

# Games From Folktales

Transcripts for November 2016

**Beating up clowns**

**Environmental determinism and the Order**

**Ptolemaic survival**

**Curdling magic**

**A covenant for Shallot**

**Orgolio statistics**

An experiment in podcasting for the Ars Magica roleplaying game

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# Games From Folktales

October 2016


# Clown punching in Mythic Europe

In the weeks leading up to the recording of this episode a plague of scary clowns has appeared in many Western countries. The obvious question for Ars Magica players is : if the same thing happened in Mythic Europe what would people do. Strangely enough we know the answer to this question because in 1221, slightly after the standard beginning period for the game, Frederick the Second (Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily, and wonder of the world) passed a law that said that no man could be harmed for beating up a clown.

I'd like to lightly touch upon the point that, like most urban myths and social phobias, the clown plague could be caused by faeries. I don't want to stress this too much because all of the iterations of that are obvious, and I'd like to focus instead on this legal aspect.

Frederick the Second probably wasn't facing a plague of scary clowns. What he was facing was an imminent crusade, and the belief that heresy would cause that crusade to fail. Looking around his kingdom, he decided to hammer down the rights of people who might be displeasing to God. The first people he went after in the Azzizes of Messina were the Jews. He didn't treat them quite so badly as clowns, because he still needed them. He used them in the imperial service, particularly as money lenders. It was he, later in 1231, that passed the law denying Christians right to practice usury, leaving the lending of to Jews. He might have done this for religious reasons, or he might have done it to annoy the great merchant banks of the other Italian city states. His mistreatment of the Jews aside let's move back to the rest of the text of the Azzizes of Messina.

It will seem familiar to those interested in the Norman invasion of England. Essentially when the Normans invaded England they said "We now own it, and things will be done as we say they will be done. If you have traditional laws, that's fun for you, and we'll keep the ones we find useful, but otherwise everything is up to us." Later this watered down into feudalism.



In much the same way when the Normans invaded Sicily the king of Sicily now owned and ran everything. This degenerated into feudalism but Frederick the Second, when he took over, made certain to confiscate every castle, even from his allies. He made the dispensation of justice something done solely by people that he personally appointed. His instruction through the Azzizes was to his sheriffs (as we would call them in English) that they would never charge anyone for robbing or harming a bufoon or jester.

Now he took this step because the easiest way to get a laugh in 1221 Sicily was to make fun of the pretensions of the clergy. There was apparently a great deal of social-class based humor in Thirteenth Century Sicily, very little of which survives. It might not be too much a stretch to suggest that it was similar in tone to the stories first written down, but orally present in the culture previously, in the Decameron in the next century.

So Frederick is thinking about a crusade and he doesn't want people mocking the Church, because he believes it makes God angry, but also because he believes it's harder to get together the political, financial, and volunteer support necessary for the construction of an army, if it's clear that the people who would benefit from it are hypocrites. Clowns and Jews are mistreated. Prostitutes are also mistreated: well they forced to live outside cities and wear distinctive garb. Sadly this appears to be a red hat which means that the messengers of the Order, at some point, will need to punch someone in the face. Moving on: he does allow gambling but there is a specific punishment for gamblers who take the name of God in vain when they lose.

So here we can see for Frederick there is a taxonomy of impurity of action. Least troublesome are the prostitutes. Next most troublesome are gamblers who take the Lord's name in vain, then the Jews, then clowns. I've often wondered whether Terry Pratchett was aware of this when he wrote about Lord Vetinari's hatred of mimes. So, strange to say, we know how Mythic Europeans would have responded to the clown plague. They would have passed a law saying that you could rob the clowns and no one will care.



**We've had covenants get money from all sorts of strange places. We've had covenants where people hunt whales. We've had others where people mine custard from the ground. Some make magical peppercorns and then transport them far away, so that no one knows that they're the ones who made them, throwing the European spice industry into chaos. We have covenants that sell dye extracted from lichens from rocks from the end of the world. Is it possible that a small covenant could make its living bounty hunting clowns? I think it's possible. I think that this might be a variant of the Crime Hook because although it's not illegal it does involve young men strong-arming people and stealing their cash. It's certainly an interesting way for grogs to make extra money and it's particularly safe in Sicily, because there it is illegal to carry weapons.**

**With the exception of people who work directly for the Holy Roman Emperor, in his role as King of Sicily, no one 's allowed to carry swords or other weapons. Such weapons are kept locked in armories, under the guard of the king until such time as required. This includes all of your characters unless they somehow have a warrant from the Emperor. Some listeners might be thinking this wasn't all that unusual: in medieval European cities there was a requirement to tie down weapons, or hand weapons in at the gate. In Sicily the law went further: most medieval European characters**

**carry a knife as a work tool or eating implement. These were not allowed in Sicily.**

**This means that when fights break out in Sicily people tend to use improvised weapons. This includes work tools and farm implements. This also means that if your character is a good brawler, his or her skill is of far greater importance in Sicily than in any of the other kingdoms of Mythic Europe, where people wonder about more aggressively quipped. Similarly people don't wear armor in Sicily. If you want around wearing armour the people who have the right to go around in armour will quickly track you down and insist that you stop doing it, after levying a fine.**

