

THE CHRONICLE OF

PAGAN™



ENGLISH

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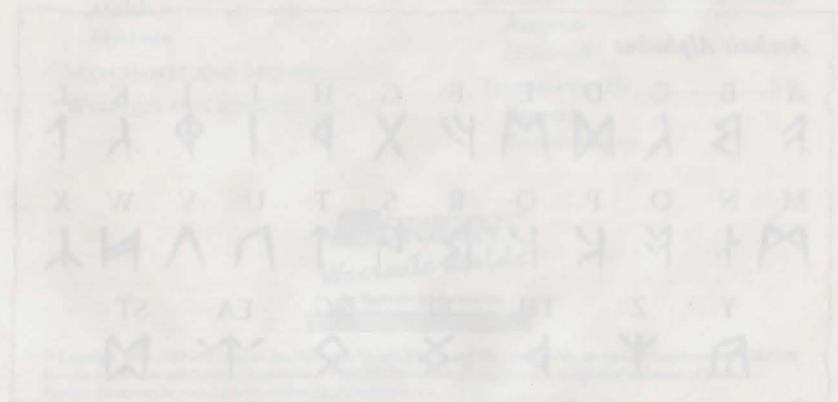
# THE CHRONICLE OF PAGAN

A TREATISE ON THE GLORIOUS HISTORY OF THIS

FOREMOST SOCIETY

*by*

BENTIC, HUMBLE SCHOLAR AND STUDENT





There is little in the world more refreshing to me than knowledge. I remember in my youth hearing tales of legendary times, unexplored places and fantastic beasts. I constantly pestered my parents and instructors with an endless number of questions. How does this work? Why did they act in such a manner? Where can I find these plants? My thirst for information was – nay, still is – insatiable. I spent hours at a time investigating all I could about my surroundings. Unfortunately, as I realised early in life, I lacked much in the way of physical prowess, making exploration difficult. Imagine my pleasure when I discovered that not only did life itself teach me things great and wondrous, but the myriad ancient tomes could offer nearly as much. It was then that I elected to dedicate this humble life to filling my mind and library with all the knowledge I could. Thus, I humbly add these words to the collection of wisdom that already fills the multitude of bookshelves throughout the land. I hope my work may someday imbue the hearts of others with curiosity.

*Bentic*



**Archaic Alphabet**

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M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
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# HISTORY



## FIRST EPOCH: AGE OF THE ANCIENT ONES

Ages ago, in the First Epoch of our lands, mankind was able to walk across the plains and traverse the seas which are today so hazardous. Our forebears, known as Zealans, worshiped the false words of the Ancient Ones, the rulers of emotions. The beautiful goddess Amoras, say the ancient texts, controlled the aspects of love and joy, appearing when those feelings were prevalent in Zealan communities. However, when their primitive emotions changed to hate or grief, fierce Odion was there to display his might. Ever holding the links between those two, so the legend goes, is proud Apathas, ruler of cool impartiality. Under the questionable comfort of these three lay the entire world, within which lived and toiled our ancestors.

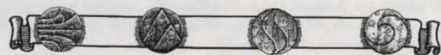
## ZEALANS

Our forebears were a simple lot, savagely ignoring rational thought in deference to the false tenets of emotion. They had little sense of society, often quarrelling among themselves, and even less knowledge of economy. To their credit, they were skilled warriors and hunters, and many of their martial forms are taught to this day. Centuries passed before a Zealan war chieftain, called Khumash-Gor, conquered most of his competing tribes. He unified them into a single community of considerable size and influence, and ruled for decades before falling to an assassin's poisoned blade. Several of his successors attempted to recapture the qualities of Khumash-Gor's leadership, all of whom failed. Then, once again, the people broke into conflicting clans, keeping only their primitive religion as a unifying aspect of Zealan society.

## SECOND EPOCH: THE TIME OF CHANGE

Then came a glorious change to the people of the land. Spoken only in hushed whispers, the leaders of a religious rebellion first made the words of the Guardian known to the public. This Guardian talked to them within their minds, foretelling of a dark time when a champion of tremendous evil would try to enter their world. This Destroyer would turn the very forces of nature – the elements of earth, water, air and fire – against them, raining destruction across the land. Only by offering worship to those very elements could the people hope to dissuade them from assisting the Destroyer.

Most of the Zealans scoffed, but several heeded the warnings of the Guardian, building, on his advice, a great temple high atop a mountain peak. With much effort and considerable magics they constructed a giant, black obelisk. There, so the Guardian explained, they could focus their worship of the elements, offering lives in sacrifice to the elemental spirits. As the Guardian had promised, the spirits grew in power, assuming titanic



forms: Lithos, the Mountain King, Elemental of Earth; Hydros, the Lurker, Elemental of Water; Stratos, the Mystic Voice, Elemental of Air; and Pyros, Lord of Flame, Elemental of Fire.

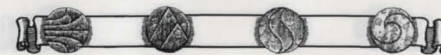
The archaic deities of the emotions became enraged as their powers diminished, commanding their worshippers to slay the followers of this new religion, who thus became known as Pagans. Brother turned against brother as a bloody war raged across the land. The message of the Guardian grew louder, and fewer Zealans heeded the words of the Ancient Ones, turning instead to the worship of the Elemental Titans. Though the war raged for years, it became quickly apparent that the Pagans would emerge victorious. Thousands of Zealans were killed when Hydros withdrew from their lands and Lithos forever sealed them within the Lost Vale. Then, when the Pagans had nearly routed most of the Zealan resistance, the Guardian gave his final warning: "Take your people and depart from the temple. The Destroyer has come."

The Pagans fled the temple and, just as the Guardian had prophesied, a scarlet visage appeared in the sky – the last time the Pagan sky was visible. The Destroyer's malevolent yellow eyes glared out across the land, finally resting upon the great temple, and bolts of lightning shot forth, obliterating the entire mountain top. The people cried out, calling for the aid of the Titans. Also as predicted, the Titans rose to the challenge, facing the Destroyer in a fantastic battle.

Clouds shrouded the earth. Night and day seemed to cease, pitching the world into a state of never-ending twilight. The earth shook in violent tremors while torrents of rain and hail pelted down from above. The very winds transformed into cyclones, whipping across the land, and volcanoes opened up like wounds, hurling fiery death upon the people. Much of the land was broken apart and many islands were annihilated or forced beneath the seas. Finally, the Titans returned to face the people, claiming victory against the Destroyer.

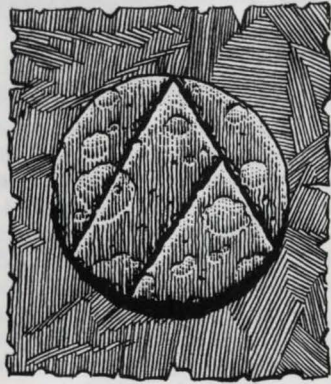
The world that remained was pitted and scarred, a vast wasteland with a smattering of island chains. The ocean brine had increased ten-fold – formerly lush shore plants now withered at the touch of the tide. Many of the survivors, both Pagans and Zealans, gathered on one of the larger islands, from then on called Morgaelin after the volcanic remains of its lone mountain of the same name. However, despite the falling of the Destroyer, the world did not return to peaceful times. The Titans became enamoured of their vast powers, demanding even greater sacrifices in return for their past deed. They set upon each other as they vied for supremacy of the world.

