

CITY GUIDEBOOK ONE:

NUMMA

THE HEART OF THE OLD

A 'BLACK JACK RACKHAM/REVENANT' FAN-SOURCE FOR

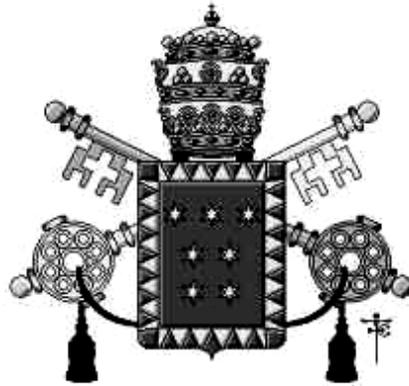
7TH SEA

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

CITY GUIDEBOOK ONE:

◆ N U M M A ◆

T H E H E A R T O F T H E O L D



"Many have dreamed up republics and principalities that have never in truth been known to exist; the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation."

- Cristoforo Scarovese, Means to Ends

CITY GUIDEBOOK ONE: NUMA

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Dedication

There are simply too many people to thank individually. However, those who stand out most are my family who gave me enough time to finally put this buggler to bed; Ravenshadow, who, unasked, jumped right in to this project with gusto and enthusiasm; and the fans of 7th Sea who clamored for more about their favorite game to the point that they infected me with their madness. Thanks Everyone. Mark

Special Art Note

We have several pieces of art that were pointed out to us that fit the theme and ideas of this booklet perfectly but we were not able to locate the original artists. If you find a piece of your artistic talents within this work please contact us immediately so that we might credit you accordingly (and possibly add a link to your web-page, should you have one) and or remove your works from the book if you so desire.

A Note On Publication

“NUMA: City of the Old” is in its entirety a fan-based work that hopes to flesh out some of the many interesting locations within the world of the 7th Sea RPG. As a work of the fan none of the contributors were paid for their efforts, and the ebook is to be distributed free of charge. Those interested in future projects should inquire at Revenant's 7th Sea Forum (<http://revenants7thsea.aimoo.com/>).

CITY GUIDEBOOK ONE: NUMA

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SECTION ONE

NUMA

THIEF'S REPRIEVE

Part One

Tino should have known better. After all, his every instinct screamed at the wrongness of the situation. But, what choice did he have, really? He could spend the rest of his days rotting away in this dank, dark, festering cesspool of a cell, forgotten under the tons of rock that was the Stone Giant. Or perhaps he would simply wait for any of a hundred of his fellow prisoners to decide that a knife in the back would solve their problems? Or he could simply acquiesce to the Bishop's plan. It was tantamount to suicide of course, and the Bishop held no pretenses otherwise. But like Tino, the Bishop seemed to realize that there really was no other choice.

The Bishop stood impassively in the cell idly staring at Tino while awaiting an answer. Tino noticed that one of the Bishop's Guards was absentmindedly kicking at a dead rat as though bored by his duty. Turning slowly to face the guard, the Bishop stared with cold fury. Tino almost smiled when he realized that the guard might be staying behind when he left. That is, if he were lucky. The good mood ended when he realized that he had, indeed, already made the decision.

"I'll do it," he managed to rasp out hoarsely, before lowering his eyes and adding respectfully, "Your Eminence."



INTRODUCTION

"Many have dreamed up republics and principalities that have never in truth been known to exist; the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation."

- Cristoforo Scarovese, Means to Ends

People say that Théah's history begins in Numa. One would be hard pressed to argue against that. From her humble beginnings by the legendary Numus as a trading center in the Levanzo hills to the seat of power for the Théah-spanning Numan

Empire, Numa is Théah. Or more appropriately, Numa spawned Théah. And I should know, I take tourists like you through her ancient heart and gravity-defying spires every day. My name is Guiseppe Agostini and I will play tour guide for your trip through the Cradle of Civilization.

Since you are reading this pamphlet, I assume you cannot afford my services in person? Ah well, there are many who cannot. However, remember as you read through this guide, that I have not attempted to give you a thorough history of this ancient city. For what would such a treatise be, given an almost 2500 year history? Such a tome would take up entire libraries (and if you are truly interested the Ancient Numan Library, which I describe more thoroughly later, can give you a good head start on answering just that question.)

Instead, I want to give you, the reader, a flavor of what influences converged to create the version of this historic city that now exists. To make this easier for you, I begin with the historical, governmental, and religious influences. The bulk of this text, however, comes with the descriptions of the various "neighborhoods" which make up the heart of Numa, their respective reputations and the places you will want to see (or stay away from) if you should find yourself nearby. To make this easier for you, I have added several maps (an 'overview', and several more detailed maps of the various neighborhoods).

But you must remember, Numa of 1668 is an exciting and dangerous city to live, visit or have adventures in, and the locations described below are meant to give you, not only a feel for the city, but ideas with which to plan your adventures in this, the most ancient of, cities.



HISTORY

"Wise men say, and not without reason, that whoever wished to foresee the future might consult the past."

- Cristoforo Scarovese, Means to Ends

As I mentioned earlier, it would be a Herculean effort to fully describe the history of Numa. There are, however, four distinct eras in the history of Numa, which I would be remiss if I did not inform

you. These eras are the Old Empire, The Age of Corentine, The Renaissance, and recent history.

Certainly you've heard the stories, the foundation of Numa on the banks of the Tigres, by the near-mythical figure of Numus. I won't gainsay such legends (the ancient Numan Library is chock full of books with similar stories). But one thing is certain. Through a judicious use of good laws and good arms, Numa the trade center became Numa the seat of power of the greatest Empire Théah has ever known. For over 750 years Numa reigned supreme, and even the arrival of sorcery and the coming of the First Prophet and his Witnesses could not unseat her. Eventually infighting; stupid, selfish leaders; and power-mad soldiers conspired to leave Numa ripe for her enemies. The Old Empire finally came to an end in 297 AV when Eisen barbarians finally succeeded in sacking Numa, leaving nothing but smoking rubble in their wake.

You shouldn't get the impression that Numa was abandoned, far from it. While the population of Numa has fluctuated throughout history, it has never been totally deserted. However, the power of the Numan Empire was broken and those who stayed in Numa stayed for reasons other than political power. That changed beginning in 349 AV, when the Emperor Corantine, a devout Vaticine himself, unified the fractured sects of Vaticine worship into the Reformed Vaticine Church. While this affected Numa only indirectly at first, Corantine ordered that the head of the church should be Numa. Simple as that, Numa became a seat of political power once again. It was from this reformed Numa that several of the Crusades were launched, and the Hieros wars were fought. These events paved the way for the wealthy merchant families to begin consolidating power, and eventually taking over control of the government. However, none would go against the power of the Church and quite quickly it was decided that Numa would remain outside the purview of the merchant families machinations. Given Numa's newfound neutrality, and Vodacce's devotion to the Church, it's not hard to make the leap that put Vodacce's Cardinals in charge.

Earlier I referred to Numa as the Cradle of Civilization, so it should come as no surprise to you that Numa often lead the way for new political,

religious, and artistic pursuits. It is to the latter that I will next speak.

The freedoms that Numa's citizens enjoyed, combined with Numa's position as neutral in the machinations of the merchant families, created a kind of haven for the best and most innovative individuals; masters who created great works of architecture including, statuary, painting, music, plays, etc. However, during the later years of the 1300's Numa went through a Renaissance. Masters of all forms of art, who at other times would never have met, gathered in Numa, talked, discussed, argued, and inspired each other to even greater heights.

For all the inspiration to further innovation, there

remained a dirty little secret. Those who (for whatever reason) could not contribute to this renaissance were devalued, dismissed, and often imprisoned. The enfeebled, infirm and insane suffered the most. However common folk, merchants, laborers, and the like, were also viewed with a certain level of contempt for their "common" occupations. Even the church got involved in this as several cardinals commissioned great works from the masters to fill the Cathedral of St. Matheus, paying for such work with the

coin of the common folk, while at the same time imprisoning, torturing and even killing the unwanted masses.

Most modern Numans will tell you, these ugly events occurred over three hundred years ago, perpetrated by people long dead. However, I will tell you, and with some confidence, there are a great number of unmarked graves in Pianura. The deceased have never received last rites and that can make for unquiet spirits.

Currently, Numa is a bustling city full of all the machinations and allegiances that you've heard of in rumors of Vodacce. Merchants seek to out-sell their competition, and failing that, resort to less-than-legal means to rid themselves of their rivals. Men fail to treat one another with sufficient respect and duel for the slights of their honor leaving wives and children to suffer for their mistakes. The rich and powerful (both within and without the church) make and break rules as they see fit, following the writings of Cristoforo Scarovese. Those powerful individuals



leave only innocents to pay the consequences for their actions. In other words, Numa is much like every other major city on Théah.

The difference is, Numa did it first. For over 2500 years, Numa has been the guiding hand, the shining example, and the groundbreaker, for every major innovation. And Theus willing, she will continue to do so. Welcome to Numa.



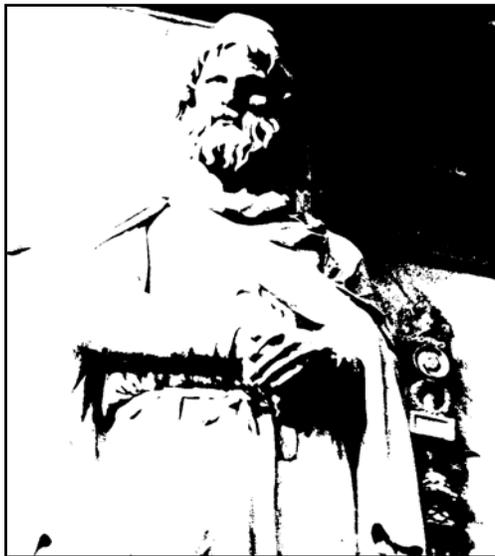
GOVERNMENT

“The main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms. You cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow.”

- Cristoforo Scarovese, Means to Ends

When Numus founded this city, he created a power structure in which final authority (and thus the most power) rested in his hands. Through his lifetime, this structure appeared to have worked. The city steadily increased its influence over a larger and larger portion of the Vodacce mainland. Rebellions were almost non-existent and from what little writing there is on the subject, the populace appeared to have been content with their lives. However, most scholars have agreed that had more to do with the size of the city than with the wisdom with which Numus made decisions.

This is not to say that Numus was a poor leader. Actually, quite the opposite, given his relative inexperience leading others and ruling a vast, diverse, and ever increasing accumulation of people, he did a remarkable job. Most importantly, however, he set the tone for leadership that was to follow. He choose wise counselors, listened to his detractors and quickly learned that the ability to change with the times, and admit mistakes was necessary for success.



One of the most important decisions he made during his life was the Vicis Populus Vulgaris or the time of the common people. Despite having sole authority, Numus traditionally gave one hour of his day to commoners who came to him with problems of a local nature. When the problems began spanning several neighborhoods, the commoners began sending representatives. This tradition continued for almost a hundred years after Numus' death.

Eventually Numus and his successors came to rely more and more heavily upon the people's representatives. After all, they were busy with threats from outside of Numa (most notably the barbarian invasions from Eisen and Ussura). Which in turn lead to the creation of the Statio Responsal around 47 AUC. It was an abysmal failure. The representatives, seeing that they had the ear of the Emperor sought to solidify their power base by suggesting a series of taxes and levies against the wealthy merchants and businessmen, essentially the people without a unified voice to the Emperor. For their part, the wealthy began electing their own representatives who demanded the Emperor disband the Statio Responsal

in favor of the wiser leadership made up of the wealthy and educated in Numa. Eventually, two different 'houses' of representatives (one for the commoners and one for the more affluent) was created, the Emperor's Senate.

The creation of the Senate served multiple purposes. It kept the commoners happy by giving them a voice in the governing of their city. It kept the rich happy because they could now make laws that allowed them more advantages in business. It also kept the Emperor happy because he could now focus his efforts on war and the accumulation of power rather than the 'petty' problems of the city.

The drawback, however, was that, as the Emperor granted more autonomy to the Senate to make law, he lost power. Occasionally a very strong Emperor would take power and severely curtail the power of the Senate. This was the situation when the Senators made the bargain that brought Magic back to Théah. Mad with power, the senators even turned their wrath on the First Prophet when he sought to speak with them. Eventually, in their madness, the

senators ended up fighting against themselves, the Emperor, and even the citizens of Numa

This was the situation when the Eisen barbarians returned to Numa. This time, they left nothing but rubble in their wake.

In the years following the barbarian invasions, there was little in the way of an organized government. Records from this era are sketchy at best. But it is known that various warlords seized power for short periods of time and attempted to implement laws, however, none was noted for wisdom or length.

Finally, around 330 AV, the Emperor Corantine, and avowed Vaticine, began consolidation of power in the area surrounding the river Dechane on what is now Montaigne-Castille border as he conquered more area, what he found was that the Vaticine church had been fractured. Many diverse cults had sprung up around the teachings of the First Prophet. Corantine successfully unified all the teachings and founded the Reformed Vaticine Church. He also installed the head of the church in Numa.

Over the coming years, people once again flocked to Numa, and as the population increased, so did the need for government. While nominally in charge, the Vaticine Church was far too busy with internal matters to intervene with the day-to-day operations of Numa. Instead, it was the monks and priests who'd traveled to Numa in throngs, who most heavily influenced the government. They began setting up monasteries, libraries, churches, and other edifices dedicated to the New Vaticine religion. These organizations held a great deal of temporal power (owing to sheer numbers and to force of arms). Eventually, they began to make law and enforce it within their particular domains. Without realizing it, the feudal system had begun in Vodacce.

For some three hundred years, this system remained unchanged, that is, until the coming of Carleman the Great. He was the first to conquer and unify Vodacce. His plan was to build an empire that would far outlast his meager life. However, quickly upon his death, his sons took to fighting among themselves. His son, Iago wound up with Vodacce. By all accounts, he was a backstabbing, evil, petty tyrant of a man who inspired not loyalty but rebellion. Eventually, three powerful merchant families (the Delagas, the Lorenzos, and the Gallilis) acted to take Vodacce back, and thus began the rule of the merchant families. All of these families paid at least lip service to the power of the Vaticine Church. Thus, while they scabbled for territory, Numa was left in the hands of the Church. The newly elected

Hierophant Modestus II, elected a group of five cardinals to oversee the day-to-day operations of the city and see to the needs of all Numa's citizens.

This is the way things have remained to this day, despite the relocation of the head of the church to Castille by the Third Prophet in 1012 AV.



NEIGHBORHOODS

LE ROVINE



At the very heart of the city lays the remains of many of the most magnificent structures of ancient Numa. While progress and the public's desire to be close to such history have lead to revitalization at the edges of this area, the majority of the ancient city has been preserved, as it was so long ago.

Originally settled in 1 AUC, by the near legendary Numus, Le Rovine represents the boundaries of that original, ancient city. Almost 800 years later (in 297 AV), this area was almost totally leveled when barbarians from Eisen burned it to the ground. What few structures remained were used as raw material. Left over stone and granite were scavenged to help build the newer structures. Le Rovine received a reprieve from the scavenging when Carleman the Great unified all of Vodacce under one flag. He declared Le Rovine a sacred place representing "the Cradle of Civilization." The few revitalized areas were allowed to stay. However, all ancient buildings would henceforth be left in their natural state in respect for the city, its citizens, and their place in history. By ancient law, any businesses here had to relocate outside Rovine each night at sundown. Thus a steady stream of businesses dedicated to tourism and consisting of nothing other than a mortarboard or possibly pushcart began arising in this area. The only exception to this rule was the

ancient Numan Library (housed, in part, in the Old Forum Building), which was permanently housed in Rovine. It was allowed to stay open until three hours after the sun set. This is not to say that Le Rovine became a ghost town after sundown (if you'll pardon the pun), far from it. Many citizens of Numa laid claim to a house or room with a view near the edges of Le Rovine. However, they knew Le Rovine became unsafe after dark. After the sun went down, a whole new form of business went into effect, one which owed itself in equal parts to the lack of influence from the Princes and the kind of policing which could be bought to look the other way. Those who wished to have things a bit safer have headed south to Nuovo Vecchiacittà.

Some of the interesting sites that can be seen in this neighborhood are; The Church of the Capuchins, Cuore di Numa Tours, The Old Forum Building, La Torretta, the lovely Madame Francesca Delaga's Boarding House, The Temple of Voltadi, Madame Donanoche's Boarding House, and the Hippodromos Magnificens.



The Church of the Capuchins: At the bottom of the bustling via Veseto, stands the Church of St. Maria of the Witnesses, more popularly known in Numa as "the Church of the Capuchins." The friars of the order wear cloaks of brown with a white cowl.

Locals know this church well because it houses a cemetery underneath. The vaults are covered with Baroque decorations that are neither of plaster nor marble, but instead they are of the skulls, teeth, femurs, finger bones, and many other parts from over

4,000 skeletons, all once Capuchin friars. The finishing touch is the cemetery's telltale motto, a somewhat gloomy reminder that reads, "We were what you are, and what we are you will become."

The church has been the center of attention recently due to a painting by Renail Guidoro that was commissioned by the Cardinal Falisci. The painting depicts the Second Prophet defeating the King of Legion. The controversy lies in the fact that the artist depicted the King of Legion as having an appearance that resembles the major-domo of the Church Council, Bishop Numanis.

Cuore di Numa Tours: A Numan tradition since well before your grandfather was born, Cuore di Numa Tours caters to the tourists of Numa. The brainchild of the Agostini family, Cuore di Numa has locations in most of the safer neighborhoods. The buildings vary according to neighborhood standards, for example, the original Cuore di Numa Tours (in Le Rovine) consists of nothing more than a large mortarboard set up directly across the street from the Hippodromos Magnificens. Conversely, Cuore di Numa in Dioclasian serves hors d'oeuvres, and the finest wines during tours. The current patriarch of the Agostini clan, Guiseppe, came up with the idea of publishing a pamphlet for 'self-guided' tours.