**This means that if your covenant is rolling clowns cash, the clowns could not be armed, or wearing armor. If you roll a clown for cash and he has a sword with him then he goes from just being someone who you can attack with impunity to someone who it is your civic duty to attack: from someone who the courts will not defend, to someone the courts will actively hunt down.**

# Environmental Determinism and the Order of Hermes

Environmental determinism is an idea with classical roots, but was most popular during the colonial period. It suggests that the social development of a country is determined in whole, or in large part, by the resources that are available to that society. Listeners familiar with 4X computer games are aware of this style of thinking. If your civilization is on the corner of a map, it's easier to defend your expanding border than if your civilization is on the center of a map, so a more aggressive policy is possible. If your civilization has resources which are highly suited to trading with other civilizations, or to diplomacy, or to manufacturing, you may tailor the way your civilization develops to suit these resources.

This is of course a gross oversimplification and it ignores the way that environmental determinism was used by eugenicists and racists during the colonial period. They suggested that rather than societies being formed by the environmental conditions around them, individuals were themselves permanently marked by their environment, and therefore people who were raised in superior environments were innately superior. This may be a view held by some Hermetic magi, because in an early book by Hippocrates.

These views wouldn't be considered particularly unusual in medieval Europe. Aside from all people being the children of God, people of noble birth were already quite certain that their blood was superior to that of other people. Their senses were finer and they enjoyed them more, for example. The Order of Hermes is one of the few democratic institutions in Mythic Europe and it is also in some senses vaguely meritocratic because it gives greater power to those who have magical talent, and magical talent is earned through personal work and study.

If environmental determinism is, in some sense true, the structure of the Order of Hermes tells us about the underlying magical conditions of the Mythic Europe in which it developed. The standard model of Mythic Europe as described in the current game books is this: all things in Europe are permeated by a mystical field. This field is made up of a substance best thought of, metaphorically, as a fluid. This fluid is called vim. Tides of vim sweep through the world permeating all things, with the possible exception of items so strongly tied to other Realms has to be shielded from magic's effects. The relics of saints, for example.

The tides of vim circle around a single point called the Axis Magica. It is a non-descript cave system in what is modern-day Switzerland. Thinking on this again I should of put it on Mount Blanc but I was using that for something else which didn't eventually make it to the books. In the areas where great magic has been done, or magical beasts have lived, the surface of the universe is in some sense corroded or dimpled, so that more vim can rest there. Magi can use this vim, so areas that have had previous magical use are suitable for settlement by magicians, because they allow easy a study of magic



Within the great tides of vim are eddies and currents caused by areas which are tied to the other Realms, most notably around cities. According to some magi, the attentive presence of God, which they call the Dominion, forces vim out of the area, in the same way that putting a stone pillar into a pond forces the water out of that space. I suggest that this is not the case, that vim is still in the area, it's just not accessible by magicians. I'd argue (although I don't think this argument has been made in the books yet) that it's because all spellcasting is done through the convincing theurgic spirits. Theurgic spirits cannot abide the presence of the Divine, so casting spells is shouting into empty space: there is nothing that answers the magus and obeys his instruction.

So that's the fundamental structure of the world and out of these areas of deep saturation of vim, a substance called vis accrues. Vis takes the flavor of the material shape into which is bound, so if vis binds itself into fruit, it is useful in magic that affects plants. You might make the converse argument: that there are some sites which are better for the collection of certain types of vis, and it's at those points that magicians use rituals to harvest vis.

For example in one of my early campaigns, you could put water into cups carved into a specific rock in Cornwall, on a specific night, and it would become vis. The tides of magic create the potential for the condensation of vis, and magi provide the material object for that condensation to occur into.

It has generally been assumed that the vis which congeals in Mythic Europe is spread evenly across the fifteen Hermetic Arts. In some sagas Techniques (the verb Arts) are rarer than the Forms (the noun Arts). If you accept that environmental determinism, with

all its faults and ethical problems is in some sense a workable model, then the Order of Hermes as it appears in 1220 should, in some way, reflect the resources which are available to its population.

Now in several of the other podcasts I've mentioned that Aquam is an underdeveloped Art in the game. This may be because Aquam does not coalesce, or if it does, it is deep under the ocean, or at the bottom of lakes and streams, where no-one harvests it.

A thought was given to me by an idea mentioned by Tim08 on the Atlas Games forum. He was discussing the earlier episode of the podcast about the qualities of water, and he said one of the qualities of water is that it suppresses radiation, and that he didn't think that that was particularly practical in Ars Magica sagas. In a strange way, however, it is, you could argue that water suppresses the field of vim, either because you're using a metaphor of radiation (which some people do, indeed that's where the name "aura" comes from for the local strength of the field) or you can make the argument that, as the Bible says, the spirit of the Lord moves in the waters. It's the spirit of the Lord moving in the waters that prevents vampires from crossing running water and causes witches to be rejected by water in certain parts of European folklore. Similarly if the spirit of the Lord moves in the water, it is possible that the waters have a very mild Divine aura: they might in some sense have the qualities of a particularly dilute relic. This might prevent vis from congealing in its presence.

Thanks again to Tim08 for this particular thought.

