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Welcome to Aegis!

The city-state of Aegis is built over the Gate, the heart of the world's magic. The Gate is a blessing, a curse, and a responsibility.

Beyond the Gate lie horrors beyond imagining, loathsome frights so great that even the spawn of Hell will co-operate with humankind to keep them away. The gate first opened 21 centuries ago, and after the first War of the Gate, Aegis was founded. Since that time, the Gate has been breached three more times. Some say the fifth War of the Gate is due soon.

And the heartbeat of the city is magic. Vampires and other undead are citizens here; Eldritch faeries may meet for wine with wizards and scoundrels. Magic is technology in Aegis, with all that implies.

Aegis and Role-Playing

Aegis is also a role-playing environment both familiar and unique. It's an excellent place to begin fantasy role-playing and a diverting location for the experienced player.

For the beginning fantasy role-player, Aegis is comfortable because many of the assumptions underlying life in Aegis are similar to those in the modern world: people are literate, the sexes are equal, and the religious environment is a mosaic. Magic is, in some senses, regarded as technology. Yet there are still monsters to be killed (or befriended), spells to be cast, wrongs to be righted, and a strong sword-arm is of great benefit.

For the experienced role-player, Aegis is different: Vampires and werewolves are citizens, the combinations of magics are heady, and the rules are not the same as in other fantasy cities. Watch your step in Aegis, because your old habits could make you dead...or worse.

Using Aegis as a Campaign Setting

The intent is to have Aegis as a campaign setting. The "Campaigning" and "Adventures" chapters keep that in mind.

However, if you don't *want* to use Aegis as a setting for an entire campaign, you can use it as a setting for several adventures.

Using Aegis in Your Adventures

You can choose to use Aegis as an exotic location for the PCs to visit; you might want to build it up for a while first...let them hear stories of the city where monsters live, that sort of thing. You can have the PCs attempt to invade Aegis, to get something out of the city...possibly a monster of some kind has escaped to Aegis to avoid crimes.

If you use Aegis as a location for visiting, think about your magic system carefully. Aegis is a very magic-rich environment, and you'll need a similar justification in your adventure.

PCs may need to bring a dead friend or relative to Aegis in an attempt to have him or her resurrected.

You might also choose to simply steal parts of Aegis for transplantation into your own campaign world. Perhaps the vampires have a similar structure in your world, or there is an organization of monsters. Perhaps the Faerie have a similar breeding problem (or the elves, for that matter). Or maybe you simply want an evil wizard-lord to run something like the Midnight Circus. A huge empire requires a huge bureaucracy, and Aegis can provide a model for that.

You can also reverse the intent of Aegis. As written, it's a cosmopolitan city where different creeds and races are tolerated. You're free to run an adventure (or even a campaign!) involving the heroic paladins who eventually subjugate the City of Vampires and free the humans from their servitude.

Customizing Aegis

The City

Aegis is the largest city in the world, with a population of about 400,000. It is one of the few to make tourism its second largest industry. (Opinions differ as to the largest industry.) Aegis has branches of all of the main magic colleges. Aegis has the pits of Hell. Aegis has the Colossus. Aegis has the Maze, the Zoo, Blood-Toll Bridge, the Midnight Circus, and other attractions. The city couldn't sustain itself without magic.

The city can be supported because it's intensively farmed. Zombies do a lot of the physical labour, although the land is usually owned by others.

Corn, wheat, and rice are staples. Much of the food is imported from Goblet-Hollow, also called the Valley, which is at the source of the Mearallaem River. Aegis also imports food (meat animals, some grains, some fruits) from the neighboring nations of Gurril, Omaki and Palliss. Aegis can survive without this importation, but diet would be reduced. The climate in Aegis is suitable for citrus fruits, although fruits like apples and peaches must be brought in from Ruesada or from Goblet-Hollow. (It may help to think of Aegis as Vancouver and Goblet-Hollow as the Okanagan Valley.)

A Quick Tour

The city sits on the mouth of the Mearallaem River, which opens into the Bay of the Colossus, a nearly circular bay. The opening of the bay to the ocean is to the south, and Aegis is on the northeast compass point of the bay.

The territory that belongs to Aegis is roughly the area within four days' ride from the city. Aegis also controls the land along the Mearallaem River into the mountains, up to Goblet-Hollow. Beyond that? To the west is the Great Marsh, and north of that the Blackmark Forest. To the north and east are the Raemear Mountains. To the south is Elfhome. Aegis has never been invaded over land.

The Old City contains the Zoo, the Palace of the Warden, the slums, and the oldest homes of nobles. (Most noble families also keep homes in the Hammer section of town, across the river.) With the exception of the estates, most of these buildings are five and six stories tall, of stone construction for the first story or two, and then of wood. The original construction of the Old City predates the Third War of the Gate. The walls that surround the Old City are intended to keep things in.

The outer city walls line the river on both sides, and surround most of the city. Within those walls are Hell, the Marketplace, the Wizardrow, and most of the rest of the city. At each of the Bay Door and the River Door, there is a huge portcullis, erected by magic with the aid of silkies and merpeople, that prevents river craft from entering the city via the river. The river walls are lower than the rest of the walls because of the confidence the city places in these two blockades.

Outside the city walls live many of the agriculturists and labourers. The docks for the bay and the warehouses for the maritime district also hug the shore of the bay, outside the walls. There are river docks above Blood Toll Island.

There is also a small island in the bay, Nagamis Island. Lovers go there for trysts.

Technically, Blood Toll Island is outside the city walls as well, because it is in the middle of the river. However, the two blockades on the river should protect it, and the Undead who reside there.

The population density in the city varies from dense (150/hectare) in the Old City to sparse (50/hectare) beyond the outer walls. The city is roughly 20 km across and covers 4000 hectares.

There are fourteen districts in Aegis (one for each seat on the Warden's Council, plus the Old City, which is controlled by the Warden). Although each of them is described in a certain way - i.e., the Thumb is the Merchant's District, remember that for the inhabitants, Aegis often functions like two separate cities. Each side of the city has all the necessities needed for living (for the poor, to minimize the number of times they must cross the Blood Toll Bridge). However, if you are interested in something unusual, your best bet is the area which specializes in that item. Appendix B describes all fourteen of the districts, but for a quick tour, we'll just name them: On the eastern side of the Mearallem river are the Old City, where the Palace and the Zoo are, the Chine (or river docks), the Rookery, Bishopsrood (the religious center of Aegis), Hell, the Funnel (the wizard's district), the Stewpot, the Magazine, and the Spur (the region outside the walls, extending down to the bay).

On the western side of the river are the Grudge district (a slum), the Swords district, the Thumb (the mercantile district), the Hammer, Wands, and the Magazine (again).

There are an uncertain number of entrances into Aegis, but everyone talks as if there were four: the Marsh Door, the Plain Door, the River Door, and the Bay Door. Both the River and the Bay Doors are two

sets of entrances each, one on each side of the river, but they are talked about as if they were single entrances; thus, people talk about the Bay Door, and not the Western Bay Door.

When talking about places that occur on both sides of the river, such as the Bay Door, the Spur, or the Magazine, it's always assumed that you are talking about the one on the same side of the river as you are currently on. If you're talking about the other one, you refer to the Moon Spur, or the Moon Magazine, or the Moon Bay Door.

An area that isn't a district and yet may be of some importance is Scribe Alley and the Alley of Rumours. Both of these occur in the space between All-Fools Street and Porter Road, Scribe Alley on the Western side and the Alley of Rumours on the Eastern side. The Alley of Rumours has a number of interesting and not particularly legal establishments. Scribe Alley deals with information in its own way; translators, linguists, writers, poets, bards, librarians, and others who make their living off language are here. The Bell Call ought to be here, but isn't.

The Government

The ruler of the city is the Warden. There are 13 seats on the Warden's Council. There are likewise thirteen sections or wards in Aegis. The nobles of a ward compete to become representative (note that a noble for a ward need not live in that ward). (It follows, of course, that there are fourteen districts, including the Warden's.)

The Council run the city; the Warden is responsible for its upkeep, image, and protection. The Warden owns the treasury, the city guard, and the customs office. The current Warden, Lairda Gemlen, is a reasonable woman.

The vampires have an official representative. They are suspected to be supporting another seven as well.

Over the years, Aegis has tried all the governments: democracy, theocracy (but nobody worships Thurmillim any more), monarchy, autocracy, oligarchy, you name it. The current method is not too bad.

Political Parties

Although Council members are inevitably noble, there are some political factions which have an identity. Some parties are associated with Houses; for example, the House Koreamon can be relied upon to stress the need for strong defenses. While Koreamon may have other Houses following it, it's known that Koreamon

leads this particular stance. Other parties are made of affiliations of weaker Houses. For example, the Velox party promotes a middle-of-the-road stance when dealing with Palliss and Shier Kra. No one House can be said to hold this opinion. (In fact, there are several meliorist parties.)

Despite the fact that there is no obvious political power for the common people, they have a say. Most lords pay attention to what the people in their districts say, because it's better for business. Tyranny, as they know in Aegis, is strictly for the short term.

The Nobility

Currently you purchase a noble title and get to keep it as long as you can make your payments. There are 225 noble families in Aegis. Each noble family has a coat of arms; a hundred and five of these coats are over a thousand years old. The other hundred and twenty noble titles have been created in the last thousand years, as the Warden needed more money for the city, or as the population grew.

Heraldry

Here are the basics of Aegis heraldry (a familiarity): There are two metals and five colours (gold and silver; red, blue, green, black, violet). You cannot place a metal on a metal, nor a colour on a colour. Some of the patterns are different than on Earth; for instance, the Aminon coat of arms is Gold, trefoil swords counter-clockwise, on a field, Sable. This is a triangle of three gold swords, the base sword pointing right, on a black background.

Non-combatants wear their arms in a upright pentagon; combatants wear them in a circle, representing a shield. Should combat be necessary against a foreign invader, the combatants will wear tabards. Heraldry skill will allow you to know more of them.

There are 225 noble houses, each with its own coat of arms. There are also arms for other organizations, such as the Warden, the city government, several of the religions, and the Free Company of Mercenaries.

The Undead have their own nobility and coats of arms, with different metals and colours (mercury and iron (silver and rust); blue, indigo, brown, black, yellow). The Undead can tell the difference. It is a difficult thing for a living person to know the undead arms, since the undead are secretive about these things.

Buying a House

It may happen that players want to buy a house. There may be one or two houses available or about to become available; should the current Lord Noraemon meet an untimely end, the House will become available to any who can pay off his debts (which are extensive)..

Some Houses

House Aminon: One of the oldest Houses in Aegis, over a thousand years old. Historically in charge of protecting the city in all wars, it has lost prestige and function over the past three centuries as a result of a curse placed on the family line. Ancestral home in the Old City is Illaminonear, recently rebuilt and refurbished by Tererinh Daimrea, who purchased the title after the death of the last of the previous line, Anikin Roekall.

House Anamilon: House Anamilon was founded during the last War of the Gate, and is the leading house in supporting magic and magic research. Several Lords of Anamilon have become mighty mages; one founded his own school.

House Koreamon: A young house, four hundred years. The House Koreamon once employed Lomino the sculptor. Koreamon is responsible for protection of the city in case of war; not known whether or not this includes a War of the Gate.

House Noraemon: A disreputable house with few redeeming factors. The current lord is expected to bankrupt the House before he dies. If he does not destroy the house, there are a number of bastards waiting to be recognized; if he fails to recognize any of them, there will be trouble. His father died in a brothel in Hell, disagreeing with the bouncer.

House Roakim: A struggling house which has some problems. The current lord, Rokum, tries to protect the reputation of his sister, Lady Esta (known to the servants as Lady Esta of the Deep Pockets). Esta is a kleptomaniac; she once stole Sujhin Mazerunner's mirror.

House Stazia: An undistinguished house. The current lord is active politically (he's a meliorist of the Velox party); the lady, Lady Stazia, has ambitions to become a vampire.

The Law

The justice system is not completely honest; some members can be bought, some can't. The philosophy is

"stern but fair"; Vlad the Impaler would have liked it. (He would have objected to the invisible end most of the criminals came to, though. Couldn't be seen by anyone, in the Maze.)

Instead of lawyers per se, Aegis has Pleadors (also known on the street as Mouths). They are a combination of lawyer and lobbyist, since they will press your case with an appropriate noble or the Warden if paid enough. Most Pleadors have Bureaucratics and Bribery as well as Conversation and Oratory.

There are also regular jails, for regular crimes.

Any high-profile thief is going to get caught, and publicly punished. Punishment depends on the crime. You might just get sentenced to working in the Zoo. (Not hard work; it just has a high mortality rate.)

The Guard work on clearing out the Undead before dawn. It makes bad feelings with the Hellspawn if you let suspects disintegrate in the sunlight.

The City Guard

There are about 14,400 guardsmen (actually guardsmen and guardswomen) in the city. Guardsmen receive training in fighting, so they are at least as good as ruffians or bandits.

Please understand that the city guards aren't police officers in the modern sense of the word. They are guards, a militia. Their principal job is to defend the city. In the absence of an immediate threat, they make the streets safe for the interests of the Warden, and currently the interests of the Warden are served by making the streets safe for tourists.

There are also elite guards, composed primarily of vampires, which guard the Maze. Every once in a while they run into something. Sometimes they don't come back. Each troop is required to have a token human or vampire (depending).

Due to the tourist trade, members of the city guard have the authority to carry out detective investigations. Most will pick any known member of the criminal class and arrest him. The suspect is jailed for about a month, by which time any tourists who are concerned about the crime are gone. Some will actually try to find the criminal.

Each city guard has a steel broadsword and a cuirass. He or she has a skirtplate, a small shield, greaves and vambraces. Helms optional.

In Hero terms, his armour is DEF 3. In CORPS terms, it is 2/2.

Contraband

Iron is illegal. The undead have very powerful Detect Iron spells at the city gates. The only people allowed to have iron are the city guards, and certain very high officials (the Warden, for one).

There is a drug called Red Habit or Crimson Hand (because the leaves have a crimson patch which looks like a hand), which is grossly addictive to elves. Humans are unaffected. Red Habit is illegal. The leading supplier of Red Habit in Aegis is the Kraken, who founded his (its?) mob rule on this vice.

The Citizens

Aegis is distinguished from many cultures by two things: compulsory education for children of citizens and sexual equality for men and women. See the “Life in Aegis” chapter for more information.

As might be expected, the people are racially mixed. All hair colours are present, all eye colours. Most people have skins a light caramel colour, befitting their Ruesadan background, but there are others.

(Off the continent of the Sceptre, Aegis natives are regarded as “swarthy.”)

Given that people have vampires to be prejudiced about, there is little bigotry regarding skin colour. (There is plenty regarding nation of origin, however.)

Its People

When you discuss the people of Aegis, you are talking about three factions: the human (mortal) population, the Fae folk, and the Hellspawn. The humans make up by far the largest part of the population.

Some Demographics

These figures can only be considered to apply to the human population (60% of Aegis) unless otherwise stated.

Definitions

Rich: spend 10-35% of income on food
 Middle Class: spend 25-50% of income on food
 Poor: spend 60-80% of income on food
 Destitute: what income?

(Obviously, this can be extended to the Undead by saying “existence-sustaining necessities” instead of food. However, the vampires have made wealth a prerequisite for joining them, which skews the figures, so they have been left out of this.)

Distribution of Wealth: Human/Vampire

Rich	3%
Middle Class	27%
Poor	59%
Destitute	11%

Breakdown by Employment

(assuming 45% of population is dependents...old, sick, children)

Occupation	%	#
Lords ¹	0.7%	1,680
Clerics	10	24,000
Professional ²	5	12,000
Mages ³	2	4,800
Merchants	7	16,800
Craftsmen	1	024,000
City Guard	6	14,400
Servants	1	843,200
Agriculturists ⁴	15	36,000
Labourers	15	.336,720
Destitute ⁵	11	26,400

1. 225 noble families.

2. Doctors, pleaders, etc.

3. Includes students
4. Doesn't include zombies
5. Including approx. 7,000 thieves

Humans

Human beings make up 60% of the population of Aegis.

Some of the districts of Aegis (the Swords district, for example) are highly prejudiced against the non-humans.

Faery

The Faery folk have recently become something of a problem.

There is a similar problem for redcaps: they find sugar (sucrose) intoxicating. You can bribe a redcap with a piece of sugar cane, or a bit of rock sugar.

Some of the eldritch (brownies, for example) are much more comfortable with humans than the majority of their kin. You can often find Brownies outside the Eldritch areas of the city.

There are few dwarves in the city, although there is one dwarf-only tavern (The Iron Anvil). There is no rivalry or enmity between dwarves and elves, other than the enmity dwarves feel to *everybody*.

The only race of Fae who are forbidden to the city are Kobolds, who once attempted to mine the Gate. (The expression “dumb as a Kobold” is still grounds for a brawl in the areas of Aegis where memories are long.)

Eldritch vs. Faerie

Although most people (humans) don't realize it, there is a distinction between the “Eldritch” and “Faerie.” Eldritch is a broad term, covering everything/everyone of magical origin that is *not* Hellspawned. “Faerie” refers to Eldritch (usually humanoid) who are part of a particular political division: the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. The Faerie truly live in a separate realm; the Elfhome supports many passages between these two realms, although other passages exist or can be created. The Faerie have a complex ritual of accession and succession; members take new names to contend for the throne or for mating.

Dwarves, for example, are Eldritch but are *not* Faerie. The dwarves do not submit to the leadership of the Courts. Redcaps do; therefore Redcaps are Faerie. (The Redcaps in the city are small brownie-like folk, with green skin and red hands and faces. The evil

iron-shoed redcaps live in the Truran Mountains, where they feed on or ally with the Kakkam.)

Elves

The most prominent of the Eldritch are the Elves. They are tall, graceful, and often beautiful. They show no signs of aging. In their home, the Elfhome, they are people of music and mystery; some say the elves taught the angels how to sing.