The Old Forum Building: Actually a collection of buildings that encompassed almost one square mile in Le Rovine, these buildings housed the Numan Senate throughout the time of the Numan Empire. Much of the buildings' purposes had been lost to time; however, the large oval building dominating the center of the area was the site of the Senate's gathering and the site where the First Prophet addressed the senators.

Currently it houses the Ancient Numan Library as it has for centuries. It is the only 'business' in Rovine allowed to stay open after sunset. Emperor Carleman felt that a staple of a learned society was their ability to learn from the past. Thus, the Ancient Numan Library contains the most complete collection of scrolls, books and treatises on the history of Numa in existence.

La Torretta: This tower is a wonder to behold. Standing more than four stories tall, and built without Sorte, it was constructed about 37 AUC. It originally served as a watch/signal tower to alert the city of attack. Numa occupies the valley in the Levanzo hills created by the Tigres River. As such, it is hidden

between hills to the north and south. While this made attacks in either of these directions difficult, it also made advanced warning difficult. Originally there were 5 towers similar to La Torretta built in a line to the Numan frontier. However, Numan military conquests pushed the border far enough north to make the signal tower idea obsolete. Time and weather have taken their toll on the towers, and currently there are only two left intact.

Madame Francesca Delaga's Boarding House: A maze of alleyways holding a number of boarding houses known as the Path of Roses stands on the border between Le Rovine and Nuovo Vecchiacittà. It is named for the practice of the owners to purchase flowers at the end of the day from the marketplace and strew them along the streets. The clashing fragrances covers the normal reek of the city, though some do not feel the scent of rotting flowers is a true improvement.

One of the notable boarding houses is run by Madame Delaga, a notorious prude and busybody. She feels that any sort of erotic love is a slap in the face of the divine and refuses to rent her rooms to anyone engaging in carnal activities of any sort. Only her cheap rates keep her house full of patrons, though many are careful to conceal their activities from her.

The Temple of Voltadi: These ruins, located near the center of Le Rovine once represented the center of Numan life. Legend has it that the head of the ancient Numan Gods, Voltadi, inspired Numus to settle here, and promised the city would flourish eternally if Numans made sacrifices to him. The temple once housed the largest statue of Voltadi in the known world. It was sacked, along with the rest of Ancient Numa in 297 AV, and the pieces used in other buildings pulleys Numa (chief among them, the Cathedral of St. Mattheus, see below)

Madame Donanoche's Boarding House: Snuggled amidst a group of several other lodgings on the Path of Roses are the boarding house of Madame Violetta Donanoche. Violetta was once a minor courtesan, but the march of time took its toll and she was forced to retire on her fortieth birthday. She still retains her elegant features and rapier-like wit.

The first floor of her house consists of several small studies and dens that encourage quiet conversations. The second floor holds the large dining room, capable of seating twenty, as well as a kitchen and pantry. The upper stories contain rooms

for her guests and her own quarters. She has rooms for up to 10 lodgers and reasonable rates. However, after years struggling through the Vodacce courts, she finds that foreigners are far more soothing and only rents rooms to them. This also allows her to supplement her income by offering to provide introductions and guidance through the turbulent social scene.

Hippodromos Magnificens: this sprawling edifice housed the greatest spectacles of human and animal drama the world over. Ancient gladiators fought various opponents within these walls to the thrill of the crowds. The Hippodromos boasted the ability to house all of Numa within its walls. Rare was the event without a capacity crowd. An ingenious system of levers and pulleys allowed combatants to be brought up from below or even lowered down from on high. It has been rumored that the fight floor was, on several occasions, flooded in order to bring sea battles to the crowds.

PIANURA DELL'INONDAZIONE (PIANURA)



Located east Le Rovine and north of the Tigres River, Pianura contains a number of swamps, tall marsh grass, overgrowth, and its own share of ruins. The few buildings that are still serviceable have been built upon stilts to withstand the many floods that seem to plague the area. Pianura originally laid claim to the most fertile ground outside of what is now Falisci lands. Through an ingenious use of aqueducts, pumps, and earthen/stone dams, builders in ancient Numa created a vast and highly efficient farmland for the city's use.

Multiple disasters struck Pianura beginning in 1193 AV. That year, a series of torrential rainstorms along with runoff from Mt. Olimpia flooded the Tigres and overwhelmed the dams and ancient pump systems. Those who survived abandoned the area and it remained submerged for some 5 months. Eventually those who returned, rebuilt, and a year

and a half later, the dams were again overwhelmed, and the area flooded once again. Once more, a few foolhardy souls returned, and again a year later the area flooded.

Later, in the early 1300's, during the height of the Renaissance, hundreds of infirmed, mentally ill, and others who simply did not 'fit in' with the aesthetic of the time, were brought here and either left, or killed outright. To this day stories are still told of this beggar or that tourist who stumbles across some remains or, worse, a mass grave. Currently, most consider the area cursed and only the truly desperate voluntarily spend any time here. Because of this, and unbeknownst to most, a rather large contingent of Cymbyr have taken up residence during the dry months. There are some three ancient bridges (Coltivatore, Prigioniero, and Viti Appendenti) that still cross into this area.

Some of the interesting sites that can be seen in this neighborhood are; The Pit and The Cymbyr Village of Sakin'el.

The Pit: Throughout Numa's long history, she's had an extensive relationship with fighting contests. Most popular among them are the fights between trained gamecocks. With the coming of the church, however, such diversions are not only illegal, but also considered immoral. Issues of morality and legality aside, the masses still have a thirst for such games. They just need to be more discreet about where they engage in such activities. Enter Claudio and Teobaldo Accorsi.

While on the run from several debtors back in their home neighborhood of Vecchiacittà, they had occasion to hide out in some of the ruins left over from Pianura's flood. While there, they happened upon several old basements and connecting sewer tunnels. With a bit of work and a great deal more ingenuity than people gave them credit for, they cleaned out the basements and blocked up tunnels keeping the area from filling up should more flooding occur. They also carefully concealed the entrance under the arch of a little used bridge, allowing spectators entry either by walking under the bridge or travel via river.

To make it more difficult to be caught in the act (the only way they could be convicted of being involved in illegal fighting), they made sure that fights are held on random days. The only way to know when the next one will be is to be at the previous fight. That way, there are a limited number of people who know, and they are already guilty.

There is a charge for entry and most proceeds are used to bribe the officials who could make life very difficult on the brothers. The rest of the entry fee is used to hire muscle, which dissuades those who would get too rowdy or refuse to pay their debts. The real coup the brothers pulled off, however, was in the area of procurement. Several Cymbyr families have agreed to provide the fighting game-cocks, which are the favorite of fighting enthusiasts throughout Numa, via a deal who's details are known only to them.

Sakin'el: during the dry season, one of the Cymbyr groups, the Tzigan, gathers here for purposes known only to them. While they will entertain some guests, by and large, they keep a low profile while inside the city. It is this group that the Accorsi brothers have made a deal with to provide fighting gamecocks, and as such, many of the creatures can be seen and heard when one approaches the camp.

VECCHIACITTÀ & NUOVO VECCHIACITTÀ



When Emperor Carleman conquered Numa, he immediately began searching for a suitable spot to house his army. He found it in the ruins of the Calx Paretis (which he later renamed Il Gigante della Pietra, see below). However, armies have followers and those people must stay somewhere. Vecchiacittà grew up around the island to service the soldiers housed on there. Unfortunately, most of Vecchiacittà was located on the flood plain of the Tigres River. This river is noted for it's flooding (see Pianura above). Eventually, those who could afford it moved above the flood plain. Those who remained were either too poor, aged, or crazy to leave, and the neighborhood began its decline. All too soon, the military moved on, and the neighborhood fell into even harder times. Things temporarily looked up when the Vaticine Church announced that it would use the old soldiers barracks as a prison. That, however, ended up being the nail in Vecchiacittà's coffin. The guards, already knowledgeable about the neighborhood's reputation, took their business elsewhere, which lead to even more desperate times for those trying to make an honest living. Worse, criminals who completed their sentence were routinely set free there. Needless to say, the crime rate increased dramatically.

Currently, this area consists of nothing more than the lowest of low hovels. The only break in the unending poverty is the tourist shops which line the roads leading to the three bridges heading into Il Castello and hence to Le Rovine. Even the tourist areas have become dangerous as beggars and thieves have taken up residence to prey on those tourists staying in Levanzo. The church has increased police presence threefold, however, this has yet to curtail the criminal behavior. The only good news for this neighborhood, or more accurately for Nuovo Vecchiacittà, which is directly across the river from Dioclasian, is that it is starting to be overtaken by the more bohemian, urbane, middle class, artists, and near-do-wells, which want to rub elbows with the lower class (or at least pretend to). As a result, crime has gone down and business, up.

Some of the interesting sites that can be seen in these twin, yet opposite, neighborhoods are: Sugicci Imports, Gustav's Bakery, The Birds of the Sky and Copello Bondicci's Locksmith, Broken Tears Abbey.

Sugicci Imports: (Nuovo Vecchiacittà) Antoni Sugicci runs the same Imports store his father ran, and the same store his father ran before him. Given the long history of the import business and the fact that nothing untoward has ever been associated with Sugicci Imports, it a reputation for respectability. The Sugicci began with Montaigne and Eisen connections, and have always provided fine imports for a reasonable price.

Gustav's Bakery: (Nuovo Vecchiacittà) Gustav Gruber is a tall man with a terrible scar across his bald scalp who opened this shop after the mercenary trade became too much for him. He rarely speaks and never allows any expression to cross his face. Occasionally, he uses the razor-sharp knife he carries prominently on his hip to slice his loafs and dole out samples to patrons who scarcely believe the knife display they just witnessed. However, the few times that local toughs tried to bully him, they discovered that he is deadly with every blade in his shop and the dozen he keeps concealed about his body.

The Birds of the Sky: (Nuovo Vecchiacittà) one of the finer restaurants in the city is known for its unusual menu. Aldo Ghioletti, the owner and head chef, serves the finest wines, breads, salads and vegetables in sumptuous feasts fit for Merchant Princes. However, he does not serve any meat save fowl. Most find this a peculiarity and enjoy the fare

he does provide. His stews and broiled fowl are particularly fine quality and none fault the extent of his wine cellar. In person, Ghioletti is a short, stout man with a flair for talking to people with gusto and an excellent memory for both spices and customers.

Copello Bondicci's Locksmith: (Vecchiacittà) Bondicci is a short, wiry man who is always ready with a quick grin and a jovial word. He provides keys for the most difficult of locks anywhere in the city and many with legal and illegal needs know they can rely upon him. Only when he walks does anyone notice his twisted and uneven gait, the result of a fall.



Broken Tears Abbey: (Vecchiacittà) This small, dilapidated structure is one of the most pathetic church structures within Numa that isn't technically classified as a ruin. It is known to nearly all of the locals as "Gallandro's House," for it is where Sister Gallandro does the majority of her work looking after the physical and spiritual well being of those less fortunate and most often ignored by the more elite (within and without the church). The house is a shelter for any who need it. A place where their wounds might be treated when no other help is available.

The Church and the Council all but ignore the efforts, knowing full well that most of Numa could care less about these people. They send token support at best when the Sister gets too loud in her efforts. At any point in time there is talk of reducing the house to ruin, but nothing more then talk has come to pass thus far. Support from the Guard is minimal in Vecchiacittà, it is no different here, despite the frail position of Sister Gallandro and the few who help her.

For the most part the house is left alone by the local mobs that vie for dominion of the streets as many respect Sister Gallandro and her efforts, despite the fact that she doesn't tolerate their activities. This has a large part to do with the fact that while she hates their actions she respects and loves them as fellow human beings.

More can be found on Sister Gallandro in the Dramatis Personae Section.

VILLAGGIO DELLA CHIESA



When Carleman unified Vodacce, he wanted to restore the Cradle of Civilization to its former glory. This 'former glory,' included restoring the Church to its former position as both spiritual and temporal leader of Numa. He set aside several hundred acres in one of the nicest areas of southwest of the ancient city. This area, he proclaimed, was the sole province of the Vaticine Church, and would be used as they saw fit. He envisioned a great cathedral and enough space to house those who lived and worked there and anyone else who had business with the church. It had enough space left over for massive gardens and other works of honor to Theus. However, that was not exactly how things worked out. The church, always in need of money, began allowing select businesses and residences to build on church lands with the understanding that the individual's would donate their building when they no longer had need of it or upon their death. When the original tenants began dying off, they asked the church to extend their need to that of their family, and just like that, the church became a landlord. The church owns everything in this section of Numa and it is only by their largesse that non-church business takes place here.

Some of the interesting sites that can be seen in this neighborhood are; The Cathedral of Saint Matthews, The House of Green Walls, the Smithy of Soloman Antone, and Ecclesiastical Garb

The Cathedral of Saint Matthews: while most would agree that this cathedral and its surrounding grounds

are not as magnificent as the current home of the Vaticine Church (though one would be wise not to say that within earshot of any native Numan), it is never-the-less, awe inspiring. Built centuries ago, it boasts architecture from nearly every major period in history. While in other places, this might seem ostentatious, in the Cathedral, it adds to the sense of history. Here and there throughout, visitors can see stones scavenged from the Le Rovine section of Numa, and it is rumored that the stones of the great statue of Voltadi can be seen within its walls.

The House of Green Walls: In the midst of the clerical residences lies an oddity, a gambling house where no money changes hands. Two hundred years ago, the Cardinals ruling the city placed a ban upon wagering as it encouraged greed. But vice lies within the hearts of every man, even priests. Several Vaticine officials altered the wording of the ban to allow gambling so long as money was not its object. Afterwards, these officials gathered in one of their homes for "friendly" games in which the stakes were merely favors. The tradition continues to this day in the House of Green Walls. Technically, the building is a manor owned by the church for the entertainment and housing of noble guests. However, few ever stay there. That way, the games may continue twice weekly as they have for many years. Only ordained Vaticines may enter with an invitation and few below the rank of Bishop are ever invited. The staff knows that discretion is their most important qualification and duty for they occasionally witness events and discussions that affect the entire course of the Vaticine Church.

The Smithy of Soloman Antone: Soloman Antone was a soldier who traveled quite extensively. It was said that he even traveled to far off Cathay. Carleman handpicked him to create the Church Guard in 609 AV after he was crowned High Emperor. His first undertaking was to create a weapon far in advance of weapon design of the time. Using his knowledge learned in Cathay, and improving upon it, he invented The Serpent Sword. As he came to the end of his life, he made it a point to teach the secret of creating the sword to several of his most worthy students. To the most pious, he gave the smithy he had created. His student, honored by the gift, changed his name to Soloman Antone, in order that the smithy does not change names. This tradition has been passed down to this day. The current 'Soloman Antone' Agostina Fabbro has owned the shop a little more than three years.

Ecclesiastical Garb: in theory, the Church provides priestly robes and garments. Since these garments are of a consistent quality and design, this ensures that the officials will not waste time and energy focusing on appearance instead of more theological matters. In practice, things stand a bit differently. A large shop named Ecclesiastical Garb provides all the formal garments. The shop employs ten tailors and produces a rather average quality product on short demand. Any official in the church may stop and obtain any formal garb they are entitled to wear and have the garment ready within twenty-four hours without cost. However, the shop's true focus is on providing more discriminating buyers with a much finer garment. Such robes are quite costly, but most feel that the replacement of rare silks and satins for the more plebeian cottons is worth the money. Few high-ranking officials in Numa would dare risk their reputation by wearing simple garb when the far more exotic is so readily available.

Some interesting sites that can be seen in this neighborhood are: Patero's, The Hanging Gardens of Numa, Evangelista's School, and Manor Arachnidan.



DIOCLASIAN



As the power of the merchant princes began to rise and families got richer and richer, the need to see and be seen everywhere important eventually came to the fore. Dioclasian was, quite simply, the result of extravagance gone mad. Every one of the merchant princes, several of the cardinals and quite a few bishops have owned, at one time or another, at least one estate here. Between the massive estates, smaller, more reserved (but still wealthy) houses have begun to crop up and included such luminaries as local business owners, landlords, and several neer-do-wells. Rather than the crowded, vertical architecture seen elsewhere in Numa, Dioclasian boasts sprawling edifices of beautiful and classic design, with massive gardens, grounds, fountains, and hedgerow. Those businesses that seek to locate in Dioclasian (or even do business here) must have met with the approval of the residence authority that is elected from among current residents. A carefully reconstructed ancient Numan wall (25 feet high and 12 feet thick) was built to surround the neighborhood on three sides. The fourth was protected by the River. Private security (paid for by the residents) manned the walls and patrolled the streets, to ensure that the poor and destitute did not bother their betters.

Patero's: Patero's began as a private estate in the wealthy Dioclasian district. Patero himself was a noted member of the Figaricci family, who some believe could have been a great family if they had played their cards right. Unfortunately, that was all Patero liked to do, play cards. And dice. And gamble on the slightest thing, like whether this leaf would fall faster than that one, or whether one courtesan could hit a higher note than the other. He reduced his family to near poverty, and in an effort to survive they ostracized him. But against all odds however, the constant stream of guests (and a few lucky bets) kept him in luxury until his death. He had no heir who would recognize him as father. An enterprising courtesan bought the estate, with the intention of retiring. She found that the reputation of the place continued on after the death of its founder, and decided to cash in. Now, Patero's welcomes any who can pay into its high stakes games, and provides amusement for those willing to pay a small premium.

There are no crowds at Patero's. There are a few small and well appointed rooms, each with a couple tables of this game or that, which change as participants come or go. It is not a casino in the sense that there is a 'house' that attempts to profit on all games. Instead, those who come to play leave tokens of gratitude to their hostess, as thanks for a pleasant environment, and run their games as they see fit. Patero's is a place to see and be seen, a constant party in slow ebb, open at all hours of the day and night.

Hanging Gardens of Numa: There are two stories of how the Hanging Gardens were created. The first was that, to keep his daughter safe, a rich merchant had a small garden created on top of the wall. It allowed her to get fresh air and enjoy a bit of nature. At the same time, it helped her avoid exposure to the ruffians and cutpurses that hung around the small parks and baths of Numa. Fellow Merchants and Nobles, not wanting to be left out, also created small gardens for their families to enjoy. Eventually, the gardens were attached to each other, and a clever water pumping system was created. It filled the fountains in the gardens, and helped with the watering of the plants. Through out the years, gardens were built up and broken down.

