

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Black Monks of Glastonbury describes one of the richest and most powerful abbeys in Europe, and provides information on the diabolic corruption of most of its inhabitants. This sourcebook includes rules for diabolists in both **Ars Magica's** Mythic Europe and Open Game License (OGL) fantasy settings, portraying them as fearsome antagonists who gain great power at the cost of their immortal souls.

This book is not just an adventure module. Rather, the abbey, its inhabitants, and the surrounding lands are presented in detail and many possible adventures involving them are outlined. As a setting, Glastonbury can be used for any level of player characters; many low- and mid-level adventures are suggested, but a straight fight with the abbey's diabolist monks would be a challenge even for epic-level characters. Glastonbury Abbey deserves to be a major feature of any saga or campaign set near it, and this sourcebook is designed to help it realize that potential.

Although the abbey and adjoining town of Glastonbury are actually in the southwest of England in Somerset, they could be placed anywhere in Europe west of Greece without

much alteration. Benedictine monasteries were found everywhere, and rumors of corrupt monks were as prevalent. Notes are also included on how to use the abbey in a typical high fantasy world. Thus, this book should be useful to any GM playing in a fantasy setting.

History and Myth

The portrayal of Glastonbury Abbey in this book is based on both history and myth, with a dose of imagination. The abbey was real, and the ruins are still there to be visited. Many of the myths drawn upon in this book are real myths, although they have often been altered a bit to make for better gaming. The diabolist monks are entirely the product of the author's imagination, however. In order to help readers who care about what is real and what is created, those chapters that mix history, myth, and fiction include a final Reality Check section, which explains what came from where.

Religion

It is not possible to write a book about monks who have chosen to worship the Devil without touching on religious issues. It should be stressed that this book is a work of



fiction, and that the portrayal of religions herein should not be taken to reflect the beliefs of the author or the publisher on real religions. Within the book, it is assumed that Christianity is correct, and that those who worship the Devil are both evil and damned for eternity. This need not be true in your game, of course.

Dual Systems

The Black Monks of Glastonbury is a sourcebook for both the **Ars Magica** RPG and OGL games. If you page through this book, you'll see that rules for **Ars Magica** run alongside the SRD rules for the OGL that you might be more familiar with. You can play using either set of rules, paying attention only to the statistics for your game system of choice.

The statistics for the two game systems in this sourcebook were developed separately, not converted: some material doesn't quite translate properly between the two games. This book is not intended to be a conversion guide between **Ars Magica** and the SRD rules. However, where possible *The Black Monks of Glastonbury* does try to recreate the flavor of **Ars Magica's** Mythic Europe setting.

To help make it a little easier to follow the statistics you need, we've set them apart with formatting, letting you ignore everything that doesn't concern you.



Information formatted like this and preceded by the black monk icon is for OGL only — it's Open Game Content. You can safely ignore it if you're playing this adventure using **Ars Magica** rules.



Information formatted like this and preceded by the white monk icon is for **Ars Magica** only. You can safely ignore it if you're playing this adventure using the SRD rules.

The rest of the text is formatted like this, and is for both systems. This is the information that is used no matter what rules you're using; things like descriptions of locations or events, or the backgrounds of NPCs.

CHAPTER TWO: USING THIS BOOK IN A D20 GAME

Ars Magica is set in Mythic Europe — a world much like medieval Europe in 1220 A.D., but where many of the myths are true. This is probably not where most OGL campaigns are taking place. This chapter provides some suggestions on how to use this book in your OGL setting.

GMs who intend to use this book as an **Ars Magica** supplement should skip ahead to Chapter Three.

Glastonbury in Your World

When considering how to introduce Glastonbury Abbey to OGL PCs, the most obvious option is to simply include the abbey as a place in your world. Since medieval fantasy worlds usually have a feudal political structure, with large abbeys and temples to the gods scattered around, Glastonbury Abbey should feel right at home. However, there are some changes that may need to be made.

As noted in the Introduction, diabolism is presented here as inherently evil. Thus, the corrupt monks of Glastonbury should be clerics of an evil deity. They should still be masquerading as servants of a good deity, however. In most worlds, this should be easy to arrange. The good deity whom they claim to serve should be popular in the lands where the abbey is found, so that the local rulers could plausibly have given Glastonbury the lands it needs to be powerful.

Other elements of the abbey setting, such as the infernal regio Saphat, may not fit in particular fantasy worlds, or may need some changes; the Rules for Mythic Europe section below discusses some of these issues.

There is one difference common to many fantasy worlds which does require some changes to the assumptions made in this book. In most fantasy worlds, the player characters are part of a wandering group, traveling the land fighting evil and righting wrongs. In **Ars Magica**, the characters are all members of a covenant, and