The Pagans constructed holy sanctuaries, one for each of the Titans, in an effort to appease them. The fight for control between the Elemental Titans continued, while the few remaining Zealans who had sought refuge in the nearby mountains launched continual raids upon the Pagans. Though the Destroyer was gone, the people were still in constant turmoil.





### THIRD EPOCH: PACIFYING THE TITANS



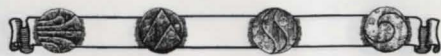
#### *Calming the Earth*

The elder Pagans knew it would be impossible to overcome the might of the Titans, so they sought to bargain instead. They sent a champion, Moriens, to the Hall of the Mountain King to plead with Lithos, begging him to cease his destructive quakes. In return, Lithos demanded the service of the people, even beyond life. Upon their deaths the people were to be interred, and thus conveyed to his realm for eternal slavery. In addition, ordered the hungry Mountain King, several

Pagans must be given to him immediately. With this pact Lithos would not only quiet the land, but also instill within Moriens the magical powers necessary to perform rituals required to satisfy the Titan of Earth, including minor manipulation of the earth. The elders accepted the terrible price and the covenant was formed.

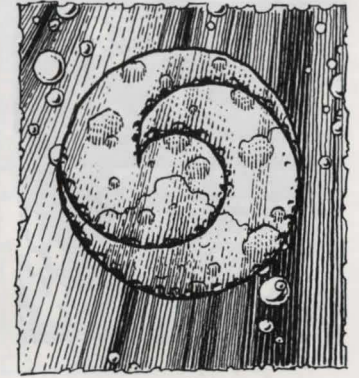
Moriens became the leader of the Pagans – the first in a long line of Necromancers. He established a cemetery near the newly built Tenebrae, City of Eternal Twilight. He selected several elderly citizens to volunteer as Lithos' first servants. As agreed, the tremors ended and the earth calmed.

As the decades passed, Moriens began to feel within himself the infirmity of age and its resultant illnesses. He went to Lithos and asked to have his life extended so that he might continue his work. The Mountain King explained that such was not within his power, but that there was another way to have the Pagans continue their service. He permitted Moriens to choose an Apprentice so that, upon his death, a new Necromancer would assume his position. In turn, the deceased Necromancer would enter a different service than the other Pagans, one that involved eternal rest, where his wisdom could be called upon by other Necromancers down through the ages. Each succeeding Necromancer would, in turn, find an Apprentice to whom the powers would be passed upon death. The earth shook no more, but still the volcano raged, the winds blew and the rains fell.



#### *Stilling the Seas*

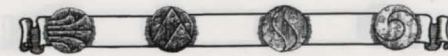
Many generations of hardships passed and a hero became known to the people. His name was Kalen, and in time he became their Necromancer. He fell in love with his Apprentice, who returned his affections, and soon they were to undergo the Ceremony of Bonding. Then tragedy befell them as Hydros, considerably displeased with the pact between Lithos and the Pagans, sent a great wave to wash across the city, pulling Kalen's beloved into the seas. As the people began repairs to the city, Kalen headed to the Temple of Flowing Waters.



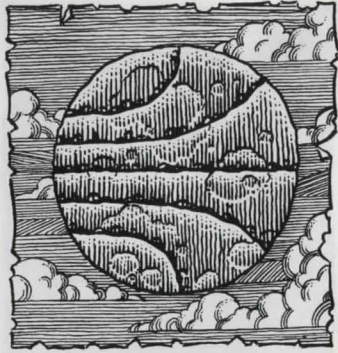
There Kalen begged for the return of his betrothed, but Hydros refused his request. Instead she revealed to him the image of his love in her new form, pale and sickly as that of one of the Lurker's minions. Thoughts of vengeance entered Kalen's mind and he visited Lithos to learn of means for justice. He found the Mountain King eager to comply, having no love for a rival Titan. Lithos revealed that a powerful substance, called Blackrock, was immutable by any amount of the Lurker's powerful waves.

Kalen remembered the tales of the ancient Pagan Temple and the great obelisk. He returned to the volcano and found in the crater the remains of the obelisk. There, in the murky waters continually filled by Hydros' rains, was the darkened silt of this Blackrock. Using his Necromantic powers, Kalen reshaped the crater to prevent fresh water from entering the Temple of Flowing Water. In addition, he melded the Blackrock into the crater wall, preventing the Lurker from eroding away the land. He had trapped Hydros.

Entering the Temple, Kalen was prepared to destroy both it and Hydros by reforming the crater. His intention was that not enough water should remain for the Titan's existence. Before he could complete the task, the Lurker's pleas stayed his hand. She promised to return his beloved's body so that it could be interred properly, no longer a servant to the Titan of Water. She also offered to pass on to him and all in his future bloodline a modicum of her powers, equal in measure to the abilities he gained from Lithos. Kalen accepted her bargain for the good of the people. From that point on, the storms ended, and two separate sects of magic, Necromancy and Tempestry, were present in the land.







### *Assisting the Air*

Several years after the torrential rains ceased, a mystical voice contacted Stellos, a wizened follower of Stratos, while he was praying at Argentrock Isle. The voice identified herself as Stratos, ruler of Air. Stellos began telling others of the Mystic Voice, but they thought nothing of his insane ranting ... until he began performing miracles. Quickly it spread through the land that Stellos could aid the sick and draw truth from the lips of liars. Word of his powers reached Kalen, who brought

to Stellos the body of his betrothed. The elderly man took Kalen's love to Windy Point and asked for the power to return her to life.

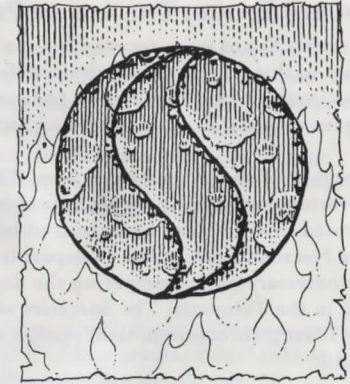
Stratos explained that the woman's body had been separated from her spirit for too long. It would be possible to breathe life into her, but only at great cost. Hoping to repay Kalen for his work in ending the rains, Stellos agreed to the unknown fee. Stratos permitted the determined man to send his spirit into the realm of Air. Farther and farther he went, facing tremendous winds. There he finally found a shimmering cloud at the very verge of the sky itself and something he later called the ethereal void. As he entered the cloud, the light of day confronted him; he was the first and, to this day, only Pagan to see sunlight in many generations. On the dark island below, his mouth opened and from it flowed the breath of life into the body of Kalen's beloved.

The old man, prepared to greet the lovers, returned to his body only to discover he had lost his vision – forever blinded by the sight of the sun. Kalen began to weep, but Stellos bade him stop. He was himself truly joyful at the sight he had witnessed far above the darkness of the clouds. To show his gratitude, Kalen commanded the rocky ground to form the walls for a stone construct to house and protect the old man. Here Stellos could pass on his knowledge of healing and purification throughout the ages, for with the power of resurrection came immortality. Stellos and his pupils became known as Theurgists, and together they were proclaimed the Order of Enlightenment. The Order was never wanting for students, for one Titan's violence was yet unquelled, and with the fires came always the wounded.