The other story tells of a freak storm that came through the city, that had such high winds it tore the very ground up and relocated some of it on top of the wall, and seeing it, gave the Merchants and Nobles the idea of creating a garden above the city. With great engineering, and help from the Fate Witches, high rising gardens were created, along with a watering system that would also keep the fountains in many of the gardens flowing, to help with the watering.

Several small zoos crisscross the gardens. Colorful birds and small animals from across Théah, add to the realism of the different parts of the garden. Head Gardeners and Gamesmen tend the cultivated areas of the gardens. However, some areas were left to go wild, allowing for increased diversity. The garden is a popular place for private parties of the Nobles, and for a private tryst.

Evangelista's Fencing School: Parlaying his fame and talent into riches, the famed prodigy Dominic Evangelista, brought his fencing school to a place where people will pay to be seen with a genius. Thus, the Evangelista Fencing School caters to only the very rich and powerful. Dominic is a master of the Ambrosia school, taught by Veronica herself. It is even rumored in certain circles that, when Veronica passes, she plans to give Dominic her schools.

Manor Arachnidan: This is the business for the well-known Voss family of Numa who are masters of the art of 'spider-whispering.' The location is divided into several sections, mainly for the various types of stock maintained at the manor. The façade and the front quarter of the building do not reveal the plethora of arachnidan located deeper within. This is mainly to ease the locals and casual visitors to the manor, who would undoubtedly be quite horrified to

see the amount of arachnids running loose beyond the closed doors and deep velvet curtains. More on Voss can be found in the Personae Dramatis section.

IL GIGANTE DELLA PIETRA



In 739 AUC, General Cnaeus became Emperor of the Numan Empire. He was a hard man who'd gone up through the ranks to become a successful, if paranoid commander. He was hand picked by the Senate who wished to relieve him of his powerful army and place him where he would stand no chance of usurping the Senate's power. Deprived of his legions and worried the Senators would kill him, he began seeing plots from within. Most importantly he believed that the senators (more specifically the magic wielding senators) were planning on killing him should he seek to exert his authority.

He consulted with mystics and seers to see if there was a way to avoid this fate and was told that so long as he was building a palatial estate in the middle of the Tigres river, no senator would come to harm him. Cnaeus immediately began diverting funds from public works projects to build an island made of stone in the middle of a wide section of the river. He named his new home, the Calx Parietis (or Stone Wall). As envisioned, it was more of an armed camp than estate. Just as work on the island was about to be completed (and prior to beginning work on the estate), Cnaeus was killed while traversing a peasant riot which had broken out to protest his diversion of public funds. Interestingly, none of the Guardsmen attending him were harmed, and the riot ended almost immediately after the Emperor's death.

Later Emperors saw the strategic use of the island and completed the Calx Parietis. Rather than using it as a home for the Emperor, it was used to house the growing legions that were fighting wars increasingly closer to home. Emperor Carleman used it to house his own army until needed elsewhere. When the Emperor first laid eyes on the island and its buildings, he astonishingly remarked, "It looks like some great stone giant." The name stuck.

For many years, the Stone Giant served various functions. Several of the buildings housed a library, much of it lay dormant, it was a home for squatters, and when the Cathedral of St. Matheus was being refurbished, it was the temporary home of the Church. Then, in 1433, The Stone Giant got its current occupation, prison/watch headquarters. The Church, responding to City watch officials' complaints of overcrowding and manpower shortages, ordered that work begin on the Giant to refurbish several of the outlying buildings for use by the watch. At the same time a massive renovation redesigned the Giant itself into a prison. Even the bridges, which connect the Giant to the mainland, were redesigned to make getting onto or off of the island extremely difficult, while at the same time, allowing foot traffic to pass between Levanzo and Le Rovine. Currently, there are no privately owned shops, businesses or homes on the Stone Giant. Everything that goes on there is related to the watch or the prison.

LEVANZO



In 404 AV, a devoutly Vaticine landowner by the name of Carlos Trufigglio made a pilgrimage to Numa. It was his intention to pay homage to the newly reformed Vaticine church. However, legend says that he heard the voice of Theus telling him to build in the foothills south of the city. Then and there, he determined to devote the rest of his life to the Church. He used his entire fortune (as he had no family to speak of) buying the land that now bears his name and placing a monastery on a small hill in the southeast of the property. Soon, people who shared his vision also came to visit the monastery and settled. They tithed much of their income to the Church through the monastery.

As time went on, and money got tight, less and less of the tithe went to the Church. Fortunately for the monks, the hilly volcanic dirt proved perfect for grapes. Eventually the entire village was hired in one capacity or another to grow, weed, protect, harvest,

and crush the grapes to make wine. Artisans flocked to the area as cask and bottle makers were required, as did numerous shops that purchased the wine and sold it to the public. St. Nunnus (the patron saint of winemakers) was adopted as the patron of Levanzo as the feudal system began to break down, and the Church looked away from their monasteries and more toward their parishioners. However, in Levanzo, little changed.

Certainly the peasants in Levanzo now paid their tithes directly to the church, but they were still employed in some capacity by the Monastery. Thus, the business of grape growing and wine making continued unabated. That was, until 1193. The torrential rains that flooded and destroyed Pianura also succeeded in destroying the grape vines of Levanzo. Worse, the flood had its way with the monastery. The seedlings and vine samplings, with which the monks could hope to rebuild, were also destroyed. With the destruction of the crop, there was no wine to sell, and the entire economic system of Levanzo was wiped out.

Eventually the monks were reassigned, and Levanzo wine was no more. However, that was not the end of the people of Levanzo. It was still an idyllic location, and far less crowded than other areas of Numa. Eventually, others moved in and Levanzo became known for its simple, rustic living. The promise of clean living brought out the artists, craftsmen, and merchants by the cartload. Levanzo of today still retains that rustic living, as there are no buildings more than two stories tall anywhere. The Levanzo Monastery still sits on the small hill to the southeast, and more than a few monks have tried to reopen it at various times in the last 50 years. Thus far, however, none have had much success with bringing back the winery.

Some of the interesting sites that can be seen in this neighborhood are: The Shroud of St. Simon, Bramante e Palladio, Alessio's Il Grano, Theatre of Folly, and The Plaza of Commerce.

Shroud of St. Simon: Even in Numa, the heart of the Church for Vodacce, there are those who give the devout pause. The curious morality of the Vodacce Vaticine regarding Fate Witches and courtesans is a precarious dance between faith and pragmatism. No doubt while some Church scholars privately vex about such fallen women, publicly it is not considered wise to do so. Likewise, it is not financially prudent to ignore the business opportunities they offer.

One such opportunity presented itself to Teofania Aspasi. Originally from the Lucani regions, the widow Aspasi migrated to Numa after the tragic and senseless deaths of her sons in a duel. Alone and emotionally shattered, Teofania sought spiritual comfort in her faith. Like many Lucani women, she was gifted in needlework and wanted to create vestments for Church officials. Of course, already established merchants usually handled such duties and Aspasi found it difficult to get clientele.

Still, the Church appreciates those that work on its behalf. A few kind-hearted priests were taken with the devout widow's efforts and admirable skill and steered her towards dresswork, whispering discreetly in a few ears here and there of some of the nobles or upper-class merchants that attended services that Aspasi's work would do their women (wives and mistresses both) quite well.

Aspasi's shop and client list has grown in the four years since arriving in Numa. She has a keen eye and touch for color and fabric. As the Church has helped her out, Teofania offers that kindness in return, tithing monthly and taking in a few orphan girls from the nunnery under her wing as apprentices. Hard-working, even as she reaches her 60's, Teofania still insists on doing all the dye work of her dresses herself. Her rich purples, brilliant greens and deep blue-blacks are as highly admired as her skill with a needle, something she takes a small amount of pride in.



Bramante e Palladio, Architects & Contractors: Numan buildings designed and built over the centuries, from churches and public buildings constructed of the finest marble and iron to warehouses and peasant housing built from wood and stucco, nonetheless have a distinctly Vodacce flair. Buildings reflecting all styles, from the Ancient to the current Baroque, often reflect the slender strands of a spider's web. Frequently, Sorte assists the more flamboyant and gravity-defying designs in their construction, through utilizing the Arcana Spread and various cards of the Major Arcana. Practical designs are usually developed by Andrea Palladio and his wife Annabella, but construction of some of the most elaborate designs often require the cooperation of dozens of subcontracted Fate Witches.

Alessio's Il Grano: Fine cuisine is one of many things that Vodacce is famous for, and Alessio's Il Grano is an example of a fine dining experience in Numa. The proprietor, Alessio Cangi, has a reputation for providing wonderful meals for parties of two to two hundred. Il Grano has a nice view, but one can only enjoy it from the outdoor patio or the second-story balcony. The main building has no exterior windows. Instead, Il Grano has several large rooms that surround a large, busy kitchen. Skylights and sconces accentuate an atmosphere that can be either intimate or festive, depending on the mood and size of the party. Prices are above average, so if one has the means, a table can usually be found.

Theatre of Folly: Classical plays and operettas are a combination of powerful speeches and strong music. These concepts are carved into the base of two pillars at the front of the theatre, but carved into the crowns of both pillars is the word "Folly". Inside the theatre itself, the commoners are quickly shunted to an open space before the stage while nobles and church officials find far more comfortable, and expensive, seats on the balconies that line the open spaces. A massive chandelier provides bright illumination, though a series of rope-driven shades can dim this to starlight in an instant. The company itself focuses on the finest dramas and comedies, though the follies of nobility are a common theme. In order to prevent any nobles from

taking offense, the names of farm animals is used in place of the names of the noble families. For example, any piece that refers to a Bernoulli would instead use the name Gallo (rooster).

The Plaza of Commerce: A number of shops and stalls surround the ornate fountain that dominates this plaza. A statue of the First Prophet scattering breadcrumbs to the birds is almost completely obscured by the leaping waters that surround it. A merchant named Sebastiano Thale owns the entire plaza and rents out to these shops. Some claim that anything is available here, but that is partially because the shops usually change every few months. Most of the shops open with high hopes as the rent is so low for the area. However, the shopkeepers quickly learn over the course of several months that

Thale has dozens of methods of extracting more money from his tenets, whether that be a monopoly on their suppliers, the right to levy additional fees for any work done on his buildings, levying fines for excessive use of the sidewalks or additional fees for the plumbing of the fountain. He is only able to maintain this through a series of bribes and connections to high-ranking officials. The shops that go out of business are quickly replaced and the cycle continues.

However, a handful of shops have remained constant for several years. Three brothers named Basso own a carpenter shop, a blacksmith and a mason. They've knocked out the walls to allow customers to wander from one area to the other with ease, though getting any assistance from the brothers is difficult as all three are rather gruff. Next door, Analisa Calcatore runs a store specializing in musical instruments and sheet music. Beside that lies Scarto di Tessuto where the discriminating customers can purchase fabrics, leathers and carpets in a dizzying array of colors and qualities. Another shop owned by Vincenzo Granai is a bookstore that features books on seemingly every topic, though the owner keeps the place so dark and disorganized that customers can rarely find anything without assistance. The final shop that has held its place for years is a small tavern called Casa di Vino Dolce, where cheap wine and griddlecakes are available day and night alike.



TRAFORI

While not a neighborhood as such, the vast network of pipes, cisterns, tunnels, conduits, basins, and the like, make up a large part of Numa life. Il Trafori or The Tunnels, as they are routinely called, are a hodgepodge of Ancient Numan construction; add-ons or bypasses from various ages, and modern remodeling.

While not nearly as vast (nor deep) as, say, Charouse's network, the tunnels beneath Numa have an impressive array of conflicting, contradictory and nonsensical plumbing.

Numa's citizens boast some of the cleanest city water in all of Théah. This is no doubt due to the ancient Numan aqueduct that brings in fresh water from Lake Pulito some 34 miles to the northeast.

To keep from being overrun by disease carrying rats and other vermin, The Church has hired a small army of vermin catchers (called Uomini del Traforo, or tunnel men) who crawl through the tunnels day and night. These men (and women) say that there are many interesting things to be seen underneath the city. They include ancient Numan graffiti, several hidden rooms (one underneath La Rovine is rumored to be an ancient hiding place of the Witnesses), and in one case, an entire building.

MODERN NUMA

Surrounding these ancient neighborhoods in almost every direction, are the modern, gravity defying structures that most see when they imagine Vodacce architecture. While it is not my intention to ignore such magnificence, this area is, to my way of thinking, not the reason you've chosen to visit Numa. If you wanted to see structures standing out against sheer cliffs and defying the sky, you would be visiting any of the island cities to the south. No, what you came to see is the heart of Numa, the Cradle of Civilization, and the place where Théah began. In the neighborhoods and sites described above, you will find all that and more. For modern Numa you have no better guide than to follow where your eyes lead you. You find all manner of modern conveniences, unique statuary, interesting marketplaces, bold art and the like. However, once you've viewed the heart of Numa, those others pale. I hope you've enjoyed this tour, and mayhap one day you will let me show it to you in person.



CULTURE & TRADITION

CARNIVAL

Numa's Carnival represents a milestone among the city's most important folk traditions. It consists of a huge public festival that lasts eight days, and ended on the night of Secundus 28th, with the beginning of *Quadragesim* (the "fortieth day" before Day of Fire).

Day of Fire is the anniversary date of the day that the First Prophet was set afire at the stake for his crimes by the Numan Senate. The forty days before this holy day are days in which those of the Vaticine faith pay homage not only to the First Prophet, but also to all four Prophet's. For many it is a time of simple daily prayers and lighting of candles and incense. To others it is has deeper meaning and is a time of fasting and internalization. Actually, the celebrations for Carnival start eleven days earlier, on Secundus 18th, but since races and fancy costumes are forbidden on Redi and Voltadi, the Carnival days are only eight.



The use of holding fancy events before *Quadragesim* began some six centuries before. In those early days the festivities were mainly tournaments. Later these games turned into street celebrations. Carnival was also importance Numan people because during this short period severe laws concerning public order (based on religious principles) could be broken. The Guard of Numa, being an arm of the Church, which rules the city and province directly, is strict in having these laws observed during the rest of the year, particularly during the forthcoming *Quadragesim*, when even theatre plays can be forbidden so as not to disturb the spirit of the time of reflection and prayer. The fervor in which these laws are enforced has a tendency to sway back and forth between more liberal and conservative lines, dependant upon who sits on the Council. During Carnival the people often take

liberties (sometimes towards the ruling classes of the clergy and the noble), which in other periods of the year would cause arrest, or worse.

The first Carnival celebrations held organized bullfights and knight tournaments. Besides the aforesaid entertainments, another event became popular; an event known as "the rolling of the pigs." In this 'sport' a number of carts carrying pigs were towed up to the top of a hill, where they were pushed along its steep side. Rolling down the hill the carts tilted and smashed, while at the bottom of the hill a great crowd gathered, competing for the animals (or what was left of them) in a huge and bloody brawl.

Around the mid fifteenth century the Hierophant had the celebrations moved, as he came from Porta Spatia. Here the common people's fantasy gave birth to another bizarre and rather cruel competition: a race along a mile long street, which was run by dwarfs, cripples and the deformed participants. The people enjoyed watching the strange competitors, and made fun of them, also throwing all sorts of trash. In 1517 the then current Hierophant put an end to this barbarous custom.

These cruel and disgusting events are of the past (mainly) and today many harmless events take place: fancy costume parades (characters inspired by the *Commedia dell'Arte*, such as Harlequin, are particularly popular), dances that last all night, the throwing of pellets made of colored chalk called *confetti*, and small fragments of colored paper called *sbruffi*. The final action of Numa's Carnival, on the final night, is the charming Candle Race, in which participants carry a candle or a small lantern and, as they ran, they tried to put out others' lights.

During the days of Carnival many wear fancy costumes and masks are immensely popular. After sunset this was still allowed, but wearing a mask is prohibited for security reasons. The masks are made of wax or papier-mâché. They are so popular that some sellers often make their year's worth of business out of them over Carnival days.

Even priests, friars and nuns could have fun, so long as they did so in their own convents, never in the streets. If they are not outrageous they enjoy music, dances, rich meals, and even wear fancy clothes. The only fancy clothing that enclosed nuns are allowed to wear, though, are the actual clothes of their own confessors!

The most awaited event for Carnival is the Race of the Crescent, i.e. a race run by Crescent breeds of horse. This race long ago replaced the one run by freaks, which is no longer allowed. The Crescent Race is held eight times during Carnival, once for

each of the carnival days, and it takes place just before sunset. The horses race without a rider, easily reaching their full speed before the race's end where a tarpaulin is hung so as to stop the horses. At the tarpaulin, a number of grooms, boasting their courage and strength, dash among the animals attempting to clutch them (the so-called Catching of the Crescents), amidst a great chaos. As a prize, the owner of the winning horse is awarded an embroidered banner, made of precious fabric. What makes the race dangerous for the spectators is the narrow width of the street, which is often packed. The high class watch the race from the many balconies (on this occasion they are rented), but most of the crowd stands in the street on a somewhat tall and narrow pavement, that ran along both sides of the road.

Carnival does not automatically take place: each year the people of the city awaited a specific edict by the Council of Numa that gives or denies permission to hold the festival. Under the days of the most strict (and darker) leadership of the Church, not only was the festival cancelled, but there were no theatre plays, nor dances, nor any other fancy events that took place in any part of the entire year, replaced by a great number of religious rites, processions, and so on. Another time when Carnival is often canceled is when the presiding Hierophant dies. During these days many Cardinals and Hierophants fear revolts, because the opportunity of going around wearing masks enabled rebels and outlaws not to be easily recognized. In times of unpopular measures, such as the issuing of new taxes, or the like, any pretext could be used to cancel street celebrations and fancy costume parades. For instance, in 1637 the official reason claimed was an outbreak of cholera.

THE TALKING STATUES OF NUMA

One tradition that Numan citizens have used to oppose arrogance and corruption of the ruling class with no small sense of humor is that of the so-called 'talking statues'. Over time the people have given various nicknames to these statues.

