

THE SCROLL OF VIS SOURCES OF VOLUNTAS

In order of distance from the covenant

INTELLEGO: THE CRYSTAL OF WISDOM

Kept under lock in the covenant's secure storage except when being used or studied. This crystal lens of astonishing workmanship, a hand-span in diameter and bound in a hoop of brass, has a most curious property. When the light of the sun at noon on the summer solstice is focused through the lens upon a blank parchment, indecipherable patterns burn themselves upon the page. It may be that these are the glyphs of some unknown writing, but thus far neither mundane scholarship nor magical investigation has revealed their nature or origin. One page can be prepared each year, and each contains Intellego vis, always three pawns. If the vis is removed from the page, the writing also fades.

The brass circle that holds the lens has the remains of a mounting bracket of some sort still attached. It may be that there was originally a stand or tripod on which the device rested, but if so, this has now been lost.

It is thought by some Hermetic scholars that the glyphs contain the key to lost secrets, and that if they could be deciphered a vast source of wisdom might be unlocked.

MENTEM: THE BOARD OF TREMERE

The covenant owns a relic of the early days of the Order: the chessboard of Tremere the Founder. It has somehow acquired the property of concentrating Mentem vis. In order to access it a game of chess must be played by magi from different Houses (one of which must be Tremere) on feast of St Stephen (Boxing Day). The pawns must be newly carved and the vis will be directly stored in them. The amount varies with the intensity of the match. (The amount is equal to 1/10th of the sum of both players' rolls rounded up.) The Tremere player if not a member of the covenant will demand one pawn as well as his supper for playing the game.

They will try to persuade the covenant's player to wager the board: tell them it is not your personal property.

MUTO

Some distance away from the covenant, there is a field of wildflowers of many vibrant colours. As is to be expected its location shifts a little each spring. Each year, caterpillars nest in and feed upon these flowers. The butterflies that these caterpillars turn into burst free from their cocoons at dawn on a single day, the twentieth of July, and on that day the field is ablaze with a dazzling riot of colour, the sort of natural beauty that would tempt the heart of a poet.

Awe-inspiring though this may be, the butterflies do not contain vis, nor do they have any particular virtue other than their odd habit of all hatching at the same time. However, some intact cocoons can be found each year from which no butterfly hatched. These each contain a pawn of Muto vis, and exhibit an odd, almost metallic luster. These must be harvested before the sun sets on the day of the hatching, for after that time their power dissipates if not collected, and finding the unspent cocoons in a field full of them is no small task; many hands may be required. It may be possible to instruct gogs or covenfolk to collect all the cocoons, burst or whole, for later sorting at the covenant's convenience.

CORPUS

Two sources are acknowledged to the covenant.

The first lies in the cave north of the village of Ebberston where Alfrid, King of Northumberland rested on his way north to his deathbed. The prayers for his recovery mean that if you lay two wooden carved warriors on the cairn that marks where he lay on the Spring Equinox will produce two pawns of Corpus.

The second lies in a spring on the edge of the old Roman Road through the forest. It is marked by a small stone statue said to be of Aesculapius and will provide two pawns on Midsummer Day and two at the autumn equinox.

IGNEM

North of the corpus source on the Roman Road is a flat stone which at one point was dedicated to Mithras. Light a fire on it in the light of the noonday sun within a week of Midsummer and collect the ashes for four pawns of Ignem vis.

ANIMAL

There is a warren of magical rabbits in the Woods.

Finding them is sometimes difficult: they don't reside in a regio but they do change burrows frequently. The bowyer Robin Marianne of the Wood may be able to help you find them but will want paying in some other form of vis. If you have the time a mundane hunter may succeed.

You may take one rabbit from the bevy and take three of its paws from the body. Each is a pawn of animal vis. But bury the body with one rabbit's foot still attached where you slew it. Failure to do so will prevent the rabbits from returning for several years.

Best done in spring: beware of the fay of the area who have been known to take an interest.

CREO

To be gathered in the spring: acorns from the oldest oak in the forest. Finding it varies in difficulty. The tree may have up to three magical acorns and they will need to be climbed for.

PERDO

The Stone of Death lies on a hill in the centre of the Forest. It is of an unknown age, but it is undoubtedly ancient. The stone measures two paces long and half a pace wide, and it protrudes no more than knee-high from the ground. Its major axis is aligned with setting sun on the winter solstice.

The ancient Egyptians divided the sun's path through the stars not only into the familiar signs of the zodiac, but also into thirty-six decans, three in each zodiacal house. The third decan of Gemini is ruled by Saturn, the planet of death. When the sun rises in this decan, beginning the second week of June, the stone is shrouded in a light mist. If an animal is sacrificed each day for the ten days that the sun remains in the decan, at sunset on the final day Perdo vis forms from the blood. Each sacrifice must occur at the rising of Saturn. (An Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 12 determines the proper timing for the sacrifices.)

REGO

A rock outcropping on the coast at a bay to the North-East of the Forest was carved long ago by unknown hands into the image of a seated man of regal bearing, facing ever outward to the open sea.