### *Binding the Flame*

Centuries after Stellos' miracle of resurrection, a group of five Theurgists pooled their knowledge and resources to learn more about the Lord of Flame. During their studies, they reached an important realisation. If Blackrock was anathema to the Lurker, they conjectured, perhaps it held debilitating effects for Pyros, as well. Knowing that the fires spewing from the volcano would annihilate the island in less than a year, the five acted on their speculation.



Some of the Theurgists visited the Necromancer to procure as much Blackrock as they could. They received several small chips, in addition to a single fragment larger than a man's head. Other Theurgists set about formulating the necessary diagrams and components required to shape the dark substance, and with luck, bind Pyros within.

Finally, the five were ready to begin. They drew a pentagram upon the floor in Pyros' Temple, setting the Blackrock in the centre where the Lord of Flame was likely to appear. Four of the Theurgists took a point of the pentagram and knelt in readiness, while the fifth stood at the final point and began the traditional Ritual of Summoning. As expected, Pyros appeared in a searing blaze of fire. Immediately feeling the effects of the Blackrock with which he was in contact, he pointed towards a Theurgist and instantly enveloped him in fire. Before the dying Theurgist's tortured scream could fade, the remaining four made up for the loss and quickly commenced the binding process' chants. Flames licked about the Theurgists as they intoned the various words of power until finally it was over. Pyros was bound in the larger fragment.

Adversely affected from within the Blackrock, Pyros was unable to hurl lava upon the Pagans. At first the Theurgists were revered as saviours, until the people began to realise what corrupting mental transformations had been required of the four Theurgists. Rightly fearing the power the Theurgists wielded over fire, the people labelled them Sorcerers for their dealings with daemons, and shunned them. The Sorcerers readily accepted their fate and secreted themselves away from the others. They named a Master Sorcerer, though after a violent death he was replaced by the First Acolyte. Many accusations were cast about who was responsible for the death, though nothing ever came of it. A precedent was set, however, and in the subsequent centuries, the more powerful Acolytes were always ready to take the Mastery from those fellow Sorcerers who grew weak or complacent.





## FOURTH EPOCH: THE AGE OF PEACE

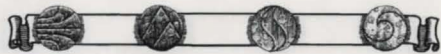
After the Titans were appeased or controlled, the era of peace which still exists to this day settled on the people. The few Zealans who clung tenaciously to their weakening gods are now extinct, though only after the Pagans endured decades of raiding and murder.

People are free to live normal lives. They tend their fields or wares, performing their daily duties as is right. Those few who have instead devoted their lives to the pursuit of magics live apart from the populous. The Necromancers, asked to depart from society to perform the distasteful but necessary task of preparing the dead for Lithos, have handed over their rule to the Tempests. The Sorcerers remain in their hidden enclave, while the Theurgists continue their studies in the monastery on their small island.



## BRITANNIA

*This segment of history, if it can be called such, belongs more in a work of fiction than in this objective treatise of our land and our culture. However, at Vardion's rather persuasive – and sorcerous – insistence, I have included it within these pages. Though the veracity of the source is unknown, Vardion claims these stories, as told by his grandmother, Mordra, must have some bearing on reality or she would not have passed them on. Vardion is a great and widely respected sorcerer, and even the Thaumaturge Mythran speaks highly of the aged woman, yet one must wonder about the truth of tales describing this other world, the one called Britannia.*



## THREE AGES OF DARKNESS

During the early formation of this mythical Britannia, there came to be three embodiments of evil. The first was a spellcaster named Mondain, the second was his apprentice Minax, and the third was their unusual offspring, the entity Exodus. In each case, the ruler of this Britannia called for assistance in defeating the great evil, and, in each case, the same strange champion appeared to conquer the malevolent forces assaulting the land. The stranger was able to claim victory all three times, thus proving considerable courage and skill.

## THREE AGES OF ENLIGHTENMENT

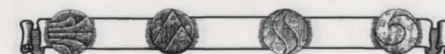
Following the destruction of the three faces of evil, there came three more times of trial for this world of Britannia. The first involved establishing a set of ethical codes by which the general population should live. In addition, the ruler of the land called for a hero to step forward and solve several quests designed to represent one of the codes of ethics. The selfsame champion who defeated the three sources of ultimate evil emerged successfully from the eight quests, becoming the embodiment of those codes. As champion, the hero was integral in resolving political strife when the ruler of the land disappeared and was replaced by Blackthorn, a tyrannical lord who harshly enforced the letter of the law. Finally, the champion served the kingdom a sixth time, demonstrating that a perceived source of malevolence was in reality a collection of individuals trying to right a serious wrong.

## AGE OF ARMAGEDDON

The mighty Thaumaturge Mythran has added a bit of credibility to Mordra's tales by telling one of his own. He does not seem to remember the source of this story, but he believes that it must be part of the mythology put forth by Vardion's grandmother.

Following the sixth adventure, the champion disappeared from the land, returning nearly two centuries later! This time, however, the hero appeared without summons, for no one knew of any cataclysms that required reparations. Yet it was not long before the champion was again facing great evil, this time in the form of an insidious organisation called The Fellowship that had insinuated itself into Britannian society. In addition, a magical island, once home to the very Exodus of the Third Age of Darkness, had risen to the surface, indicating a further threat to Britannia. During this seventh period of service, the champion was able to uncover the dastardly plot of The Fellowship and remove the evil presence forming on the island.

There is nothing more known about the history of this unusual land, for Vardion has had no contact with his grandmother for some time now and Mythran remembers no more stories. Yet Vardion remains confident of the existence of this world of Britannia, and that its presence is related to his grandmother's alleged disappearance.





# TRAVELER'S GUIDE

## PLACES

### *Tenebrae*

Named the City of Eternal Twilight, Tenebrae is the only community – excluding the various groups of spellcasters – known still to exist on Morgaelin. It was first built ages ago by our Zealan ancestors, who were

forced out during the ancient wars. Despite its heritage, many of the edifices are new, having been reconstructed in recent years.

In the central part of the city is the **Great Palace**, home and court of the reigning Lady. From there she rules with a firm hand, keeping the peace via her very real threat of sending criminals to a watery grave.

### *Plateau*

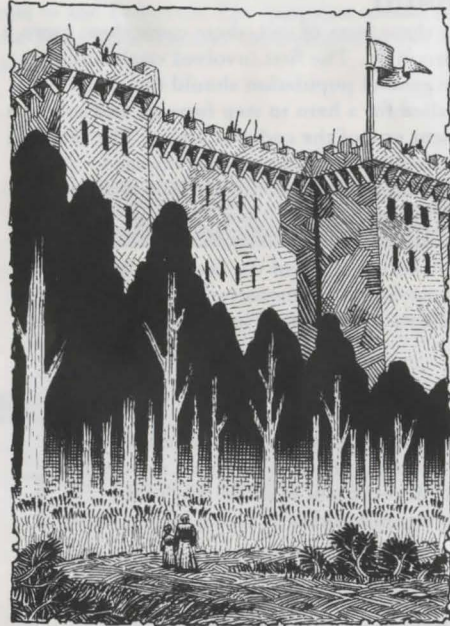
This crag that overlooks the city supports a small hut, home to the mysterious Mythran.

Covered with a few groves

of trees, the area is remarkably nondescript, and Mythran has done little to change the flora and fauna other than construct his unusual abode. It is said that this is where to find information no others could possibly know.