But the elves who live in the city are different. They're still tall, graceful, and beautiful, but they're also, to some extent, *familiar*. The sophisticated, experienced city-dweller is often blasé about them. (“Oh, it's an elf. Don't stare, you'll mark yourself as a hick.”)

Most elves live on the eastern side of the river, and most elves in the city are *young*. Why?

Well, the elves are tremendously long-lived—they thought they were immortal. However, two hundred years ago, they began to die off. Suddenly they realized that they could die, and they went into a fit of breeding. Now there are all these adolescent elves (one to two hundred years old) crowding their elders in the Elfhome; their elders sent them to the city, where they began taking over neighborhoods and, in general, acting like punks. Elf JDs.

To compound this problem, the Eldritch also have a problem with drugs: there is a drug called Red Habit which is *very* addictive to elves, and it is being brought in by the Kraken.

Not all elves are like this, of course; there are some elder wise mages in the city. (For example, the elven mage Boxcars lives in the Funnel.) There are other young elves who have good reputations (such as Boxcars' niece, Sujhin Mazerunner), and there are the members of the elven embassy.

The Elfhome

Most elves live in the Elfhome, the large forest to the south of Aegis.

Hellspawn

Six hundred years ago, the vampires led an attempt by the hellspawn to become the ruling class. This resulted in the Undead Accord (the Kordalu Accord, after the vampire who negotiated it), giving the undead equal rights in the city.

Some of the Hellspawn are still mistrusted — no one really trusts the vampires as a group.

Other hellspawn could be good friends. For

example, there is a sport (blacktongue kickers) which is moderately popular (and once was extremely popular); there is an interclan competition every year during the Festival which is always held on Blacktongue Field, and which is always refereed by the ghost of Emer Spraytoe, who invented the game!

Vampires

Vampires are the most notable of the Hellspawn. They tend to be aesthetes, interested in complex webs of power and intellectual pursuits.

Vampires have a lifespan of 200 to 300 years. Eventually the magic holding them together fades, senility sets in, and they leave the crypt door open. Sunlight destroys them.

PCs have heard all the usual stories about vampires, but don't know which are true (the vampires aren't telling): They can't cross running water (this seems to be true); they can't enter a home unless invited; they fear certain holy symbols; they drink blood; they can be held in their coffins by a wild rose; they dislike garlic. They can hypnotize their victims. They gain strength and speed when they become vampires. They sleep in their native soil during the day. Normal weapons are held to be ineffective against them; iron hurts them somewhat more. To kill them, you must drive a stake through the heart and cut off the head, or expose them to sunlight. They have human familiars.

The vampires have turned becoming one of them into an expensive, high-status proposition. It costs a great deal of money to become a vampire; illegal vampires are condemned to die. There are only a certain number of tombs on Blood Toll Island, which is where the creme de la creme of the Undead sleep. The vampires keep their exact numbers secret, although popular rumour has it that each vampire is assigned one of the noble houses for another takeover. Be that as it may, there are more than five hundred vampires and fewer than a thousand.

Some vampires are good people, although there is a weeding-out process that tends to select for a specific Machiavellian type. If the vampires are up to something, they won't do it in the open, because there is still a mistrust of the Undead among the human population.

Some vampires affect extremely long fingernails that can be used as claws; some people who want some day to become vampires also adopt this affectation. (It is one of the ways to spot a vampire wannabe.)

It is illegal for a vampire to directly bite a human

being; however, there are vampires who feel that biting is the only way to feed, and who are willing to pay money for the privilege. The Inn of the Midnight Son is a little-known tavern which features a basement room where vampires may feed in the traditional manner.

In the standard campaign, player characters cannot be vampires.

Weres

Weres are unusual in that they look entirely human most of the time. (In the world of Aegis, there is only one moon, a large one, with a full moon every 31.683 days.) Usually the full moon is three days, but sometimes it is four. Weres in Aegis change into the animal form; they do not become a human-animal hybrid.

There are werewolves, wererats, weretigers, werebears; werebears are immune to fire.

Most of the weres live in a ghetto just outside of Hell, by the Zoo. When the full moon comes, they all go to some of the large empty areas of the Zoo. Contraception spells don't work on weres, so fertile weres are often locked up in their homes.

Anyone native to Aegis can recognize a were.

In the standard Aegis campaign, player characters cannot be were.

Zombies

When the Vampire Accord was signed, the zombies were a problem. They weren't self-aware, but they had rights under the Accord. Spells were later developed which created self-aware zombies—these spells are now the only legal spells for zombies. Hence there are two types of zombies: automatons and self-aware zombies (living dead).

Zombies make Aegis possible; they do the heavy agricultural work needed to support the population.

Most zombies in Aegis are debtors, who are working past death to pay off their debts. A man who is in debt may arrange to be turned into a zombie after death so that he can continue to work and pay off his debts, or the Debtor's Court could arrange this, if it's more money than the debtor's blood will cover.

Other Species

There are other mortal races in Aegis. Only one or two are mentioned here.

Barsoomians

The “Barsoomians” are a green-skinned four-armed race sometimes imported to fight in the Midnight Circus. They are used to the deserts of Astinoivayl, and often have problems with the humidity in Aegis.

Kakkam

The Kakkam are a race of large humanoids who come originally from the Truran Mountains, in the northeast of the continent.

Relations Between Them

For the most part, the races live in relative harmony. This may be because the non-human races are thoroughly outnumbered, or it may be because humans save their bigotry for the Hellspawn.

Aegis' Neighbours

Aegis shares the continent of the Sceptre with a number of other nations: Goblet-hollow is Aegis' vassal state; Gurril and Omaki are north and east; the Elfhome is immediately south of the city, and Palliss and Shier Kra occupy the bottom of the continent. There are also island nations throughout the Dragon's Tail islands.

Aegis trades with Gurril, Omaki, the nations on Astinoivayl's east coast, and the northwestern nations of Haquida. It also trades with the island-nations along the Dragon's Tail, and indifferently with Shier Kra.

Goblet-Hollow

Goblet-Hollow is the valley which provides most of the fruits and winter food for the city of Aegis. It is its own fiefdom, protected by Aegis by long-standing agreement. Lord Garay is the current Lord of Goblet-hollow. Goblet-Hollow is its own fiefdom, protected by Aegis.

The Mearallaem River flows out of Goblet-Hollow down to Aegis. Barges carrying foodstuffs travel down the river and are hauled upstream by horses.

Goblet-Hollow is also significant because it is the route from Omaki to Aegis. The family which guards the pass proper is named the Rocklines.

Gurril

A large feudal nation, ruled by a central king to whom the others pay homage. Gurril's current king hasn't been seen in public for a few years; it's possible that the queen is hiding his death or senility to maintain rule. Women are second-class citizens in Gurril. While not actively hostile to the Eldritch, they don't deal with them much, except for the mountain dwellers (dwarves and such). Gurril occupies itself with internecine warfare.

Its major products are fish, metals, and coal. They produce excellent ships. Gurril is bounded on the east by the Morrillab River.

Omaki

Omaki has only recently become a democratic republic. The previous autocracy was thrown out eight years ago. Omaki is populated by two distinct social groups: the Riders, and the Farmers.

The Riders raise meat animals (cattle, buffalo), and the Farmers raise crops. There are (and always have

been) bitter disputes between the two groups. Previously, these disputes were brought to the ruler of the territory. The new tribunal has established a central court and circuit judges, but the system still has some bugs in it. Another problem is raiders coming down from the mountains.

The new tribunal may be too ambitious; they have declared a new capital city, a new legal system, and an end to the previous social castes. It seems likely that their next step will be a war to unite the people; the question is whether they will attack Gurriel, Robalda, or Aegis.

There is a pass through the mountains to the Valley, and then to Aegis. Animals for meat are brought through here during summer and fall, and caravans come through from the northern part of Shier Kra as well as Omaki. This pass has never successfully been used for an attack before, but it isn't impossible.

Palliss

Palliss is a green, farmed Christian country whose monarch rules by Divine Right. The principle pass across the mountains into Shier Kra is Back Break Pass. Palliss is primarily notable for its religious intolerance and the sheer fanaticism of the Order of the Knights of the Riven Palm. The two principal political forces influencing the King are the Knights and the Church.

The main political force in the country is the Order of the Knights of the Riven Palm; they also form the commissioned ranks of the army. The Knights take the names of weapons (e.g., Sir Guy de Pick). Each Knight is expected to be supreme with his name weapon, as well as competent with sword and shield, lance, and mace. Upon attaining his title, each Knight has an iron rivet driven into the palm of each hand, hence the name of their order. The iron rivets are intended to protect them from magic at all times. Technically, the Knights are subservient to the wishes of the Mother Church, though this is not currently the case.

The Church of Palliss is descended from the Roman Catholic Church; they do not recognize the Pope in Aegis, and have their own Pope.

All magic which is not under control of the Church is banned in Palliss.

Palliss has frequently decided that the Gate would be better administered under its rule, but Palliss has no truly competent mages, and has never taken the city. The path directly into Aegis' territory is blocked by the Elfhome, so a land attack would have to travel through Shier Kra and then Omaki in order to get to Aegis. Palliss is also not particularly good at espionage.

Their last serious attempt at conquest was inspired by the vampire pope (about two hundred years ago).

Women are second-class citizens in Palliss. There are no slaves in Palliss, although there are indentured freedmen, who are the next best thing.

Palliss has very extensive and exotic court functions, honouring saints that have very little to do with the Roman Catholic Church as you and I understand it. Every three years, there is a tournament at Lidon (near Back Break Pass), the Tourney of Allucquere, which is famous throughout Palliss. The Shrine of Our Lady Allucquere is also in Lidon, near the Tourney site; people are frequently cured of their curses by going to the Shrine. Lidon has a population of about 3,000, and caravans leave for the Palliss cities of Tallommande and Coridomme. Tallommande has a population of about 8,000 and is about two and a half day's journey from Lidon. Coridomme's population is about 5,000 people, and it is about three days' journey from Lidon.

The capital is Allimonde, population about 50,000. The summer capital is Perssallon, which the King much prefers.

Robalda

Robalda was once a Ruesadan colony. Unfortunately, the Truran Mountains are the home of the Kakkam (large, Orc-like creatures). Parts of the countryside were reclaimed from the Kakkam, but when Ruesada had other problems, they ceased all military aid. Robalda has spent the last three hundred years fighting a losing battle. They are very aware of being under siege.

Robalda has precious little trade, and little to trade with. Some lumber is exported, and they have excellent forests for ship masts, but that's about it.

They are governed by an appointed king, who is chosen from the barons. The king taxes them, but in return plans the major sorties against the Kakkam and train the young fighters whose families cannot afford this themselves. The Robaldans are proud people.

They have relatively few court functions, but there are a number of festivals.

There are no slaves in Robalda.

Shier Kra

Shier Kra is a theocracy. They have fifteen gods, and the priests of each god rule for fifteen years. However, they don't do it in sequence; the high priests get together and have a series of magical contests. It is presumed that the winner has a more powerful (or

more benevolent) god. The incumbent is handicapped, but that handicap can be lessened or increased, depending upon the government's performance over the last term. This system leads to incredible politics and back-biting as up-and-coming gods try to lower the current ruler's effectiveness (and increase the handicap). The current god, the Rat God, is half-way through his term.

Shier Kra has widespread slavery. It is the market for slaves on the continent. The principle industries are textiles and farming, although they make an exquisite liqueur, which is highly prized (Shustrov Trem).

The most important geographical feature of Shier Kra is the Shustrim Klo, which is the river leaving the Jewel Lake. It provides transport throughout the nation. It — and magic — holds the nation together. The Shustrim Klo empties into a gulf, the Shustrim Flay, where the capital is.

The capital is Ashiev Du (Kra means nation, Du means city). Ashiev Du is surrounded by bayou and marsh.

Shier Kra has a reasonable merchant navy, but is very limited in its regular navy. It has privateers out harrasing other nations, however, primarily the nations of Haquida and Ruesada. The nations of the Dragon's Tail do not allow ships with the Shier Kra flag to pass.

The World

The Sceptre is the smallest of the continents of the world. There are nine continents and 13 seas.

The Continents

The continents are:

1. **The Sceptre** (The Dragon's Tail is the name of the archipelago trailing off the handle). The Sceptre is a moderate-climate continent, possibly better termed a very large island.
2. **Astinoivayl**. It lies west of the Sceptre. Astinoivayl is divided in half by the Twin Deserts. Through the centre of the Deserts runs the Stayviloin River. The River is ruled by the River Empire, an empire in decay. They could never expand beyond the river.
3. **Jek Tun Quyinn**. This continent is to the west of Astinoivayl. Magic is weakest here, of all places in the world. There are rumours of a race of wizards. The Barsoomians and reptile men come from here. Barbarians from Quyinn are rare; all use names with Quyinn in them. There isn't much trade with these nations.
4. **Lalliprilloman**. A continent slightly smaller than Australia, to the south east of the Sceptre, between the Ruesada-Haquida complex and Kharkid.
5. **Haquida**. Haquida is roughly Europe to Ruesada's Asia. Both lie east of the Sceptre.
6. **Dhruntrug** (pronounce "dh" as a voiced "th", like "the"). The land of the northern warlike species and races. Many empires are born there; few last long. This continent has produced many Alexanders, and most of their conquests remained united that long.
7. **Kharkid**. A cold and frigid land, except for one peninsula. Roughly Antarctica with a peninsula that stretches up; the tip of the peninsula is directly south of the Dragon's Tail. Kharkid contains an insular set of tribes.
8. **Ruesada**. The fragments of an empire. Several of the fragments claim to be the rightful empire, and have launched abortive attempts to gather all the pieces. The Ruesadan Empire at its height controlled much of the Soorethil and Praesillad Seas.
9. **Bef Mozhem-sur** ("zh" like the French "j" in "je"). A strange set of lands, all bonded by a common religion, about which they have many wars. Exquisite spices and jewelry are produced here. The continent is west of Jek Tun Quyinn and east of Ruesada. One of the countries is called Ylar; it had a coup eight years ago, so there are a surprisingly large

number of Ylar exiles in Aegis.

The Oceans

The seas and oceans are:

1. The Western Diamond Sea (so-called because it is bounded by Sceptre at the northernmost point, Haquida to the east, Astinoivayl to the west, and the northern tip of Kharkid to the south).
2. Soorethil Sea, which lies between Haquida and Ruesada.
3. Praesillad Sea, which separates Haquida from Kharkid, and is bounded on its eastern side by Lalliprilloman. The area around Kharkid is known for its fierce storms.
4. The Eastern Expanse. Beyond Lalliprilloman and Ruesada there is a vast expanse of water, broken only by a few scattered islands. The Turtle Kingdoms are in the Expanse; so are the Rafters.
5. As it goes north, the Eastern Expanse becomes the Uederasa Sea, bounded by Dhrunrug and Bef Mozhem-sur. This sea is temperate to arctic; it is passable for only five months of the year; for the other ten, no ships sail.
6. The expanse between Jek Tun Quyinn and Dhrunrug is the Arndhrag Ocean. Due to the Moryum Dhrell (think Gulf Stream), this section of ocean is open much of the year. There is constant interaction between the coastal nations on these two continents.
7. Between Jek Tun Quyinn and Kharkid is the Talkhid Ocean.
8. Jek Tun Quyinn has one of the three land-locked seas on the planet: Ahk Bok Rowamm.
9. Between Jek Tun Quyinn and Astinoivayl is the Toem Eskalaedam. A tropical ocean. Although it is relatively narrow, if you aren't becalmed or eaten by sea monsters, you'll be killed by the storms.
10. In Ruesada is an inland-but-not-land-locked sea, Nyeridal Cres. The Nyeridal Cresal allows transport to the Eastern Expanse.
11. On the line connecting Haquida and Ruesada is the Aloquirrel Sea. Formed as the continents push together, it is surrounded by mountains.
12. Directly to the east of Sceptre, between it and Haquida, is the Eastern Wall.
13. Aegis faces to the west of Sceptre, looking out on the Western Wall.

Other Lands, Other Nations

There are things worth knowing about other lands and nations in the world.

Old Ruesada

Old Ruesada was once a mighty empire, but it fell apart six hundred years ago. The core of what used to be the empire has splintered into the lands of the Dragon Princes. The Dragon Lands are ruled by the Princes of Snow, Copper, Gold, Diamond, Silver, Iron, and Blood. The Dragon Princes used to be sorcerors as well, but it's not clear if all or any of them still are.

The Emperor still sits in the capital, but has no control over the Dragon Lands. What is now called Ruesada is the land to the south and west of the Dragon Lands.

A History

Some of the high points of Aegis history (Dates approximate):

- 2 Founding of Aegis. Undead and Eldritch appear.

0 The First War of the Gate.

The Gate is finally sealed by powerful, primitive magics. Some say the First War lasted decades; others say it was over in months. The forces unleashed by the First War created the Bay of the Colossus.

1 Founding

Aegis founded upon the ruins of Aegis. Because things still escape the Gate, the Maze begun as a simple walled labyrinth. A roof is added when flying things emerged.

572 The Razing

Top layer of Aegis razed by the Kradath. They destroy sections of the Maze. They are subsequently destroyed by the Maze's inhabitants.

572-573 -Second War of the Gate.

Several major magic colleges founded as a result of knowledge gained in this war. Forbinites claim that this war was ended by Forbin's arrival.

982 - The Ruesadan Invasion

Invaders from Ruesada bessege the city; they bring the worship of Thurmillim with them. The seige lasts almost a year; it is this seige that leads the magic colleges to create the "Preserve Food" spell. Aegis' language roots are very similar to the High Ruesadan because of this invasion. Magic is not a useful defense in this war; too much iron in the city.

983-999 -Third War of the Gate.

Ruesada ceases to be a major military power after pouring its materiel into this war. Because the war ends with the millennium, this is taken as an omen of good fortune to come.

1020-1500 -The Golden Age of Aegis.

Prosperity, trade, an exceptional series of Wardens. The Undead knew their place then. The Eldritch and Undead regard this as a time of oppression and slaughter. The Zoo is built during this time, and populated with natural beasts.