For nearly that last two centuries it has come to be that late at night, satirical posters are hung upon a number of statues that stand in well-known sites, so that in the morning everyone could read them before the posters were taken away by the City Guard.

Sometimes a poem was left, sometimes a joke. In most cases their satire was addressed to the City Council. When he lived within Numa's walls, the Hierophant was occasionally addressed. And the authors, of course, always remained unknown.



NATIONS & ORDERS

NUMA ON NATIONS

Here's a general account of what the average citizen of Numa might think of a given nation and its people, sort of the preconception they have towards foreign visitors.

Avalon. Most Numans don't really recognize the differences between the three realms within Avalon. To many Numans Avalon is not unlike that which it was to the Numa of old, an island surrounded by dark waters, filled with strange things seemingly on the edge of the world.

Castille. There's a love/hate relationship with Castille. After all, to the citizens of the city, Numa should be the center of the Vaticine Faith. It is one of those things that does not overly affect day-to-day life, but can be the source of heated debate when the topic arises and pride of one's home is challenged.

Cathay. Little is known about this land and even fewer care about it, other than the merchants. The Church doctrine, and thus the city doctrine, steps heavily upon anything of or from Cathay.

Crescent. It is a land full of damned heretics and barbarians and the Church weighs heavily upon anything of Crescent nature or origin. (This can be relaxed during Carnival.)

Eisen. Many believe that Eisen is a rightfully damned wasteland; ripped apart in war for their war over the Vaticine Faith and Objectionism. Tales of 'soulless wanderers' only enhances this perception.

Montaigne. There's a general sorrow felt for the Montaigne that are faithful Vataince who have found a tyrant in "le'Empereur" and a seething hatred for him and his unabashed demonstrations of contempt to all that is holy and good. Numans do not recognize the title of Emperor from such a false and pathetic man; they barely can acknowledge him as a King.

Ussura. Little is truly known about Ussura. There are whispers of things strange and unnatural, of course. And the invasion initiated into its lands by the Montaigne King is sometimes the topic over drinks and dinner.

Vendel. Like all Vodacce, Numan citizens dislike the Vendel greatly for the economic troubles it has inflicted upon the lands of the seven Princes.

Vestenmannavnjar. Like Ussura, Numa knows little of these people other than what their history books and ancient scrolls recall from the days of the Numan Empire. They see them as barbarians and worse. It is quite possible that no Vestenmannavnjar has stepped within the walls of Numa that wasn't either a raider or a slave.

SECRET SOCIETIES, ORDERS & GUILDS

Each society and order and guild has a possible presence or opinion, good or bad, about Numa.

Die Kreuzritter. As the birthplace of sorcery and the fallen throne of the Vaticine faith, the DK has a definite interest and presence in Numa. They are constantly on vigil for evil men and darker demons as well as seeking out artifacts of faith that they might need to rescue. They also have an ally amongst the Council, whether he knows it or not.

The Explorer's Society: The Society has very few, if any, friends within the halls of power in Numa, which is in its entirety an organization of the Vaticine Church. Still, it is not unusual for Society members to seek out information in the libraries of the city, though they usually do it as covertly as possible.

Invisible College. As one would expect, the College has great interest in Numa. The politics and policies alone are of interest to the members, but more importantly the ancient stores of knowledge and

the sorcerous history of the city also is of interest to the Invisible College.

Knights of the Rose and Cross. The Knights have only a minimal presence in Numa. There's currently no chapter house in Numa, but the Order does seek to establish one.

Los Vagos. Vagos has no presence in Numa as they have enough issues in Castille to worry about.

NOM. Like many places, NOM has a tentacle within the city. It is filled with far too much power and perhaps the deepest secrets of Théah buried under the streets to simply leave alone.

Rilasciare. Numa is the birthplace of the Rilasciare as much as it was of Sorcery. The city is as close to a sacred place that the order has. However, the stranglehold of the Church on the city and the support of the Princes for the Council guarantee little or no chance of change.

Sophia's Daughters. While the Daughters can move a bit safer in Numa than they can in the Princedoms this is not saying much, as the Church is no ally to the Daughters and their cause.

Swordsman's Guild. The Guild gets as much respect as it does in the rest of Vodacce, which is to say it gets little. There is a guild house in the city, which is well maintained in honor of the prestige that they city once held, and might very well hold in the future.



SECTION TWO

PERSONAE

THIEF'S REPRIEVE

Part Two

The sun hurt his eyes, but all the same, Tino welcomed it. Despite the urgency, he stopped for just a second to bask in his newfound freedom. There in the streets of Levanzo, letting the sun warm his face for the first time in years, the Bishop's words came to him. "Captain Favero is meeting with one of the Cardinals this afternoon. I need to know which of the Cardinals, and what they talk about. The 'good' Captain has some rather dangerous ideas, and I need to know if they are spreading." With that, the Bishop turned and strode from the cell, pausing only at the door to motion Tino out. The memory faded as Tino hurried on to his unannounced appointment at the Hanging Gardens

Two hours later, Tino sat at a sidewalk Kaffe shop some dozen yards from where he'd paused to enjoy the sunshine. The pouch of coins the Bishop had given him was considerably lighter, but the expense would be well worth it. Unconsciously he patted the new packet hanging off his belt. He did not have to wait for long.

Tall and almost regal looking, the Captain strode into view looking every bit the military man. He paused outside a small bistro across the street from where Tino sat and surveyed his surroundings. As his eyes crossed the street, he thought could feel the Captain's gaze boring into him. Within moments sweat was dotting his brow, and Tino felt sure the Captain would come over to return him into the Stone Giant's embrace. But for whatever reason, that moment never came. When he finally dared look again, the Captain was sitting at a table with another man. Tino wracked his brain but simply could not place the face.



PERSONAE

This section discusses just a few of the more unique and dramatic people of Numa. From the well known Major Personae, to the less powerful or important Minor Personae to those with an air of mystery. Gamemasters will find further information and ideas for each in the Gamemaster Section.



MAJOR PERSONAE OF THE CITY

CAPTAIN VINCENTE FAVERO



Captain Favero is in charge of the city guard in general and Il Gigante in particular. He runs a very tight ship and brooks no insolence or corruption. He is also aware that he is fighting an uphill battle against an insurmountable enemy; that enemy being the rules and regulations with which he is hampered on a daily basis by the Cardinals of Numa.

He believes, as most do, that laws are the foundation of civilization. However, he feels the spirit with which those laws were enacted is more important than the letter by which criminals usually escape justice. The object of his ire is Bishop Numanus. Vincente feels the Bishop views the law as a static entity rather than a living thing. He has shared his frustrations with his good friend and confidante, Cardinal Michel Durand del Falisci; thus far he has been unable to convince the good cardinal to beseech the other cardinals to look elsewhere for a liaison.

Vincente is tall, a handsome man who looks every bit the dashing young Captain. He wears his hair short and well oiled. He keeps his face clean-shaven and insists that all his officers do likewise.

RENIAL GUIDORO

Renial Guidoro is one of the most sought after artists of Numa (and throughout most of Vodacce). Born in Fontaine, he had come to Numa to complete his apprenticeship, and so became entranced with the city he has settled here.

Renial is known not only for his masterful paintings, but also for his extravagant character. A handsome man with no small amount of wealth, he always wears very elegant clothing. He is very keen on gambling, some have accused him of being overly so as he is known to spend entire evening playing naught but cards. He is said to believe in witchcraft and hexes and other superstitions. Also, it is said that he suffers a fear of persecution; in particular, he is said to live in the constant fright of being poisoned.

Recently Renial has come under the hard gaze of the Church Council's Major-Domo, Bishop Numanis. Among Numa's most important families are the Numanis. Their social rank in the Vaticine Church of Numa is easily understood considering the fact that the family boasts a Hierophant amongst its bloodline.

For reasons not known Bishop Numanis and Cardinal Michel Durand del Falisci (brother of Prince Donello Falisci) seem to have no small amount of animosity for one another. Cardinal Michel, once a Capuchin friar, commissioned a painting of the Second Prophet for the church of his old order. Renial, outstanding artist that he is, was chosen for the work.

According to rumors, which probably contain more than a speck of the truth, Renial became aware that Bishop Numanis had slandered him at an event and offended his reputation in some way. So when commissioned by the Cardinal, his ears full of the

gossip concerning the men's attitudes towards one another, Renial decided to take his revenge on the bishop by means of his own talent, at the same time pleasing the Cardinal.

The painting of controversy has the Second Prophet defeating a single representative of Legion in battle, a supposed King of the Devils. Undoubtedly, the face that the Second Prophet crushes under his foot looks almost identical to that of the Bishop. It seemed that Renial deemed that the Bishop's elongated face, thin hair, a scanty beard (and a often noted strange look in his eyes) was the perfect model for...The King of the Devils!

As one would very well expect, when the painting was hung in the church, the Bishop obviously complained over such an outrage. Renial is said to have admitted the amazing resemblance, but to have justified himself claiming, "...that the very demon had appeared to me, and thus I know all to well his face, and if Bishop Numanis is so unlucky as to resemble him, then I, a mere artist, am not to be blamed." Amused, the Cardinal has left the painting to hang in its place of honor at the Church of the Capuchins.

CAPTAIN DOMENICA MANTOVANI

Devout to the point of fanaticism, Captain Mantovani devoted her life to the safety and protection of the cardinals of Numa. She has been in charge of the Cardinal's Guard in Numa for more years than most would care to remember and has personally met over a dozen of the previous cardinals of Numa.

While still a capable swordswoman in her own right, she prefers to organize and direct rather than engage in swordplay. Because of her extensive history and fanatical devotion to the Vaticine church, she feels that it is her duty to protect all of the Church. This includes the Cathedral and the Villaggio della Chiesa., and by extension, all of Numa. This sense of duty has brought her into conflict with the newly appointed Captain of the City Guard, Vincente Favero. She views his 'diatribes' as nothing more than the rantings of a petulant child. She has seen City Guardsmen come and go, and she is not about to back down from this one merely because he fancies himself handsome

Domenica is a middle-aged woman who is showing some signs of her age. Her shoulder-length black hair is streaked with gray (a badge of honor she wears proudly), and there are wrinkles around her eyes and face.

BISHOP FIDELIS SENECA NUMANUS



The good bishop has the enviable job of acting major-domo to the five Cardinals of Numa. It is his responsibility to notify the cardinals of important goings on in the city and surrounding areas; ensure that edicts and proclamations are recorded and distributed to the citizenry; act as liaison with governmental bodies located throughout the city; and oversee the day-to-day operations of the Cathedral of St. Mattheus and the Villaggio della Chiesa. The good bishop's cousin is Marcus Numanus, head librarian at the Ancient Numan Library.

Known by reputation as a stickler for the rules, most people who have had occasion to interact with him, leave with a sour taste in their mouths.

However, none can complain about the efficiency with which he does his job.

Bishop Numanus is a short, pudgy balding man who hides his thinning pate with a severe monastic haircut and a zucchetto.



MINOR PERSONAE OF THE CITY

ALBERTO VOSS



Alberto is a simple man unnaturally talented and gifted with spiders. The beasts simply adore him and his whispering voice. Alberto may very well be the best spider-keeper in all of Vodacce and noble ladies of the various princely courts seek out his guidance and talents. It is said that his father was likewise gifted and that his son has shown the talent, too. Not surprisingly things of an unusual and sorcerous nature are not overtly appreciated in the church controlled Numa, but Alberto's family have long managed its affairs discreetly and with respect (and bribes) paid in full (and often) to the Church.

The family store is well kept and its neighbor has yet to complain about and 'loose stock.' (If anything the area seems quite free of other pesky insects.) The front of the store is decorated in a most elegant and tasteful manner, with little hint or sign of what the true nature of the shop is. Behind several sets of heavy curtains however, it is a different world. Webs

hang everywhere and all manner of arachnids climb and crawl and spin their way. Usually no less than a dozen of the critters are crawling about Alberto's robes and more than one gentle customer has watched as a few dozen more seem to try and follow him about, not unlike a puppy dog might.

As valued, sought out after and proficient as he is, one might expect that it would be both difficult and expensive to arrange an interview with him and one would be right. Alberto's services and opinions are easily ten times that of the next expert.

SISTER GALLANDRO



Sister Gallandro is a young and pious woman who lives in the service of Theus. She is often found among the 'lesser peoples' of the city doing what she can to aid and comfort them. Sister Gallandro is a very gifted and experienced healer, despite her young age. Sister Gallandro is morally above the politics of the churches, though sometimes her naiveté in such things blinds her to the hubris of the Vaticine Church.

Sister Gallandro serves Theus, not the church. She fears nothing and no one save her Lord God. This can sometimes make her unliked by those of a less pious nature. While Sister Gallandro has given up all worldly ties to her family in service to the Church, she still maintains strong connection to her older brother, Petruccio, who often travels but makes his home in Numa. Petruccio is a swordsman and duelist for hire who has a reputation for a mouth that is, "exceedingly faster and less sharp than his blade."

More than one man and woman has noted the 'loss' of Sister Gallandro's beauty, given her vows as a servant of Theus, to whom she had pledged all. Her blue eyes and dark hair, which is often hidden away,

are the envy of many a lady and the desire of more than a few men; even men who should not have such desires.



PERSONAE OF MYSTERY

MONSIEUR DARKE

Most any citizen of Numa would have little or no knowledge of this man. To the majority of those that may have heard of his name, he is a mystery inside of an enigma; an urban legend. Only those closest to the darker nature of man and the devil would have ever come face to face with him. Those who know anything know that he is a master of torture, surpassed by none other. An artist of pain so natural and beautiful in his manipulations that it is said no man nor woman nor damned beast of legion can resist his efforts.

While few can talk from experience, Darke is said to be tall and thin but hard of body and infinitely harder of soul, if he has one at all. They say his eyes are a reflection of that darkness and that no light reflects from their soulless gaze.

DECURION VORCIUS LUCENIUS

They say at night, especially on night when the "Traitor's Moon" hangs dangerously in the sky, a Centurion Soldier of Numa's ancient days...from the time...walks the streets seeking vengeance for the murder of her master Julius Caius. Some even whisper that she can smell a betrayal as if it were a 10-day-old corpse, and seeks out such instances to bring her bloody sword to the foul turncoat.

Vorcius, though a hard fighting soldier in her day, was said to be a handsome woman despite her scars. Her apparition, usually seen dripping in the gore from the traitorous blood she has spilled often does not enhance or convey such beauty if it is there.



PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED NPCS

NUMA'S CARDINALS

Teodoro Ciosa: A staunch religious patriarch whose voice carries the Numan Forum, Teodoro is well respected and there is said to be a petition seeking to canonize him immediately upon his death. (Vodacce p46, 73, 115, CotP, p119)

Ernesto Denzelli de Bernoulli: Ernesto is a brother of Prince Bernoulli and is a powerful supporter of Numan Independence. (Vodacce, p47)

Benedetto St. Vito: He has not spoken a word since the day he witnessed a miracle in which a man was brought back to life in an Elena monastery. He is a strong supporter of Vodacce arts and artists. (Vodacce, p47)

Carouso della Spada Lucani: He is a staunch supporter of the Lucani family. More notably, he is an outspoken proponent on returning the Heriophant to Numa and many other modern (heretical) ideas. (CotP p71, 113)

Michel Durand del Falisci: This cardinal is the only brother of ruling Prince Falisci, he is known for his Montaigne sounding name and has a close working relationship with Cardinal Durkheim. He has something of a rivalry with Bishop Numanis. (CotP p70, 112)

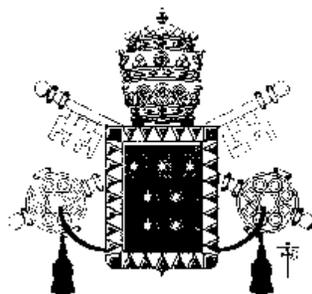


YOUR GUIDE

GUISEPPE AGOSTINI



Giuseppe grew up in the family that fairly invented the words 'tour guide.' So it was only natural that, as he took over the family business, he should look for ways to improve profits. He figured that, rather than creating a new idea, he would look at other major cities, see what was being done there, and 'borrow' their ideas. For almost five years, Giuseppe traveled the length and breadth of Théah. What he learned, he brought back and either used outright or improved if he was able. As an aside to his travels, Giuseppe learned a smattering of every language and became proficient in many. He is looking into language lessons for all his family and possibly even the tour guides.



SECTION THREE

THE GAME

THIEF'S REPRIEVE

Part Three

It was well past sunset and the moon had risen high into the air. Despite the fullness of the moon, Tino had difficulty seeing. Time, it seemed, was not his friend, and three years spent not exercising the skills of his craft had left him exhausted after a day spent shadowing his prey. Tino had quickly determined that the man with the Captain was one of the Cardinals. After a short time, the Captain and his friend had picked up followers. They had tried to hide their allegiance, but Cardinal's Guards are not known for their subtlety. Not to mention the halberds they carried. So with the combination of the Cardinal's Guards and the Captain searching for anything untoward, Tino had to play a careful game. He had to maintain enough distance so as not to be seen, while at the same time, staying close enough to keep following.

A light showing in a dark apartment brought Tino back to the business at hand. His prey had finally come down to business. As he started toward the building, he saw the two guards stepping out onto the veranda of the same apartment. They were drinking some beverage and made an effort not to peer indoors. All the better, his prey wanted privacy. That just made things easier.

Alighting on the rooftop, Tino thanked his lucky stars that his skills hadn't deteriorated completely. Peering over the edge, he saw the guards below. He was in luck! They had set their mugs down to cool and were leaning on the ledge. He rolled back onto the roof and grabbed the pouch he'd purchased earlier. "Only a few grains are necessary for complete slumber," his contact had said. The air was still this time of night, and that made for a perfect opportunity. Tino began sprinkling the powder over the edge above the guards' mugs. When he saw that some had landed on the surface of the fluid, he rolled back up onto the roof to wait.



NEW BACKGROUND

MOLE (Expanded)

Mole as previously described (Rilascaire p. 88) involved members of that society who joined other organizations (be they governmental, social, religious or even another secret society) in order to spy upon them. The expanded Mole background should include any member of one organization that joins another in order to spy upon them.