### *Vengeance Bay*

This area is beyond the reach of those without the means to cross the seas in safety – a rare thing in these times. The bay was the site of the last and greatest true battle between the Zealans and the Pagans, who won by calling upon Hydros to pull the Zealan leader's ship under the sea. To further the show of power, Hydros spat the ship back up, cursing all on board to eternal slavery as part of her undead legion.



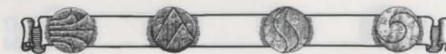
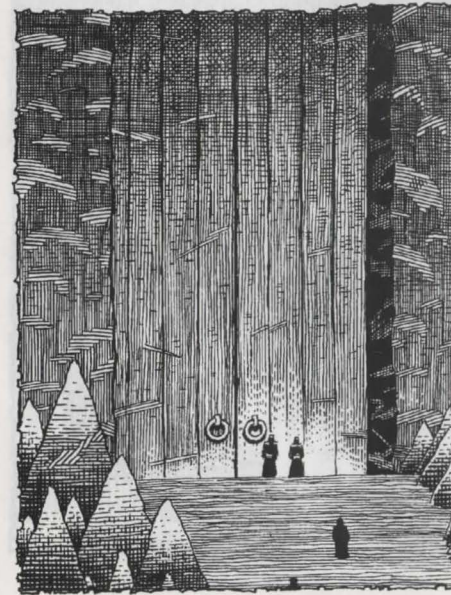
### *Cemetery*

The cemetery is where the dead are interred and then sent to Lithos. It is also home not only to the Necromancer and her Apprentice, but to dozens of the Mountain King's servants. Even before reaching the cemetery, the stench of death becomes overpowering, and many ghouls and skeletons are visible from the gates. Very few are brave or foolish enough to enter the graveyard to speak with the Necromancer, and usually only the Apprentice travels into the city for supplies.



### *Hall of the Mountain King*

Located at the base of the mountain at Stone Cove, the Hall of the Mountain King is, indeed, where the Necromancers may go to speak with Lithos. In fact, only those with the powers of a Necromancer or Apprentice are able to enter, for the seemingly inoperable stone door stops all others.





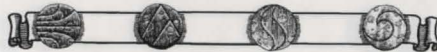
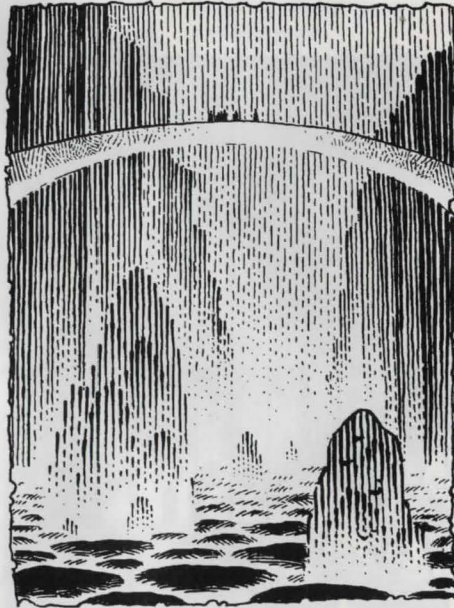


### *Argentrock Isle*

This small islet, reached only by a bridge, is home to the monastery of the Order of Enlightenment. There the Theurgists have the opportunity to attend to their studies in the peace and quiet necessary to achieve Enlightenment and Purity. Those Theurgists who learn well the lessons of Stratos are permitted to visit **Windy Point**, where a truly pure Adept might hope to hear the Mystic Voice.

### *Sorcerer's Enclave*

Among the most darksome places in Pagan is the treacherous territory known as Sorcerer's Enclave. There the Mages of Fire perform unknown and possibly horrific magics, as they consort with their patron Titan, Pyros. Fortunately, the area is quite secluded, as a boiling lake of fire surrounds the collection of buildings, making it impossible for those who are not members of the sorcerous cabal to traverse.



## PEOPLE

### *Mordea*

Ruler and Tempest of Tenebrae, our Lady Mordea governs with strict attention to detail. Her right of rule was inherited from her Tempest father, Keldan, and noble mother, Celidia – both royalty and real power support her claim to rulership. Our Lady is extremely aware of her position, accepting only the utmost in loyalty from her subjects.

### *Lothian and Vividos*

Lothian is the strong and stoic Necromancer, quite competent in her abilities to convey the deceased to Lithos. She has little opportunity to converse with the citizens of nearby Tenebrae; her work keeps her so tremendously occupied. The townspeople are, however, friendly to her new Apprentice, Vividos. His vivacious personality is a good complement to Lothian's, making it easy for him to deal with the world outside the distasteful realm of The Cemetery.

### *Stellos*

Stellos is a wise and kind man for whom the term elderly is more a measure of appearance than chronology, for his dealings with Stratos have left him immortal. Ever concerned for the welfare of others, he is perfectly suited for his role as instructor at the Order of Enlightenment. The only man alive from our tumultuous past, Stellos is a still-breathing legend who matches perfectly the stories of his heroic encounter in the realm of Air.

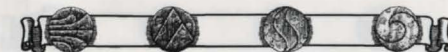
### *Malchir*

Few know much about Malchir, the Master Sorcerer, and those who know anything at all are his fellow followers of fire. It is said he is a dark man, but no one knows whether his bitterness led him to, or is a result of, his status. There are those who speculate he bears a greater resemblance to the daemons he commands than to normal men.

### *Mythran*

Master of Thaumaturgy, Mythran, is a quirky, peculiar man. Many give witness to his abilities with magic, yet none can draw a connection between his powers and those of any of the other spellcasters. There seems little that he does not know or cannot find out, and many have made their way to his home atop the plateau to glean what they can from his wisdom. He speaks as though there were other Thaumaturges, but I have heard naught of them elsewhere.

Those who have seen it say his house is quite unusual. Only a small hovel on the outside, his home is considerably larger within. Rumors claim that the entire second story is devoted to his research and experiments, and considering his vast wealth of knowledge, there seems no reason for doubt.





## MERCHANTS AND MONEY

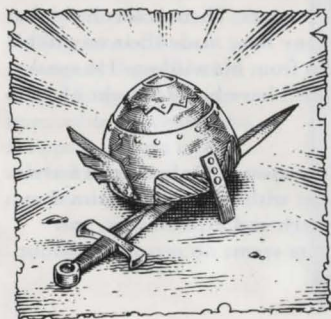
During the Third Epoch, after the Age of the Necromancers passed and Tempests came to rule, the Pagans learned the value of coins – namely that a universal currency saved wear and tear on the feet. Much deliberation went on as to what should best represent this abstract item of value. Some wanted the trappings of precious metals, but decided such was too valuable for crafts and weaponry to waste on coinage. Others thought that objects from the sea, such as oysters, clams and starfish, would best honour the Tempest rulers. Conversely, proponents of toraxen hides argued that it would be sacrilege to remove such sea belongings from the domain of Hydros.

Finally, the people agreed upon shaped and stamped obsidian chips. Obsidian is no longer used for other objects, it comes from the ground, honouring earth, and can be imprinted with the icons of the other Titans to show deference to them as well. Moreover, it is possible to confine to government agencies the technology for heating raw obsidian and molding the ore into chips. Thus they can enforce a necessary, though arbitrary, value within city walls.