If even small amounts of Aquam were available, the handful of magicians who specialize in Aquam would rapidly accelerate their Arts because there is no competition for that vis, in contrast to, say, the competition for Corpus vis. So looking at the Houses: what can this tell us about the underlying structure of the world? Let's work our way through the vis types.

Animal vis must be relatively common. There is a House of Animal magicians, and there are many beastmaster traditions. Animal is one of those interesting cases where magical spirits can become incarnate in the form. There are even some attempts at farming animal vis by raising the animals which act as condensation points.

Aquam was mentioned earlier: many of the objections to it can also apply to Auram. It's clear that if, for example, Auram vis is mostly deposited by lightning strikes on mountains in the middle of great thunderstorms, there are some people who can catch it. Most noticeably the lightning lineage found in the greater Alps tribunal went from nothing, to having a single Archmagus, to being a relatively politically prominent quite quickly because someone had resources available to them that other people did not know how to use. You could argue that it was the mastery of lightning magic which enabled them to access a great deal of vis which had not previously been available to magicians.

Corpus seems common but I think that's because it is often found in fairies. A question occurs: is Corpus common because it is found in fairies, or is it common because fairies know that magi want it? If magi suddenly said "We're not interested in Corpus vis anymore. We've just want vim now" would magicians be finding that instead? Fairies appear to have the ability to congeal vis:

indeed congealing vis is part of whatever pathway they using to anchor themselves in the mundane world. Do they choose the art that magi want them to choose?

Herbam seems terribly common. In part I suspect that's because have been this is easy to imagine. Also wood is basically the plastic of the Middle Ages, so it's fun to play with it let's characters do a lot of really interesting things without seriously altering the combat balance of the group. It is said in the current rule books that Herbam vis rarer now than it once was, due to the destruction of the great forests. In previous editions vis in general was less common because it was being suppressed by the spread of the Dominion. It is not however clearly in the current edition whether if your character knocks down a vis bearing tree and founds a village, they don't instead start getting other types of vis.

That is what should be happening if vis is caused by damage or change in the surface nature of reality because by previous magical accidents, which is the standard model for the creation of vis.

Ignem seems to be rare in the sense that naturally occurring fires are very rare and the few that do occur are very difficult for magi to approach and control. Yet one of the main Houses of the Order is dedicated to fire magic, and many of them carry around large chunks of Ignem vis so that if they die in battle, they can take out...well everything in that vicinity. Ignem clearly appears far more often than, say, Aquam. One suggestion is that ancient mystical practices (Vestialism? Mithraism?) allowed humanity to make fire vis far more common than it would otherwise have been.



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**Imaginem vis is useful for magi, particularly the houses interested in mortals and faeries. Fairies seem, conversely, to offer a great deal of it to magicians, however difficult it is to think of natural occurrences in the wild.**

**Imaginem descending into material form would be things like reflections in mirrors and the sounds of songs: things that transient and difficult for magicians to harvest. Yet none the less they do. Does this mean that they're far more common than other Arts? Does it mean, for example, that Imaginem is merely a reflection of other types of vis: a sort of effluent breathed off?**

**Mentem is the killer of the idea that all forms appear evenly throughout the world. Mentem occurs where things think, which can cause people to fall back to the idea that the elemental forms are balanced, or that Mentem used to be far more common, but now that people are given a Christian burial it's difficult to take vis from their ghosts.**

**Terram seems pretty common. In part this is because humans delve into the soil. Modern humans, in various forms of folklore, are strongly tied to the element of earth. According to the ancient Greeks we are the people of iron. According to the ancient Hebrews the first human was made of clay. Something similar appears in Egyptian and Roman cosmology. Also gemstones sexually reproduce deep within the earth, and contain vis. So in a sense they are breedable.**

**Finally we have vim vis. It just sort of turns up as a necessary, poor relation to the obvious types. It's useful for Aegis of the Hearth, so everyone wants it and it's also good for making magic items, so you can often trade it with someone, but it's not particularly exciting. Sometimes it is found in magical creatures but most instead have vis which is strongly**

**associated with their most potent magical power.**

**So let's quickly summarise. The Order has twelve Houses and the Houses have various specialisations. Discounting the specialisations that are verbs, that leaves us with various Houses interested in the ten Forms.**

**There is almost universal interest in the Corpus Form**

**Strong interest in Animal, Herbam, Ignem and Terram,**

**Specialized interest in Imagem and Mentem and Vim**

**Some, rare interest in Aquam and Auram.**

**It can be argued that if the resources available to the Order of Hermes determine the shape of the Order of Hermes, then the shape of the Order of Hermes indicates that the resources available have moulded, and are reflected by, this order of interest.**