NEW SKILLS

LEGIONNAIRE

This skill costs 4 points for anyone not actually a part of the Legionnaire system of Ancient Numa; it cannot be reduced by *any* Advantage. Training in this skill was all but a way of life for Numan Legionnaires, taking it in modern Théah is unusual.

Basic Knacks: Footwork, Menial Tasks, Stand Watch, Survival, Tactics

Advanced Knacks: Ambush, Bribery, Gaming, Hand Signs, Incitation, Logistics, Long Distance Running, Menace, Mooch, Scrounging

SHORT SWORD

This skill represents expertise with the shorter, fatter blades of more archaic times than the leaner blades of various lengths in modern Théah. Swords such as the Numan Gladius are a perfect example of this.

Basic Knacks: Attack (Short Sword), Parry (Short Sword)

TORTURER

Only the more vile natured person would have a skill whose sole purpose is that of inflicting pain upon someone. A loss of Reputation is certainly possible for someone if it were discovered of his or her 'hobby'. Those who interact with someone whom they know is a torturer can obviously be strained. As

such, Gamemasters are encouraged to offer a Raise penalty during social situations as he sees fit.

Basic Knack: Interrogation, First Aid

Advanced Knack: Cold Read, Menace, Natural Philosophy, Poison



NEW SWORDSMAN SCHOOL

DESCO NUMANAIUS

Country of Origin: Numan Empire

Description: This school developed over a course of time into one of the elite fighting methods of the Numan Empire. While all Numan Legionnaires could fight, those trained in Desco were far and beyond the regular Legionnaire. Often, one was not even approached to learn the deadly fighting style until they were beyond their 7th year of service. (A Legionnaire pledged to serve 25 years to Numa when he signed up.) As such, most often all were veterans of one war or another, for Numa's Empire was far reaching and often in conflict with this faction or that region.

Today, in mid 17th century Théah, the art of Desco is all but lost. Its weapon of choice, its brutal mindset, and themes are long out of fashion. Still, despite its archaic attributes, there are a small group of men and women, nobles of city of Numa, in Vodacce, who study the school and take to heart the ideals of the Numan Legionnaire. Their studies are, however, limited, in that all traces of its mastery are lost to time, for no document has been found today that describes the final tier of ability of the Desco Numanaius Legionnaire; Those libraries and colleges that once contained the works had long since lost them to time, war, fire and a variety of other tragedies.

The strength of the school was the practiced and coordinated maneuvers of its training regime. Also, it promoted the unity of the Numan soldiery, that together any groups of comrades are better, stronger, faster and more powerful than any one. As such, when alone the school's training, while deadly, is a

little less effective than when a group of Legionnaires are standing as one.

It is not a sanctioned school. There are no trade-in bonuses for this. Additionally, the school costs 8 HP more at character generation.

98% of Théah likely doesn't even know it exists outside of Numa and Numan historians; its not a matter of a learning a skill it is setting oneself on a rigorous path and way of life. It is nearly impossible to get Exploit Weakness (Desco) without being a member of the school. Costs outside the school for ranks should be doubled to tripled to reflect the obscurity of the school. Only the most advanced storytelling should reduce this cost.



Basic Curriculum: Legionnaire, Short Sword

Swordsman Knacks: Beat (Short Sword), Lunge (Short Sword), Wall of Steel (Short Sword), Exploit Weakness (Desco)

Frugalis, Severitas and Fidelis are the ideals that the Desco Swordsman lived and died by, as such they are a part of fighting style at every tier.

Apprentice: A Desco is frugal in energy and action: add Mastery Level to Total Initiative. A Desco should be severe; focused, determined and not easily dissuaded: add Mastery Level to Brawn rolls versus Damage. A Desco is faithful to his comrades: Add your Mastery Level to the Passive and Active Defenses of the Desco next to you, reflectively you get

their bonus.

Journeyman: A Desco is frugal in energy and action: He can burn a Action Die during a round to gain a Unkept Die on another action, be it defense or attack, as he waits for the perfect opportunity. A Desco should be severe; focused, determined and not easily dissuaded: Add double Mastery Level as a bonus to all damage rolls. A Desco is faithful to his comrades: He can use an action to Parry an attack aimed at a fellow Desco Swordsman with whom he fights alongside at no penalty.

Master: The Master level of Desco is lost to modern Théah and cannot be taken or learned by any modern swordsman.



NEW ADVANTAGES

MEMBERSHIP: ALUMNO DESCO (2 points)

You are a member of the Alumno Desco, a minor society who has found value in the old themes and ideals of the Numan Legionnaires of ancient Numa and specifically those of Desco Numanaius.

Dependent upon your rank within the order you have access to the library of the society as well as its resources. You also have access to help or aid in the form of other members of the society.

You received a finely crafted Numan gladius upon membership acceptance. You may, in time, gain access to the swordsman techniques of Desco Numanaius.

NUMAN EDUCATION (4 points)

While the Castillian's have brought the art of education to newfound levels, few can argue the fact that Numa is the ancient heart of all that is today. It has ancient libraries, museums and catacombs filled with the writings of the some of the most influential mean and women in Théah's past. Those who have been canny enough to take advantage of the city often find themselves well versed in scholarly pursuits. *You gain the Thean (R/W) language automatically. You gain the Scholar skill. Lastly, you get a Free Raise when getting around in the city.*



NEW SECRET SOCIETY

ALUMNO DESCO

Descoplinae: In Numan mythology, Descoplinae, a minor deity, was the personification of discipline. He was commonly worshipped by Imperial Numan Soldiers. His meaning to them was both discipline as in self-control and determination, as well as discipline as in a field of soldiery. Virtue that was chiefly important to Descoplinae, and thus to his most devote

followers, were: Frugality, Severetyand Faithfulness. A soldier should be frugal in every way: with money, with energy, with actions. A soldier should be severe: focused, determined, not easily dissuaded, decisive. A soldier should be faithful: to his unit, his army, the officers and the people of Numa.

Alumno Desco

Alumno Desco is a society based almost entirely within the walls and surrounding countryside of Numa. It is a small group of men and women who have found value in the old themes and ideals of the Numan Legionnaires in general and specifically those of the Desco Numanaius.



Italienische Gelehrte.

Deutsche Bürgerin.

Desco Numanaius is an ancient style of combat and way of life reserved for the more advanced soldiers of the era of the Numan Empire. They cherished and paid service to Descoplinae, a minor deity in the Numan pantheon who was the personification of discipline. They believed in his three ideals above all else: Frugalis, Severitas and Fidelis. A soldier should be frugal in every way: with money, with energy, with actions. A soldier should be severe: focused, determined, not easily dissuaded, decisive. A soldier should be faithful: to his unit, his army, the officers and the people of Numa.

Alumno Desco is far to small and elite to be properly known outside of Numa, but within the city it is. Alumno Desco is a society that is only secret in that what one must be or do to become a member and

what occurs behind closed walls and doors is unknown. Those of the order are not too hard to spot. They are a frugal and severe group. Their fashion, lifestyle and manners all reflect the ideals of Frugalis, Severitas and Fidelis. Also, some openly carry the ancient sword of the Numan Legionnaire, the gladius; those that do have surely studied the way of the Desco Numanaius swordsmen.

As one might guess, the Alumno Desco have to be very careful with how and where they do things. The Church hardly takes an appreciative view on the mere idea that someone might be praying to or idolizing the Numan deity, Descoplinae. In fact, doing so is quite enough for a hearing and possibly a heretical burning, should right zealotry fall into place. Therefore, the Alumno Desco are always very, very careful when speaking of their ideals and ways outside the circle of the order itself.

In public, they respect the model that Descoplinae represents and in no way pay tribute to him, which would be blasphemous. In private, it is more than that. In private, be it within the sanctuary of the Order's halls or their own mind, they of Alumno Desco see Descoplinae as much more than some historical throwback. To these men and women, he is a power, and he is venerated as one. This veneration varies from member to member; some think of him as a man, an elderly statesman or Senator or general of Numa who has grown in myth. Some consider him not unlike a Saint of Theus. Others believe him more like a powerful spirit or aspect of Theus, perhaps like that of an angel. And still others believe him to be much more than that.

It is important to remember that while Descoplinae is very important to the Order, the ultimate point of the faith of the Legionnaire is not idol worshiping, but instead focuses on the idea of being faithful to one's comrades and friends, to the Order and to the city and people of Numa. In essence the Order of Alumno Desco has developed into a self appointed 'home guard.' They take the role of protectors, even if the people of Numa don't know or don't care to be protected by them. In some way they are very much like the Knights of the Rose and Cross, but in others they are as dark and willful as the Die Kreuzritter.

There are three tiers within the Order. The first and most basic is that of the Hastatus. The Hastatus are basically those who are new to the group or those

unwilling to go further with the discipline needed for the higher ranks. This is the largest group. Some of the people within this circle could be a part of it for merely social reasons or because they might believe in the ideals of the cause, but no will to pursue them. Three Princes must speak one for in order to be invited by the Order even at this lower ranking.

To become a member of the Princes one must have served no less than two years time as Hastatus and brought into the next level by two members of the Triarius. The Princes are serious men and women, likely on the path to become Triarius themselves. It is not until this level of acceptance can one begin to study the Desco Numanaius school of fighting. Training as one is not mandatory, it is a privilege.

One must serve at least five years as a Princes before being welcomed into the Triarius. These are the most elite and secret members of the Order. It is possible that those within the Hastatus might very well not even know who is or is not a Triarius, for there are some who, for one reason or another, choose not to reveal their identity. (When they choose to retain their identity they will often wear a simple bronze mask.) It is hard, though not impossible to gain the rank of Triarius without being a least somewhat learned in the arts of Desco Numanaius.



Lastly there are the Consuls. Three men or women who make the final decision on any matter brought before them. In the Order, their word is the law. One does not even hear of their existence until admittance into the Princes. In fact, one will not even see one (as far as they know) unless they are brought before them, which usually means some calamity or tragedy has occurred...which likely means that the life of the Princes is probably a short lived thing.

Day to day the Order isn't overly active, though it always seems to have a hand in this or that at any given time. During times of crisis they might be more forceful in showing their presence in the city. They are, at the least, very much interested in the health and vibrancy of Numa, so they try to have spies where they best feel they can help protect the city.

The Order is happiest when things are well in the city and they can quietly lead their lives and the lives of their fellow Numan citizenry in the ideals of Frugalis, Severitas and Fidelis. But they are also

willing to join into small bands or units and patrol the streets, acting to most of the city as vigilantes at best. Despite honor, the Order can be quite dark of purpose however, and the use of an assassin or poison is quite acceptable to the Alumno Desco.



NEW EQUIPMENT

SHORT SWORD

These swords are shorter of length than a heavy weapon and wider of blade than fencing weapons of modern Théah. Swords such as the Numan Gladius are a perfect example of this. The blades of these weapons are heavy and designed for goring an opponent, giving a Free Raise to Lunges. Against longer (reach) or fencing blades (speed) the archaic blade suffers a +5 to the TN to Parry in an Active Defense. They do 2k2 damage.



NEW POISONS

DOMINIC'S REVENGE

Special, see below / Special, see below / 1 Day

A special concoction originally attributed to Dominic Mondavi a distant relative of Acelde Mondavi. His sister, an escaped fate witch had used her magic to make him fearful of spiders. This poison, it was said, helped him even the odds. It can be spread on weapons and introduced via wounds into the bloodstream. It is very powerful as it causes confusion to the victim. They are unable to concentrate and it is difficult to do fine motor skills. In game terms all physical and mental skill rolls have their TN's raised by 5 per application for the duration of the poison

REMEDY OF TRUST

None, see below / 24 hours / Special, see below

Also referred to as the faithful wife's best friend, this poison's origins are lost to history. However, its application is as much a repeated trend of the times as it is social commentary. The poison itself has no harmful effects. Repeated uses will not kill the victim or cause irreversible lasting damage. What it does do, however, is cause all the muscles of the face and genitals to relax completely. The victim is left with a hideously distorted face, and an inability to perform sexually. This poison has long been used on cheating husbands by their wives / mistresses / significant others. It is especially interesting to note that because of the length of time necessary for the poisons effects to be noticed (24 hours), the victim often found themselves in the company of the 'other woman' at the time. Recovery from the poison can take days, weeks, or even months as the victim will need to exercise the afflicted muscles (much like the cure for pins and needles)



TORTURE IN THÉAH

Rugen: [admiring his torture contraption] Beautiful isn't it? It took me half a lifetime to invent it. I'm sure you've discovered my deep and abiding interest in pain. Presently I'm writing the definitive

work on the subject, so I want you to be totally honest with me on how the machine makes you feel. This being our first try, I'll use the lowest setting. [Rugen activates the machine. Wesley writhes.] As you know, the concept of the suction pump is centuries old. Really that's all this is except that instead of sucking water, I'm sucking life. I've just sucked one year of your life away. I might one day go as high as five, but I really don't know what that would do to you. So, let's just start with what we have. What did this do to you? Tell me. And remember, this is for posterity...so be honest. How do you feel? [Wesley cries and moans in pain] Interesting.

-The Princess Bride (1987)

Torture was long been used by many governments and countries and organization. In the Numan Republic, for example, a slave's testimony was admissible only if it was extracted by torture, on the assumption that slaves could not be trusted to reveal the truth voluntarily. Ancient and medieval philosophers—notably, Aristotle and Francis Bacon—were staunch champions of the utility of carefully monitored torture to the justice system.

In much of Théah, medieval and many modern courts freely inflict torture, depending on the crimes of the accused and the social status of the suspect. Torture is seen as a legitimate means for justice to extract confessions, or obtain the names of accomplices or other information about the crime. Often, defendants sentenced to death are tortured prior to execution, so as to have a last chance that they disclose the names of their accomplices.

Here is a listing of torture methods you can Google or check out on Wikipedia: *Abacinate, Aggravated tooth extraction, Bastinado, Beatings and physical violence, Blinding with light, Boiling, Bone breaking, Branding, Burning/Cigar torture, Castration, Child abuse (physical), Choking, Cutting, Denailing, Disfigurement, Drowning or Water cure, Dry drowning, Elder Abuse (physical), Flagellation, Flaying, Foot roasting, Foot whipping, Force-feeding, Genital mutilation/ circumcision, Goat tongue, Hair burning, Kneecapping, Limb/finger removal, Mancuerda, Mouth stretching, Oxygen deprivation, Peine forte et dure, Picquet, Pistol-whipping, or beating with rifle butt, Pitchcapping, Rape, Incest and other forms of sexual assault, Scalping, Scaphism, Sensory deprivation, Shabach technique, Sleep deprivation, Sound (Extremely high volumes, dynamic range, low frequency, noise intended to interfere with rest, cognition and concentration), Squassation, Starvation (forced), Strappado (also known as "reverse hanging"), Ta'liq hanging from a metal bar., Tickling, Tongue removal, Water boarding, Water torture, Whipping.*

Here is a list of torture devices you can Google or check out on Wikipedia: *Boot, Brank, Brazen bull, Breaking wheel, Crocodile shears, Foot press, Foot screw, Heretic's fork, Instep borer, Iron Maiden, Judas Chair, Kia quen, Mancuerda, Pau de Arara, Peace breaker's muzzle, Pear, Pear of Anguish, Pillory, Rack, Scarpines, Scavenger's daughter, Scold's bridle, Spanish boot, Stocks, Tablillas, Tean zu, Thumbscrew, Toe breaker, Tucker telephone, Horse rape.*

TORTURE IN YOUR GAME

John Sheridan: You just have to say, "No, I won't" one more time than they can say, "Yes, you will."

- Babylon 5: *Intersections in Real Time*

Torture is a very dark matter that reaches into the utmost and despicable low of human nature. What man is willing to do to it is simply tragic and horrible. As this is a roleplaying game, meant to be played for fun, one would consider that such a subject would hardly seem desirable. However, the era in which 7th Sea rests and the reality and fiction of that era often touches upon the darker aspect of humanity, and thus torture. Mel Gibson's ending moments in *Braveheart* is probably the most easily pointed too example, but there are more.

A 'Your Dumb Clause' If You Don't Know This Already: *Roleplaying the depth of emotional and physical turmoil involved in torture would be far beyond the normal scope of any game, and thus is often best handled "off screen" (such as Princess Leia's torture at the hands of Darth Vader in A New Hope) and most assuredly not be LARP'd in any fashion what so ever.*

As being handled "off screen" there is little need for "torture rules" but in the event that your game might get into a situation where some dice rolls might more easily bring about a scene's conclusion, we have brought you the following:

MECHANICS

Interrogation is completed via the same way that most Repartee Actions are, though they have a definite aspect of a physical element, like that of combat. A series of roles are needed, the interrogator's skills versus the Resolve of the poor creature being administered to, to break (mentally, speaking) a victim.

REPARTEE : TORTURE

Trait Used: Wits (May add the Interrogation skill as Unkept dice)

TN: (Target's Resolve +1) x 5

Torture is any act by which severe pain, whether physical or psychological, is intentionally inflicted on a person as a means of intimidation, a deterrent, revenge, a punishment, or as a method for the extraction of information or confessions. It is also used as a method of coercion or as a tool to control groups seen as a threat. Throughout history it has been used as a method of effecting religious conversion or political "re-education".

The torturer makes a series of Contested Resolve checks against the target for each session with which he works with his subject; which can be as little as fifteen minutes to as long as several hours. When the roll is made, if the torturer is successful he gains a Breaking Point. He also gains an addition Breaking Point for every ten points he beat the roll by. When the torturer succeeds in gaining a number of Breaking Points equal to Resolve x 10, he has broken his subject. Each time he fails to succeed on a session roll however, he loses one-half the number of Breaking Points he has gathered thus far.

A Torturous Example: Galiaus, one of the most feared interrogators of all of the Ussuran lands has been given a subject to test his skills upon. Michael was, until recently, a part of the Montaigne invasion force. Unfortunately he was captured and is now being tortured for information on the Montaigne war strategy. Michael is fairly strong headed with a Resolve of four. This means that each session Galiaus must make a Wits Check against Michael's Resolve TN of 25 $[(4+1) \times 5]$. Each time Galiaus wins such a roll he gains a Breaking Point. In this case he needs 40 of them to break Michael to get what he needs from him.

