta, servants and allies, the covenant expands to suit the saga. Characters, places, and situations persist beyond their first story, providing depth for future stories. The covenant is a setting, but also a shared creation that suffers and thrives, reflecting the player characters' lives. The covenant incorporates the characters, items, and loose ends that persist after their story has finished. The covenant is the saga, represented within itself.

How to Use This Book

This book is broadly divided into two parts. The first two-thirds (Chapters 1–6) expands significantly on the Covenants chapter of *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, and deals with choices for covenant creation and development. Chapter 2: Boons and Hooks allows your troupe to insert plot hooks and character resources into the fabric of the saga. It also provides ideas for stories that twist the growth of the covenant in various directions. Chapter 3: Governance considers how magi treat each other and their covenfolk, and the story potential of these relationships. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 consist of ideas and rules for important covenant resources: covenfolk, monetary wealth, and magical wealth (*vis*), respectively.

Your troupe should decide for itself whether to design a covenant before the saga begins. Some troupes enjoy coming to an agreement on the sort of covenant they will have, and design their covenant in great detail before they begin the saga. Others prefer to begin with a barren hill, and tell stories that develop the covenant from nothing. Both approaches are a source of rewarding play.

The last three chapters (Chapters 7–9) consider the innermost parts of the

Some Tips for a Smoothly Run Covenant

Encourage the players to contribute to the design and ongoing development of the covenant as much as possible.

Put all the notes with the basic covenant information together into a single file, which is accessible by the players. This file might also contain the character sheets for pool grog characters.

Keep a private file for the storyguide to record plans and adventures.

Have one of the players take responsibility for maintaining the library sheet. This might be the player whose character is the librarian. Likewise, delegate the responsibility for keeping track of the *vis* stores and finances to two other players.

Make little paper or card tokens for pawns of *vis*, perhaps with the Hermetic symbol for the each Art printed on

them. An exchange of *vis* represented by the physical exchange of tokens is more meaningful than simply altering some numbers on a sheet, and is less prone to fraud!

Write down a simple calendar of all the events which occur every year, and when they occur. This might include making Aging rolls at the winter solstice, the annual casting of the *Aegis of the Hearth* ritual, council meetings, and the regular gathering of *vis* from *vis* sources.

Maintain a history or logbook of the covenant, written from the perspective of the characters, perhaps in the form of journal entries or letters. After each session, ask for a volunteer to write up that session's events, so that the load is spread evenly.



Customized Covenant Creation Summary

This is a summary of the existing rules for covenant creation (see ArM5, page 70), with some minor additions. Starting from the baseline below, choose a power level, and once you have a basic concept, proceed to select Boons and Hooks, and buy Resources.

BASELINE

The base for covenant creation is a stone building with enough room to accommodate the magi and covenfolk. It is located in a level 3 magic aura in a place somewhat removed from mundane society, and has basic defenses. The base covenant has no magical resources. It has sufficient mundane resources for day-to-day upkeep, with a single Typical source of income. For every magus, there is one standard laboratory, and approximately one grog and two other covenfolk, such as servants, laborers, teamsters, and craftsmen. The craftsmen are of common types, such as blacksmiths or carpenters. Apart from possibly a bookbinder and illuminator, there are no exotic specialists. The covenant has a Living Conditions modifier of +1 for magi and 0 for everybody else.

POWER LEVELS TABLE

Power Level	Build Points	Maximum Level of Lab Text / Effect in Enchanted Device	Minimum Age of Covenant
Low	0–300	25	None
Medium	300–1250	40	10 years
High	1250–2500	No limit	50 years
Legendary	2500+	No limit	100 years

covenant: the library, and the sancta and laboratories of the magi. They contain rules and ideas for magus characters, which mostly affect their own lives, rather than the covenant as a whole. Chapter 7: Library considers how magi communicate across the generations and share knowledge with each other. Chapters 8 and 9 encourage players to express the personalities of their magi in the physical structures of their private spaces within the covenant.

The Covenant in Play

Covenants do not gain Build Points while they are being played. Instead,

POWER LEVEL

The first choice is the level of power within the covenant that is accessible to the player character magi. This depends on what sort of saga the players want; it is suggested that novice players start with a medium or low power level. See the Power Levels Table for details about the four possible power levels: low, medium, high, and legendary.

BOONS AND HOOKS

Boons are things that make the covenant better, whereas Hooks are features of the covenant that lead to stories. Boons and Hooks come in three kinds: Major (which cost three points), Minor (which cost one point), and Free Choices (which do not cost any points). A covenant may have as many Hooks as the players want; they provide points that can be spent to buy Boons. Thus, a covenant cannot start with more points of Boons than points of Hooks. A greatly expanded list of Boons and Hooks may be found in Chapter 2: Boons and Hooks.

RESOURCES

The chosen power level grants a number of Build Points, which are used to buy resources. The costs are:

ENCHANTED ITEMS

- 2 per five levels of effects

LABORATORIES

- Extra labs: 50 each
- Non-standard lab: Size x 20; Major Virtue: 20; Minor Virtue: 10

LABORATORY TEXTS

- 1 per five levels

LIBRARY

- Art Summae: Level + Quality (Level limit: 20; Quality limit: 11 + (20 – level), or 22, whichever is lower)
- Ability Summae: 3 x Level + Quality (Level limit: 8; Quality limit: 11 + 3 x (8 – level), or 22, whichever is lower)
- Tractatus: Quality (Quality limit: 11)

MONEY

- Stocks: 1 per 10 pounds

SPECIALISTS

- Teacher: Communication + Teaching + Highest Ability Score (Score limit: by age)
- Other: Highest Ability Score (Score limit: by age)

VIS

- Sources: 5 per pawn of vis per year
- Stocks: 1 per 5 pawns of vis

further resources are gained as a result of the characters' actions, such as trading, writing books, and creating enchanted items. Events in play may lead to the covenant gaining or losing Boons or Hooks. If a Boon is gained, the covenant should gain a corresponding Hook, representing the reaction of the world to its change in fortunes. If a Boon is lost, the characters should be given sufficient story opportunities to regain it (thus, it may effectively become a Hook). Hooks may be gained and lost as part of the natural growth of the saga, although not all Hooks may be lost. However it usually takes several stories to resolve a Hook.

As the saga progresses and the covenant evolves, there is inevitably some

bookkeeping involved. You will probably want to keep a record of the covenant's game statistics, its resources (such as the library and vis stores), its inhabitants, and any ongoing stories and events. To help with this process, you will find a number of sheets in Appendix B. The most important is the covenant sheet (effectively a "character sheet" for the covenant); there are also sheets to record the details of vis stores, libraries, and laboratories, as well as a yearly summary sheet to record the most important changes from year to year.

Lastly, we wish you the best of luck with your covenant, and most importantly of all, have fun creating and playing it!