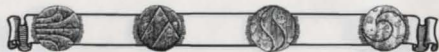
Those who cannot or will not craft for themselves use these obsidian chips throughout the city as legitimate exchange for goods and services. Since there are not many merchants in town, I have taken the liberty of compiling a list of the few types of goods offered to the general public. Fresh fish and vegetables can be purchased at the tavern. The weaver produces fine apparel that is both functional and comfortable. Exquisite jewellery can be purchased from the jeweller, who also produces some glassware. Quality refreshment is available at the tavern, where herdsmen bring torax chops and kith fillets. Finally, several of the craftsmen about town are likely to sell tools of their various trades.

## WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

As any member of the militia is sure to admit, finding good weapons and armour is extremely important. Even though the Zealan raids ended some time ago, there is always need for arms to protect against the wilds of nature.



The weaponsmith forges and sells all sorts of swords, axes, maces and hammers, in addition to a wide assortment of armour and shields. However, being a metalworker, the smith rarely sells lighter forms of protection. Fortunately for those who have taken an oath to police and protect the city, the current captain of the guard crafts armour from toraxen hides, and has been known to offer his wares for sale upon request.



## BESTIARY



### DOMESTICATED CREATURES

#### *Kith*

Although they are large, multicolored quadrupeds, kith bear a remarkable resemblance to the common insect. The major difference between the kith and what some consider to be their smaller cousins is size. At full maturity, a kith's head easily reaches the waist of a man. A few may grow even larger.



Being omnivorous by nature, kith tend to live on the various plant life found throughout the land, though they prefer denser flora. Domestic kith are de-venomed and de-fanged at birth, feral kith are far more dangerous, often rearing up on their abdomens to strike with poisoned fangs.

Kith excretions come in the form of silky strands, which are woven together to make fine clothing and linens. The finer weaves of kith silk make excellent canvases, for the paints adhere well to the fibrous material. In addition, the meat taken from the kith's abdomen and thorax is quite tasty, and many herdsmen raise kith solely for the sustenance they provide.

#### *Torax*

Large, slow reptiles, toraxen are the staple of the herdsman's stock. They are usually brown in colour, though some have dark brown or dark gray spots. Their heads are broad and flat, filled more with bone and muscle than brain. Half as tall as a man and usually docile, the torax is particularly strong for its size, often able to knock down trees in one angry charge. Setting its head down, the torax charges victims and then snaps with its bone-crushing jaws. Their tough hide is thickest around the legs and back, making them especially difficult to damage in these areas.



The tremendous strength of a torax makes it an excellent dray beast; able to carry great loads for a long amount of time. In addition, their thick skin makes excellent leather, which is usable as clothing, armour and even temporary shelters. Torax meat is a staple food, whether served fresh as chops or dried as jerky.

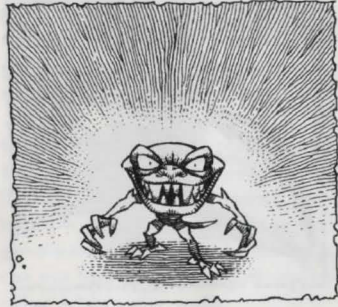




## CREATURES OF THE WILDS

### Changeling

Changelings are, indeed, a curious species. As they are shapeshifters, it is difficult to describe their true form. However, there is one shape that is apparently available to all changelings – or at least in all of those encountered thus far. In that form, they appear much like short, disfigured and disproportioned men. The changelings' movements seem jerky and erratic, yet the creatures seem to be in control of their actions.



In battle, the changeling assumes the shapes of its opponent or flora! In these forms, the changeling has the strengths and abilities of these other creatures, including any toxins they might be able to employ. In what must be assumed is its natural form,

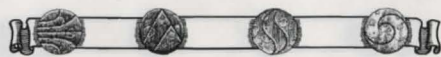
the changeling bounces about the area and then suddenly leaps at its opponent with its huge tooth-filled maw opened widely. No one has had the opportunity to learn exactly what it is that allows a changeling to shapeshift or what makes it act as it does, for it fights viciously to the death. Moreover, the creature disappears when it dies, making study impossible.

### Troll

Trolls are large, lumbering bipedal creatures, standing half again as tall as a man. Their skin colour ranges from a pale green to an olive or tan, and they wear little in the way of clothing. Trolls move quite slowly, as if they must first decide where to place each foot before taking a step – though anyone who has watched a troll move through a small community, stepping on whatever is underfoot, knows better than to think a troll is careful. There are those who speculate that trolls are the offshoot of an ancient tribe of particularly evil and stupid Zealans, though none of the ancient tomes in Tenebrae support that theory.



Trolls fight poorly, being so slow and bulky. However, their solid strength means certain death for most who are careless enough to be struck. All trolls use clubs, usually pulled from dead vegetation, though even their powerful fists are enough to deliver a tremendous blow.



### Seeker

The seeker is nothing more than an abomination of nature. One large eye floats about connected to a huge, snapping mouth via a thick red membrane. It is hoped that this creature is the result of a magical concoction, but others claim that seekers are the living remains of the Destroyer, as foretold by the one who called himself the Guardian.



The seeker seems to be neither herbivore nor carnivore – no one has ever seen it eat. The creature simply hovers about until it sights a target and then launches into a furious assault of gnashing teeth. Yet no scholar has ever been able to explain the seeker's sole purpose of wanton destruction. It does not eat, and yet nothing eats it. Even in death the seeker mocks other life, exploding into a myriad of sharp bone and cartilage that can be fatal to those caught within the radius of its devastating blast.

## UNDEAD AND SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

### Aerial Servant

Many people who die before they finish important tasks become spirits bound to the welfare of others. Unlike ghosts, for whom the Titans have no use, aerial servants function as messengers and assistants to Stratos. Moreover, aerial servants do not possess the same dark gray appearance of their counterparts, the ghosts, seeming instead to be made up of simple currents of air.

Aerial servants do not attack others, whether they are living or otherwise. However, they are usually loyal to the Theurgists who summon them, obeying their commands to the best of their abilities. Some say that aerial servants can affect the objects they touch, temporarily changing the objects into air currents as well. This way, the aerial servant is able to transport otherwise solid objects through the smallest wall chinks and such.







### Daemon

Those consumed by flame, either in life or death, or are slain by another daemon, become servants and warriors for the Lord of Flame and his followers. Daemons are bipedal creatures with mottled and scaly skin, sporting sharp claws and talons. Atop their heads are two horns, while coarse brown fur covers their legs.

These hideous beasts are terrible tools of destruction. With their powerful arms and sharp fangs and claws, they

rend their victims with razor-like ability. According to the few witnesses who have seen a daemon attack, the victims scream of the burning pain that comes from each strike, and legend maintains that daemons can even hurl destructive balls of flame. As fire is their primary tool, daemons seem immune to the effects of flame themselves, and their thick scales make them nearly impervious to the common blade.

### Ghost

Ghosts, also known as wraiths, are the disembodied spirits of those who died so tragically that even the Titans have no use for them. They appear as twisted shapes of gray floating above the ground. Tied to the general location of their demise, ghosts rarely travel far in search of victims. They consume life forces to give them strength. Ghosts have complete control over their visibility, often remaining invisible until prey is near enough to scare.