When the victim's breaking point is reached, he can attempt to "say 'No' one more time" and resist spilling his guts (in the figurative sense). He makes a Resolve roll with a TN of 40.

MECHANICAL OPTIONS & NOTES

Mind & Matter:

Simply, damage to the human body (cutting, bludgeoning, racking, etc.) and mind (deprivation,

mind games) can have simple mechanical effects. Physical damage follows the normal rules of combat and wounds. At a certain point, dice cease to Explode. It is certainly possible for Gamemasters to create a mental version of Flesh Wounds and Wounds, using Panache and Wits. What mental weapons might be used and what they might do as far as damage is entirely up to the Gamemaster.

Strong Feelings on the Subject:

A Gamemaster and Player might agree that their character has a lot to lose on a matter and they might agree that the amount of Breaking Points needed by a torturer to be more than the standard "Resolve x 10." If so, the Gamemaster can simply give a bonus to the victim. Perhaps allowing the victim to make a Resolve roll, the total of which is added to the total number of Breaking Points needed to break him. This is an immense bonus however and should be rewarded with care and with some cost to the victim, such as costing a number of multiple Drama Dice.



Reputation Dice:

Reputation dice can be used by both the tortured and the torturer; adding unkept dice to a roll for the torturer and a number of Raises to the Resolve TN for the victim. Usually a torturer will not be well known enough to have and use Reputation Points however, so they may instead use one-half the reputation of their master, so long as the victim knows who is torturing them. Also, the master must be directly involved in the affair to use the bonus. For example, its not enough that some no-name torturer in le'Empereur's dungeons is torturing you because that what they do down there to pretty much everyone. No, the torturer must get it directly from le'Empereur (the master) to do the deed. Meaning that the master who's Reputation is being flaunted has a direct investment in the matter.

Reputation Dice might also be used by the victim of torture to aid in "say 'No' one more time."

A Knight's Vow:

Knights of the Rose & Cross seemingly have an immensely gross advantage in the Vow ability of

their Order. After all a statement of, "I vow that you shall never get the location of Lady Corbeauombre's child's sanctuary from my lips," could be quite a problem for a torturer, if coming from a Knight.

The Cause So Great:

Magistrate: The prisoner wishes to say a word.

Wallace: FREEEEE-DOMMMMMM.

- Braveheart (1995)

Simply put, some folks are willing to suffer and die for something. As quoted above, William Wallace in the film Braveheart is an example of such a person and such a situation. In these cases the victim is going to die, with no hope of rescue, but in return becomes a noble martyr for his cause.

Tell Me No Lies:

Davian: Ethan, where's the Rabbit's Foot?

Hunt: The Rabbit's Foot is in Paris.

Davian: It's not in Paris.

-Mission: Impossible III (2006)

Sometimes a victim might try and lie, to fool his captor into believing that he is giving up the information when really he's not. Sometimes these lies can be proven true or false rather simply. Sometimes it would take a great deal of effort or time to verify or disprove; time likely not available to the torturer or his or her master.

It is not often that a torturer will simply take an offering such as this without inflicting further treatment, "just in case." In fact, someone might continue to torture even if he's broken a subject, simply not aware that he had succeeded in his tasks.

The Blood of Another:

Owen Davian: Who are you? Do you have a wife? A girlfriend? Whoever she is, I'm gonna find her. I'm gonna hurt her. And then I'm going to kill you, right in front of her.

-Mission: Impossible III (2006)

It is quite possible, if not utterly likely, that a torturer might cause injury or lay cruelty upon another instead of the victim himself to cause the victim to give up information. In these situations the heroic victim of torture in most literature gives up or

gives into his punisher, who is simply not willing to allow another to suffer for himself.

It is quite often that the torturer will have to prove his metal; to show the victim that he is quite willing to do whatever it takes. If this "trust" is not developed between victim and torturer, this becomes a matter of matching wits and can simply be resolved like any other session roll for Breaking Points. A torturer could gain a number of additional Free Raises depending upon the secondary victim's relationship to the victim.

Advantages:

A certain number of Advantages would certainly affect a torture scenario. Here's a list and how they might come into play.

- *Faith.* As this Advantage is undefined to a large extent, so it is left to the Gamemaster to define in this case.
- *Indomitable Will.* The +2 unkept dice can be granted as a bonus in both the Contested Roll and the "say 'No' one more time" phase. During a session, when a torturer makes a Wits roll, +10 is added to the TN needed. In the "say 'No' one more time" phase, its bonus is as normally used.
- *Man of Will.* This Advantage has the greatest effect upon a situation involving torture. Quite simply, someone who has Man of Will simply is not going to break under any circumstance that they do not want to.
- *Pain Tolerance* and *Toughness.* These Advantages can give bonuses in resisting torture. It adds the normal bonuses to resist physical pain as normal and generally gives a +5 to all Contested Roll TNs.

THE REWARD OF TORTURE

Should a hero undergo torture and live to survive the ordeal, he should gain a nice number of Drama Dice as a result. This is left to the GM to decide upon, but 5-10 of them, depending upon how intense the situation was, would likely be a good reward. Note that these Drama Dice cannot be transferred into Experience Points.

SECTION FOUR

SECRETS

THIEF'S REPRIEVE

Part Four

Safe in the confessional, Tino knew he was home free. The partition slid open and the voice of the Bishop issued forth. "Tell me what you've found out, thief." Tino thought about this business. No need to go into the details of getting there, Tino instead started with the rooftop.

He'd only had to wait a few minutes for the guards to come back to their cups and seconds later they were sound asleep. After that he easily made his way onto the veranda and from there was able to overhear the whole conversation. He still didn't know which of the cardinals the Captain had spoken with, even with the Bishop's prompting. However, he was able to state that they continually spoke of "removing thorns." This seemed to satisfy the Bishop. Or at least Tino thought it did, as the Bishop remained quiet throughout.

When he had finished his report, the Bishop finally spoke. "You've done well, my son. However, no one must know of this meeting, so you will wait here for 5 minutes before leaving. That will give me time to be elsewhere." With that the Bishop rose and Tino heard the sound of the confessional door closing. He sat alone in the dark of the confessional for quite some time with only his thoughts and the hushed tones of a few lonely parishioners scattered about outside.

With his time up, Tino opened the door and made to leave. However, what he saw stopped him in his tracks. The Bishop was standing mere feet away speaking to several men and women in the uniforms of The Cardinal's Guard. He overheard the Bishop saying, "...of course, the law is clear." The Bishop turned and Tino saw a slight smile, one completely devoid of humor, on his face as he continued. "That man," he said pointing directly at Tino, "confessed that he is part of a conspiracy to kill Cardinal Durand del Falisci. He

escaped from the Stone Giant earlier today, followed the Cardinal, and poisoned his Guards. But, by the grace of Theus was unable to complete the deed owing to the presence of Captain Favero. You may take him away, Captain Mantovani."

As Tino was being lead away still protesting his innocence, Bishop Numanus was already planning his next step. With the thief framed for the murders and a 'conspiracy' out to get Cardinal Durand del Falisci, he was one step closer removing the Cardinal from office. "When you seek to remove thorns," he chuckled to himself, "be careful you don't get stuck."



NEIGHBORHOOD PERSONAE AND HOOKS

LE ROVINE

Madame Donanoche's Boarding House: Madame Violetta Dananoche - In truth, there is another reason for her selection of boarders. She converted to Objectionism during a lengthy time in the employ of an Eisen visiting the city. She rents rooms only to those who quietly share her faith. Given the nature of Numa, any Objectionist who publicly proclaims his religion opens himself up to duels, harassment and assassination. However, in the quiet confines of Violetta's house, they are able to be more open about their faith and even spend time in the small chapel she has built in the basement.

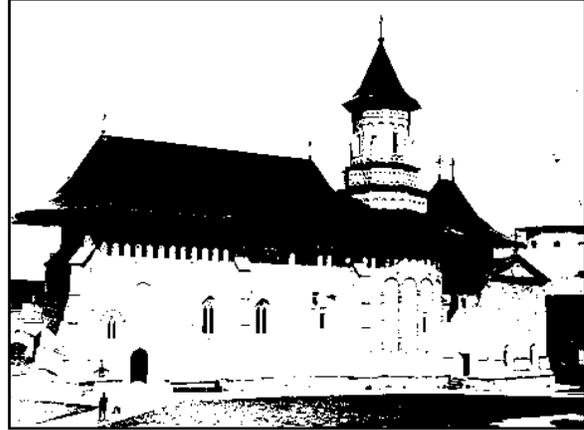
Madame Francesca Delaga's Boarding House: Madame Francesca Delaga - Delaga also harbors a terrible grudge against Madame Donanoche, a former courtesan who runs a nearby boarding house.

The Church of the Capuchins: The masterwork of art by Renail Guidoro of the Second prophet



defeating the King of Legion hangs in the church, donated by Cardinal Falisci. This painting is the source of some controversy due to the resemblance of the King of Legion to Bishop Numanis. (See the description of Renail Guidoro.)

While the Bishop has demanded the painting removed and destroyed, the cardinal will not hear of it, thus it hangs in the church. It is quite possible that the Bishop might seek to have the painting stolen or perhaps damaged in a small fire, but he must make any such moves carefully and be sure that any actions could never be proven to be connected to him.



PIANURA DELL'INONDAZIONE (PIANURA)

The Pit: Claudio Accorsi - the more gregarious of the two, Claudio is the older of the brothers (by some 4 years). Given his social connections and outgoing personality, people often assume that he is the idea man behind The Pit. Those people would be wrong. It was Claudio that got the brothers in trouble with creditors in the first place; he has a penchant for get-rich-quick schemes and is always in debt. It's only been through Teobaldo's influence that neither of them has ended up face down in the Tigris.

Teobaldo Accorsi - the true architect behind The Pit. Teobaldo is quiet and unassuming, but with a dry and extremely sharp wit. Where others might have given up on Claudio as a gambler and leach, Teobaldo was able to find just exactly the right job for him.

Plot Hooks:

A) The heroes are in the employ of one of the merchant princes (or alternately any powerful NPC) it turns out that said NPC wishes to view a fight. However, none of the heroes have previously been to a fight and word on the street is that there isn't a fight scheduled for quite some time, how can the heroes get a fight organized and quickly?

B) Claudio and Teobaldo are in a bit of a pickle. It turns out that they didn't quite block off all the tunnels, and this particular tunnel leads to an ancient mausoleum. Worse, ghouls who've previously taken up residence in the mausoleum can smell the blood of the combatants. And they're hungry.

C) A young child whose parent has gone missing hires heroes. It turns out that there have been spates of recent 'disappearances.' Turns out that Claudio and Teobaldo are getting themselves involved in some more 'interesting' fights. For a sufficient price, they can even have people kidnapped to fight for rich patrons amusement.

VECCHIACITTA' & NUOVO VECCHIACITTA'

Sugicci Imports (Nuovo Vecchiacittà):

Antoni Sugicci - A middle-aged man with graying hair and a softly confident presence. He always knows what to say, and can always close the deal. He makes no pretense about being a dangerous man; he has never really lifted a sword, and doesn't want to invite violence into his life. He just wants to do business. He married young, and his wife gave him one child before she died of natural causes. His son, a young man of twenty or so, is working for him and is busy making legitimate trading deals in Castille.

Currently, Antoni is playing a very dangerous game. In addition to his legitimate business, he also makes a good business fencing stolen goods out of the back of the store and using the front to launder the profits. For three generations the Sugicci family has been the go-to-guys for petty criminals and muggers looking to trade their ill-gotten gains for less incriminating cash. Its location has always been a resource; close enough to the criminals to be convenient, but close enough to the middle class to maintain a veneer of respectability.

Plot Hooks:

A) The heroes need to unload something sensitive, and fast. Maybe its some documents they shouldn't have, maybe they stole something, or maybe they just find themselves on the wrong side of a convoluted plot. No matted the reason, they need to get to a fence. Somebody knows somebody, and they find their way to Antoni's door. Still, he hasn't survived this long by being foolish, and he may require something of them to compensate for his risk.

B) The Church has learned about Antoni's operation, specifically that he has come into

possession of some dangerous items. They don't want to go through normal channels, because that would alert the spies of the various princes. A concerned member of the clergy approaches some pious and friendly heroes to do the job, quietly. Antoni is not willing to give his life for trinkets; so getting the goods is easy. But when assassins of the Qatih'i show up, the heroes begin to wonder what they have gotten into.

The Birds of the Sky (Nuovo Vecchiacittà):

Aldo Ghioletti - A handful of the regular patrons know that Ghioletti is actually a member of a small heretical group known as the Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven. The group believes that Theus created 777 souls at the beginning of the world that are continually reborn after death. However, when a man commits a sinful or evil deed, his soul is sundered and broken, and split into multiple bodies when it is reborn. Most people, particularly the downtrodden and poor, have only a tiny fraction of a soul within themselves while nobles and the worthy have greater portions culminating with the Prophets who bore a full soul within their bodies. Given the terrible state of corruption in the world, many portions of souls now reside in lesser beings, such as beasts, animals and fish. Only birds cannot bear a soul because its weight would prevent them from flying. Only by generous and heroic deeds can a man restore the lost portions of his soul. Part of this group's beliefs condemns the practice of killing or consuming any being with a soul, so they do not eat red meat or fish. Members of this heretical group often dine here and gather in a back room once a month to discuss their beliefs and proclaim their faith to one another. They do so carefully, however, because the Inquisition has declared the 777 are heretics and to be burned at the stake.

Copello Bondicci's Locksmith:

Copello Bondicci - Before that injury Capello was known as Volpe, the city's greatest thief who was able to pick any lock, slip through any crack to reach his aim. While other men pilfered jewels and paintings, he focused on vital information and secrets. During his last job, he obtained proof of a terrible secret, a secret that could tear the Vaticine Church apart. To avoid that, he hid the proof and told no one. But he ran afoul of some Vaticine guards that night and fell several stories to the ground. The broken leg never healed properly, so he decided to retire from crime and become a locksmith.

Plot Hook: Even after two years, Capello still fears that someone will discover his action, so he needs someone to retrieve the secret from its hiding place inside a safe without a key in a gargoyle on the tallest building in the city. Then he just needs someone to break back into one of the most secure buildings in Numa and replace the evidence before anyone notices it is missing.

Broken Tears Abbey: (Vecchiacittà) Between various elite members of the city and the most base and degraded criminals, the abbey and good works of Sister Gallandro are under constant threat.

Plot Hooks:

A) Someone comes into the abbey, stabbed in the back, warning the Sister to be wary of her life but dies before he can give her details.

B) Someone from the Council has dropped a spy within the Abbey. Why would someone do this?

C) One of the heroes is ambushed one night and left for dead. When he awakens he is in the abbey and Sister Gallandro is taking care of him.

D) Sister Gallandro approaches the heroes. She tells them of a man they found in the river and brought to her. How he has no memory and she wants them to help him. What is it about the tattoo on his back that has her so scared?

E) A satchel of guilders...enough to construct a cathedral...has found its way onto the abbey's doorstep. So why has Sister Gallandro contacted the heroes to ask them to find out who left it and return it to them?



VILLAGGIO DELLA CHIESA

The House of the Green Walls: A game at the House goes thusly. Each player receives 40 palm-sized wooden discs called favori and places his

signature or mark upon them. These are the stakes used in their games, though regulars often bring their own custom-made favori. The most popular card game is called Cardinal's Folly. Each player is dealt 3 face-down cards with betting after each card. Any player who do not drop out during the bidding reveal their three cards and total their value (face cards are worth 0 points unless all three cards are face cards and then they count for 10 points each). The person with the highest total wins the pot. Ties, split it.

At the end of the evening, the losers owe favors to whomever won their favori, though generally if two players have equal numbers of each others favors, they simply call it a draw. The exact nature of the favors owed is always handled in private and the losers may always refuse at the risk of a reputation of not paying his debts and being barred from the House. Often, a person will redeem multiple favori at a time for a more substantial favor. Some typical favors include helping research a matter of doctrine or local information (1 favori), employing a peasant in a menial position (1 favori), voting on a matter of little importance (20 favori), employing a close relative in a position of power (20 favori) and voting on a matter of extreme importance such as the election of a Hierophant (up to 400 favori). One tale told by regulars at the House states that one of the Hierophants was elected solely due to an extremely lucky night at Cardinal's Folly.

DIOCLASIAN

Patero's:

Stefano Pavlovich - Son of an Ussuran immigrant and a courtesan mother, Stefano is tall, dark and handsome. He has a practiced manner that allows him to socialize with ease, and he is a constant fixture at Patero's. Some think that he is the lover of the mistress, but the truth (which is an open truth to those who think to ask) is that he is in the employ of the house. He is a skilled swordsman, and while he does not interfere with fights between patrons, he is quick to step in if the duels should spill over and disturb those who are not involved. He is also a fantastic card player, and has the amazing ability to clean someone out, yet make them recall the experience so fondly that they wish to return.

Pia - Pia is the current owner of Patero's, having won it in a game of dice from its previous owner (she suspects that the dice were loaded, but won't question a good thing). She has been very successful thus far, and has used Patero's in order to free herself from the need of patronage. Rather than be beholden to one man, she now uses all of high society to support herself, and couldn't be happier.

Plot Hooks:

A) Pia won the ownership of Patero's with loaded dice, as the previous owner kept a secret. She was secretly under the thumb of some terrible group who expected to use Patero's for their own ends. After she assumed ownership, Pia receives a message; work for them or die. Never one to lay down without a fight, she hires the heros to investigate, having heard of their reputation as just individuals.

B) Pia has a very dangerous little secret. Shortly after she won Patero's, she made a deal with some Eisen diplomats who stopped by for a few rounds of cards. Now, she is one of the few people in Vodacce who will trade perhaps the most dangerous of goods: guilders. If the heros find out, will they keep her secret, or will they sell her out to Prince Vestini's Hand, who are already on her trail?