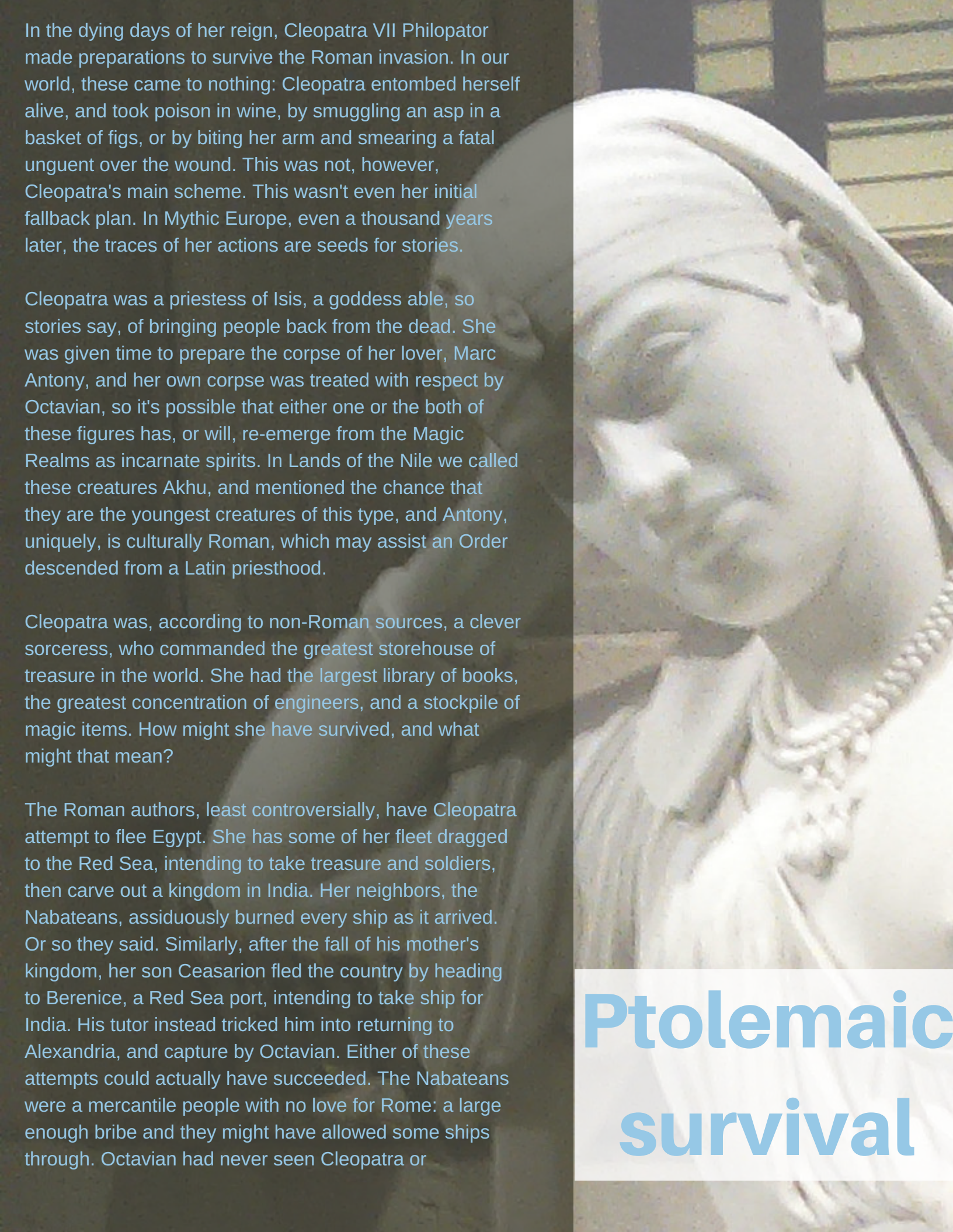


In the dying days of her reign, Cleopatra VII Philopator made preparations to survive the Roman invasion. In our world, these came to nothing: Cleopatra entombed herself alive, and took poison in wine, by smuggling an asp in a basket of figs, or by biting her arm and smearing a fatal unguent over the wound. This was not, however, Cleopatra's main scheme. This wasn't even her initial fallback plan. In Mythic Europe, even a thousand years later, the traces of her actions are seeds for stories.

Cleopatra was a priestess of Isis, a goddess able, so stories say, of bringing people back from the dead. She was given time to prepare the corpse of her lover, Marc Antony, and her own corpse was treated with respect by Octavian, so it's possible that either one or the both of these figures has, or will, re-emerge from the Magic Realms as incarnate spirits. In Lands of the Nile we called these creatures Akhu, and mentioned the chance that they are the youngest creatures of this type, and Antony, uniquely, is culturally Roman, which may assist an Order descended from a Latin priesthood.


Cleopatra was, according to non-Roman sources, a clever sorceress, who commanded the greatest storehouse of treasure in the world. She had the largest library of books, the greatest concentration of engineers, and a stockpile of magic items. How might she have survived, and what might that mean?

The Roman authors, least controversially, have Cleopatra attempt to flee Egypt. She has some of her fleet dragged to the Red Sea, intending to take treasure and soldiers, then carve out a kingdom in India. Her neighbors, the Nabateans, assiduously burned every ship as it arrived. Or so they said. Similarly, after the fall of his mother's kingdom, her son Ceasarion fled the country by heading to Berenice, a Red Sea port, intending to take ship for India. His tutor instead tricked him into returning to Alexandria, and capture by Octavian. Either of these attempts could actually have succeeded. The Nabateans were a mercantile people with no love for Rome: a large enough bribe and they might have allowed some ships through. Octavian had never seen Cleopatra or



# Ptolemaic survival





Caesarion. How difficult would it have been to send a substitute to die in place of the sovereigns?