Feeding on the spirits of the living, wraiths attack with a draining touch that leaves the victim weak of body and will. Armour is useless against their attack, and weapons without some sort of enchantment cannot hurt them. Legend claims that some of the Necromantic magics may affect a ghost, but I doubt there is any evidence to support the supposition. Note that a ghost's non-corporeal nature permits it to access many areas sealed to ordinary folk.

### Ghoul

Ghouls are the animated corpses of the recently dead. Wearing nothing more than the clothing in which they were interred, ghouls – or zombies – are extremely slow in both thought and action. Unlike skeleton warriors, the ghouls' function is far less oriented towards combat, and they begin their service as soon as they make their way to the Mountain King's domain.



However, when sacred areas such as the cemetery are disturbed, ghouls are there to confront the trespasser. Fortunately for the perpetrator, movement for ghouls is extremely difficult and painful, rendering them poor combatants. An ironic twist to the ghouls' nature is that they consume the flesh of their prey, thus making it impossible for the victims ever to reach Lithos and serve him.



### Minion of the Lurker

The Tempests tell us that those whose bodies fall dead in the water, whether by drowning or other means, tragically face service not with Lithos, but with Hydros, the Lurker. Little is known about the vile minions, for they do not walk upon the land and no one has dared to enter the Lurker's domain to view them up close. The few glimpses that have been seen reveal a large, fish-like head filled with a row of sharp teeth. It is assumed that the transformation into this disgusting beast takes some time, though how much is unknown.

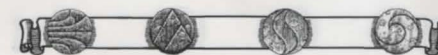
There is no record of anyone surviving a direct encounter in the water with a minion, though some of the fishing folk have managed to avoid the creatures by remaining in their boats. It is unknown whether minion victims are consumed or dragged deep below the waves to become minions themselves.

### Skeleton Warrior

The remains of warriors from ages past, skeletons are the servants of Lithos and the Necromancers who follow him. Their body and spirits, passed to the Mountain King during interment, are held in waiting until needed. However, they still carry with them the accoutrements of their fighting days: axes, swords, shields, armour and so forth.



Though dead, these animated skeletons are extremely agile and strong, often felling a man before he can even strike. They are brainless, yet seem to retain much of the fighting skill they possessed in life. Skeletons attack only with their ancient weapons, which are oft times filthy with disease-ridden decay. As they are already dead and serve only a single function, skeleton warriors attack relentlessly until destroyed.

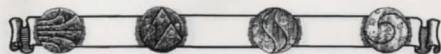






Compiling this information took considerably more effort than I first expected. The project began at first as idle curiosity – I merely wanted to know more about spellcasting. I contacted the leader of each of the four types of magic – Necromancy, Tempestry, Theurgy and Sorcery – and requested that they convey what information they could to me. The Theurgists and Necromancer complied readily. The Tempest responded via her seneschal, who informed me that Our Lady Mordea was occupied with too many “important” matters to concern herself with my trivia. Equally frustrating, the Master Sorcerer was quite reluctant to reveal much about spells of Fire, only sending what he did after becoming completely assured I was up to no nefarious plotting.

Fortunately, Mythran knows quite a lot about magic and spells, as I suspected, and was extremely helpful in filling in the gaps left by Lady Mordea and Malchir. Indeed, I learned from Mythran that he, himself, has acquired the ability to cast snippets of the other types of magic. Though I do not mistrust his words, I do think it strange that he mentions reagents for his spells the likes of which I have never seen. Nevertheless, what follows is Mythran’s explanation of magic in his own words.



## A TREATISE

### by Mythran the Thaumaturge

My years of research in the field of magic have led me to the conclusion that all magic is simply the manifestation of a being’s will, superimposed upon reality, through the means of etheric emanations. Furthermore, I propose that such emanations are truly limited only by the imagination and willpower of the entity in question.

Certain rituals and words can assist the caster in visualising the desired effect, just as certain physical objects can lend power, stability and shape to the caster’s will. These props are not always necessary for beings of considerable power or intellect, but are useful for most spellcasters.

Following is a detailed analysis of the styles of spellcrafting that I have been able to observe in this world – Necromancy, The Rituals of Death; Tempestry, the Power of the Water and Storms; Theurgy, the Discipline of Attuning the Spirit; Sorcery, the craft of Destruction; and what I call Thaumaturgy, my personal study of Magics.

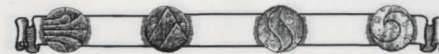
### A WORD ON CASTING

All spells, save the seemingly innate abilities of the Tempests, require a ritual of some sort before casting. The rituals, or props as I called them earlier, are each of varying duration, and sometimes are performed long before the actual spell is cast. In addition, the rituals all require from one to three of the following components: spell books, foci or reagents.

Effectively, **spell books** are used as sources for spell formulae. These books describe the rituals, foci or reagents necessary to cast the spells, as well as explaining the results of success and, sometimes, the results of failure.

**Foci** are material items used to bind and release magical energy. Sometimes they do nothing more than enhance the caster’s ability to concentrate, that is, *focus* on his or her spell. Other foci store the energy in the form of charges, allowing the caster to prepare much of the spell beforehand and then simply release the energy when necessary. At the very least, foci serve to channel the etheric waves into usable power.

Finally, **reagents** are the disposable components of casting. They are natural materials consumed when the spell is cast. Sometimes the spell caster scatters the reagents about the affected area, while other times they are simply mixed together in precise proportions.







## NECROMANCY

Within all living things is a magical energy or life-force. However, once the life has passed from a body, a by-product of the life-force, emitted as etheric waves, remains inside. Lithos, the Titan of Earth, imbues those of his choice with the insight and fortitude to have some power over death and Earth.

The focus of a Necromantic spell is a small pouch filled with the reagents required to cast the spell. These reagents are easily obtainable as they are bits and pieces of the land and of those who once lived upon it.

### REAGENTS

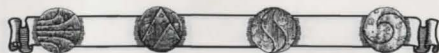
Reagent	Purpose	Notes
<b>Blood</b>	Movement/ Animation	The essence of life, reft from the body, serves as a reminder of mortality.
<b>Bone</b>	Summoning/ Communication	The source of blood is also, strangely enough, the source of the will, and remembers the life it once embraced.
<b>Wood</b>	Preservation/ Binding	Almost ageless, a time-aided tree can be stronger than the hardest rock.
<b>Dirt</b>	Protection	The plant grows from the womb of the land, its roots deeply embedded in the safety of soil.
<b>Executioner's Hood</b>	Death	This fungus is black in hue, dark in purpose and shaped like the head-covering of its namesake.
<b>Blackmoor</b>	Power	This is an odd mixture of the element of Earth and the mysterious Blackrock.

### RITUALS

#### **MASK OF DEATH (Quas Corp)**

By this ritual, the Necromancer may assume a state of near-death that will appear as actual death. The Necromancer is completely cognisant, and can dispel the effects at any time.

**Reagents: Wood, Executioner's Hood**



#### **CALL QUAKE (Kal Vas Ylem Por)**

This ritual causes the very earth to rise up and heave.

**Reagents: Blood, Bone, Wood, Blackmoor**

#### **DEATH SPEAK (Kal Wis Corp)**

This ritual briefly returns a semblance of life to a deceased body and allows the Necromancer to converse with the spirit of the once living. However, if the being has not undergone certain preparations before death, this spell is quite a painful experience, usually rendering the subject incoherent.