The Hanging Gardens of Numa:

Guido di Saltamarccia - Head Gardener, and a man who knows how to keep his mouth shut. He makes a small living working in The Gardens, keeping them pristine, and blooming. He has his 2 sons, Roberto and Marcus as helpers, along with several other workers that keep the fountains flowing and the waterways clear. If anyone knows The Gardens inside and out, it is Guido.

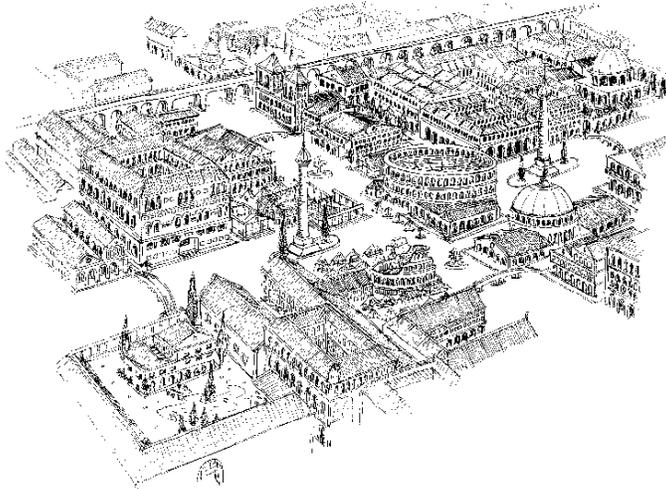
Roberto di Saltamarccia - Elder son of Guido, and one who will take the position, once his father retires. He is the schemer of the family, and knows how to make a quick buck. He has taken to growing particular mushrooms and other 'useful' plants that are needed for making certain potions, be they for healing or for harm. He has scattered these plants throughout the garden (though for the mushrooms, he created a small room down inside the wall, near a water source, to have a damp dark area to grow them in). He has also learned that certain plant extracts, when fed to the large cats, can make for a

more interesting hunt, and he privately has put out feelers on the subject to several high ranking Nobles, as a added extra for their 'private hunts'.

Marcus di Saltalamarccia - The younger son (by 2 years), he is also the 'muscle' of the two boys. Whatever his older brother has scheming, Marcus is there to help him with it, to get his part of the gains. He has also taken to learning how to handle the big cats from the Head Gameskeeper, especially the lions, because of his strength.

Georgio Medicali - Head Gameskeeper for The Gardens. His job is to keep the animals healthy and happy, especially the large cats. He recently acquired a pair of young lions from a Montaigne dealer and is looking forward to 'trying them out.'

Plot Hook: For all of the garden's beauty, there is a darker side to it, and not all of it during the night. It is called "Il Gioco Di Cercare" (The Hunt Game). Several of the "larger" animals kept in the gardens, are a few of the great cats. A man found by Dioclasian's private guards to be guilty of 'taking unwarranted advantage of woman', or abusing children; a woman found cheating on her husband, and other offenses, are given the option to 'volunteer' themselves for Il Gioco Di Cercare. They are given a small dull dagger, and a loaf of bread, and sent into a larger part of the gardens, where they have to make it across to a chosen point (GM's discretion), without getting killed by one of the cats, or tripping one of the many traps built into the gardens. (These can be anything that can be thought up by the GM, that would work in the setting. The traps are well known to the people who visit The Gardens often, so they are able to avoid them, and some can be 'turned off', though sometimes they are 'missed or forgotten' to be turned off on purpose.) Nobles make bets while waiting for the outcome, while dining in style in a secure part of The Gardens. The height of The Gardens makes it very hard for the convicted to try and climb down the walls to escape, and archers are posted during the hunt, to keep this from happening. The Garden can also be hired out for 'private hunts.'



Manor Arachnidan: The Voss family is fairly stable but there's always the possibility that they might need a hand with something.

Plot Hooks:

A) Alberto's family has been attacked, his son abducted. Help Alberto get him back and a lot of people will be happy.

B) Guard a "special package" (read: Box Full of Spider) to its destination for Alberto. Then chase after it when it is stolen.

LAVENZO

The Shroud of St. Simone:

Teofania Aspasi - appears to be quiet, friendly and a devout Vaticine. But in the heart of this pious widow lurks a terrible madness...a pathological hatred for both Fate Witches and courtesans. Teofania's sons were used as pawns in a rivalry between a local lord's Strega wife and kept

mistress, manipulated both emotionally and magically into the duel that led to their deaths by each others' blades. Seeing the callous disregard these women had for innocents caused Teofania's mind to crumble and she vowed that she would not rest until she could eradicate as many of the "twin whores of Legion, Sex and Sorte" from Vodacce as she could. In her four years, Teofania has dispatched a little over a dozen such victims. Her methods are slow and devious. Once or twice every few months or so, when she has to make a dress for a Fate Witch or a courtesan, she'll make sure to use one of her "special" dyes. These dyes are heavily impregnated with arsenic salts. The result is usually a slow, lingering death in a span of months. Even in the Great Game, where assassination is commonplace, random killing is still hard to puzzle out especially when there are so many other obvious suspects all around. And given the dressmaker's piety to the Church, she has done nothing yet to warrant suspicion.

Plot Hooks:

A) A Fate Witch has been found poisoned and circumstantial evidence points to her abused Vedova sister. Vodacce justice is not known for being particularly merciful or patient. Or, in some cases, caring about the actual facts. Can the Heroes prove the innocence of the accused in time?

B) Sophia's Daughters are alarmed at the growing deaths of Strega and courtesans that seem to stem from Numa. They're frantically trying to piece together just who could be responsible and why. However, a few of the more extreme members of the Bane faction of the Rilasciare are aware of the Daughters' activities and see this as a prime opportunity to throw off the yoke of partnership between the Daughters and the Free Thinkers once and for all. It's a race to find the killer, but one side wants to neutralize while the other wants to protect. Who will get there first and which side in this situation will the Heroes choose?

C) The Fate Witch and the courtesan responsible for the deaths of Teofania's sons have arrived in Numa with their lord, their rivalry still in full swing. With her enemies so close, Aspasi's madness has escalated. Can the Heroes prevent more deaths from occurring? If they find out Teofania's circumstances, will they want to?

**Theatre of Folly**

While the scrawny owner Tigran Naticelli and the slow-speaking playwright Andare Reni seem as far apart as night and day to most, they do share a secret. They are both members of a secret society named Lega di Folly, an offshoot of the Rilasciare. Their plays portray the nobles of Vodacce as idiots and buffoons, so busy dealing with manipulation and intrigue that they don't ever notice the important aspects to life such as freedom or love. These themes have gone unnoticed simply because the plays are extremely entertaining, the Theatre never focuses on any one noble family and the nobles are often so busy intriguing with each other that they're not paying any attention to the play itself.

Alessio's Il Grano

Alessio Cangì He is short, stocky, and very energetic man in his mid to late 40's. He starts his day very early and works late into the evening, allowing himself a rest in the slow mid-afternoon hours. Although he is an excellent chef, he leaves most of the food preparation to a well-trained staff, and spends his time meeting and greeting patrons.

Plot Hooks:

A) Il Grano has served as a meeting place for the Seven Princes on occasion. One reason that the food at Il Grano has a distinctive flavor is that Alessio uses spices from the Crescent Empire. He is guarded with this secret, as he doesn't want to draw the ire of the Church and he doesn't want to appear to be playing favorites with the Bernoulli's.

B) The Heroes could be needed to protect/procure a shipment from the Crescent Empire, while avoiding the attention of the Church or any of the other Princes.



SECRETS OF THE MAJOR PERSONAE

CAPTAIN VINCENTE FAVERO

**Hero**

Brawn: 3
 Finesse: 3
 Wits: 3
 Resolve: 3
 Panache: 5
 Reputation: 22
 Background: Lorenzo 2
 Arcana: Commanding

Advantages: Eisen, Vodacce (R/W), Combat Reflexes, Commission: Captain, Swordsman's Guild, Left Handed

Ambrosia (Master): Feint 5, Pommel Strike 5, Riposte 5, Exploit Weakness (Ambrosia) 5

Athlete: Climbing 3, Footwork 5, Sprinting 3, Throwing 2, Leaping 3, Side-Step 4, Swimming 2

Captain: Strategy 3, Tactics 4, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 3, Leadership 5

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 5, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 4, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 4, Throw (Improvised Weapon) 3
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5
Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 3, Reload (Firearms) 2
Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 4, Underworld Lore 2

The good captain has only one secret, which, if revealed would spell disaster. He has an ancient, though strong, tie to the Lorenzo family through his mother's side. He is aware of this shame, and it drives him to seek justice in all forms.

He also secretly believes that Bishop Numanus is up to no good. While he cannot point to any one act or event, the good Bishop is simply too organized and resourceful to have that simplistic a view of the law. He also has a continuing professional friction with the captain of the Cardinal's Guard, Domenica Mantovani (see below) over jurisdiction in and around the area of the Villaggio della Chiesa.

RENIAL GUIDORO



Hero

Brawn: 2
 Finesse: 2
 Wits: 4
 Resolve: 3
 Panache: 2
 Reputation: 25
 Background: Fear 3
 Arcana: None

Advantages: Castille, Montaigne (R/W), Théan (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Connections (several), Memberships: Social Clubs, Patrons (artistic), Servant (henchman)
Artist: Drawing 3, Sculpting 1, Painting 5
Courtier: Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Gaming 4, Gossip 4, Mooch 5, Politics 1, Scheming 1, Sincerity 3
Herbalist: Cooking 2, Diagnosis 1, First Aid 1, Flora 3, Compounds 4
Merchant: Hagglng 3
Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 2, Philosophy 1, Research 1, Law 2, Natural Philosophy 3
Streetwise: Socializing 3, Street Navigation 3, Shopping 1, Underworld Lore 1, Gambling 4

Renail knows more than a few secrets, being fairly deeply plugged into the social fabric of Numa. He rather easily finds himself in the most elite of

rooms, a guest of one noble or church patron or another during the day to the seediest of card houses the evening of that same day. Renail has been approached by more than a few groups seeking to recruit him including, the Invisible College and the Rilasciare. Such attempts of recruitment have been fairly coy and Renail is unsure at best as to what these offers have truly been.

Most recently, with the Numanis Devil Painting incident, he has come to the attention of the Die Kreuzritter through Cardinal Falisci and his friend, Cardinal Durkheim. They have most recently, taken to watching the painter to see if Bishop Numanis will seek earthly revenge upon Renali.

CAPTAIN DOMENICA MANTOVANI



Villain

Brawn: 2
 Finesse: 4
 Wits: 4
 Resolve: 3
 Panache: 3
 Reputation: 15
 Background: Vow 3
 Arcana: Misguided

Advantages: Castille, Eisen, Montaigne, Thean (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Church Guard, Commission: Captain
Swords of Soloman (Master): Bind 5, Disarm 5, Attack (Shield) 5, Exploit Weakness (SoS) 5
Athlete: Climbing 2, Footwork 5, Sprinting 3, Throwing 1
Commander: Strategy 4, Tactics 4, Diplomacy 2, Incitation 5, Leadership 3, Logistics 3
Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 5, Parry (Fencing) 5
Shield: Parry (Shield) 5
Priest: Oratory 1, Philosophy 3, Religious Lore (Vatatine) 4, Writing 4, Theology 3
Wrestling: Grapple 4, Break 3, Escape 3

Captain Mantovani has, indeed, seen many of the cardinals come and go. She has also had to perform favors for them, whether they were good men or not. Domenica has given false alibis to cardinals sought for various crimes, she has bribed more than a few young ladies not to mention the names of their children's fathers, and in one case, she personally silenced a vocal detractor of one of the cardinals. All these things she's done in the name of Theus, and for the good of The Church.

BISHOP FIDELIS SENECA NUMANUS



Villain

Brawn: 2
 Finesse: 2
 Wits: 4
 Resolve: 2
 Panache: 2
 Reputation: -35
 Background: Mole 3
 Arcana: Careful

Advantages: Castille (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Eisen, Thean (R/W), Numan Education, Debater, Ordained, Membership: NOM

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1

Firearms: Attack (Firearms) 1

Criminal: Gambling 4, Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Cheating 5

Politician: Etiquette 4, Oratory 3, Socializing 2, Diplomacy 4, Incitation 2, Politics 3, Rabble-Rousing 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 4

Priest: Oratory 3, Philosophy 2, Religious Lore (Vaticine) 3, Writing 3, Theology 3

Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 1, Philosophy 2, Research 4, Law 5

The good bishop was placed in his current position to influence the city of Numa and the Vaticine Church for NOM. His ability to manipulate the laws while ignoring the spirit of those laws has allowed him to run the city virtually unchallenged (that is save the suspicions of Captain Vincente Favero). In addition, because his responsibilities include acting as liaison between the cardinals and all governmental bodies, he has ensured that the cardinals only hear what he wants them to.

He is aware of the relationship between Captain Favero and Cardinal Durand del Falisci. While he would dearly love to get rid of the good captain, he is a careful and patient man. He is quite certain that the good Captain will provide his own noose. He is also aware of the friction between Captain Favero and Captain Mantovani and encourages it as much as he is able. He thus keeps them from turning their efforts toward him.



SECRETS OF THE MINOR PERSONAE

ALBERTO VOSS



Henchman

Brawn: 2
 Finesse: 2
 Wits: 2
 Resolve: 2
 Panache: 3
 Reputation: 25
 Background: Lost Love 1, Assassin 1, Rivalry 1
 Arcana: None

Advantages: Vodacce (R/W), Connections (Many), Night Trained, Poison Immunity (all Spiders)

Pyeryem (1/4 Blood): Knacks: Speak (Arachnids) 5 (See Notes Below)

Courtier: Dancing 4, Etiquette 4, Fashion 2, Oratory 1, Gaming 3, Gossip 5, Memorizing 4, Politics 3, Scheming 4, Sincerity 3

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 1

Doctor: Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Veterinarian 3

Fence: Appraising 3, Socializing 3, Hagglng 3, Shopping 3, Underworld Lore 5

Fencing: Attack (Fencing) 1, Parry (Fencing) 1

Herbalist: Cooking 3, Diagnosis 3, First Aid 3, Poison 5

Knife: Attack (Knife) 1, Parry (Knife) 1

Scholar: History 2, Mathematics 2, Philosophy 2, Research 4, Astronomy 1, Natural Philosophy 3

Sorcery Note: As a 'quarter blood' Alberto has only the smallest touch of sorcery, enough to basically allow him to commune with spiders. How or where, or by what breeding through out the years that this sorcery came from is something of a mystery, even to Alberto's family, but it is a power they have had for several generations now.

While Alberto himself is a simple man many who visit him and seek him out are anything but simple. He often innocently overhears things or is simply told such things outright and thus, he knows how to keep a secret.

Plot Hooks:

A) The PCs master wants to speak with Alberto for some reason, and he wants to do it now. It is up to them to make it happen. How busy Alberto is and how long they might have to wait until he is not busy

is up to you the GM. Alberto has many friends that will not be pleased to see him unhappy in anyway. Perhaps they will have to make a deal with another lord to let them have his appointment.

B) A Inquisition Knight is pushing his luck in going after Alberto. Bribe him away or Kill him, your master or benefactor doesn't care which. The problem is that the Knight is Alberto's third cousin...family always makes these things so messy.

C) Guard a "special package" (read: Box Full of Spider) to its destination for Alberto. Then chase after it when it is stolen.

D) A body is found. Who? Maybe a friend of the PCs. A very good, lifelong friend is best. When they check it out, thirteen spiders crawl out of the corpses mouth and nose. The arachnids are their only clues and no one knows spiders better then Alberto.

SISTER GALLANDRO



Hero

Brawn: 1
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 3
Panache: 3
Reputation: 16
Background: Vow 3
Arcana: Comforting

Advantages: Eisen (R/W), Théan (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Above Average Appearance, Cloistered, Faith

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 4

Monk: Philosophy 2, Writing 3, Calligraphy 3, Menial Tasks 4, Theology 3, Seneschal 1, Compounds 4

Priest: Oratory 1, Philosophy 2, Religious Lore (Vaticine) 3, Writing 3, Diplomacy 2, Mooch 5

Rider: Ride 4

Servant: Etiquette 3, Fashion 1, Menial Tasks 4, Unobtrusive 3

Sister Gallandro does not have any secrets. She's a good and noble person. Her biggest weakness is her foolish and loudmouth brother, Petruccio.

More then a few men who have sought to harm or take advantage of the Sister have discovered to their great aches and bruises that she fairly capable of defending herself in often a most unladylike fashion.

This has to do with her upbringing with her brother before she joined the Order.

Plot Hooks:

A) Sister Gallandro has an encounter with a heroic PC when they are at their lowest point. She'll help them get back on their feet; physically and emotionally. She can inspire the greatness of others to come forth.

B) Sister Gallandro is trying to help the poor and down trodden of the city and needs some supplies, she goes to the heroes to ask them to get them for her. They are maybe her only hope...how far will she let them go about the task...

C) Someone is killing Sisters in the city. Sister Gallandro won't stop her work. Can the heroes save her when she becomes the target? And is the killer a psycho, or is he an assassin, sent by the church itself to eliminate her specifically (meaning the other deaths were just decoys).

D) Sister Gallandro's brother has come to town. His name is Petruccio. He's a swordsman with a nasty habit of hedonism and a big mouth all around. Sister Gallandro asks the heroes to help him from getting into trouble. But it is they who will need the help when he insults the absolute worst person he could at a dinner party...(I won't say his name, you already know it).