If Cleopatra got away by sea, she could have gone virtually anywhere. Her people had already traveled as far as India as traders. An island kingdom of Helleno-Egyptian sorcerers is possible. She might also have traveled down the Nile, the embodiment of her goddess, and entered Warangia, the mysterious kingdom from which slaves and gold come to the coast.

After the loss of the Red Sea fleet, the Romans were concerned she might head for Spain. It had been a fractious province for some time. She might have continued West, to the Canary Islands, or to Antillia, there to found a kingdom that has avoided Europeans, until now. At least, they have publicly avoided Europeans: they may have had spies throughout Africa, some human, but perhaps some spirits or faeries, like the headless priests of Isis from Philae.

In Cleopatra's story, the two greatest libraries in the world are destroyed. The Great Library of Alexandria burns, and Marc Antony then replenishes it, by giving the contents of the Library of Pergamum to Cleopatra as a gift. These then disappear from history.

Magi have looked for them (of course they have) but they have had an amazing lack of success. As a plot hook, many games have had a Verditus make a submersible and attempt to recover inscriptions on the stones said to have slid into the bay. Perhaps the lack of success is a sign that the best of the items were hidden, then secreted out of the country? Cleopatra commanded her city not to rise against the Romans, so her networks survived the invasion intact. The Alexandrian resistance could have worked for years to save her kingdom's treasures, then impersonate merchants or caravans of slaves, and flee to a new home, distant from the Empire.

As a lover of the Foundation novels and a librarian, the idea that there may be a surviving Great Library sending agents into the world is appealing.



There are a few missing Ptolemies in history, who could be the ancestors of this civilisation's leaders. Cleopatra had four children. Caesarion, son of Julius, likely died at the hands of his adoptive brother, but may have escaped. Cleopatra had fraternal twins with Marc Antony called Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, then another son, Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The younger Cleopatra was taken to Rome and raised by Octavia, sister of Octavian, until she was married to Juba II. He was also educated in Rome, as a client-king for the Numidians. Their court had a great library, Isis worship and a group of mystical scholars about it. It's one obvious birthplace for a cult of Egyptian-inspired Roman magicians.

After she poisoned herself, Octavian called in the Psylli to try and save Cleopatra. They were a Berber tribe that were immune to snakebite, and could draw the poison out of bites and restore the dead to life. They used serpents in paternity tests: deliberately ensuring their babies were bitten by snakes. There's no known link between the Queen of Numidians, the Psylli, and the Massylli priestess who sent Trianoma to Bonisagus, but there's a hook there to conjure stories with.

The younger boys simply vanish from history. One writer records they were spared by Augustus as a wedding gift to their sister, but that seems oddly sentimental, and vaguely bizarre. Either or both might have vanished away to another civilization, to continue the line of Alexander.

*Lands of the Nile* has a great deal of information about ancient Egyptian mystical practices and military equipment. The use of a pocket civilization allows these to be used not only be the returning dead, but by a mortal culture. This helps sagas with alternative themeing to stories like the Mongol invasion, the Quest for Prester John, the discovery of the Americas, the addition of a new House to the Order, or the development of a magical homeland.



Very early in the history of Ars Magica, it was established that many of the cursed items which characters might find were produced by a single magician, called Himnis the Mad. Later he is used as the founder of confraternity of Verditus magi, who for some reason use the limited time of their life to create magic items that harm their users.

Why cursed items exist at all is unclear. In Dungeons and Dragons cursed items are a sort of mini game, in which you ensure that treasure is not poisoned or trapped. In Ars Magica, traps and poisons work far more directly and the philosophy of the game concerning mind control is far different. If you attempted to pull the idea from early Dungeons and Dragons, that cursed items force their owner to use them, even though it reduces the character's favoured ability, then that would be seen as particularly bad story design. Generally if troop has accepted the character, the Storyguide shouldn't go out of their way to wreck that character's main abilities: and yet we have cursed items.

Before the Order of Hermes supplement there was some question as to how large the Order was. It set the size of the Order as about 1000 people. Before that, when the Order might conceivably have been as small as just the characters and their ancestors, a single magician creating cursed items due to mental illness made sense. When the Order became far larger, and your character could have adventures anywhere in Europe, it became troublingly difficult to explain how they kept running into material created by a single person.

The size of the Order has in some sagas, at least, been radically increased to include sufficient members for all of the various cults which characters might wish to join. It's difficult to see how a single magician, or even a lineage of magicians, spend so much time creating cursed items. There is a way around the shortage for groups who think it necessary to have cursed items. I call it Curdled Magic.

I first thought about curdling magic while listening to an episode about Daedulus by the Myths and Legends Podcast. It occurred to me that no matter what he made, he was eventually harmed by his creations. If you had his flaw, you can build a labyrinth and you'd then be locked into it. You can build mystical wings, but they'll kill your son. Other

inventions had similar problems. Listening to the story of Daedulus I thought "Aha! This is how Himnis gets his problems. He is clearly a descendant."

Then I thought that the problem with this is that it's not playable. No player would deliberately volunteer to play a magus who spends all of his time creating machines that eventually kill him and destroy his family members. How could this be modified? Can you get the player to volunteer for their characters to spontaneously create cursed items? There are two great points of unexpected failure with magic items.