The position of Warden taken by Asth, the Sorcerer King. Asth institutes sweeping social reforms which are not taken to heart by the populace. (Including final elimination of Thurmillim-worship.) Riots are common. Asth populates the Zoo with things from the Maze.

1521-1542 - Fourth War of the Gate

Asth, seeking something (power? true resurrection for his dead wife? Opinion still divided), opens the Gate. Thus begins the Fourth War of the Gate, perhaps the most bitter. All fight in this one, Hellspawn, Eldritch, and human.

1542 - The Vampire Revolt.

The Undead seize the opportunity and take control of the city. A long series of negotiations follow which end the persecution of Undead and Eldritch. Most of the Eldritch retire to the mountains and forests at this point. The Vampire Accord is signed. Iron is banned in the city (except for the iron used in the Gate: even after a War of the Gate, few have seen the Gate itself).

1545 -The Current Age

The beginning of the current age in Aegis. Traders spread the idea of one standard Festival week. The magic colleges expand, Hell becomes famous. The Midnight Circus is founded.

1812 - Kobolds Banned

A tribe of Kobolds makes its way past the traps, and the Maze, and the Guard, and attempts to mine the iron in the Gate. After arrest, their stated defense: "Well, it was just sitting there! How were we supposed to know it was something special?"

1895 - The Forbin War

Palliss mounts an attack on Aegis by sea. Forbin destroys many of the ships; Forbin seen smiling for many years afterwards. The rest of the ships are destroyed by magic.

Magic

Aegis is most famous for its magic. All of the major schools of magic have colleges here, where magic is easy. Many have subsidiary colleges elsewhere.

Magic in Aegis is so easy that even people without a hint of magery in their blood (for example, the “Natural debility: POW” disadvantage) can perform the three Everyman spells.

(This abundance of magic is one reason why certain Languages of Power are discouraged in Aegis. A carelessly-spoken syllable could destroy the city.)

The Gate

Because Aegis is built upon the Gate, the source of all magic on the planet, it is the centre for all magical research. All magic colleges make their homes here.

Rules of Magic

All spells on the planet have the limitation: will not work if more than a dagger’s worth of iron is in the same hex as the caster. This limitation is only worth +1/4, because iron is banned in Aegis. It’s important to realize that this also stops Constant spells; mages who are going into iron-legal areas therefore use Ward instead of Shield, so that the iron in arrowheads accumulates on the ground more than a hex from the caster. Dwarves and Kobolds, workers in metals, almost never perform magic of any kind.

Learning magic (in a particular college) involves an *attunement ritual*. Once you are attuned to a particular college, you must use the components of that college to cast your magic spells, and you are restricted to that college’s “theory” of magic or worldview. (As a side effect, this means that every college of magic has a secret book of “evil spells” or the spells that were created by members who went mad or turned to evil. Since they were restricted to their own colleges, they had to create spells in that school.)

The Everyman Spells are the exception to this rule, and they will only work on the continent of the Sceptre, where Aegis is. (They are not widely known in Palliss and in Shier Kra, which both have reasons for not allowing the spells to be known.)

The Everyman Spells

Because Aegis is at the source of all magic, everyone knows these three magic spells. These have been time-tested over the years. If you say them wrong, they do

not backfire. They cannot be boosted to give a greater result (can’t be pushed). They require material components. All of them take at least a minute to cast, and have incantations or gestures. In Aegis, anyone can cast them, whether or not one has magical aptitude or the disadvantage “Natural debility POW”. The spells are:

1. **Start fire.** (Component: ashes and fuel) (Does 1/2 d 6 K in Hero or 1 DV in CORPS)
2. **Contraception.** Must be cast daily by men, monthly by women. (Component: leafless branch from a tree that has never flowered—this component is not used up by casting the spell)
3. **Preserve food.** Lasts 24 hours (Component: salt, food must be in a special container)

These spells have been *thoroughly* tested. One spell is released for public use about every five hundred years. (The Shield spell is being rushed; it should be ready in about two hundred years.)

You can buy books of household spells, but these take someone with Magic Skill to use, even though all of them have the advantage No magic roll. Examples of the spells found in them: Raise bread, maintain even temperature (useful for ovens and common rooms), polish silver, dust with whirlwind.

If you want to blow big bucks, you can buy a Secretary Quill spell, which will take dictation.

Magic Colleges

All of the leading magic colleges have schools in Aegis. For our purposes a magic college is a group of mages or priests who are united by a common theory of magic. (All account for high- and low-magic areas, and the detrimental effects of iron.) All the spells of a college are thus united by some special effects and by some aspect of the casting. For example, all spells of the Order of Flame must bend flame some way and they all require Gestures and Incantations. Givamoe magics are almost all ritual, requiring some hours of preparation and the ingestion of some interesting potions. Details are more important if you run into them. Knowledge Skill Magic Colleges will help you identify the school of a spell if you see it performed.

Some of the more notable magic colleges:

Elemental Colleges

There are five colleges, based on the five elements (wood, water, air, earth, and fire). Each of their spells must be accomplished using the element of their college.

Givamoe Magic

Givamoe mages believe that all things have spirits

and that the interactions of these spirits cause things to happen. They heal you by sucking out the bad spirits that have gotten into you. Most of their magic tends to be healing or cursing magic, although they have some interesting attack spells based on the spirits of natural features. Their spells require a natural object whose spirit can intercede or be requested to act for them.

Saegin

Only the Saegins know what the tenets of their magic are; only Saegin mages learn it, and Saegins start to become mages after a two-year novitiation (is this a word?), and four more years as a monk. (For more information on the Saegins, see Appendix 2.)

Dheenunan (Blood magic)

The magic college of the vampires. It is only taught from one vampire to another.

Moonblade

The weapons shop where the best magical weapons are made. They qualify as a school. Their records are absolutely confidential. All of their Create spells are complex and ritual. The Moonblade shop occasionally buys exotica from adventurers. Industrial spies try and find out what the Moonblade is buying.

Guild of Necromancers

In Aegis, most Necromancers are on the level of hedge wizards. It just doesn't take much to raise the dead here.

Alchemy

Mages look down on alchemy, partly because it requires no inborn Magic skill to learn. Alchemy is the art of using the magic inherent in objects to achieve magical ends. To become an alchemist requires the skill Alchemist, which covers basic lab procedures, and Alchemical Theory. To create new elixirs, you must have the skill Alchemical Research. To mix an elixir, you must make a skill roll and someone must tend the elixir 24 hours a day. A failed skill roll usually just means an ineffective batch; an 18 on the skill roll means it blew up.

Almost any magical effect can be created with alchemy, but all elixirs take a long time to create, have only a limited number of charges, use exotic materials and destroy them in the process, and have other limitations, including (usually) requiring time to take effect.

Although alchemy is magical, you cannot use

Analyze Magic to analyze an elixir. You must use the *new* spell Analyze Alchemy, which is otherwise treated just like Analyze Magic. Also, any decent Alchemist can analyze an elixir given a lab, 4-7 hours and a successful skill roll.

Alchemical elixirs come in four forms: **Potions** (take one turn to affect subject); **powders**—must be taken in food or drink (take 10 minutes to affect subject); **pastilles**—thumbnail-sized tablets which must be burned and the fumes inhaled for effect (take one phase to affect subject); **unguent**—cream or jelly, must touch bare skin (effect is instant).

Each form has its own shelf life and storage limitations as well. Potions only last a day after being uncorked (so they're often sold in one-dose bottles). Powders will last nearly forever while dry, one month in food or drink. An unburnt pastille will last a month, but is destroyed by water. Unguents are neutralized by water, strong sunlight, and last a week after being exposed to air.

An elixir costs about 1 silver piece for each day it takes to make.

Religion and Mythos

One of the famous streets in Aegis is AllFool's Street. Every major church has a branch here; even Catholicism. (It's changed somewhat; two hundred years ago, they had a vampire Pope, Pope Innocent XXXIII.)

The Citizen and the Gods

As befits citizens of a polytheistic culture, citizens of Aegis are fairly casual about gods. New or foreign gods are generally considered to be local gods under a new name, or as part of a hybrid adopted for reasons best known to the gods.

(In this context, the Mosaic dictum "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" makes much more sense.)

One is cautious of gods, careful of gods...but one doesn't start wars for gods. Strangers are generally treated with respect, since a stranger could be a god in disguise (or at least a source of revenue).

There is no strict dividing line between religion and secular activities. Religious holidays are also holidays; religious pilgrimages are expected to be fun and interesting.

The Tarot

This isn't really a religion. Most of the people in Aegis have their cards read at least once a week. The reading has an eighty percent chance of coming true if there are no major arcana cards in it. If there are cards of the major arcana, then you can attempt to get the Burning Woman to intercede for you.

There are two sets of cards, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana consists of 21 cards, while the Minor Arcana is 65 cards, 5 suits of 13 cards each.

These details on the cards and their meanings have deliberately been left vague so GMs can give clues through Tarot readings without being straight-jacketed by them.

The Minor Arcana

The five suits: Clouds, Wands, Torches, Anvils and Streams. They are traditionally arranged in a circle, in that order, with Streams leading back to Clouds. The general meanings are as follows:

Clouds: Dreams, hopes, the emotions.

Wands: Life, bounty, the Eldritch.

Torches: War, the Hellspawn, conflict.

Anvils: Manufacturing, money, tasks.

Streams: Travel, the intellect, freedom.

The cards come in the denominations of 0 to 8, with 0 representing the total absence of that characteristic (even reversed), and with four face cards: Heir (youth, potential unrealized), Jack (path unchosen), Lord, and Lady.

The Major Arcana

Some of these cards will be familiar to you as being in our current Tarot deck; others are very Aegis.

0. The Fool (also The Tourist)
- 1 The Mage
- 2 The Duke and Duchess
- 3 The Vampire Lord (or The Leech)
- 4 The Burning Woman
- 5 The City (or The Shield)
- 6 The Seer
- 7 The Sun
- 8 The Moon
- 9 The Tomb
- 10 The Changeling
- 11 The Blind One (or Fate) (husband of The Burning Woman)
- 12 The Colossus
- 13 The Trickster (or the Raven)
- 14 The World
- 15 The Sword
- 16 The Lovers
- 17 The Merchant
- 18 The Wanton
- 19 Death
- 20 The Cascade

It is possible for one of the characters to make a living as a card reader. It is Precognition, and it only works with the cards (no limitation given; cards are easy to find).

Luck

Everyone believes in luck. Different religions have different gods in charge of luck, and different gods have different items and numbers they have blessed as lucky.

The magic numbers that everyone believes in are 3, 5, and 7. That's why the year is 15 (3X5) months of 28 (7x4) days, instead of 15 29-day months, or any other combination.

Forbin

Aegis sits on a circular bay (a meteor crater). Standing astride the two spits of land that guard the entrance to the bay is the Colossus, Forbin. He is eternal; he doesn't eat, he doesn't excrete. He does move, though. The Forbinites believe that if Forbin ever leaves, the Gate will collapse and the end of the world will come. They spend their time trying to entertain him. Small Forbins to stand astride doorways are very popular in Aegis. (The thieves' guild likes them, too; they give more hand-holds. Not to mention Rullin the Clever who almost escaped capture by impersonating one.)

The Saegin Monks

(Sy'jin) A monastic order with about 1,200 members in Aegis and six monasteries. They believe in perfect balance of all things. Saegin monks can be recognized by their white robes and their milky white eyes. All Saegin study martial arts, and have a slightly mystic reputation because they can fight while blinded.

The Saegin have a good reputation in Aegis; they may not in other areas. The Saegin helped greatly in the last War of the gate.

They are blinded after their second year of study; this blinding is supposed to be horribly painful, with the student required to fast for a week before. There are several conflicting stories about how the blinding is done:

In one story, the priest supervising takes a red-hot spoon and gouges out the student's eyes. If the student flinches or moves, he fails, and is further mutilated and left for the Beggar Queen to take. If he does not flinch, he is taken away and his eyes are replaced with ivory balls, which are used by the Saegin as an artifact of magic when he becomes a mage.

In another story, the student is asked to blind himself, by dropping acid into his own eyes. If he blinks, the inside surface of the eyelid is burned and scarred, reminding him every time he blinks afterward that he did not maintain perfect control during his investiture.

Some people believe that the Saegin are not blind at all, but they have a glamour cast over their eyes which allows them to see in the dark.

The religion appeals primarily to men, but there are female members. The six monasteries are divided among five Houses.

Information for players who choose Saegin characters is given in Appendix 2.

Some Other Religions

The Burning Woman The Aegis version of the Prometheus myth. Disobeying her husband, the Blind One (or Fate), she gave magic and fire to humanity. As punishment, he set her on fire for ten thousand years. She can intercede for you, taking on another two years of punishment. Sometimes her husband gets angry at humans for doing this, and the attempt to intercede fails; you get blown up (die horribly, suffer something far worse than you would have without intercession) and the Burning Woman has two hundred years taken off her sentence.

Oerimaekin (pronounced Or-i-my-kin) Oerimaekin is not a religion for the weak of spirit. They don't believe in life after death, they don't believe in the Tarot. Instead of helping their fellow men, they prefer to use them. The religion stresses self-reliance (I'm tempted to say that they have a statue so they can spit on it during ceremonies, but no—) and worldly success. To prove their devotion, they walk over hot coals, and they attempt to make bags of money. If you want a license to walk all over people, join this religion. The only real relationships they have are with other Oerimaekins, because they know where they stand.

More importantly, people don't want to like the Oerimaekin, and the Oerimaekin don't help it by sneering at everyone else. There is a fringe group that few people know about (the Maekinant) who are somewhat softer, and more tolerable.

Rainbows The Rainbow religion will allow anybody and allows almost anything, so long as members give 50% of their income to the church. (They don't state it this baldly.) The Rainbow church is recent and popular. It promises eternal life, absolution for sins, pleasure for the faithful with the certainty of punishment for those who don't believe. The Rainbow religion is causing a certain amount of concern among leading religious leaders. It is new and popular. Rainbows who've just seen the light wear a scarf of their color (red). As you advance, you change colours. Green rainbows wear a different shade of green than Green Priests. The high priest is Indigo. The god Imanam is, literally, Violet. As a scapegoat, the Rainbows have chosen the Oerimaekin.

Sickles A pagan group, they worship the earth mother-fertility goddess, who is symbolized

by the season's crop. They vie with the druids for rights to tend the city parks. The Warden gives them some parks of their own in which they worship.

Death

In Aegis, Death's appearance changes as a gauge of how desirable one finds the idea of dying. Death shifts from a skeleton to a beautiful person of the appropriate sex. Death likes to drink at a tavern called the Aling Raven.

Death is pleasant to speak with and will not play games for anyone's life. "I am only the servant," Death says. "Argue with my masters, not with me."

Living in Aegis

There are good times and there are bad times. The perception is that these are good-times-sliding-into-bad-times. ("Things aren't as good as they were when your father was young, I'll tell you that. At least there's some work.")

Fashion

The residents of Aegis dress for a wet warm-temperate climate. Men and women wear essentially the same garments, but the styles are different; one can easily tell a man from a woman by dress alone. The summer wear is a light shift (for women) or a light blouse and a kilt (for men), usually with a belt or sash, and a light cloak, and sandals. Spring and fall wear adds hose and a heavier cloak; in the winter, men switch to pants. Most men wear a breechclout under their kilts. Women may wear a breechclout and many women wear an undergarment which functions somewhat like a brassiere (rather like the ancient Cretan model). Winter footgear is leather boots which look rather like moccasins (since no nails are used in making Aegis footgear).

For formal occasions, high-born and middle-class women will wear gowns and men will wear hose or pants.

Colours tend to be bright; leathers are frequently dyed.

Elves tend to dress like Robin Hood year-round.

Vampires wear pants year-round, men and women.

The Economics of Blood

Aegis has a rather complex economy based on blood. There's a fair amount of inflation-devaluation.

You may choose to use one of two currencies as a GM running a campaign in Aegis. If you prefer a simpler currency, there is a simple gold-silver-copper scale: If you enjoy a realistic (but difficult) economy, keeping track of occasional inflation, devaluation, and multiple currencies, you may use the blood economy. In either case, no iron coins are allowed.

In the simple currency, 1 gold piece = 10 silver pieces; 1 silver piece = 100 copper pieces. For convenience, use current prices for items, but think of a copper piece as about 50 cents. They cut coppers into eighths if needed. A beer is 2 coppers.

In the complex currency, there are three different currencies: the Warden's currency, the bridge-token, and

bonds issued by one of several private organizations.

The most stable currency is the bridge-token. You can make a profit through careful exchange of bridge-tokens, though not on a regular basis, and the Guild of Money-lenders frowns on it. (Bridge-tokens go for less in the purely human areas far from the bridge, because these people don't go across the bridge. So you can buy tokens from them for resale near the bridge. But these people rarely have tokens.)

Every month, you go down and donate a certain quantity of blood. You receive tokens. The ratio of blood:gold is fairly well fixed, so you can always pay some poor person to donate for you. You might even get the blood cheaper than just buying a token on the black market. Since the coins can only legally be spent on Blood-Toll Bridge and in Hell, they find their way back to the blood banks.

Food and Drink

The staples are corn (maize), wheat, and rice. Much of the food is imported from Goblet-Hollow, also called "the Valley", which is at the source of the Mearallaem River. Aegis also imports food (meat animals, some grains, some fruits) from the neighbouring nations of Gurril, Omaki, and Palliss. The city can survive without this importation, but diet would be reduced. The climate in Aegis is suitable for citrus fruits, although fruits like apples and peaches must be brought in from Ruesada or from Goblet-Hollow. (It may help to think of Aegis as Vancouver and Goblet-Hollow as the Okanagan Valley.)

Meat is eaten three or four times a week; most people keep chickens or other fowl if they can (just as many people keep a vegetable garden), and one can always buy fish or goat or pork at one of the markets. Cattle are rarely eaten, although they are sometimes brought down from Omaki and then slaughtered. Oxen and horses may be eaten, but they aren't bred for it.

Both soft and hard cheeses are made from goat's milk. Most cheese comes from outside the city.