**Reagents: Blood, Bone**

#### **ROCK FLESH (Rel Sanct Ylem)**

With this ritual, the Necromancer gains an innate resistance to damage by transforming the very flesh into a substance as strong as stone.

**Reagents: Wood, Dirt**

#### **SUMMON DEAD (Kal Corp Xen)**

This spell summons from the Earth a number of dead warriors to serve the Necromancer as guardians. They are mindless, attacking anyone not endowed with the power of Necromancy. Though it is possible to summon armies of the walking dead, I have never seen more than one appear.

**Reagents: Blood, Bone, Wood**

#### **OPEN GROUND (Des Por Ylem)**

When cast near a tombstone, this ritual, under the guidance of a Necromancer, shapes the ground and stone. Most often, however, it is merely used to create a grave or open a weakened wall of rock.

**Reagents: Blood, Blackmoor**

#### **CREATE GOLEM (In Ort Ylem Xen)**

This spell calls up a creature made of Earth, generally in the shape of a man, to perform the bidding of the caster. It follows a few terse commands, usually understanding statements to retrieve or open things.

**Reagents: Blood, Bone, Wood, Dirt, Blackmoor**

#### **WITHSTAND DEATH (Vas An Corp)**

By means of this preparation ritual, the Necromancer returns from death once (and only once), with all ailments removed and in full health.

**Reagents: Wood, Dirt, Blackmoor**

#### **GRANT PEACE (In Vas Corp)**

This potent ritual calls upon the bailiwick of the Necromancer, that being death. The recipient, if the undead of Earth, instantly reverts to the lifeless corpse it was before becoming animated. If cast upon the fully living, the life force of the recipient is momentarily severed from the body, often resulting in death, but in some instances, causing only temporary confusion.

**Reagents: Executioner's Hood, Blackmoor**







## TEMPESTRY

This power is purely and simply the ability to control the Water and Storms. It is an inherited trait, and therefore little is known about it. We do know some of the powers displayed to date by the ruling nobility of Tenebrae. Since I do not know the actual names of the powers, I will merely list what I have observed.

### POWERS OF TEMPESTRY

I have seen a trained Tempest walk upon the Water as if upon dry land, breathe Water as easily as Air, create and calm windy storms, still the turbulent seas, cause clouds to skid across the sky with preternatural agility, and send great bolts of lightning to strike those deemed unworthy of life.

Note that the Tempest requires no components, foci or magical incantations, as all etheric waves are amplified and channelled by Hydros, the Titan of Water.

## THEURGY

The Order of Enlightenment from which issued this magical discipline believes that to purify oneself and focus the inner energies of the mind eliminates the need to find power in the world around. Therefore these mages require no reagents of any sort.

However, in the process of becoming attuned to Stratos, the Titan of Air, small silver tokens representing the spells become necessary. These tokens are the doorways to power for the Novice, unlocked by words of magic. Once a monk has become an Adept, achieved "enlightenment," and then continued studies for several more years, he or she will find the foci no longer required and that the power flows from the mind of the Theurgist unimpeded by physical restraints.



### INVOCATIONS

#### *DIVINATION (In Wis)*

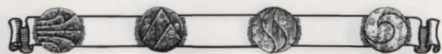
This invocation reveals the Theurgist's location, time of day, day of the week, and current month.

**Focus: Sextant**

#### *HEALING TOUCH (In Mani)*

This is a healing spell, affecting minor wounds.

**Focus: Pointing Hand**



#### *AERIAL SERVANT (Kal Ort Xen)*

This spell calls a whirling being of Air, which will accept the Theurgist's directives to manipulate or move any object. An unusual ability of this creature is that it is able to move an object through solid obstacles, such as walls and closed doors.

**Focus: Arm Band**

#### *REVEAL (Ort Lor)*

This spell releases a wave of energy that dispels all forms of invisibility around the Theurgist.

**Focus: Open Eye**

#### *RESTORATION (Vas In Mani)*

This is a powerful invocation. It restores a living recipient to full health, eliminating wounds, maiming or disease.

**Focus: Open Hand**

#### *FADE FROM SIGHT (Quas An Lor)*

As the name of this invocation states, the Theurgist becomes completely invisible to the sight of nearly all mortal beings.

**Focus: Closed Eye**

#### *AIR WALK (Vas Hur Por)*

By means of this invocation, the Theurgist is capable of jumping a great distance with the aid of the surrounding Air. I am told that this is cast the first time without a focus, when the Theurgist leaps to Windy Point to speak with Stratos.

**Focus: Wings**

#### *HEAR TRUTH (An Quas Lor)*

This invocation reveals the truth to any lie spoken knowingly to the Theurgist, as if the Air, itself, were unraveling the thread of the message.

**Focus: Chain**

#### *INTERVENTION (In Sanct An Jux)*

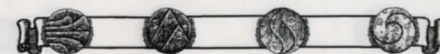
One of the most powerful abilities of the Theurgist is to call into existence a wall of Air that blocks all damaging forces. While this spell can make the mightiest sword blow feel like a tap, it will not prevent death from immersion in lava or drowning in Water.

**Focus: Fist**

#### *RESURRECTION (Vas An Corp)*

The most powerful ability of the Order of Enlightenment is the ability to restore life to the recently departed. However, the price for this ability is eternal blindness. I am sure there must be an easier way, but my research has yielded nothing worthwhile.

**Focus: None but blindness and eternal life**







## SORCERY

Sorcerers deal in magic of Fire and Destruction, having long ago founded the cabal that bound Pyros, the Titan of Fire, to their wills. In doing so, they also garnered the ability to call upon his servants, the daemons.

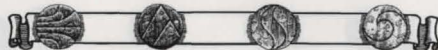
In the performance of Sorcery, one must use rituals, reagents, foci, magical words and a specially designed protective circle, called a pentacle or pentagram for the five-pointed star confined within. The tremendous powers of Pyros are released in great gouts of flame, and only a trained Sorcerer would dare to call upon them. Even then, the pentacle is required to keep the Sorcerer from being consumed along with the reagents.

The Sorcerer places the spell's focus at the pentagram's centre, the candles at each point around the circle, and

the reagents near the candles, all while intoning the mystic words to shape the unbound energies. When this ritual enchantment is done, the Sorcerer is left with a charged (even multiply charged), glowing focus, suffused with the power of the spell invoked. The spell can then be cast at any time.

### REAGENTS

Reagent	Purpose	Notes
<b>Volcanic Ash</b>	Flame	The refuse of the volcano has the property of creating the initial spark of Fire.
<b>Pumice</b>	Distance	This rock, cast highest and farthest from the volcano, retains the etheric impetus built up in the flight.
<b>Obsidian</b>	Duration	While seeming to be a fragile, easily broken substance, it endures the heat of the volcano.
<b>Pig Iron</b>	Protection	Iron's hard yet versatile nature works in protective Sorcery as no other reagent can.
<b>Brimstone</b>	Power	This is the rock that burns or, more to the point in Sorcery, explodes. A virtually limitless source of power dwells within its etheric composition.
<b>Daemon Bone</b>	Summoning/ Binding	Having taken a hint from the Necromancers, the cabal found that Bone does, indeed, retain its tie to life. It is even useful in the ritual of binding when enough power is at hand. Daemonic forces are summoned and controlled by use of this reagent.