The first is in the Extraordinary Results for experimentation chart. Those of you using ArM 5, it's on page 199. What I'd suggest is an extra entry into the extraordinary results chart, such that the item becomes cursed: harming the user, although not necessarily the magus making the item. I accept that there is some overlap between the Side Effect result in the Curdling result, however I believe that can be overlooked. Side effects seem different in theme to having an item which is cursed.

I use the term "curdled" to suggest that the magic has gone awry, rather than that it's been deliberately designed to cause harm, like, for example, an item corrupted with infernal powers. There used to be a Flaw in early versions of Ars Magica (and I'm having difficulty recalling its name) that meant that the characters magical ability was linked to their life. When they died, all of the magical items that they had create, and all of the spells which they had cast, suddenly ceased to work. I presume this was removed from later editions because a flaw which is not a flaw. It was an easy point for characters who didn't wish to leave that sort of mystical legacy. You could design a flaw that did something similar, so that at death, the magic items created by character curdled. To be a playable flaw it needs meaningful impact on the plot. It could be known to be heritable, and the character is they have it, so it becomes the Dark Secret Flaw.

The generation of cursed items as a side effect of experimentation, or from a Flaw selected at character creation, adjusts the likelihood of curdling in a particular saga. A troupe can emphasize, or de-emphasize, the availability of cursed items to suit their story style.





# A covenant for Shallot

If your characters found the site of the poem "The Lady of Shallot" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and founded a covenant there in 1220, what Boons and Hooks would it have?

There are two versions of the poem. The older is less punchy, but has more detail about the setting. In these notes, the later version of the poem is recorded, while only those lines from the version that add material are given. The podcast is prepared the opposite way.

This article is not a direct transcript of the podcast. They are recordist's notes.

Thanks again to Kristin Hughes and Kirsten Ferreri for their Librivox recordings.



## PART I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-tower'd Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
Skimming down to Camelot:  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
Down to tower'd Camelot:  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott.'

- **River (Hook).**
- **Agricultural wealth, likely in a colder area or poor soils.**
- **Shallot is said to be in Guilford or Ceasaromagus. If in England, Centralised Kingdom Hook may be appropriate.**
- **Used to brew beer, make whiskey, feed livestock (therefor leatherwork, parchment-making.).**
- **Road (Hook, if castle not completely cut off).**
- **Camelot: ruins close?**
- **Flowers as vis sources. Thematic link to love, regard, illusions.**
- **Island is a Fortifications Free Choice.**

- **Castle Hook**
- **Towers likely square or rectangular, as circular towers are novel in the C13th.**
- **Curtain Walls and Mural Towers Boon if the towers form a ring of defended space.**
- **Grey is an odd colour for a castle: most are whitewashed.**
- **A bower is a place where a woman lives confined.**
- **Toll on the canal road? Secondary Income Boon?**
- **The space of flowers takes the place of the utilitarian buildings of the castle?**
- **Is the "space of flowers" outside the castle, so that it is essentially one big building, a dojo, like the White Tower in the Tower of London? If so, it has the Keep, but not the Curtain Walls and Mural Towers Boon. Could Guilford Castle be a model / floorplan?**
- **Covenfolk may have useful skills based on sailing, fishing, carting, brewing and farming. A shallop is a small boat.**

- **Is she a faerie?**
- **Is there a Faerie Aura here?**
- **Has she been replaced by a faerie?**
- **If the faerie sings when people die, it's a banshee, and so either a Death prophecy or Death Visitor.**
- **If she is using the tapestry as an External Vis Source, she might be a covenant inhabitant.**
- **No staff: only reapers hear her.**



- **What is the nature of the curse? Who whispers?**
- **If the PCs continue this, by having other people weave, then that's an Evil Custom Hook.**
- **Is it just Camelot, or is it stopping weaving? Could you just put a shutter over that window?**

- **The podcast covers the Allegory of the Cave at this point, and notes its role in earlier editions of House Criamon. This suggests that a Criamon clutch might wish to inhabit Shalott.**
- **Red is a rare, expensive colour in period. How do market girls have access to it? Valuable resource? The pages in "crimson" are not wearing red, they are wearing cloth of highest quality., suited to being dyed with the expensive, crimson colour.**

- **The mirror and tapestry are magic items.**
- **The crack may need to be repaired by a skilled Verditus or faerie smith.**
- **"half-sick" is a littoral emotional state, which makes her vulnerable to faerie influences.**

There she **weaves by night and day**  
 A **magic web** with colours gay.  
 She has heard a **whisper** say,  
 A **curse** is on her if she stay  
**To look down to Camelot.**

She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

**And moving thro' a mirror clear**  
**That hangs before her all the year,**  
**Shadows of the world appear.**

There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the **red** cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

**But in her web she still delights**  
**To weave the mirror's magic sights,**  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
 And music, went to Camelot:  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed;  
**'I am half sick of shadows,' said**  
**The Lady of Shalott.**





- Is Lancelot a faerie?
- A bowshot is not very far.
- Why is his armour coppered?
- Why is he so flashy and noisy?
- His shield probably refers to the hero of "The Faerie Queene" by Spencer.
- "Remote" seems a stretch.

### PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror-crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me!' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

**Did I mention not liking Lancelot?**

**If they get a lot of meteors here, a covenant may wish to seek the Astrological Mysteries.**

- The tapestry is not, you'll note, in the boat, although it generally is, as a shroud, when the subject is painted.
- That the Lady knows immediately the nature of the curse, when it strikes her, argues that it is a faerie story element. You don't know how dragon fire works when it breathes on you, just that it is painful: the Magic Realm does not explain itself in this way.
- If she's a faerie, her role has changed at this point.
- Her mirror is really good by medieval standards of manufacture. Glass mirrors with silver backing are not known in period.

- Who has been polishing his horse's feet?
- He's riding his warhorse: that's bad for it.
- The song is a quote from Shakespeare.
- Note she falls for the reflection of the reflection of Lancelot. That seems good for an Imaginem vis source.



PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot:  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
The Lady of Shalott.

**Story  
dependent  
weather.  
Faerie  
Aura?**

**Suicide  
reference?**

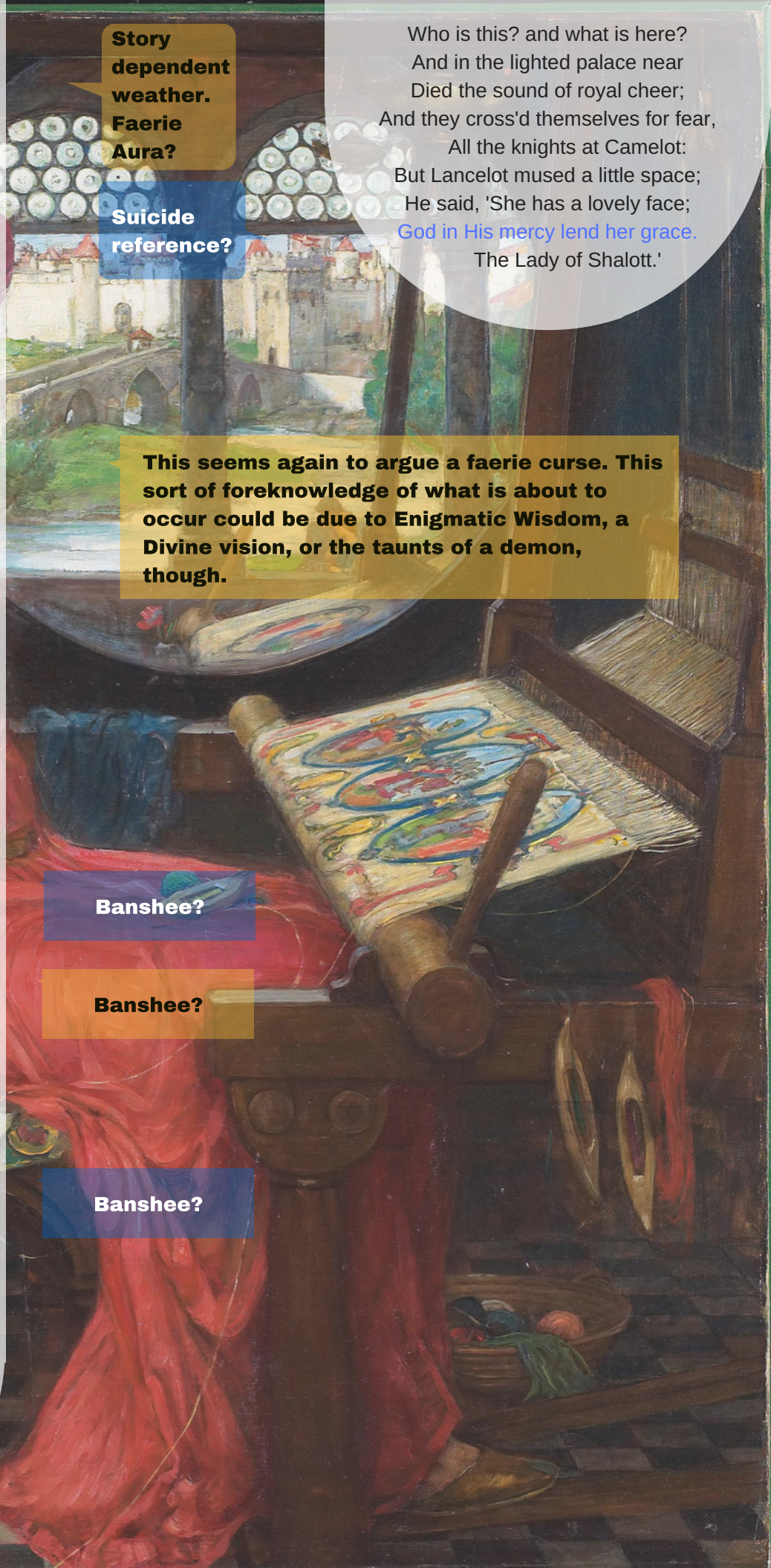
Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in His mercy lend her grace.  
The Lady of Shalott.'

**This seems again to argue a faerie curse. This sort of foreknowledge of what is about to occur could be due to Enigmatic Wisdom, a Divine vision, or the taunts of a demon, though.**

**Banshee?**

**Banshee?**

**Banshee?**





## Extra lines from the 1939 edition

Vis sources. Rego? Herbam? Imagem?