Beer and wine technologies are reasonably developed, because of the Preserve Food spell. A jar of ale costs a penny (about a dollar in terms of earnings).

Family and Clans

People in Aegis have families, and they have clans. Clans are assigned like astrological signs, according to the day of the week on which you were born. People born on the cusp are very special, since they belong to

two clans. Hellspawn tend not to have clans. Some vampires and weres might.

Anyone born during Festival is a Raven. Ravens consider themselves special because some of the legendary heroes were Ravens. Many Ravens are executed.

Some clans have rivalries: Wind vs. Fog, and Bear vs. Salmon. (These are more like army-navy rivalries than Hatfield-McCoy rivalries.) River, Tree, Wolf, and Raven clans are neutral. (Wolf and Raven clans used to be rivals, but that stopped as a result of the Vampire Revolt. Maybe someday I'll figure out the story.)

A member of your clan is obliged to help you in a time of crisis. Help does not mean betraying their employer. If you go around abusing this, they can boot you out of the clan. Nobody is neutral to someone who has been ostracized from a clan. In practical terms, you have to leave the city, even if that is not explicitly the purpose of ostracism.

Of course, if someone comes up to you and says, "I am also of the Wolf clan. Help me!" then you have to.

Each clan has a mark. The marks aren't secret, but they aren't advertised, either. If you aren't particularly observant, you could grow up without knowing what some of the marks are. It takes 1 pt. of knowledge to know other clans' marks. You always know the mark of your own clan. Each clan assigns the clan mark at a different age, but none before the age of eight.

The clan system extends through the nations of Sceptre, Haquida and Western Ruesada.

One's style of marriage depends upon one's religion and one's social standing. Nobles often have formal marriages which include dowries and exchanges of rights and titles, and extensive agreements about childcare and inheritance. Most people simply ask and then move in together; they may ask for the relationship to be sanctified at temple. Divorce is automatic if the couple have decided to have children and there were none after three years. If the couple don't want to divorce, they can extend their marriage to include another party to substitute for the sterile or substitute partner. (Some marriages include three or four parties anyway.)

Most families in the city are small (birth control is available!) and more closely resemble modern nuclear families. (The clan system largely replaces the extended family.)

Inheritance is by sex: boys inherit from their father, girls inherit from their mother. If only one sex of child is born, they inherit from both parents.

Birth and Death and Resurrection

Most people (humans) are born in the homes of their parents. The births are usually attended by midwives, who may or may not know magical spells. Some people will use magic to hold off the birth or speed it up to come at a more propitious time, but the majority of people do not. What will be, they figure, will be.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most humans choose to be cremated after a funeral service. (The service is usually a religious blessing followed by a wake.)

There are graveyards in Aegis (there are several in the Swords district, for example), and a “headcount” is done on a regular basis to ensure that no one is reviving corpses without permission.

Most graveyards are paupers’ graves. It costs more to be cremated than to be buried, and the Warden is reluctant to burn someone who may only appear to be dead. (There was a mistake several hundred years ago involving a powerful vampire and an overzealous bureaucrat.)

Some few people save a token of a deceased relative (usually a thumb) to use in case they ever need to resurrect that relative. (Other people regard this as barbaric, since only the complete destruction of the body will sever the silver cord that binds a soul to its body.) People who do keep tokens treat them as irreplaceably valuable (and there are criminals who steal ancestor-tokens and ransom them).

Because of the problems with population pressure, resurrections are subject to bureaucratic approval. Although there are mages who will do “back-alley” resurrections, most reputable mages will only store the corpse or token until such time as a certificate is obtained from the Warden. (This is handled on a daily basis; applicants plead their case to an upper-level bureaucrat who has a given number of certificates to hand out. Applications are open to the public; you can argue against someone’s resurrection if you want.)

Once the certificate and the money have been passed to the mage, the resurrection is usually straightforward. The mage has worked out the details in advance.

Note that resurrections can also be performed by gods. These are not subject to bureaucratic whim, but are extremely rare. (In fact, there are none currently alive in the world.)

Entertainment and Special Events

The citizens of Aegis are fond of entertainment, and there are special events all through the year.

Festival

The last seven days of the year (8 days every 130 years) are the Festival. Festival is a big money-making time in Aegis, but it’s also a legitimate celebration of the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. At Festival time, one can (should) make one’s peace with old spirits, beseech the blessings of gods, and try to create a favourable environment for omens in the coming year. The Festival in two years is an 8-day festival, which is extra-special. Some preparations are already underway.

Blacktongue Kickers

A popular sport in Aegis. The Festival includes a round-robin playoff between teams, ending with the championship game, refereed by the ghost of Emer Spraytoe, the inventor of the game.

The Midnight Circus

The Midnight Circus is an old established gladiatorial arena located in Hell. It runs at night only, and often features humans against hellspawn opponents. Champions become local celebrities, and there is a great deal of betting on the outcomes of fights.

The current champion is Greemayrisk, a Barsoomian.

Technology

Aegis has roughly the technology that Earth had in 1300.

Technologies

Aegis has the following technologies:

- The printing press. Moveable type. Paper.
- The wooden truss. Cement and concrete for finishing roads and buildings. Houses have tile roofs instead of thatch.
- The block and tackle.
- The “S” trap in plumbing, allowing flush toilets and sinks that are not noxious.
- Soap. A general connection between hygiene and disease, although the actual cause of disease is

believed to be spirits.

- Glass. Glass mirrors are available, but are very expensive (glass is not made in Aegis). Spectacles are known, too.
- The water-driven mechanical clock. (Aegis has a large clock tower in the center of the mercantile district on the West Bank, which is visible—if not legible—throughout the city.)
- The water wheel. Used in relatively few locations, because it's easier to have someone enchant the mill, or use zombies and a whim-drive.
- Paddle wheel boats with animal whim-drive (not usable on the Mearallam). Ship convoys.
- Sailors can take advantage of magnetic compasses, mariner's compasses, astrolabes, and charts of the fixed and moving stars.
- Alchemists are capable of producing a number of reagents, including sulfuric acid, nitric acid, aqua regia, and silver nitrate.
- Mathematicians have the concept of zero, of decimal points, of decimal arithmetic, and a reasonable knowledge of algebra and trigonometry.

The concept of the assembly-line is largely unknown, except for certain religious and magical technologies. (Components are given initial preparation by novices, improved by journeymen, and finished by masters.)

Ships around the southern part of the continent, where the winds are tricky, use the lateen sail. Lug sails are common around the north, where the trade winds are more predictable.

Weapons and Armour

All citizens who have been through the public school system have familiarity with bow or crossbow or staff or sword (equal chance, or the player can choose). This is part of the Aegis Citizen's Package (see later).

Most people are satisfied with knives or clubs; thieves and bandits may use shortswords. The quarterstaff is moderately popular; it's the weapon of choice for the Saegin priests.

Because of the melting-pot nature of the city, there are a wide variety of weapons here, almost any weapon that doesn't contain iron or gunpowder. Maces, flails (including nunchaku), and lances aren't particularly popular. (In Aegis' narrow streets, it's difficult to charge a horse.) People who live in the Great Marsh use a type of bolo to bring down birds.

The occasional barbarian or professional fighter might wander about with a bronze bastard sword. Carrying a weapon like that attracts the wrong kind of attention, though.

No one has ever heard of gunpowder. Even if they had, they would assume it was magic. (It may exist as a viable technology on the far side of the planet, where magic is weak.)

Nobles and vampires tend to use sabre, epee, and rapier. Vampires particularly employ what is essentially Florentine style (use of the dagger adds +1 to DCV, like a sword, if you have bought familiarity with Florentine style).

Each city guard has an iron broadsword and a mail shirt, shorter than a cuirass. The mail shirt is bronze, magically strengthened. A Guardsman has a skirtplate, a small shield, greaves and vambraces. Helms are optional, and are usually discarded in the summer, when the humidity is high.

Only Guardsmen (and ex-Guardsmen) have armour that good. Not all ex-Guardsmen have saved enough money to buy their armour from the Warden. Everyone else must make do with hardened leather or cloth.

In Aegis, people name their favourite weapons, especially if the weapon is expensive or magical. Each sword in succession needn't have its own name; perhaps a vampire always names his rapier Dheenamra, or Blood Drinker, though this is his fourth rapier by that name.

About Bronze

Bronze is about half as strong as steel, and weighs about 10% more. (Halve the defense values for steel weapons given in the rules.) Bronze blades nick and dull quickly (treat it as a weapon of poor quality). This is no problem in the city; it'll cost you a silver piece to get the weapon sharpened again, or you can do it yourself with familiarity with Weaponsmith or Weapon Care, and the tools.

Bronze is much more expensive than iron. However; although there are decent copper mines in the mountains, Aegis depends upon the mines in Toorn in Ruesada for its supply of tin.

There are two types of magical bronze: Mage's Bronze and Smith's Bronze. Both are made by mages. Mage's Bronze is as strong and light as steel, but reverts to regular bronze if the spell is broken. Smith's Bronze is made by magic but is not inherently magical: it is as hard and strong as steel, and never reverts to regular

bronze, even in no-magic areas. It must be worked by a smith. Only the Moonblade shop knows the spells for Smith's Bronze; the payment includes a dozen beryls of a certain size and quality.

You can buy a magically hardened blade that's as strong as a steel one for only 30 gold pieces. You can get one that's much harder for a lot more.

Education

Aegis has public schools. Children attend from ages 4-7 (a bit longer than Earth ages 5-8, given the difference in the year). Children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and basic weapons proficiencies. They are taught some measure of social studies: some history, some geography, and some of the great stories of their people. ("A citizen's first duty is to the Warden," and so on.) Other topics include what to do if there's a fire, how to mobilize in case of attack, and so on.

Literacy is reasonably wide-spread because of this (hence all of the news-sheets), but there are plenty of adults who can only barely remember how to make their mark. Because the city deals with so many tourists, being illiterate is not (in general) a great disadvantage.

When a child leaves school, he or she is old enough to apprentice to a guild or take other employment.

Aegis has public schools; citizens are required to go to school from age 4 until age 8. The schools teach basic reading, writing, arithmetic and the use of bow or crossbow. Private tutors are available to teach after the age of 8. Many adults have forgotten how to read, though most can still write their names.

Sexual Equality

The humans have had full sexual equality for a thousand years, ever since the contraception spell was perfected. Discriminate against people because of their religion or ancestry or ethnic background, sure, but not because their sex.

Side effects include the dissolution of "traditional" (Ruesadan) marriage ceremonies and a change in inheritance practices.

Jobs and Employment

To a large extent, the employment system is feudal. Most jobs are hereditary. If your mother was a servant of the Inikear family, you will be too. Should a family or a church purchase your services, you will follow them. They, in turn, pay for all the necessities of life, and throw the wedding party for you, and all of that. In essence, you have sworn fealty to your employer.

Some employers and some jobs may require you to swear homage.

Probably the best job to get from that point of view is city guard. The pay is good, and there are no restrictions on who you marry, because the Warden has no rivals. (No admitted rivals.) People do leave the city guard; it is a dangerous job, and a cautious and economical guardsman can leave after ten years and buy a small business.

Aegis has all sorts of jobs. If you can't do anything else, you can be a guide (if you're a native). Fishermen. Craftsmen. Aegis has some of the master craftsmen of the world. Aegis is also very fond of entertainers.

Because of the high degree of literacy in Aegis, they have weekly news-sheets, published on rag paper with moveable type presses. The type is carved wood. The news-sheets have ads, so you can make a living as a newsman in Aegis. Not a good one; there are four or five long-term news-sheets with new ones appearing and disappearing all the time. The oldest is the Bell-Call, published and mostly written by Oarimel Lemig.

There are professional people in Aegis—chirurgeons, pleaders, scribes, etc. They have guilds.

Guilds

Here are some guilds of Aegis. The guilds have a degree of power: they control entry into fields of employment, and are reasonably free of influence by the vampires. (Some humans regard this as being between a rock and a hard place: vampires or guilds.)

Animal Handlers Guild

Apothecaries Guild

Artificer's Brotherhood

Blacksmiths' Alliance

Brotherhood of Stonemasons

Carpenters' Cadre

Embalmers' Guild

Federation of Fences

Fellowship of Pain (official torturers, executioners)

Fellowship of Physicians and Chirurgeons

Heralds' and Messengers' Guild (includes news-sheet producers)

House of Pleaders

Jewelers' Guild

Merchants' Consortium

Moneychangers' Guild

Moneylenders' Guild

Order of Architects

Order of the Planets and Harmonics (Astrologers' Association)

Pilots' Guild
 Pleasure Consortium (prostitution, drugs, etc.)
 Scribes' Guild
 Shipwrights' Guild
 Tailors' Guild
 Thieves' Guild
 Slavers' Guild

Hygiene: Sewers and Aqueducts

The city of Aegis has relatively advanced sewers; unlike other cities in the world, fecal matter does not coat the streets. Most houses have running water and flush toilets, of a sort. Water is provided

The sewers do not empty into the bay or the river. (They did once, but the merpeople object, and the merpeople are essential to the Aegis fishing industry.) Instead, there is an “aqueduct” (actually a cloacaduct) that carries waste to the Great Marsh. This sewer is covered, and accessible underground through the maze of tunnels that make up the Aegis sewer system.

Rain sewers *do* empty into the river.

Both sewer systems are largely populated. The rain sewers tend to be the hideouts of beggars, and the cloaca tend to be populated by wererats.

The Second Oldest Profession: Tourism

The city of Aegis encourages tourists. (By “tourist” we mean “foreign visitors who will spend money”.)

The concept of tourists in a “medieval” society is not unheard of. Many of the “pilgrims” in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* act as though the pilgrimage is a holiday.

The Normans had a practice of sending sons to finish their education in France; the Elizabethans sent theirs to Italy.

Some medieval towns did support themselves by catering to pilgrims who passed through on the way to holy sites. Military and religious orders were founded, ostensibly to cater to the needs of pilgrims

With pilgrims come diseases, brawls, con men, prostitution (not just the needs of male pilgrims, but many pilgrim nuns who never made it to their destinations ended up as whores at some wateringhole along the way).

Aegis makes a big deal out of two things: *Anyone* can do magic in Aegis, and *monsters* roam the streets *safely*. One of the reasons for the Midnight Circus is to expose visitors to actual Hellspawn in a safe environment.

Most inns and tavers that deal with the tourist trade have an employee, the “spur,” whose job it is to get everyone involved in conversation (and drink more, but that’s incidental). In a night in a tourist inn, you are expected to participate in the stories and the songs. If you want a secret meeting, go somewhere else.

They make their own fun in the inns and taverns (although an entertainer will not be out of work for long, in Aegis).

Pilgrims undoubtedly have different reasons for a trip to Aegis:

- Some bring their dead companions to Aegis in the hope of having them resurrected.
- Some hope to have some other miracle occur, or get a boon of a god.
- Some are adherents of the Christian faith, and would like to meet with the Pope.
- Some want to see the Undead or to learn from them.

Wheels within Wheels: A Chapter of Secrets

This chapter contains some secrets. If you are not playing a thief, a beggar, a Saegin, or an elf, you should content yourself with reading the first section, “Assorted Rumours”.

Assorted Rumours

This section contains rumours. Truth not guaranteed. Saegin priests are blinded by dripping acid into their eyes; if the candidate blinks, he fails and is still blinded.

The vampires control almost all of the Warden’s council.

A vampire cannot enter a building unless invited.

Kakkam are really violent Faerie, ejected from the courts of the Fae.

The Pallissene Knights of the Riven Palm are immune to magic.

Beggars and thieves are part of the same guild.

Death’s appearance is different for each person.

Elves can control a human’s mind.

The child of a vampire and a human can see invisible things.

Shapeshifters can’t be trusted.

It takes five bites from a vampire to become a vampire.

Most gods adopt human form to wander the streets of the city.

Thieves

As befits a high-density area, Aegis has a high thief population, including Brams, who are beggars who fake deformities. This includes beggars, many of whom are not maimed at all (although one subfaction of the Cleaved tribe of beggars (see below) will maim the fakes, who are understandably not thrilled). There have been times when the Thieves’ Guild has owned part of the Council; this is not one of those times.

The Guild doesn’t like foreigners working in town, but it hasn’t the structure to deal with all of them. The Guild exerts strongest control on pickpockets and those who would steal from inns, since those are the crimes that directly affect the tourist trade. Non-member con men are only hunted on an 11- roll and a really inventive thief might be able to win their respect and membership with a spectacular theft. Of course, then he would owe dues, wouldn’t he?

If a thief begins to attract attention, there’s a good

chance that the Guild will contract to have the thief taught a lesson. Perhaps he or she will be caught...

Legal punishment for first theft is forced labour; second theft is loss of a hand. They never cut off both hands; that would increase the beggar population. Instead, they set you to work in Hell, or they auction off your blood to the vampires to pay back your theft.

Almost all fences in Aegis belong to the Fraternity of Fences. They won’t buy from a non-Guild thief. This means that most of the free-lancers work for specific targets or for cash.

About a hundred years ago, the beggars split off from the Thieves’ Guild and formed their own group. Most people believe that the thieves and the beggars are still the same group.

Beggars

When the beggars started to worship Thurm, about a hundred years ago, they split off from the Thieves’ Guild, and developed their own identity. (Their worship of Thurm is a secret, known only to beggars.) The Beggars’ Guild is currently ruled by Maron, the Beggar King, and his consort, the Veiled Lady (or the Lace Lady), Erdeth. In the past few months, however, there has been a Feud between the Beggars, which has divided the Guild in two.

The Beggars’ Guild is made up of six tribes, given here in increasing order of status:

Brams

Non-deformed children of beggars who must then fake their deformities. Beggars hold them in the lowest regard. Most of the “old” Brams — those who faked injuries before the separation with the Thieves’ Guild — considered themselves con-men and are now part of the thieves.

Cleaved

Warriors or adventurers who have been maimed. Some of the Cleaved are a bit fanatical and will “make” converts out of brams in the Thieves’ Guild.

Gutterkin

The desperate, the destitute, and the mad.