SECRETS OF THE PERSONAE OF MYSTERY

MONSIEUR DARKE



Scoundrel

Brawn: 2
Finesse: 3
Wits: 3
Resolve: 3
Panache: 5
Reputation: -15
Background: Moment of Awe
Arcana: Ruthless

Advantages: Théan (R/W), Vodacce (R/W), Connections, Friends at Court, Night Trained, Odd Sleeping Habits, Scarovese

Quinque (Master): Voice 5, Elemental 5, Instruments 5, Machines 5, Substance 5

Artist: Composer 2, Drawing 5

Courtesan: Acting 1, Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fashion 3, Jenny 1, Masseur 4, Unobtrusive 3, Cold Read 5, Gossip 2, Mooch 2, Poison 4, Politics 3, Sincerity 4

Doctor: Diagnosis 2, First Aid 4, Dentist 3, Examiner 4, Quack 4, Surgery 4, Vivisection 6

Knife: Attack (Knife) 3, Parry (Knife) 3, Throw (Knife) 5

Merchant: Hagglng 3

Spy: Shadowing 3, Stealth 3, Bribery 2, Conceal 3, Cryptography 3, Interrogation 6, Memorizing 4

Torturer: Interrogation 5, First Aid 4, Cold Read 5, Menace 4, Natural Philosophy 3, Poison 4

He is known simply as Darke. What his real name is, only those from the orphanage he grew up in would be able to tell, and unfortunately that burned down several years ago. Darke's trade is that of a professional torturer & vivisectionist. There are few men in the world who know the ways of a man's body and how to twist it to his ends as Darke. No one...ever...remains unbroken once Darke begins his work. No will, no matter what iron it might be made of can resist his subtle manipulations, and no faith can shield one from the hard nature of his hooks and needles.

Darke himself is a severe looking man, tall and gaunt, in every way a looming specter. His eyes are deep and of a blue so light in color that they are nearly white. (It has been said that there have been times when he has merely walk into a room and look into the eyes of his object and the person has broken under that intense gaze.)

Darke is one of the few men whose talents outweigh the justice of the Church, for he is as much a man of Faith as that of a scientist, for so few are as knowledgeable about the human body as he. He charges exorbitant prices and never harms a man of the cloth. Unless, of course, its the Church itself that brings the man to his tables. He has been known to travel the seven princedoms quite frequently, however, Numa is always home and he always spends his winters there.

Plot Hooks:

A) One of the PCs has fallen into an enemy trap. Now he gets to meet Darke. This guy is going to get the secrets, and it can hurt as much or as little as it needs to. In the end, Darke should get away; he's as much a plot device as a force of ill nature. He'll likely get away just as the other PCs are closing in on their friend, who they've come to rescue.

B) A PC's master has hired the PCs to pick up a "special guest" and bring him to a man. Then they are to wait for the man's work to be completed. All is well, until the screaming starts from the other room. Now imagine if your master was a Bishop of the Church.

C) The PC must undergo a trial of loyalty and purpose. Darke is called in to "interrogate" and test the hero. (Check out "Comes the Inquisitor" episode of Babylon 5 for an example.)

DECURION VORCIUS LUCENIUS



Villain

Ghost: GMG156-157

Fear Rating:
3 (Resolve TN 20);
5 (TN 30)

Effect: The ghostly apparition of Lucenius is incorporeal and cannot be harmed by mortal weapons. While she hardly bothers to attack or concern herself with most people she might encounter at times, if she does, she can attack with her spectral gladius, doing 3k1 damage.

If she encounters someone with a traitorous Background, Hubris or history she will know it upon sight and will seek to destroy him or her. Against such a person her weapon's damage is 5k2. At times she can sense such things as they happen in the city and she might very well seek such actions out. If she arrives, her wrath increases by 2 when she appears.

Porte is not affected by her presence. Nor would the Montaigne trick with mirrors. Holy faith or other folklore inspired rituals might work to undo or force away Vorcius, but until she comes to terms to what happened to her and the Emperor, she cannot be killed, only dispersed for a few days or weeks.

GM Advise: GMs should use Vorcius sparingly. She could be a very good warning to a character that is planning on doing something bad. She could, despite her "villainous" aspect, show up to aid a hero who is being betrayed. She is not a talker. She's a warrior who has spent a long time trying to make up for her loss of honor, growing more and more spiteful each passing season.

A Numan Legionnaire, Vorcius served nobly during the days of Emperor Julius Caius as a Decurion (Sergeant) in the Numan armies. Before her death she was a master warrior and a veteran campaigner. Due to her honorable and steadfast service in the legion and noted valor in battle she was assigned to the personal guard of the Emperor.

It was that fateful day in which the Caius was brutally murdered by the Senators that Vorcius first held her duty as a lifeguard to the Emperor. Unfortunately, the senators were both wise and canny in their planning and they had successfully devised a means and way to separate the guard from their Emperor. Vorcius and the others were either killed or captured before they had even realized what was going on. Vorcius herself was captured, tortured and eventually crucified by the Senate since she would not renounce her loyalty to the Emperor.

Today, nearly two millennia later, there are reports of a woman who walks the halls and streets of Numa dressed in old Legionnaire armaments. They say she is bloody, as if from terrible battle, and that she looks for her lost lord, the Emperor Caius.

Some whisper that those who seek to betray their masters and lords are foolish not to be wary and that Decurion Vorcius Lucenius often seeks out such that would do betrayal and does them great and terrible and bloody punishment.

Plot Hook: It might be very interesting if a female Heroic Character discovered that she looks just like Vorcius, down to the mole on her cheek. Could such a character find a way to bring the ghostly form to some kind of peace? Could Vorcius, through some ancient bloodline, manage to possess such a woman, taking physical form through her?

GUISEPPE AGOSTINI



Henchman

Brawn: 2
 Finesse: 2
 Wits: 3
 Resolve: 2
 Panache: 2
 Reputation: 15
 Background: Vow 3
 Arcana: Friendly

Advantages: Castille, Eisen, Montaigne, Avalon, Cymric (ACQ), Inish (ACQ), Vendel, Ussuran, Vodacce (R/W), Midnight Archipelago (ACQ), Linguist, Area Knowledge (Numa)

Dirty Fighting: Attack (Dirty Fighting) 3, Attack (Improvised Weapon) 3, Parry (Improvised Weapon) 2

Guide: Climbing 2, Street Navigation 5, Tracking 3, Direction Sense 3

Performer: Acting 2, Dancing 1, Oratory 4, Singing 1, Cold Read 3, Memorizing 3, Storytelling 4

Plot Hooks:

A) With the popularity of Cuore di Numa, rivals seek to gain any advantage. Guiseppie contacts the heroes because several of his tour guides have been attacked. Worse, they were attacked while doing tours (making tourists worry for their safety). Can the heroes find the perpetrators and deal with them quickly. Cuore di Numa's future may depend on it.

B) Unbeknownst to most, Cuore di Numa has a side business which keeps them solvent. In addition to leading tours, they also transport messages throughout the city, and are not too curious about what they are delivering. However, one package in particular, could spell trouble for a great many innocents. The heroes could get involved in several different ways, however, the important question is, can they keep the message from getting delivered?



DESCO NUMANAIUS SWORDSMAN MASTERY

The Master level of Desco is lost to modern Théah and cannot be taken or learned by any modern swordsman. It is provided here mainly to complete the entry. If a GM wishes to incorporate it into his game a good plot hook would be that a group (possibly the player characters themselves) finds an old manuscript detailing the third and final tier of ability of the Deco Numanaius. This "lost book" need not be in Numa, it could be any where in Théah, even as far away as Avalon. Obviously such a discovery, should (when) word got back to the Desco would be HUGE deal for them.

Master: A Desco is frugal in energy and action: Can make an Attack as an Interrupt Action. A Desco should be severe; focused, determined and not easily dissuaded: Adds his Mastery Level as unkept dice to

resist Fear or Intimidation checks. A Desco is faithful to his comrades: When with at least one other Desco Swordsman, he keeps his normal defense when making a Lunge Attack.



QUINQUE

"Know that there are five degrees of torture; first, the torture of being threatened to be tortured; secondly, the torture of being conveyed to the place of torture; thirdly, the torture of being, and bound for torture; fourthly, the torture of being hoisted on the torturing rack; and fifthly, and lastly, the torture itself."

Quinque, to put it quite simply is the unnatural means of inflicting ones will upon another. Through the use of various tools, elements and suggestions the practitioner of Quinque can break even the most willful man or woman.

There are man experts of the "art" of inquisition throughout Théah's courts, churches and local municipalities but Quinque is beyond even that even so much as a practitioner of Glamour Magic is beyond the skills of a typical stage magician. Quinque is not sorcery, not some arcane mystical element passed through the blood of one's parents, gained in some ancient bargain. Instead, it is a reflection of the darkness within one's own soul, a manifestation of a great an empty place within oneself that can be delivered upon another. In short, Quinque is shamanistic in effect, if not in name.

While torture has long been a part of Théah's history Quinque has played only the smallest of roles. Few have heard of the talent itself, and thank Theus that fewer still have the darkness of the soul (Or the complete lack of one?) needed to manifest the talent. At any given point there has never been more then a few agents, and until recently, never more then a single master of Quinque. Today, in Théah, there are three masters: Monsieur Darke of Vodacce, Galiaus of Ussura and Brother Johun of the Vaticine Inquisition of Castille. Undoubtedly the Crescent Empire and Cathay also have a few who have obtained a high level of mastery of their equivalent of Quinque.

Mechanically, Quinque is treated as sorceries are, though it is shamanistic. The Quinque student

must gain rank 4 in all the Knacks of the ability to gain the Adept level and Ranks 5 in all the Knacks to Master it. This is simply not a school meant for Player Characters and most certainly not heroic characters. It is best used, if at all, off-screen or in dramatic fashion.

QUINQUE KNACKS

Elemental: The use of various elements in breaking a subject. Fire, cold, drowning, water, etc.

Instruments: The use of various tools such as knives, needles, pliers or even one's own hands and other such utensils.

Machines: This is the use of large or more complex devices then small hand-held tools.

Substance: The use of toxins and poisons to facilitate effects.

Voice: The art of simply speaking to extract information.

QUINQUE MASTERY LEVEL

Apprentice Degree: The use of a single Knack in interrogations. Each Rank gives a bonus of +2 to Interrogation rolls. So a Quinque practitioner with Instruments 3 adds +6 to his roll.

Adept Degree: The use of a two Knacks in concert in interrogations. Each Rank gives a bonus of +2 to Interrogation rolls. So a Quinque practitioner with Instruments 4 and Elemental 4 adds +16 to his roll.

Master Degree: The use of a several Knacks in concert in interrogations. At this level of ability, a Quinque Master can break anyone given enough time. Advantages such as Man of Will and abilities such as the Rose & Cross Vow no longer aid or fortify the victim from interrogation and torture.



FIENDISH BEASTS

THE REMEMBRANCE MASTER

It was the skull of a human, one long since passed into heavens or hells undreamt of. And out from under the base of the skull stretched and uncoiled a number of legs. Two at first, then four, five...eight, limbs spread out and lifted the skull and began to shamle forward. Julian thought he could

see the faint glimmer of something in the eye sockets and he watched it as it moved, unable even to scream he was in such profound horror.

The Remembrance Master

Villain

TN to be Hit: 15

Brawn: 1

Finesse: 2

Resolve: 2

Wits: 5

Panache: 1

Attack Roll: Bite 3k1, Spittle 5k4

Damage: Bite 1k1

Knacks: Ambush 5, Leaping 4

Description: It is said that sometimes, deep in the catacombs of Numa and in other places of the world, that a spider will come upon the long abandoned skull of a truly evil person, and from it will hear the welcoming whisperings and it will make that place, so touched with the dark essence of what was, its home. It is said, that over time, nature and unnatural are made into something new and something terrible. The Master Remembrance is a twisted corruption of both the arachnid that once crawled into the skull and the evil that was once the man or woman to whom the skull belonged, and in its metamorphosis becomes something utterly different.

Special Abilities:

Fear Rating: 4

Unnatural Toughness: Treat the Remembrance Master as if it has 3x the value of Resolve when determining Dramatic Wounds.

Brood Mastery. The Master Remembrance can gain dominance of arachnids, commanding them, controlling them to do its bidding. By the time a person sees the Master, he has likely been through the brood, bitten a number of times and could very well be weakened by the many bites he's received.

Feverous Discharge. The Master Remembrance can spit out a vile concoction that once it touches the skin of a person, threatens to send that person into a delirious fever of the brain that eventually leads to the person's death, though it is far more likely that they will commit suicide prior to the several agonizing weeks it takes to die.

When infected the victim will have a sore spot on his or her body wherever the toxin made contact,

but within 24 hours it goes away. (The toxin is already at work, presenting a minute euphoria of which the usual result is that the victim is not concerned with the attack.) A few days later the toxin begins to infect the brain. Mild euphoria continues for a bit, but sleep begins to be plagued with nightmares. These nightmares are fueled by the memories of the victim, taking pleasant ones and twisting them into vile, horrid things that are only thought about in the darkest places of the mind. Love making become rape, births of one's children becomes the ripping free of monsters unimagined, etc, etc. Soon enough, paranoia, visions of things and other such mental tragedies occur. After a few weeks, the pain begins. Minimally at first, but it increases day after day, never giving the victim a chance to rest. This pain, combined with the visions and instability of the mind usually results in the suicide of the victim. If that is not possible, it takes another month to die, the results of which are sure to give nightmares to those who see it.



There are several theories as to how to cure someone that has been affected, but thus far no known cases of such cures has been documented. Some say that only the most benign and faithful hands can aid someone who has been thrust into the greater darkness. Others claim that the proper organs of the slain Master that infected the person must be made into a brew and injected into the brain directly. Others claim there's no cure at all and the only remedy is a merciful death.

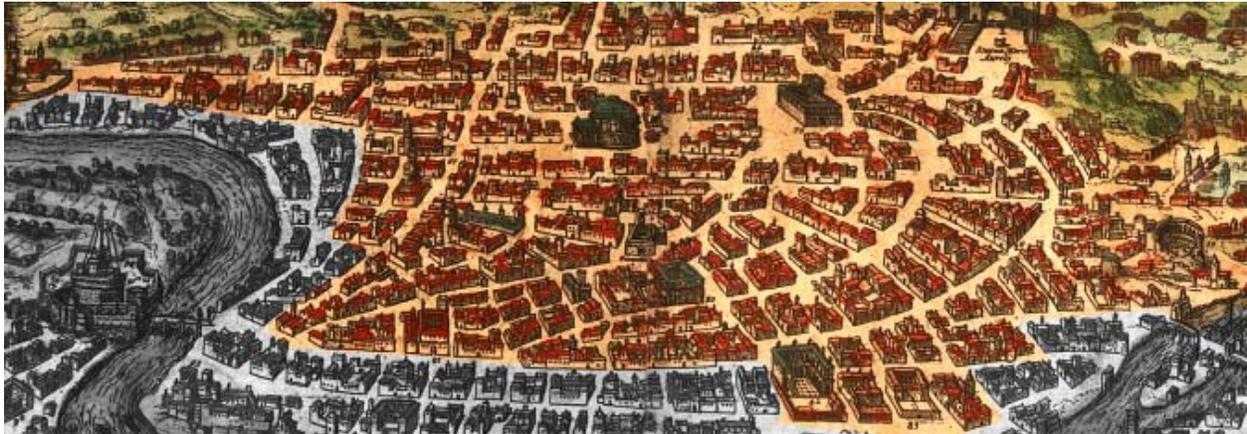
Plot Hooks:

A) A friend of the heroes has been infected by a Remembrance Master and unfortunately they have no idea what is wrong with him. First they must determine that his budding madness is something darker, then they must find out that he was in one of the catacombs for one reason or another and then they must uncover and face the true horror...

B) Alberto Voss has started to hear unpleasant things from some of his "friends"; a great and terrible abomination has come to black-life and he seeks out a noble group of heroes to remove this foul blight.

C) A man has brought the characters together to collect a Remembrance Master. He wishes to possess it and study it. He's not seeking to make a cure for madness, but instead is trying to harvest the spittle for his own dark designs. Will the heroes discover his plans before it is too late?

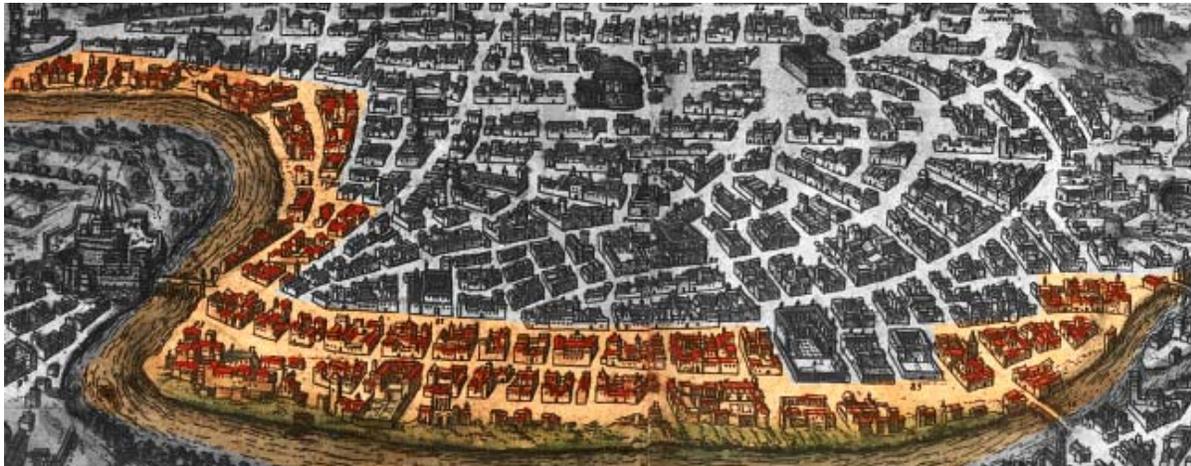
LE ROVINE



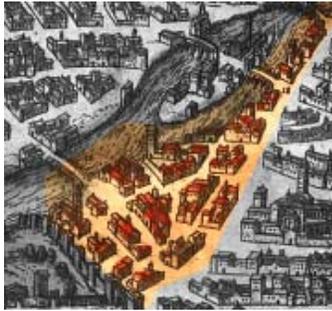
PIANURA DELL'INONDAZIONE (PIANURA)



VECCHIACITTA



NUOVO VECCHIACITTA



VILLAGGIO DELLA CHIESA



DIOCLASIAN



LEVANZO



IL GIGANTE DELLA PIETRA



CITY GUIDEBOOK TWO:

SAN

CHRISTOBOL

CITY OF FAITH & HERESY



COMING THIS FALL

NUMA



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S

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