If this is a Briar Rose style of fence and bramble, a supernatural barrier, it explains why the castle is not taken from the lady, despite her lack of guards. Removes the Road Hook, arguably is a physical manifestation of a Regio boundary (Boon).

In addition to its material value, this might act as a key to the Regio boundary.

Dying swans might be a Perdo or Imagem vis source.

- Literally a suicide note in earlier versions.
- May carry a curse. May persist into 1220.
- Appears to damage Camelot.

The yellowleaved waterlily,  
The greensheathed daffodilly,  
Trembled in the water chilly,  
Round about Shalott

...

The little isle is all inrailed  
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed  
With roses: by the marge unhailed  
The shallop flitteth silen-sailed  
Skimming down to Camelot:  
A pearlgarland winds her head;  
She leaneth on a velvet bed,  
Fully royally appareled,  
The Lady of Shalott.

...

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight  
All raimented in snowy white  
That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,  
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,)  
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot  
Thought the squally eastwind keenly  
Blew, with folded arms serenely  
By the water stood the queenly  
Lady of Shalott.

...

As when to sailors while they roam,  
By creeks and outfalls far from home,  
Rising and dropping with the foam,  
From dying swans wild warblings come,  
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot  
Still as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her chanting her deathsong  
The Lady of Shalott.

...

They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,  
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest,  
There lay a parchment on her breast,  
That puzzled more than all the rest,  
The wellfed wits at Camelot.  
"The web was woven curiously,  
The charm is broken utterly,  
Draw near and fear not -- this is I,  
The Lady of Shalott."

...



During one of the podcasts I mentioned a demon with the form of an ambulatory phallus. He was written for *Antagonists* and is based on a character from Spencer's *Faerie Queen*. He failed to make the line style and good taste level, so he'd never make it into an Ars book. Sometimes the ideas just aren't winners.

Orogglio, is a demon so swollen with Pride that his name means "Pride" in Italian. His usual strategy is to take possession of convincing orators and use their pride to lead people into sin. Abaissier has taken these people as his cult leaders, and Orogglio resents this sudden lack of victims. His physical form is large and powerful, and he vents his frustration by attacking those he might otherwise possess. He may do this in his material form, or by possessing scholars disputing with flagellant leaders.

**Order:** Vessel of Iniquity

**Infernal Might:** 15 {Corpus}

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +3, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +4, Dex +0, Qik +0

**Size:** +2

**Virtues and Flaws:** Berserk, Tough

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Personality Traits:** Depraved +6, Hateful +6, Angry +4

**Reputations:** Embodies Pride 1 (Infernal), Vessel of Iniquity 1 (Infernal)

**Combat:**

Mace : Init +1, Attack +3\*, Defense +0, Damage +10\*\*

\* +2 when berserk

\*\* +5 if he has time to recover his magical mace.

**Soak:** +7 or +9 when berserk

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious [Give the penalties for every fatigue level the character has. There may be more to add in.]

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+) [

**Abilities:** Awareness 4 (rivals), Guile 6 (dance), Single Weapon 7 (feet), Theology 6 (heresy).

**Powers:**

**Envisioning**, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem: For 1 point, allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. For 5 points, allows the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait roll against an Ease factor of 9 or more. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure.

**Form of Wickedness**, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: Allows the demon to manufacture a solid form of pure sin. It forces those around the demon to begin carousing if they lack sufficient Magic Resistance. A Stamina stress roll against an Ease factor of 6 is needed every hour, failure costing a Fatigue level, and a success breaking this Power's hold. The Power also ends when the victim falls unconscious. A botch causes temporary insanity and imposes a Minor Personality Flaw appropriate to the sin. This form may only be maintained for one round, after which the demon must take spiritual or human form.

**Form of The Proud Man**, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: After assuming corporeal form, see Form of Wickedness, earlier, the demon can take solid form. See Appearance for details.

**Possession**, variable points, Init +2, Mentem: The demon stores some of its Might in a temporary pool in a victim, after overcoming Magic Resistance. When this pool is spent, the possession ends. The two pieces of the demon can only communicate if in sight of each other. The demon controls the actions of the host, but must spend Might to have the victim perform tasks they consider abhorrent. This requires the demon to make a roll of stress die + spent Might points against the victim's Personality trait roll. It also costs 1 might to use a Supernatural ability, or the same number of Might points a possessed supernatural creature spends to use one of its powers. Orogglio may possess multiple people simultaneously.

**Contagious Obsession**, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats magic resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Proud and at the next opportunity he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to prevent attempting to crush others with his words. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently. Any human who becomes a victim of this demon's Obsession power becomes a carrier of that Power and can pass it on to anyone he abuses, using the same series of rolls. Every added victim costs the demon 1 Might point, and the Power ceases to be contagious if either she runs out of Might or a day passes without someone being infected. Once the power ceases being contagious, it continues to affect the afflicted as described earlier.

**Weakness:** Protected group (celibates)

**Vis:** 3 pawns of Perdo, body

**Appearance:** The natural appearance of this demon is sin made manifest as a formless dark shape. He can, however, take a solid form. Orogglio appears as a vaguely humanoid, ten foot tall, ambulatory phallus. He has small arms and legs and, if given time to retrieve it, fights using a mace made from an oak that grew in the centre of the Earth.