Demonsbreath

Those maimed and crippled by disease & illness.

Stained

Those maimed by accident or intent (Erdath is a member of this tribe).

Thurget

The congenitally deformed (Maron is a member of this tribe).

Saegins

The following information should be restricted to players whose characters are Saegin monks.

Combat

It is accepted that the Saegin are masters of combat. There are Saegin archers; they are more advanced in their studies, and have already mastered the quarterstaff.

The Saegin reputation for combat began with the last War of the Gate. The Saegin monastery of the time was its own division. Being blind, they were unaffected by visual illusions and did not require light in the labyrinth. There are those who say that the Saegin mages did not successfully banish the monsters. But there are those who say that the Saegin mages bound one of them, and that monster waits beneath one of the monasteries, to be used by the Saegin against the Others when the next Gate War happens.

As you can expect, the Saegin are pretty much left alone. Sometimes a gang will learn how to recognize the novices and beat them up; the gang is usually dealt with, but not by the Saegins. (At least, not that anyone can trace...)

The Saegin Religion

Although the Saegin study combat as part of self-discipline and self-knowledge, it is only the branch of the church found in Aegis. Any one who has taken the time to study the Saegin will have discovered that the Saegin have tried all avenues of self-discipline. This means that there are, for instance, a few who are from a different branch who study instead a yoga-like discipline, or writing, or singing. There is in Bef Mozhem-sur a Saegin circus. But then, Bef Mozhem-sur is a strange land.

The basic tenets, then, are asceticism and self-control, achieved through mastery of a discipline. (This is most clearly shown in their magic.) There are few holy writings of the Saegin, for obvious reasons. The only holy books and writs they have are intended for the novices. These are primarily writings on diet, topics for meditation, and the initial exercises on training the mind and the senses.

The Saegin religion is not monolithic; they are divided along several lines. First are the divisions of discipline; there is generally respect between the branches. More serious are divisions based on differences in philosophy. The public does not hear about

these differences. Given the relative secrecy of the Saegins, we can assume that the revealing of Saegin secrets is one of these issues.

Hierarchy

The Aegis priests are organized into six Houses, the Houses of Thought, Hearing, Touch, Taste, Smell, and Movement. All of the Houses are equal, but the House of Thought is more equal than others. At least, it is at this House that the Saeginimet (most accurately, the One Who Judges, in Old High Ruesadan) stays.

Each House has an Elder, who is supposedly only a resource for others, but who practically wields the power.

The Elders of a city meet regularly. The Saeginimet is frequently seen toiling in the garden, or instructing novices.

Magic

Like many other magic colleges in Aegis, the prospective mage must undergo a ceremony which (effectively) sensitizes him or her to the qualities of the college's magic.

Because the Saegin emphasize self-discipline and memorization abilities, they learn magic relatively quickly once they start, but they start later in life. There are a number of restrictions on the lifestyles of Saegin mages; if these are not followed, the magic will not work.

The mage must abstain from sex, and from contraception spells. (Granted, the second isn't a great disadvantage once you've accepted the first.) For a month after indulging in any form of sexual activity, the mage will be unable to perform any sort of magic.

The diet is highly specialized. No red meat, no poultry. Certain kinds of fish are kosher, some aren't. It costs money to maintain this diet, if you don't have your own garden; about 20 silver pieces extra each month.

There are a series of physical exercises which must be performed at least every other day, preferably every day. These take about an hour, and replace the katas of the regular Saegins. They focus the magical energies in the correct parts of the body.

Touching a piece of iron has the same effect as sexual activity; it "grounds" the magical energies. Saegin magic is built around the concept of balance and entropy. (Even balance needs an opposite concept as counterweight.) Saegin mages tend not to use magical items. They also do not allow the investiture of objects

with one's magic -- you can't put magical energy into your quarterstaff so you can sleep around and still fight in the morning.

Elves

Elves are extremely long-lived. One of the problems with being an elf is that life can get boring.

As a result, the elves have adopted a behaviour identified as "elf-mind." After one or two hundred years of life, an elf begins to feel a certain restlessness. (There are physical symptoms: the brain is regenerating.) When this happens, he makes preparations to go "beyond the sea." An elf can hold this off by making will or ego rolls, but eventually must give in. It's a biological imperative for them.

And then, the next morning, the elf wakes up and he is someone else, *with a new history*. The "elf-mind" comes into play because all of the other elves *agree* with him or her. (This can drive humans crazy, because they see their old friend, but everyone insists that that's someone else who happens to look just like him.)

This won't normally affect PCs, but it explains why elves don't have 400 years worth of experience.

Although elves don't have the Immortality advantage, they do age slowly and they heal nerve damage better than humans and most others do. They will not regrow lost limbs, however.

Within More Wheels: GM's Information

The following information is not for players. It is true for the author of this document, though of course it may not be true in your version of Aegis.

The Real History of Aegis

The planet on which Aegis sits was originally a bio-engineered recreation planet. All of the "lesser" monsters are descendants of the original bio-engineered organisms.

Thousands of years ago, the Gate opened, and real magic came forth. The battle was furious and pitched, and the Gate was eventually closed by dropping a nickel-iron asteroid on the planet, creating the Bay.

The environmental and climatic effects were not inconsiderable.

The bio-engineered natives of the planet used the excuse of the war to free themselves from their corporateslavery. (While they weren't officially slaves, each child born had a contract with the corporation, and

The Government of Aegis

As the players may suspect, the vampires are attempting to rule Aegis. They own a significant minority of the council, enough that if the others' votes are split, the vampires will have their way.

The Breeding of Faerie

Every change of succession in the realm of Faerie has coincided with a War of the Gate. It is highly likely that the Faerie *require* a War of the Gate to breed, and that the Seelie and Unseelie Courts work through agents on Aegis to cause Gate wars.

Campaigning

This chapter describes two possible campaigns, and suggests several more. The two campaigns described are:

The standard campaign, in which PCs are of the mortal races

The Hellspawn campaign, in which the PCs are all denizens of Hell: vampires, werewolves, and the like

The Standard Campaign

The following is the “standard” campaign. The PCs are of the mortal races (human, elf, dwarf, or other race).

For two hundred years, the House Aminon has been unlucky. After the death of the last Lord Aminon, late last year, the fees came due and weren’t paid. Tererinh Daimrea, a wealthy merchant, has purchased the title and requires retainers. All of the characters will be hired by the new Lord Aminon. They will be required to swear fealty.

The new Lord Aminon was born in Aegis, apprenticed to a foreign merchant after school, and made enough money in Haquida to buy the title. He has returned to Aegis; his wife and children still live in Haquida.

He still deals in trade, and his religion requests that he do something for the world now that he is wealthy...both of these requirements indicate that he needs a small group of diverse, resourceful agents. Lord Aminon has money but he hasn’t yet got a lot of city resources, since the previous lords gradually liquidated almost everything that wasn’t nailed to the title.

Lord Aminon is renovating Illaminonear, the ancestral home of the Aminon family, and he’s having it done by craftsmen, not mages, so the renovations will take some time (two years). He will put the characters up at the Clan Frog Inn until the renovations are done.

Characters can be hereditary servants of the Aminon family, returned now that there is a new lord, or fighters looking for a new job. It’s important to me that the characters not have much money (no matter what their background), and that they be able to work together even if they don’t like each other.

Player Characters

In Hero, characters will be built on 75 pts. plus disadvantages. I’d look twice at any character beyond 110 points. It’s essential that your character be able to get along with the group, or you just don’t get into the campaign.

In CORPS terms, characters are built on 150 AP and 100 SP. For descriptions of the player races in CORPS terms, see *Appendix C, Game Mechanics*.

The Aegis Citizen Package Deal

For Hero, there is a citizen package deal:

Literacy: 1 pt.

Weapon Familiarity: either bow, crossbow, sword, or staff, 1 pt.

Area Knowledge: 1 pt.

KS: simple math, 1 pt.

Disad: 3 pt. perk to learn wilderness skills

Package bonus:

Example Player Characters

The following player characters were eventually used:

Sujhin Mazerunner: An elven maiden, she was a magician in training and the second-most attractive woman in the city. She had a familiar, Conscience, who was summoned and bound by her uncle, Uncle Boxcars. The intent was to keep her out of trouble. Conscience did not live up to his name. Sujhin had an abhorrence of trees and wilderness. She was a city elf. Sujhin knew several spells. Played by Jim Gardner.

Harri el Shadif: An artist who was also a Ylar refugee, Harri took the job with Lord Aminon because it involved a number of artistic commissions. Harri later got romantically involved with a werewolf named Kretl from Hell. Harri’s religion caused some friction; it held that each time a man moved physically up or down, he changed his relationship with heaven, and must make proper prayers and obeisances. Harri fancied himself a gentleman. Played by Brian Dorion.

Andren Tower: Andren was a former fighter from the Midnight Circus whose family had had connections with Tererinh Daimrea. Andren got involved with Lallin Skeptril; unfortunately, she died during an adventure in Shier Kra (“Slaves of the Rat God”). That didn’t bother Andren; he got a large sack, cast a preserve food spell on her corpse daily, and carried her about for the better part of a game year until he could get her back to a decent necromancer in civilization. Played by James Nicoll.

Jon: A young Saegin in training, he was also responsible for his younger brother, Reav. He had not yet got to the stage of being blinded. Played by Peter Fraser.

Adventures

The following adventures are intended for the standard campaign, where PCs are of the mortal or long-lived races.

A Proper Burial

This is an introductory adventure which takes the PCs through many of the districts of Aegis and gives them some of the feel for the city.

Player Information

Newly hired by Lord Aminon, the PCs are requested to retrieve the body of the last Lord Aminon from the pauper’s grave in which it lies and prepare it for a proper burial.

GM’s Information

The body of (the previous) Lord Aminon was sent to a government-approved funeral home for a pauper’s burial. This adventure introduces three major threads:

First, the PCs will become enmeshed and identified with the House Aminon as they irritate the Kraken, a criminal overlord in the city.

Second, there’s a theme of “unfair death” running through this adventure: the previous lord and the necromancer’s assistant both died unfairly. Other examples may be introduced.

Third, the Omaki death curse is only one of the responsibilities that the new Lord Aminon (and by extension, the PCs) must pick up.

About Omaki Death Curses

An Omaki death curse is uttered by an evil person on the verge of death. If heard and granted, Morlethain “promotes” the spirit to Almethain, whereupon the spirit must attempt to fulfil the curse. If it succeeds, it becomes Dumethain; if it fails, it becomes lunch.

Almethair: An Omaki term for Spawnfood. Spirits which have not been evil enough to become full Shadowspawn (Dumethain) become lunch for those who did. An Omaki belief. Almethair are eternally tortured by Morlethain.

Dumethain: Term for full Shadowspawn of the Omaki god of torment and damnation. Like demons, but with more personality.

Morlethain: Omaki god of evil and torment. Espe-

cially evil people can call upon him at time of death for a chance to become Dumethain (Shadowspawn). Being Dumethain is difficult, but for the chance you get to cast an Omaki death curse. Morlethain doesn't like losers (or rather, he does...with salt).

Act 1: The House of Permanent Slumber

First the PCs have to find out which funeral home; this will involve a trip to the Warden's Warren, as the government offices are unaffectionately known. After charming, seducing, or bribing the relevant official, they can track the body to the House of Permanent Slumber. The owner of the House has been selling pauper's bodies to the Kraken, a criminal overlord; the Kraken zombifies them and ships them out of town to work on Red Habit farms.

As a side note, Joriven Deathtongue's assistant is a ghost who was murdered in an unfair way...but she doesn't remember her own death. She's pretty and she oozes sex appeal. If any of the PCs have a disadvantage such as "Womanizer" or "Helps the unfortunate" or "Sees justice done" then he or she should be compelled to find out

The assistant can tell them that before his zombification, the previous lord sat up and intoned a phrase in a foreign language (Omaki, as it turns out). She remembers the phrase perfectly (she only has memory problems relating to her death).

Act 2: The Bad Habits

An hour or two after the PCs leave the House of Permanent Slumber, they encounter a gang of elves who pick a fight with them. The elves are all reasonably proficient and are trying not to kill the PCs (but wounding is perfectly all right). If the elves win, then the PCs will be told not to mess around in areas that don't concern them. If the PCs win, they can find out that Emlin Oak, their leader, has a deal with a fellow who supplies them with Red Habit, and he asked them to warn off the PCs.

(If the PCs lose, they can still get this information by going back to Joriven Deathtongue...but then they'll have to face the elves again. Joriven sent a courier redcap off to

Edana (back at the Clan Frog) can tell them it is Omaki, and an Omaki Death Curse.

Act 3: The Kraken Moves

The adventure ends on a Red Habit farm just outside of town, where the former Lord Aminon is "working," along with a number of other illegal zombies.

While the Warden may not be particularly interested in enforcing this particular law (illegal zombies), the Guild of Farm Workers is, and the Ambassador from Elfhome would like to see the Red Habit cultivation stopped. The Warden will supply militia to close down the farm, if the PCs can reach someone in a position of power.

NPCs

The following are some NPCs who might be encountered during this adventure.

Fungus Gutterlime: A ghoul bureaucrat who works in the Palace in the Office of Crypts and Residentials. Easily bribed by the offer of dead flesh.

Joriven Deathtongue The master of the House of Permanent Slumbers, he is a small-time necromancer who has been selling pauper's corpses to the Kraken to work in the Habit fields.

Emlin Oak Leader of the Red Habits, a gang of juvenile delinquent elves who work for the Kraken. Asked to scare off the PCs.

"Golem" Remi Former Midnight Circus fighter who now works for the Kraken. Long-time Circus fans will remember he has a glass jaw (susceptible to blows to the head).

Return of the Kobolds

A family of kobolds return to the city. They require a noble deed to do, and they require it from Lord Aminon (they have documentation of a deal made four hundred years ago). Kobolds have been banned from the city for hundreds of years, and the reason becomes evident to the PCs quite quickly: Kobolds are dim-witted in the extreme and are magnets for trouble.

The kobolds are Dam, Dem, Dim, Dom, Dum, Fam, Fem, Fim, Fom, Fum, Lam, Lem, Lim, Lom, Lum, Tram, Trem, Trim, Trom, and Willie ("I'm a gremlin") All are male; all have come to Aegis to fulfil a quest, which they must do in order to become adults.

Slaves of the Rat God

The PCs end up in Shier Kra during the reign of the Rat God.

Possible adventures along the way:

They might go by sea and be stranded on an island with dinosaurs.

They might have to influence the selection of the next god.

They might have to carry a dead girlfriend around in a sack. (See Lallin Skeptril in the list of PCs.)

The Beggars' War

This is a rather long saga involving the Sword of Life, which is the counterpart to Death's sword, the Sword of Death.

Death has a twin, Life, whose job it is to grant life. However, the legend has it that Death and Life quarrelled early on, and Life spread itself thin, among all living things, so that Death could not take it. (If approached, Death is reticent on the topic.)

A Piece at a Time

A thousand years in the future, scientists wanting to investigate the strange region of space around the planet that holds Aegis (see the chapter, "Wheels within Wheels") have taken advantage of the existence of magic to build a time machine. They have sent this time machine back to investigate Aegis at a time just prior to the last War of the Gate. (This is a useful way of telling the PCs that a War of the Gate is in the offing.)

Unfortunately, the time machine crashed, in a temporal sense. It spread bits and pieces of itself over the city of Aegis and over three hundred years of history.

The survivors of the crash have been plotting the arrival points of the different pieces of the ship, and have been collecting them. (They run Ulkim Two-fingers Shop of Curios.) The next piece of the ship is due to arrive soon, and they intend to collect it and put their ship together to leave.

Too bad it's an attractive piece of metal that appeared near the Fountain of Ebon Abundance in Hell. Too bad someone else got it first.

The PCs are either hired by the time travellers or by the person who picked up the artifact.

The Egg of Hours

Whoever possesses the Egg of Hours is the greatest thief in the world...or so the story goes. Unfortunately,

the Egg has been held by Merith Windrisp for fifty years. Fortunately, he's going to bring it out this Festival.

Some Campaign Suggestions

The following are suggestions for long story-arcs that could form the basis for a new campaign.

The Sword of Life

See the information above, under "The Beggars' War," for a description of the Sword of Life.

I used the backdrop of the Beggars War and the Sword of Life as a lengthy campaign arc that ended with the PCs using the Sword to isolate Aegis in its own pocket universe. So it would be *saufé*.

The Next War of the Gate

It's strongly hinted in our campaign that the Faefolk other than the Elves need a War of the Gate to breed. When the time comes for a succession and a new generation of Fae, they engineer a War of the Gate.

In our campaign, this came about because Conscience, Sujhim Mazerunner's familiar, was a contender for the throne. (See the Contention Names in the list of PCs.)

The Pallissene Invasion

The nation of Palliss would like dearly to control the Gate for "good." If they feel they can neutralize enough of the Aegis magic, they will attack. However, to neutralize enough magic, they must have spies in the city, who will smuggle the iron in.

The Circus at Dawn

The Hellspawn Campaign

It might be interesting to use the Storyteller system and have all of the PCs play vampires (*Vampire: The Masquerade*), werewolves (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*), Faerie (*Changeling*), or ghosts (*Wraith*).