## SPELLCRAFT

### EXTINGUISH (An Flam)

This spell douses any flame, save the very hottest.

**Foci:** *Symbol, Wand, Rod or Staff*

### IGNITE (In Flam)

This spell lights the red and black candles placed around the pentagram.

**Foci:** *Symbol, Wand, Rod or Staff*

### FLASH (Flam Por)

By means of this spell, the Sorcerer can move from one visible place to another without actually traversing the intervening space. After many years of practice, a Sorcerer can even move to places visible not only to the eye, but to memory as well.

**Foci:** *Wand, Rod, Staff or Symbol\**

### FLAME BOLT (In Ort Flam)

This spell shoots a bolt of fire from the caster, burning anything unlucky enough to be the target of the Sorcerer's ire.

**Foci:** *Wand, Rod, Staff or Symbol\**

### ENDURE HEAT (Sanct Flam)

This spell creates a glowing field that allows the Sorcerer to touch any non-magical flame and remain unhurt. With this spell, a Sorcerer can even endure the heat of lava if it is solid enough to walk upon.

**Foci:** *Rod, Staff or Symbol\**

### FIRE SHIELD (In Flam An Por)

With this spell, flames come into existence encircling the Sorcerer. No tangible creature except a daemon can pass through this flaming barrier, including the Sorcerer. Anyone foolish enough to try is thrown back and burned in the bargain.

**Foci:** *Rod, Staff or Symbol\**

### ARMOUR OF FLAMES (Vas Sanct Flam)

This spell bathes the Sorcerer in a corona of magical flames that ward off all other Fires of magical nature, including those cast by another Sorcerer.

**Foci:** *Rod, Staff or Symbol\**

### CREATE FIRE (In Flam Ylem)

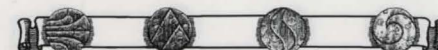
At the casting of this spell, a fire erupts around the target. Those who are foolish enough to remain in the blaze will continue to suffer damage until they step out of the flames.

**Foci:** *Staff or Symbol\**

### EXPLOSION (Vas Ort Flam)

This is much like the *Flame Bolt* spell, but with considerably larger and more devastating effects.

**Foci:** *Staff or Symbol\**





### **SUMMON DAEMON (Kal Flam Corp Xen)**

This ritual of binding will summon a daemon to attack one foe of the Sorcerer's designation. The dangerous nature of this spell lies in the fact that if no victim is specified as soon as the creature appears, the daemon will attack the Sorcerer.

**Foci: Daemon Talisman or Symbol\***

### **BANISH DAEMON (An Flam Corp Xen)**

As the name so plainly states, this spell will usually return a daemon to its home in the Fire of the volcano. Unfortunately, even the most skilled Sorcerers have been known to perform an unsuccessful banishment.

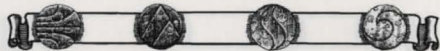
**Foci: Daemon Talisman or Symbol\***

### **CONFLAGRATION (Kal Vas Flam Corp Xen)**

This is the most powerful ritual that the Sorcerer's Cabal has revealed. If any greater exists, only they know about it. By use of this spell, a malicious, demonic force of destructive nature manifests near the caster, where it then commences to wreak savage destruction on all things near the Sorcerer.

**Foci: Daemon Talisman or Symbol\***

\*Note: As it is not the most stable focus for these spells, the Sorcerer's symbol of the pentagram will be able to retain only one charge.



## THAUMATURGY

Thaumaturgy is the term I use to define the collection of spells that I have learned over time. Put quite simply, Thaumaturgy borrows and steals a bit from each of the other magics, choosing the clear path of chaos rather than becoming too well defined and stagnant. Much like Sorcerers, I enchant items with the power of reagents and the mind.

Any Thaumaturge who knows the business may craft spells, scrolls, potions or various other implements of magic. There is almost nothing that I cannot do through the use of this form of magic, as it does not confine itself to a style.

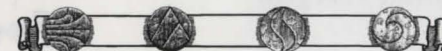


In Thaumaturgy, the foci are the actual spell books that contain the formulae and references to the reagents required for the spell. In addition, enchanted, single-use scrolls that require no other components can also be used to cast spells. Most of the spells from the other forms of magic can be distilled to their basics and put into scrolls and books as well – by a Thaumaturge of sufficient skill, that is.

### REAGENTS

*These unusual reagents are used in combination with those from other disciplines.*

<i>Reagent</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>Eye of Newt</b>	Sight/ Knowledge	This aids a mage in focusing the inner eye within the mind.
<b>Bat Wing</b>	Life/ Creatures	The flesh, bone and blood found in this structure serve as an excellent lodestone to the essence of life.
<b>Serpent Scale</b>	Destruction/ Separation	The poison in the mouth of this beast seeps into the flesh and corrupts the scales, giving them the magical ability to act as a destructor of bonds.
<b>Dragon Blood</b>	Great Power	So powerful is this creature that the blood burns as if aflame. Precise measurements of this are wise, for too much and the magic will go dangerously awry.





## ENCHANTMENTS

### *CONFUSION BLAST (In Quas Wis)*

This causes a release of etheric energies, inflicting no real physical damage, but causing all combatants near the Thaumaturge to forget completely the present combat.

**Reagents:** *Eye of Newt, Bat Wing, Serpent Scale, Obsidian, Brimstone*

### *SUMMON CREATURE (Kal Xen)*

This highly variable spell magically calls a creature to the Thaumaturge's defence. The type of creature that appears is not automatically under the control of the caster, depending upon creature's vicinity and the caster's power.

**Reagents:** *Bat Wing, Pumice, Obsidian, Bone*

### *CALL DESTRUCTION (Kal Vas Grav Por)*

This spell causes bolts of lightning and destructive explosions to cascade around the Thaumaturge, unerringly striking any visible foes.

**Reagents:** *Serpent Scale, Dragon Blood, Ash, Pig Iron, Executioner's Hood*

### *DEVASTATION (In Vas Ort Corp)*

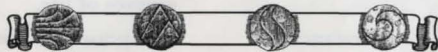
This spell, first formulated by what could only have been an insane mage, is designed to disrupt the very fabric of life throughout the world. All creatures and beings, save the crazed Thaumaturge who casts this spell, face instant eradication. As far as I can tell, there has never been a successful casting of this spell.

**Reagents:** *Bat Wing, Serpent Scale, Dragon Blood, Pig Iron, Executioner's Hood, Blackmoor, Brimstone*

### *METEOR SHOWER (Kal Des Flam Ylem)*

Rocks, summoned from unseen heights, cascade in a fiery torrent upon friends and foes alike — only the caster remains untouched.

**Reagents:** *Ash, Dirt, Serpent Scale, Brimstone, Blackmoor*



**T**hough I had initially intended this work to act as a grand reference for future scholars, I realise now that much of this is too inconsequential for such a treatise. It is the result of my fascination with people of the present as well as the past. To those students who cannot use the dated words within this text, I hope at least that I have provided a little insight to the times as they are now, so that historical essays compiled long after I have gone to serve the Mountain King may benefit from these idle observations. To the sages of the next generations, I offer my salutations and best wishes. This, my small gift of knowledge, is the greatest offering I can give.

*Bentic*



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