His beard is long and there is wisdom in his deep-set eyes. The weathered image is five times the height of a man, and can be seen clearly by ships passing along the coast. Each winter, a jagged, gleaming ring of ice forms upon his brow. This winter crown contains Rego vis and should be harvested during the first severe frost of the winter.

The locals say that the image is of Arthur, who watches over his people still, and who will rise again when the time is right. They say that he watches the sea for invaders, waiting for a sign that he is needed once more, but they cannot agree on exactly what he is waiting for. The local parish priest believes the icy crown resembles a crown of thorns, and the image to be that of Christ, who will return at the end of the world to judge mankind and establish the kingdom of God on Earth.

AQUAM

High in the North Pennine mountains, fed from melting snow, lies a stream of crystal clarity, running down from Cross Fell. As it rushes down the mountainside, it collects neither dirt nor leaf. The village at the base of the mountain. Gulgaith, enjoys considerable fame for the beer that the villagers brew from its sparkling water.

Magi are less interested in the villagers' beer than they are in its source. Halfway up the mountain, the stream pours over a small waterfall. On a ledge at the top the fall lies a stone inscribed with a Hermetic rune for Aquam.

On auspicious nights of the year (difficulty 12 roll Int + Artes Liberales to determine when these will be but always in winter) , a magus who sits upon this stone may thrust his hand into the water and cast Distillation of the Purest Stream (a copy of the spell is in the covenant library and a casting talisman is held in the covenant's treasures) to recover Aquam vis.

This requires Concentration (Concentration + Strength roll against an Ease Factor of 15, due to the frigid water and the strong current. If the magus is protected against the cold, the Ease Factor drops to 7.)

If the Concentration roll fails, no vis may be gathered that night. For a day after the vis is collected, the water from the stream (and any beer brewed with the water) tastes brackish and foul.

WARNING: The Abbot of the Priory at Skirwith has shown signs of suspicion about the appearance of strangers at a particular time of the year. Be careful not to give him a chance to investigate. Also the source, though registered is closer to Ungulus than Voluntas.

IMAGINEN

This mountain lake lies in the Pennines and is surrounded on all sides by rocky peaks, sheltering it from the outside world. Perhaps this has created a natural reservoir for Imaginem vis, or perhaps there is some unknown factor which causes the vis to pool here.

The terrain around the lake blocks all but the strongest winds from reaching the water. As a result, the surface of the lake is completely still nearly all the time, and reveals a perfect reflection of the

sky and hills above it. Anyone who looks at his own reflection sees himself, not as he is, but rather as a Platonic ideal of himself: his own perfect form. If the water is collected in a container, it still reflects the unnatural image, which is actually a distillation of the vis contained within. When the vis is drained from the water, it does not lose any of its clarity or stillness, but now instead reflects a dark image of anyone who gazes upon it. Magi who have tapped the waters for vis see themselves as old and decrepit, with the worst of their physical features emphasized. More than one grog has been driven screaming from the sight of the “cursed reflecting pool” left over once the magic has been worked.

It is suggested that the vis be gathered on a cloudless winter night.

TERRAM

Mentioned in Pliny’s Natural Histories, Aetites are rare stones which can be found in eagles’ nests. Also called eagle-stones, they look like yellowish pebbles, approximately an inch in diameter. If one is shaken carefully, a quiet rattling can be heard — it is made by a smaller pebble, held inside the larger one, not unlike a nut in a shell.

The smaller stone, if removed from its “womb” undamaged, holds one pawn of Terram vis.

The stones only form in regios and there is one in the pass between Wensleydale and Ribblesdale. If one can find the regio crossing into it simply requires crossing the bridge over a stream. Finding the nest (there is only one nest in a particular regio) requires a climb of a nearby hill and a search. Best attempted in autumn.

Aetites are also known as “pregnant stones,” and indeed, give a +5 Material bonus to fertility if used as an element of an enchanted item or a talisman.

AURAM

This resource lies in a regio that forms among the peaks of the Pennines. The entrance to the regio shifts each year but the expedition to it must expect to climb to find the way. It is recommended to start at Lofthouse at dawn and chase the storm till you find the path.

The Peak of Storms is never visible, as the top of the mountain is always hidden by clouds. In winter, a cold wind blows down its slopes, threatening to freeze an unwary traveler solid. During the spring and summer, thunderstorms form around the mountain. On Midsummer’s Day, a great storm cloud takes shape over the peak, and at noon a tremendous thunderclap splits the air. It is said that any child born that day in the valley below will have the power to speak with the four winds.

Climbing the mountain is treacherous. In winter, it is almost impossible, as snow covers the upper slopes and the frigid winds blow with great intensity. In the summer it is easier, but not without danger. The more serious threat comes from the fogs that hide the peak. A climber may become lost and stumble into one of the ravines that dot the slopes. During a summer storm, the ascent is almost as dangerous as in the winter.

If the peak is reached, the climber finds an ancient and charred tree. Each Midsummer’s Day this tree is struck with a bolt of lightning at noon. If an agate pendant is hung from the tree on that morning, when the bolt strikes it the pendant will be transformed into Auram vis.