Appendix A: Some Aegis Proper Names

Men

Algan
 Allijher
 Andim
 Arnas
 Aved
 Bardelomea
 Braymin
 Daimris
 Ellray
 Emlin
 Jaymon
 Jevon
 Hamlin
 Haren
 Jak
 Jarl
 Jon
 Kay
 Kallin
 Kaman
 Kasvear
 Keam
 Kemlea
 Kenrik
 Klayron
 Klon
 Koebay
 Layren
 Lamon
 Maysler
 Merith
 Oalar
 Oarmal
 Oarmel
 Ram
 Randven
 Ray
 Rayloem
 Reaf
 Rav
 Ridgerd
 Tay
 Tayfim
 Tererinh
 Ulkim

Walmer
 Win
 Wolf

Women

Alleara
 Alwijhin
 Ama
 Aoleveala
 Drayshai
 Edana (an Omaki name)
 Erayn
 Erillinh
 Eweana
 Faif
 Fangea
 Illineaa
 Ireaa
 Jayren
 Kayt
 Kerbea
 Kretel
 Kwenta
 Lallin
 Lallina
 Lillin
 Loeris
 Loeweatha
 Margeth
 Mayra
 Mereth
 Mofai
 Nerean
 Ningal
 Ninon
 Oaliss
 Oerea
 Ongean
 Rimina
 Seara
 Shenigeam
 Sironea
 Sujhin
 Taifimea
 Wenna

Appendix B: The Aegis Gazetteer

This chapter provides a listing of people, places, and things in Aegis. It is intended for the GM rather than the player, since it is unlikely that any one character could know all of these people and places. Some of them are very well-known, others are obscure.

Of course, this list isn't exhaustive. The GM should feel free to add to it or to modify it.

The Districts of Aegis

There are fourteen districts in Aegis (one for each seat on the Warden's Council, plus the Old City, which is controlled by the Warden). Although each of them is described in a certain way - i.e., the Thumb is the Merchant's District, remember that for the inhabitants, Aegis often functions like two separate cities. Each side of the city has all the necessities needed for living (for the poor, to minimize the number of times they must cross the Blood Toll Bridge). However, if you are interested in something unusual, your best bet is the area which specializes in that item.

There are an uncertain number of entrances into Aegis, but everyone talks as if there were four: the Marsh Door, the Plain Door, the River Door, and the Bay Door. Both the River and the Bay Doors are two sets of entrances each, one on each side of the river, but they are talked about as if they were single entrances; thus, people talk about the Bay Door, and not the Western Bay Door.

When talking about places that occur on both sides of the river, such as the Bay Door, the Spur, or the Magazine, it's always assumed that you are talking about the one on the same side of the river as you are currently on. If you're talking about the other one, you refer to the Moon Spur, or the Moon Magazine, or the Moon Bay Door.

The river runs roughly north to south and bisects the city. The eastern half of the city is slightly larger, and it is with this side we will begin. It is roughly a semicircle.

1. Dominating the eastern half is the **Old City**, which is prominent because of the Palace. The Old City's walls slope to keep things in, and there are sometimes patrols along those walls. Inside the Old City are the Warden's Palace, the Zoo, and some of the oldest nobles' estates, including Illaminonear.
2. North of the Old City is the **Chine**, which contains the river docks and some warehouses. This area is

still busy and bustling, although much of the unloading is now done on the opposite side of the river, in the Grudge district. The Chine district is where you would come in if you came in this River Door. The two main streets are River Road, which comes in parallel to the river and runs into the Old City, and Libertine Street, which runs along the inside of the Outer Wall down to All-Fools Street by the Plain Door. The Chine is a favourite spot for pickpockets and cutpurses, because it is where the wealthy tourists disembark from their ships.

3. Following Libertine Street takes you into the **Rookery**, which is a residential area. The houses directly on Libertine Street are fairly well-off, and this continues for several blocks to either side. After that, the quality of life begins to fall off, eventually becoming slums where it borders on the Outer Wall, and Hell. The Rookery has one of the few public baths, and a number of good restaurants. Most of the commercial establishments in the Rookery are in the last few blocks, where it runs along the Porter Road, the road which comes in from the Plain Door. The Avenue of Widows is along the border between the Rookery and Hell, and the Fountain of Ebon Abundance is also in this area.
4. The last two blocks of Libertine Street are in **Bishopsrood**, the religious and temple district. The district is actually quite narrow, only two blocks wide for much of its length. Bishopsrood extends across the river, for almost the full length of All-Fools Street, and is actually shaped like a cross: it extends two arms out in the Eastern half of the city, one to the north, where it comes between some of the Rookery and Hell, and one to the south, where it comes between the Stewpot and the Funnel. There is a relatively inconspicuous estate at the crux of the cross, between Bishopsrood and the Funnel; this is the House of Thought of the Saegins.
5. **Hell**. Hell comes not quite to the walls of the Old City -- at the walls is the area where the weres live as a transition zone -- and touches the Chine, the Rookery, and Bishopsrood. The residential section of Hell is for the most part run-down, although near the Midnight Circus it is well-kept and maintained, and in the Vampire sections it is also neat, if Spartan. The Inn of the Midnight Son is in Hell; so is the Fountain of Ebon Abundance. The main street through Hell is Cottar Street.

6. **The Funnel** is the name for the District of Mages. It got the name because it is popularly believed to have only one street which coils in and around to a central point, no matter how many entrances or streets there appear to be. The street is Fugue Street, for reasons unknown. All of the magic colleges are in the Funnel, as well as the Guildhall of the Mages and the homes of the biggest magicians and sorcerors. The elf-mage Boxcars lives in the Funnel.
7. **The Stewpot** is the region south of the Funnel and Bishopsrood's southern arm. It extends up along the other (riverward) side of the Bishopsrood cross. The Stewpot is where the majority of the Eldritch in Aegis live (the Eldritch have a different name for the district). The Stewpot has its own gradation of rich and poor; most humans don't know enough to understand it, if only because it's difficult to understand a redcap's notion of rich. The Stewpot is a very green place with a large number of parks. Ash Street runs through the Bishopsrood arm, through the Stewpot, and down into the Spur.
8. **The Spur** is the name given to the section around the Bay Door on both sides of the river. A large part of the Spur is outside the city walls. Most of the things you think of as existing in a seaport town are in the Spur, whereas things specific to a riverport are up in the Chine. The office of the Bell Call is in the Spur. So is the Customs and Excise office, where Rodhamimalon is Chief of Customs. Ash Street meets River Road at the Bay Door on the Eastern side.
9. The section of town between the Spur and Stewpot, bounded on the north by Bishopsrood and on the west by the river, is the **Magazine**. This is where the warehouses for the city's food supply are, and the grain silos where the exports of the city are loaded into boats and sent out into the Bay. It is not a residential district, for the most part, but rather an industrial one. The Moonblade school is in the Magazine, where it borders on Stewpot; so is the Cascade Leatherworks shop. River Road is the main road here.
On the Western side of the river:
10. To the north is the **Grudge** district. This area is a slum, consisting of warehouses, some docks, and poorer people. This is one of the areas where the elf gangs control; it is, Bad Habits territory. The main street through here is the Avenue of Rest.
11. Along the outside wall is the district of **Swords**. This is where the Inn of Permanent Slumber is. The Avenue of Rest runs through here until it meets Porter Street. Swords runs the entire length of the outside walls until it runs into the Spur. Swords is the major human residency area on this side of the river, and is noted for being the most anti-nonhuman. One of the major sources of political contention in the Swords district is the Echo Rest cemetery, which is being turned into a residential area for the Undead.
12. Porter Street on this side of the river forms the boundary of the Merchant's District, which is called the **Thumb** (short for Thumb-on-the-Scales, which you may hear from some of the older residents). The Thumb is where the best (well, most expensive) inns and taverns are. Tourists are let off in the Chine, and taken on a carriage ride along River Road through the Old City, down to the Blood-Toll Bridge. That way they get a glimpse of Hell, and then are taken across the river to the Thumb district.
13. The district where the nobles live is called the **Hammer**. It is south of Porter Road, and inside into the Magazine on this side of the river. The Hammer has many armed guards and patrols, often privately paid for. Because of the number of thieves in Aegis, anyone wandering through the Hammer who doesn't have a good excuse may be asked to leave by any of a number of armed parties. The Warden occasionally takes the nobles to task for this, but this depends upon the current political situation. There can't be said to be one main street for the Hammer.
14. The remaining district is the **Wands** district. This district occupies the space between the Bishopsrood and the Grudge. It is a middle-class neighbourhood, reasonably integrated in terms of Eldritch and humans and Undead. The Clan Frog Inn is in Wands. The major street through Wands, which runs from Porter Street to the Avenue of Rest is Tinderbox Street.

Business Establishments

Any city thrives on commerce, and Aegis has some of the best establishments in the world. It also has some of the worst.

Excellent Establishments

The following are establishments which are renowned for their excellence. A business' inclusion on this list means that it has met certain minimum standards. There are many more businesses which couldn't get onto this list.

Alleara the Tailor High quality. Expect to be put onto a waiting list.

Aolem's Child Inn Excellent food and service. Chef is Sironea Koelgim. Prices slightly high. Entertainment average. Owner: Kay Scamoer

Aved's Wood and Bone Works Flawless sense of art; wood and bone carvings. Accepts some commission sales. Owner: Bardelomea Aved

Cascade Leatherworks Difficult to become a customer. Excellent gloves and boots. Some customizing done. All work dyed trademark shade of green unless otherwise specified. Owner: Agak Winimin

Changeling's Curse Fair cross-mixture of Undead and humans. Popular with upper classes. Room 21 is cursed; inhabitant on night of full moon becomes random animal. Rates are tripled during full moon. Owner: Haren Singellik

Diamond Spider Tavern Rates inclusion only because of its dancer, Rimina Forlin. She performs on Winday, Fogday, Salmonday, and Treeday, two shows each day. House drink is called a Sjpider's Web; contains enough alcohol to stun a man. Owner: Spider Allren

The Duchess' Sash Clothing accessories. High quality, local and imported styles and materials. Owner: Nerin Aruwen

The Gazetteer All kinds of maps, books, journals of travellers, etc. Excellent service, knowledgeable staff. Travellers in need may be able to sell area knowledge there. owner: Kai Embrea

Grey Bard Inn Haunted by several ghosts, most notably a minstrel named Klon Arimig. Contains three units: inn, tavern, dining room. Owners: Ridgerd Oaklim, Kwenta Hager

Hamlin's Blades Good at customizing existing weapons. Some enchantments done. Owner: Alwijnhin Mustoak

Lady of Wands Tavern Caters to Eldritch trade. Brew a fair ale here; good port. Don't try the sack! House specialty is a drink called Acorn Cluster.

Moonblade Magical weapons. Unless specifically willed to someone, all of their weapons return to them when the owners die. Strictly custom work except for rresale of returned weapons. Prices high, waiting list

long.

Ram Arvo's Armory Best non-magical weapons and armour in Aegis. good place to see dwarves and metal-working eldritch. owner and master armourer: Ram Arvo

The Raven's Kindness Tavern Very good wine and ale produced here. Try to get some of the Bock in season. Note that bards Reav and Alwijnhin perform here, frequently competing with each other. Owner: Jarl Ravenlock

Trueshaft Bowery Excellent non-magical bows. Buys unusual or odd bows; no magic. Bow repair only fair. Good fletcher. Owner: Illinea Trueshaft

The Wolftooth Shop An excellent weaponsmith's shop. This is where iron swords for guards are made. There are many many guards around to prevent the loss of any iron. Owner, master weaponsmith: Wolf Grinear

Solid, Middle-Class Establishments

These establishments offer a fair deal for the price. They are neither outrageously expensive nor are they cheap. Few of them have any fame outside of the city, but they have their regular customers and their adherents.

Clan Frog Inn:

Disreputable Establishments

These establishments definitely won't get into the Michelin Guide. Not all of them are the dregs of their industries, but some are. Anything marked with an asterisk (*) is in Hell.

Algan's Transport Vehicles and drivers for rent.

The Arena of Kenrik A gladiatorial arena.

Armillim's Labours* Zombies for rent.

The Black Rose An herbalist.

The Bowsprite* Inn catering to aquatic Eldritch.

The Chance Remark A gambling house.

The Clean Chin Barber and surgeon.

The Deep Tankard A bar frequented by mercenaries.

The Double Dirk Armourer and weaponsmith. Some magic.

The Eel Feather* A tavern.

The Midnight Son* A tavern specializing in Undead trade.

The Gatebar* A tavern.

Kimon the Cobbler

Merith's Stables and Livery

Oak and Mistroot An Eldritch tavern.

The Pin and Tumbler A bar famous for thieves.

The Rat's Nest Tavern*

The Shop of West Winds Sailmakers.

The Shop of Ulrim Twofinger A small curio shop of religious artifacts.

Groups and Organizations

Below is a list of some of the groups and organizations in Aegis, and some people known to be associated with them.

Bad Habits: A group of punk elves, elven juvenile delinquents. Possibly connected with Kraken. They are connected with Red Habit distribution in Aegis.

Beggar Tribes: The beggars worship Thurmin. They hate magic users, feeling that mages should be able to make them whole, and refuse. There are six beggar tribes; see the discussion in the main text. Currently the tribes are divided on the issue of what to do with the Sword of Life.

Maron, the Beggar King: No legs. Believes that a new god should be created for the beggars, and that the old gods should be allowed to live. In the current dispute between the Beggar King and Queen, Maron has the loyalty of the Cleaved, the Demonsbreath, and the Stained.

Creeper Shatterhip: a lieutenant in the Beggar King's army, of the Stained Tribe.

Horm & Rehmak: Siamese twins of the Thurget tribe, on Beggar King's side.

Erdath: the Veiled Lady, the Lace Lady. Opponent to Maron in the Beggar Feud. She believes that the Sword should be used to improve the lot of the Beggars, mostly by slaughtering gods indiscriminately and restoring the Beggar god to life. The Veiled Lady has the loyalty of the Brams, the Gutterkin, and the Thurget.

Goblet-Hollow: the valley guarded by the Rockline family which provides most of the fruits and winter food for the city of Aegis. Lord Ridgerd is the current Lord of Goblet-hollow. Goblet-Hollow is its own fiefdom, protected by Aegis.

Lord Ridgerd: Lord of Goblet-hollow, the official title of the one who rules the Valley. A friend of Lord Layron. He has brought forces to support the Rocklines.

Lady Aoleveala: fiancée of Lord Layron of the Rocklines, sister to Lord Ridgerd. Has magical potential, but no opportunity to develop it. Very gifted with animals.

The Kinbras: an elite group of assassins. Symbol is

a scrap of parchment with a gold (brass) circle on it.

The Kobolds: A family of Kobolds. Kobolds have been banned from Aegis for hundreds of years. Dam, Dem, Dim, Dom, Dum, Fam, Fem, Fim, Fom, Fum, Lam, Lem, Lim, Lom, Lum, Tram, Trem, Trim, Trom, and Willie ("I'm a gremlin") All are male; all have come to Aegis to fulfil a quest, which they must do in order to become adults.

House Koreamon: A young house, four hundred years. The House Koreamon once employed Lomino the sculptor. Koreamon is responsible for protection of the city in case of war; not known whether or not this includes a War of the Gate.

Kraken: Head of Aegis' mob scene. Has managed to unify most of the existing mobs. Has hired ex-fighters as enforcers.

"Golem Remi": Former boxer who was hired by the Kraken after retiring, now acts as an enforcer. Old fans of the Circus will remember he had a glass jaw.

Joriven Deathtongue: a necromancer who manufactures illegal zombies for the Kraken. He uses a grimoire obtained by the Kraken, but he knows no real magic himself. The zombies are used to harvest Red Habit. His personal assistant is a ghost (COM 30) who can't quite remember her name. She's been dead 300 years, and is held there by force of a spell. His source of bodies has never been proven, but it is suspected that the Inn of Permanent Slumber (in the Swords district) is involved in the illegal zombie trade.

House Noreamon: A House of Aegis.

House Roakim: The current lord (Lord Roakim) tries to protect the reputation of his sister, Lady Esta of the Deep Pockets. She's a kleptomaniac, and once stole Sujhin's mirror.

Mages: some of the mages who can be encountered in Aegis, who have no easy affiliation, are:

Ekrenax: an animated stone gargoyle, possessed of two minds, the first being a mercenary's and the second is the wizard who animated him (suffered a heart attack in the casting). The mercenary has sided with one of the factions in the Sword Quest, but the wizard doesn't know which one.

Uncle Baxcars: Elven mage, one of the best, and uncle to Sujhin Mazerunner. Conjured up Conscience for her, and thereby earned enmity of Faerie.

Emlin Heartoak: an elven mage who is fascinated by Death; has never met her. He is the elf forensics expert that Margeth calls upon, and he is a good friend of

Boxcars.

Rocklines: The Rocklines are the family which rule over Rockhall, the keep protecting the pass between Omaki and Aegis. They are a noble house, but have not got the right to grant arms. They receive their support from House Aminon, although they have received relatively little in the past seventy years.

Lord Layron: current lord of Rockhall. Been lord for about three years, since his father died (fall from a height). Engaged to Lady Aoleveala, but been unable to marry because a representative of Aminon must be at wedding. Takes his duties seriously.

Lady Cetara: mother of Lord Layron. She should be ruler of Rockhall, but she suffered a stroke when her husband died. She has regained most of the movement in the right side of her body (she can walk again), but there was some brain damage. She is given to occasional fits of rage and paranoid fantasies about Lady Aoleveala.

Rollaen: Chief man-at-arms for the Rocklines.

Father Ellijhin: Circuit priest, at Rockhall to perform the marriage of Lord Layron and Lady Aoleveala.

Ruling Class of The Faeries

Distinct from the Eldritch are the Faerie, mostly because they truly live in a separate realm. The Faerie have a complex ritual of accession and succession. Each accession to the throne/breeding period of the Faeries has co-incided with a War of the Gate. Given the long life-span of the Faerie and their involvement with magic, it is not impossible that the Faerie require Wars of the Gate in order to breed, though no one knows this.

Conscience: Gremlin, heir to the throne of Faerie and familiar to Sujhin Mazerunner. Conscience's contention-name during the Time of Succession was Talleyroot.

Cutfern: King of Faerie, he rigged the competition with Conscience to win (an unheard of thing, but easy to do). In league with the Lich, he wants to start a war with the humans and then open the Gate. Cutfern is currently familiar to Allijher Stormscent, Sujhin's apprentice. His new name has not yet been chosen.

Hearthscrub: Half-brother of Conscience, his mother died in childbirth, leaving the royal family with an unlucky number of children. Eliminated in the early rounds of the succession.

Oakwine: Conscience's half-sister, destined to be Queen of Faerie. Twin to Cutfern, but 3 minutes younger.

Shieldheart: Previous king of Faerie. No idea how he died. Father of all contenders for throne.

Talleyroot: contention-name of Conscience.

Treeroot: Current name of Conscience's mother.

Wheatwater: mating name of Conscience's mother, she who is now Treeroot.

Vampires: the vampires may be organized, but they don't usually act as a group. Vampires in Aegis include:

Kearalaminon, Vampire Lord: owner of the sword Dudheenilra, also called Blade of Shiva. Known to be a brilliant fencer, owns a Moonblade. Poet, raconteur, probable mage. Won medals for bravery during time on Maze patrol. Is most likely contender for King of the Vampires, should position fall open.

Dudheenilra: Kearalaminon's sword, intelligent on its own.

Rodhamimalon: Chief Inspector of Customs. Not actually a vampire, but his father (Dramaliron) is a vampire, his mother (Kella Koerall) human. Unusual because he was conceived after his father's death. Raised in the vampire manner, darling of the Undead (+5 to Streetwise in Hell). He knows some magic. Has magical abilities: can see all vampires whether they are invisible or not; is resistant to hypnosis by vampires.

Assorted Characters:

Amajhin Siren: The best model in town. COM 23, genuinely nice, no one seems to have a bad thing to say about her. Doesn't it just make you sick?

Byook Thet Quynn: Barbarian visiting Aegis, attacked by Ekrenax on the street one night.

Elrig: Priest of the Burning Woman.

Fungus Gutterslime: A ghoulish bureaucrat who works in the Palace in the Office of Crypts and Residentials. Easily bribed by the offer of dead flesh.

Greemayrisk: Barsoomian, currently leading gladiator at the Midnight Circus.

Jayren Silvertwin: The loan shark to whom Lallin owed money. Although Jayren has no direct connection with the Kraken, he is not above asking for some muscle to extract the interest from Lallin.

Jocomo: Apprentice to Lomino the artist. Also fascinated by the Midnight Circus, he hid out there when he believed his master had gone mad.

Kretel: a werewolf, living in Hell with her sister.

Lairda Gemlen: Current Warden of Aegis. A small white-haired woman with tremendous energy and a forceful personality.

Lallin Skeptril: Alias of Roulette, a free-lance thief who is trying to make it big. She reads Tarot, and will show up anywhere the cards indicate she might make a big score. She owes money to Jayren Silvertwin.

Lomino: Artist, genius, painter, architect, sculptor, inventor, painted a brilliant Renunciation of the Raven. Born bastard in Ruesadan city of Frolin, has worked

for many of the noble homes in Aegis, including Anamilon and Koreamon. His apprentice is Jocomo. His son attempted to kill him.

Oarimeh: writer and publisher of the **Bell Call**, oldest running broadsheet in Aegis.

Saeginimet: Title of the leader of the Saegins; usually resides at House of Thought.

Seara Nannin: a singer.

Thorajeon Glass: A dwarven bureaucrat who works at the Palace in the Office of Parks and Druids. He is a nature lover and is easily manipulated, though he is not at all corrupt.

Thromin: A potter and mage, he makes storage pots and sells unusual clays to sculptors. It was he who sold the Casting Clay to Lomino. During the Lomino incident, he mentioned that he was manufacturing something (large?) for Kearalaminon.

Zakhveem rab Ashrav: Alchemist. Seven kids in family. Currently arguing with his eldest daughter and her husband. He is a Ylar refugee and comes from Bef Mozhem-sur.

Some Pallissenes:

Davy Raven: A thief and brigand who steals from the rich and gives to the poor. Eldritch are often poor. His secret is that he is a half-elf of the River clan.

Some Inns of Palliss: the Crippled Jester (PCs stayed there their first night in Palliss...has path to smuggler's cove), the Midget Horse, Single Oak, the Three Sails, the Cross and Mitre, the Ashe and Palm.

Appendix C: Game Mechanics

This section describes various items in terms of game mechanics. The original system for the campaign was Hero Games' *Fantasy Hero* (1st edition).

Hero

Time

In Hero, the different year makes the Age limitations 34+ and 51+, rather than 40+ and 60+.

Armor and Weapons

Regarding the Guard's mail:

The mail shirt is DEF 3 and covers hit locations 9-12. Other armour in the city is DEF 2 or 1.

Bronze weapons are treated as a weapon of 2 DEF and 2 BODY less than the iron equivalent.

Alchemy

To become an alchemist requires the Knowledge Skills Alchemist (2 pts: basic lab procedures), and Alchemical Theory (also 2 pts.). (More is better, of course.) To create new elixirs, you must have the 5 pt. skill, Alchemical Research.

To mix an elixir, you must make a skill roll and someone must tend the elixir 24 hours a day. A failed skill roll usually just means an ineffective batch; an 18 on the skill roll means it blew up.

Saegins

In Hero game terms, expect the average Saegin to be DEX 13, with Combat Sense and two levels with Quarterstaff.

CORPS

The following are notes for CORPS. Since CORPS doesn't have the same kind of support that Fantasy Hero does, these are somewhat more detailed.

Time

In CORPS, the entire age disadvantage is changed. It's easiest to create the character as if there were no time difference, and then convert the ages.

Though if you want to: 16 Earth years is 13.7 Aegis

years, so begin the Age disadvantage at 14. Aging rolls begin at age 26.

Because months are about the same, you can use months to calculate the AP and SP from the Age disadvantage. Remember that a character gets 1 SP/3 months and 1 AP/6 months.

Armor and Weapons

Most armour in the city is leather (AV 2/2), padded cloth (AV 1/2), or just heavy clothing (AV 0/1).

Bronze weapons are treated as follows: the mass is greater (1.8 kg) and the initiative penalty is greater (-3). They break more easily, too.

Weapons

The following weapons are not specifically mentioned in the CORPS rules:

<i>Name</i>	<i>DV Init RMod</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Bola (I)	+0 -1 1	comb.
Bola (II)	+0+1 -2 1	comb.
Thrown thal (c)	axe+0 -2 1	le-
Throwing axe	+0+1 -1 1	lethal (c)
Thrown knife	+0 +0 1	lethal (p)
Throwing knife	+0 +0 1	lethal (p)
Thrown rock	+0 +1 1	comb.
Thrown spear	+0+2 -1 1	lethal (p)
Sling	2 +0 1	lethal (b)

Alchemy

The Alchemical Theory and Alchemical Research skills are both secondary skills under Alchemy. Alchemical Research is a difficult skill which costs +1.

City Guard

The following may be taken as an average member of the city guard. Individuals will vary, of course.

6 STR	2 36	Pain Tolerance	
5 AGL	1 25	Contact: 1 Guard	
4 AWR	1 16	Law	3
4 WIL	1 16	Criminal (4)	+1
5 HLT	1 25	Melee Weapons	4
2 POW	1 4	Sword (5)	+1
		Projectile Weapons	4
		Bows (5)	+1
		Brawling	3
		Hold (4)	+1
		Area Knowledge (Aegis)	4

Military Science 4

The mail shirt is AV 2/4 and covers hit locations 3, 4, and 6. The skirt is AV 2/2, and the greaves are 2/3.

Saegins

The average Saegin is AGL 6, and has a Paranormal Detect (ranged, others, continuous, unconscious, inherent, and targeting: 27 points, requires AWR roll, -3: 24 points) and a total skill of 6 with Quarterstaff (probably Melee Weapons 4, Staff +2).

Races

The following packages are available for creating non-human characters. Several of the races have special powers, which are described at the end of this section.

The writeups are physical only; they do not include cultural limitations.

Dwarves

Aegis Dwarves in CORPS look like this:

	AP	SP
Natural Apt, HLT	10	0
Natural Deb, POW	0	-20
Size (-1)	-5	0
Thermal vision	0	7
Detect iron	0	10
Net cost:	5	-3

Calculate mass as normal for humans; average height is 115 cm for males and 110 for females.

Although Dwarves are long-lived, they do not get the Immortality advantage, because they do not regenerate. Their increased HLT keeps them active longer; the typical Dwarf lives 25-50% longer than a human.

Elves

Aegis Elves look like this in CORPS:

	AP	SP
Natural Apt, AGL	10	0
Frailness x1.2	-10	0
Psych: elf-mind	0	-10
Ultravision	0	9
Net cost	0	-1

If you want to use elves in a non-Aegis setting, you'll need to change the "elf-mind" psych lim. This is described in the Elf section, and is a secret of the Elvenfolk. It is also why they do not get the Immortality advantage.

Halflings

There aren't any halflings in Aegis, although there might be somewhere on the planet. If you want halflings, try this:

	AP	SP
Natural Apt, HLT	10	0
Natural Apt, AGL	10	0
Thermal vision	0	7
Natural Deb, STR	-10	-10
Size (-2)	-10	0
Net cost	0	0

Figure the mass of a halfling as STRx4 kg (this takes reduced size into account). Average height for halflings is 90 cm.

Barsoomians

Barsoomians are green-skinned four-armed fighters. The awkward arrangement of their arms has a number of side-effects which are not general knowledge. They are prone to back problems; they have shorter life-spans; they tend to be a little bit clumsy; and blows to the head are much more effective against them.

	AP	SP
2 Extra limbs	20	0
Phys. Lim: bad backs	-6	0
Phys. Lim: clumsy	-4	0
Phys. Lim: frail head:	-10	0
Net cost:	0	0

Racial Abilities

Detect Iron

<i>Detect</i> (iron)	
Ranged	5
Self	2
Invisible	5
Drains HLT	2
Automatic	2
Inherent	5
Min. HLT (2)	-1
Specific use (iron)	-2
Only at HLT Apt.	-3
Immutable	-5
Net cost	10

This is not a targeting sense, and fades as the dwarf (kobold, etc.) gets weaker (loses HLT). All detections are done as hearing (see CORPS rules).

Thermal vision

Detect (heat signatures)

Ranged	5
Self	2
Invisible	5
Drains HLT	2
Automatic	2
Inherent	5
Special effect: targeting	5
Min. HLT (2)	-1
Specific use	-4
Not in light	-3
Takes 1 sec/+1	-2
Only at HLT Apt.	-3
Immutable	-5
Net cost	7

There is no time requirement, but note that regular light "swamps" the thermal signature. Also, it only works at HLT aptitude, so most beings won't have more than 1 or 2.

Ultravision

+1-+4 <i>Add</i> to AWR, to negate darkness	
Ranged	5
Self	2
Invisible	5
No Drain	2
Automatic	2
Inherent	5
Special effect: targeting	5
Min. HLT (2)	-1
Specific use	-5
Takes 1 sec/+1	-2
Only negates darkness penalties	-3
Immutable	-5
Negated by flashes	-1
Net cost	9

The time (1 sec/+1) is simply normal time for the eyes to adjust to darkness.

Bestiary

Some animals I cobbled together for CORPS. To give you an idea of what the competition is like.

Optional limitations or advantages are in [].

Mummy

Guardian animated corpse, powered by an ancient curse or need for vengeance (represented as a psychological limitation). May have other skills, depending upon what he/she was like in life. Often also has the Physical Limitation Mute.

Aegis

In fantasy stories, mummies seem much tougher than zombies do. The high POW can be reduced, but would give the mummy a very strong "magical" feel to those sensitive to it.

10 STR Brawling 5
 4 AGL Grab +2
 7 AWR Toughness x0.3
 7 WIL Pain Tolerance
 5 HLT [Phys. Lim: Mute]
 8 POW Psych (10): mission

Zombie

The dead, raised to work in the fields. They're nearly tireless, though they tend not to be very perceptive. Zombies intended to be guards might have combat skills. Toughness represents the need to hack them apart instead of just hurting them. In some folktales, the taste of salt reminds the zombie that he is in fact dead.

6 STR Toughness x0.5
 3 DEX Psych (5): must obey
 orders from master
 3 AWR [Psych Lim: taste of salt
 makes them die]
 7 WIL Stealth 3
 8 HLT
 7 POW

A legal zombie in Aegis has slightly different characteristics:

5 STR Toughness x0.5
 4 DEX Psych (5): must obey
 orders from master
 4 AWR [Psych Lim: taste of salt
 makes them die]
 5 WIL Occupation: 3
 5 HLT
 2 POW

Skeleton

Another animated corpse; this one has much less left to it. This one has no toughness at all, because it can be broken apart relatively easily; however, it has a high weapons skill to prevent that.

5 STR Brawling 7
 5 AGL Melee 5
 7 AWR Weapon of choice +2
 7 WIL Shield +1

5 HLT Claws (skeletal fingers)
 DV 1
 8 POW

Giant Rat

Converted from one of BTRC's *Time Capsules* for *TimeLords*. Your basic rat-as-big-as-a-dog. For really vicious beasts, remove the Frailness and up their Bite skill. Remember that rats often carry disease...

These are found in the sewers of Aegis.

3 STR Bite: DV 1
 4 AGL [Frailness: 1.2]
 5(1) AWR Bite skill 2
 4 WIL
 5 HLT
 1 POW

Brown Bear

Found in the mountains.

Converted from BTRC's *TimeLords*.

10 STR Toughness x0.7
 4 AGL Runs at up to 14 m/s
 5(1) AWR Bite, DV 4
 7 WIL Paws, DV 3
 7 HLT Bite Skill 3
 1 POW Paws skill 5
 Mass: 450 +/- 200 kg
 Length: 2.5m
 Size modifier: -1

Black Bear

Converted from I.Marc Carlson's stats for *TimeLords*.

9 STR Toughness x0.8
 5 AGL Runs at up to 16 m/s
 5(1) AWR Bite, DV 4
 5 WIL Paws, DV 3
 7 HLT Bite Skill 4
 1 POW Paws skill 5
 Climbing 6
 Mass: 150 +/- 75 kg
 Length: 1.8m

Boar

Converted from I.Marc Carlson's stats for *TimeLords*.

8 STR Toughness x0.8
 5 AGL Runs at up to 10 m/s
 7(1) AWR Bite, DV 1

7	WIL	Tusks, DV 3	
7	HLT	Bite Skill	4
1	POW	Gore skill	8
		Climbing	6
		Mass: 136 +/- 68 kg	
		Length: 1.8m	

Length: 1m

Size modifier: -1

Lynx (Bobcat)

Converted from I.Marc Carlson's stats for *TimeLords*.

3	STR	Frailness x1.5	
9	AGL	Runs at up to 18 m/s	
8(1)	AWR	Bite, DV 1	
4	WIL	Claws, DV 2	
5	HLT	Bite/Claw Skill	5
1	POW	Hunting	9
		Climbing	8
		Mass: 16 +/- 8 kg	
		Length: 1.8m	

Jaguar

Converted from I.Marc Carlson's stats for *TimeLords*.

7	STR	Frailness x1.5	
7	AGL	Runs at up to 21 m/s	
8(2)	AWR	Bite, DV 2	
5	WIL	Claws, DV 5	
8	HLT	Bite/Claw Skill	7
1	POW	Hunting	6
		Climbing	7
		Mass: 100 +/- 50 kg	
		Length: 1.65m	

Both the black and the spotted varieties can be found alone or in groups of 2-6. When hunting, the jaguar prefers to leap onto the prey's back and bite, although the rear claw rake is also effective. The cat can jump 10 meters horizontally and 6 meters vertically.

Wolf

Converted from BTRC's *TimeLords*. Remember that wolves hunt in packs. When hunting large prey, their usual technique is to harry the target, running it to exhaustion. They will eat smaller animals as well.

3	STR	Frailness x1.2	
6	AGL	Runs at up to 14 m/s	
7(1)	AWR	Bite, DV 1	
8	WIL	Enhanced smell	
7	HLT	Bite Skill	3
1	POW	Hunting	4
		Mass: 45 +/- 20 kg	

Appendix D: Magic Spells (CORPS)

Becoming a sorcerer is very expensive in terms of SP: You need Sorcery skill, the appropriate secondary skill, and you must buy each spell.

I've identified seven colleges of magic here.

The seven colleges are four of the five Elemental Colleges, The College of Forms, the College of Will (the Saegin school), and the Necromancers.

Because of the magic sensitization (mentioned in the chapter on magic), all Aegis spells (except for the Everyman spells) have the Similar Powers limitation at -5.

For magic spells in Hero, see *Fantasy Hero*.

The Elemental Colleges

Note that although each level of knowledge has similar spells, the effects of the spells are *not* identical. There are very distinct reasons for choosing one college over another. Earth sorcerors, for example, learn the El's Blood spell, which heals wounds, while Air sorcerors learn to fly.

Elemental spells have the following common limitations (or power framework, in CORPS terms):

- Not near iron (-3)
- May only modify existing sources of that "element" (-1)
- Requires a skill roll of difficulty (POW used) (-3)
- Incantations or gestures, depending upon the spell (-1)
- Spell is part of a college (-5) and learning that college *forbids* you from learning spells from another college.
- Concentration: cast at initiative 0 (-1)
- Backfires (-3)

Power multiples have this additional disadvantage:

- Power multiples may be limited to natural effect of source (-1)

GMs may choose to have all spells be Immutable, but this essentially prevents the players from coming up with new spells.

The level of a spell is the minimum POW required to learn it. (The spell may be cast at a lower power,

however.) The level is also a guide to the order in which a sorcerer learns the spells. Usually this progression is:

Level Types

I	(skill)
II	Divine, Shape
III	Banish, Call
IV	Attack, Defend
V	Transform, Move, Self-change
VI	Summon and bindelemental
VII	Independent research

GM's Note

If you require a character to learn all previous spells and skills, the characters will be heavily penalized for being sorcerors who want combat spells (level IV). (Cost: is 16 AP for POW, plus 36 SP for spells, plus at least 11 SP for skills— 5 SP for Sorcery at level 3 (Aptitude 2), plus 6 points for the secondary skills.)

Earth Spells:

Level II

Find Earth (Cost 6)

POW used counts as AWR, minimum of 1. Difficulty to find object is difficulty for range (as in combat), plus modifiers for quantity and purity of sample (focus) and target. Cost: 6 (Detect: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)
Limit: Backfire is POW used as a Mental Blast.

Sculpt Earth (Cost 5)

POW required to mold something is the total of its AV; extra STR goes to lifting or moving the mass. Limit: only for shaping earth or rock (-1); sculpted material may not leave contact with the ground (-1) (Telekinesis: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)
Limit: Backfire is POW used in Blast.

Level III

Split Rock (Cost 5)

POW used is damage applied to rock; armor-piercing vs. rock and earth. (Blast: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)
Bonus: Special effect (armor piercing [+1])
Limit: only on earth and rock (processed metals don't count) (-2)

Seal Stone (Cost 5)

Reshape stone or earth which has been split. You *could* fill a hole with it. Fixing metals is +2 difficulty. POW used is difficulty (earth: 1; stone: 3; processed metals: 5), plus the STR required for the mass of stone which must be affected.

(Create: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Limit: Only works on split or damaged earth or rock (-2)

Level V**Stone Bolt (Cost 5)**

Casts a rock against the target; targeting is done using Projectile Weapons skill.

(Blast: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Limit: Requires combat targeting skill, and has a Range Mod of 0 (-3)

Stone wall (Cost 5)

Prerequisite: Seal Earth

Raise wall of earth or rock that stops up to POW used; POW used depends upon the material available.

Mud: 1; earth: 2; granite: 5 brick: 8. If surrounding a hex, requires twice as much POW.

Limit: Only raises available material (-1).

(Armor: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Level V**El's Blood (Cost 10)**

POW used is HLT points added. Cost 5. Time multiple has "original levels" limitation, but not the other. Cost 5. Total time to cast is 10 minutes preparation and 15 seconds of time multiples.

Bonus: Cumulative (+1)

Limit: Can't be raised past original levels (-2); requires 10 minutes of concentration time for *each* use (-8).

Doesn't work if interrupted before 15 seconds of time multiples have elapsed (i.e., washed off or concentration broken) (-1)

(Add HLT with a Time Multiple: Range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Earth swim (Cost 15)

(Shapeshift: Range, self only, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 18)

Medusa touch (Cost 9)

Turn others to living stone

Bonus: Cumulative (+1)

Limit: Requires combat targeting roll (-3); requires POW vs. POW (-1); minimum POW is 5 (major transformation) (-1)

(Shapeshift & 2 Time Multiples: No range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Level VV**Summon earth elemental (Cost 40)**

Summons an elemental who has as many points as there is POW in the spell.

(e.g., 2 POWx128 in multiples; the elemental has 256 (AP+SP). Or a mage with POW 10 puts 5 into the spell and the elemental has 1096 (AP+SP). Point

distribution determined by GM. Actual POW used in elemental depends upon connection to the "earth plane".

Limits: Requires prepared location (-1), extra time 5 hours (-8)

(Create[5] & 7 POW Multiples[35]: No range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Extra POW multiple: only on certain days of the year [5]

Bind earth elemental (Cost 40)

Binds an earth elemental to the caster's will.

Limits: Only works on earth elementals (-2); concentration time 10 minutes (-4); elemental must be in magic circle (-1)

(Dominate & 7 POW Multiples: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21)

Air Spells**Level VV****Predict weather (Cost 5)**

Limit: Only for weather (-1), 2 seconds concentrations (-2)

(Precognition: No range, others, invisible, drains POW, conscious, inherent: 21)

Guide breeze (Cost 5)

Limit: Only existing breezes (-1), 2 seconds concentration

(TK: Ranged, others, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus:)

Level VVV**Suffocate**

Create CO2 around target

(Create: Ranged, others, invisible, drains POW,

conscious, focus)

Purify Air

Create good air from bad air.

(Create: Ranged, others, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus)

Level V

Lightning Strike

(Blast: Ranged, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus:)

Wind Cloak (Armor)

(Armor: No range, self-only, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus)

Level V

Disperse (Cost)

(Shapeshift to fog: No range, self only, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus)

Glide (TK)

(TK: Ranged, only for flight, self only, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus)

Hammer (Area effect blast)

(Blast: Ranged, others, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus)

Level VV

Summon air elemental (Cost 40)

Summons an elemental who has as many points as there is POW in the spell.

(e.g., 2 POWx128 in multiples; the elemental has 256 (AP+SP). Or a mage with POW 10 puts 5 into the spell and the elemental has 1096 (AP+SP). Point distribution determined by GM. Actual POW used in elemental depends upon connection to the "air plane". Limits: Requires prepared location (-1), extra time 5 hours (-8)

(Create[5] & 7 POW Multiples[35]: No range, others, visible, drains POW, Conscious, Focus: 21)

Bind air elemental (Cost 40)

Binds an air elemental to the caster's will.

Limits: Only works on air elementals (-2); concentration time 10 minutes (-4); elemental must be in magic circle (-1)

(Dominate & 7 POW Multiples: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21)

Fire Spells

Level VV

Pyromancy

(Precognition: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21)

Shape flame

(TK: Range, others, invisible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 24)

Level VVV

Extinguish (Cost 6)

Bonus: affects flame (+1)

Limit: Only flame (-0), Side effect: Caster takes 1 pt of damage for every 4 points of POW used. (-1)

(TK: range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21 +1 -16)

Torch (Cost ?)

(Blast: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21)

Level VV

Fireball (Cost 6)

Blast

Flamesheath

Bonus: Special effect

(Armor:

Level V

Fire body

(Shapeshift)

Spark walk

(Teleport)

Smother

Bonus: affects flame (+1)

Limits: Only flame; Area multiple(s) for Extinguish spell

Level VV

Summon fire elemental (Cost 40)

(Create: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21)

Bind fire elemental (Cost 40)

Binds a fire elemental to the caster's will.

Limits: Only works on fire elementals (-2); concentra-

tion time 10 minutes (-4); elemental must be in magic circle (-1) (total -19)
(Dominate & 7 POW Multiples: Range, others, visible, drains POW, conscious, focus: 21 each, -)

Water Spells

Level JJ

Hydromancy (Clairvoyance)

Divine water (Detect)

Channel stream (TK) Only water he can see

Level JJJ

Part water (Armor)

Call water (TK) Prereq: Divine

Level JV

Icicle (Blast)

Frostline (Armor)

Level V

Freeze

(Armor w/area)

Water freedom (Protect)

Fish (Shapeshift)

Level VJ

Summon water elemental

Bind water elemental

Wood Spells

The fifth element in the Aegis structure is wood, representing life or structure.

Level JJ

Vivomancy (Precognition)

Allows the user to detect possible people interacting with the subject in the future. The actual form of the examination depends upon the exact information required and the subject. As a side effect, this spell

immediately notifies the user if the subject has the Destiny disadvantage.

Sense life (Detect)

Level JJJ

Blight (Drain)

Spring Sun (Create) Prereq: Divine

Level JV

Tanglevine (TK)

Fatigue (Drain)

Bark-skin (Absorb)

Allows user to absorb AV from nearby plants or animals; not useful unless cast on trees or large animals with actual AV.

Level V

Cursemeal

(Blast) Causes dysentery

Cure (Aid)

Borrow (Shapeshift)

Level VJ

Summon plant elemental

Bind plant elemental

The College of Forms

The College of Forms attempts to control the underlying *pattern* of things. By grasping that pattern, it may be manipulated and changed.

The College of Will (Saegin)

The College of Will specializes in meditative techniques that control the body. By so doing, they are capable of tremendous feats. (In a campaign, the Saegin monks form the College of Will.)

The power framework for the College of Will is:

Only at Aptitude level	-1 SP	No multiples
Requires skill roll, diff 6	-1 SP	“Meditative techniques”
Similar power bonus	-5 SP	Only feats of body control
Psych lim of POW level	-3 SP	Saegin follower
Requires POW 3+	-1 SP	

Must follow diet & practices -3 SP Saegis faith
-16 SP

Detect (Flow of ki)

The first spell learned is “sense flow of ki” (if you will), which implies living things and a sense of where obstacles are. It is a targeting sense:

Detect (ki flow), targeting (+5), ranged (+5), invisible (+5), drains (+2), conscious (+5), inherent (+5), self-only (+2):29 pts, minus the 16 for the framework: -13.

Later spells include “reinforce attributes” (Add), Block ki flow, weaken flow (Drain), harden will (Armor) and some can learn to Dominate others.

Necromancers

Necromancy is magic related to the dead. Necromancy can be used for noble purposes but the practice of necromancy tends to wear out the user. Necromancy breaks down into three basic categories of effect.

The first deals with the spirits of the dead: talking to them, freeing them, binding them. These tend to be the bread-and-butter of Aegis necromancers, and are based on the idea that there is a connection between the body and the spirit. This connection exists as long as the body itself exists (the typical way to break it is to burn the body). Some spirits may feel an affinity to other things as well: a particular artifact or a place.

The second deals with manipulations of Death: raising the dead, creating undead, dispelling the undead, evading death entirely. (She hates that...)

The third (and rarest, in my campaign) deals with what might be called “death force” — this would be effects such as life drain.

Necromancers need some power but not a lot. This because Aegis itself is a place of great necromantic power, and time multiples are not required there. Most other places are not attuned to necromancy; a place that is not attuned *halves* your effective POW. Places that are attuned act as power and time multiples:

Violent death: attunes site to necromancy
2-10s 1 power or time multiple (X2)
11-100s 2 power or time multiples (X4)
101-1000: 3 power or time multiples (X8)

And so on...

The number of multiples is the log base10 of the number of deaths. GM may rule there are other reasons to attune a site; the site of a theatre in the Grand Guignol tradition might count as attuned,

because of the number of simulated deaths over the years.

A caster can never be sure of the number of multiples a locale has, but can know if a place is attuned and roughly how much (in gradients like “creepy,” “you get a chill,” “scary” and “mondo bad juju”).

There are also good times for casting necromantic magic; these are cumulative:

New moon: +1 power or time multiple (X2)

Midnight: +1 power or time multiple (X2)

Certain (un)holy days: +1 or +2 power or time multiple (X2 or X4)

Almost all necromantic magic is “visible” to anybody with any POW at all, in the sense that it raises the hair on the backs of your neck and hands, and it gives an ants-crawling-over-skin feeling.

Requires POW 2+ -1 SP POW must be 4+ outside of Aegis, or must be in Aegis.

1 hour to use -7 SP Time-consuming.

Vocalization, gestures -2 SP Must get spirit's attention.

POW vs POW+2 roll -1 SP Must wrestle with spirit of the dead. Most spirits have a POW of 2, as they did in life, so a POW 2 necromancer wins the POW vs POW contest 90% of the time.

Side effect -1 SP 1 pt non-lethal headache; described below.

Backfires -3 SP Spirit can possess necromancer

School -5 SP Once attuned, a magician cannot learn outside his college.

Total -20 SP

Spells that deal exclusively with spirits may also have:

Only speak with spirits -2 SP Spirits are common, but magic in Aegis allows them to be excluded from areas.

Rather than drain HLT (as suggested in the CORPS rule book), I use a different scheme I call “necromantic scarring.” Each necromantic spell has a side effect which must heal as non-lethal damage. If a user

accumulates ten points of “necromantic bruising,” it is treated as a single point of “soul damage.” If a spell-caster accumulates ten points of “soul damage” normal scarring rules apply. (They can be applied against psych limbs as well as physical limbs, though.) Since the side effect is 1/5 points of POW used, I count POW multiples as well. For example:

Joriven Deathtongue, low-rent necromancer, is raising an illegal zombie. He has a good location (+2 POW multiples) and the zombie is worth 63 character points. Joriven’s POW is 3; he casts at Aptitude, and needs to use three more multiples to put to get X32 effective POW. Since he’s casting 4 spells of 5 SP each, that’s 4 points of “necromantic bruising” for each zombie.

This allows people to perform *some* necromancy without immediately turning to the dark side, but puts a cap on it:

Joriven normally does a zombie a week, which he heals from trivially. But since Joriven is secretly providing zombies to the Kraken organization, he’s providing two dozen this week. That means he’ll take an additional 4*24=96 points of necromantic bruising, plus his day job as a necromancy; he’s killing himself doing this: 10 points of “soul damage” in a week is pretty bad — he’s going to be psychically scarred. He should have invested in target multiples instead...

This “necromantic scarring” is just a mechanic to minimize player abuse. I wanted characters to be able to be necromancers, but not go nuts with it.

Speak With Dead

(Largely cribbed from *Dreamtime*.)

This allows one to talk to the dead. Certain families in Aegis make a practice of saving a body part before burning the corpse. (There’s an interesting adventure in there in which a family discovers their collection of ancestral thumbs has been replaced by the thumbs of total strangers. Then the ransom demand comes.)

Detect

No range	2 SP	Must be with remains.
Others	5 SP	Anyone necromancer is touching may speak to dead
Visible	2 SP	Spirit appears to all present; hair rises on end.

Drain	2 SP	
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate
Focus	2 SP	Necromancer requires largest single piece of remains
Special effect	+5 SP	Two-way communication
Special effect Limited	+5 SP -2 SP 5 SP	Dead must tell truth Only spirits.

The special effect requiring the dead to tell the truth is easy to forget. Under some circumstance, I add a roll for necromancy skill and if that’s failed, the spirit doesn’t have to tell the truth.

Free Spirit (Cut Silver Cord)

This is the most basic of necromancy spells. (It can even be done by non-necromancers; they burn the body.) The magical version differs in that the body can remain. (Largely cribbed from *Dreamtime*.)

Block

No range	2 SP	Must be with remains.
Self	2 SP	Only the necromancer can do this.
Visible	2 SP	Spirit appears to all present; hair rises on end.
Drain	5 SP	
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate.
Focus	2 SP	Necromancer requires largest single piece of remains, and a consecrated knife.
	--20 SP	Necromancy framework.
	5 SP	

Create Spirit Jar

A govi, or spirit jar, is a receptacle for a spirit. This describes the effects created in the spirit jar. It’s up to the caster to determine how many POW and Time multiples will be cast on the jar, to set the strength of the jar. Most necromancers will cast 14 or 15 time multiples to make the effect permanent; the number of POW multiples depends upon the perceived strength of the

spirit.

Armor (block spirits)

No range	2 SP	Must be with jar to enchant it.
Self	2 SP	Only the necromancer can create a spirit jar.
Visible	2 SP	This is obvious magic (especially if it fails...)
No drain	5 SP	
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate
Focus	2 SP	The jar, of course.
Limited:	-3 SP	Blocks only spirits.
Single use	-5 SP	One jar, one spirit.
Framework	-20 SP	
	5 SP	
POW multiple:	5 SP	These can be prepared ahead of time (+5)
Time multiple:	5 SP	These can be prepared ahead of time (+5)
POW 2:	4 AP	

As an artifact, the spirit jar is donated some POW, either because it is specially made from a substance that has its own POW (graveyard mud, for example), or because the necromancer has donated it. Regardless of the number of multiples, most jars are given POW 2, because they must support two spells: the Armor spell and the Bottle Spirit spell.

Bottle Spirit

This spell removes the subject's spirit and places it in the jar. So long as the jar is closed and intact, the subject's body has no will of its own.

Subtract (WIL)

Range	5 SP	Can be cast at range, though jar must be near.
Others	5 SP	Anyone with a govi can cast this spell.
Invisible	5 SP	Hair rises, but subject may be unaware of attack.
Drain	2 SP	
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate
Focus	2 SP	An artifact from the person.
Can be prepared	5 SP	With some people, it's just better to give

them a loaded spell and point them at the person...

Limit: -2 SP Govi must be near person, and someone must be ready to close it.

Framework -20 SP
5 SP

POW multiple: 5 SP These can be prepared ahead of time (+5)

Create Zombie

This creates a zombie from a living person, in the tradition of one set of Voudoun stories. The POW vs. POW+2 roll is replaced by a POW vs. WIL+2 roll, which is why capturing the spirit in a govi is so important. The govi has its own POW too, which sustains the zombie.

Create (zombie)

No range	2 SP	Must be with corpse.
Self	2 SP	Only necromancers can cast this.
Visible	2 SP	It feels spooky, and the corpse sits up...
Drain	2 SP	Advanced necromancers don't have this limit.
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate
Focus	2 SP	An intact body and the govi containing the spirit.

Can be prepared 5 SP With some people, it's just better to give them a loaded spell and point them at the person...

Limit: -3 SP Spell broken if corpse tastes salt.

Framework -20 SP
5 SP

POW multiple: 5 SP These can be prepared ahead of time (+5) or be provided by the casting environment.

A typical zombie created this way might look like this; this zombie would require 6 power multiples, most of which could be provided by the casting environment.:

STR	5	Toughness x0.3	35
AGL	3	Must obey orders of master (7)	-35
AWR	3	Attributes cost:	63
WIL	0		
HLT	4		
POW	2		

This zombie is worth 63 points, and uses its psych lim as its WIL if ordered to fight.

Raise Dead

This is a Create spell that requires the intact corpse. If an average person is 100 AP, 50 SP (after disadvantages), then the spell requires 150 POW to cast to raise an *average* person. That's a lot of power multiples...more if you add a Heal in there so the person doesn't die *again*.

Side From Death

This spell causes Death to think the caster has already died. Death hates to be fooled, so there are terrible side effects. It consists of four separate protect spells combined: one from aging, one each to protect from need for food, water, and air. Difficulties are 6, 5, 5, and 5.

Protect {aging|food|water|air}

No range	2 SP	Must be cast on self.
Self	2 SP	Only necromancers can cast this.
Visible	2 SP	The caster takes on the appearance of a corpse.
Drain	2 SP	The caster sustains himself/herself on POW.
Conscious	5 SP	Use is deliberate
Focus	2 SP	Certain artifacts are needed.
Limit	-5 SP	Must be renewed by killing on a regular basis.
Framework:	-20 SP	
	5 SP	
Time Multiples:	5 SP	Can be prepared ahead of time (+5), take lots of extra time to do this (an additional -3).
POW Multiples:	5 SP	(each) Cannot be prepared ahead of

time, are not cumulative.

Jivamoe Magic

Jivamoe magic is shamanic magic (and is therefore largely influenced by the rituals in *Dreamtime*).

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