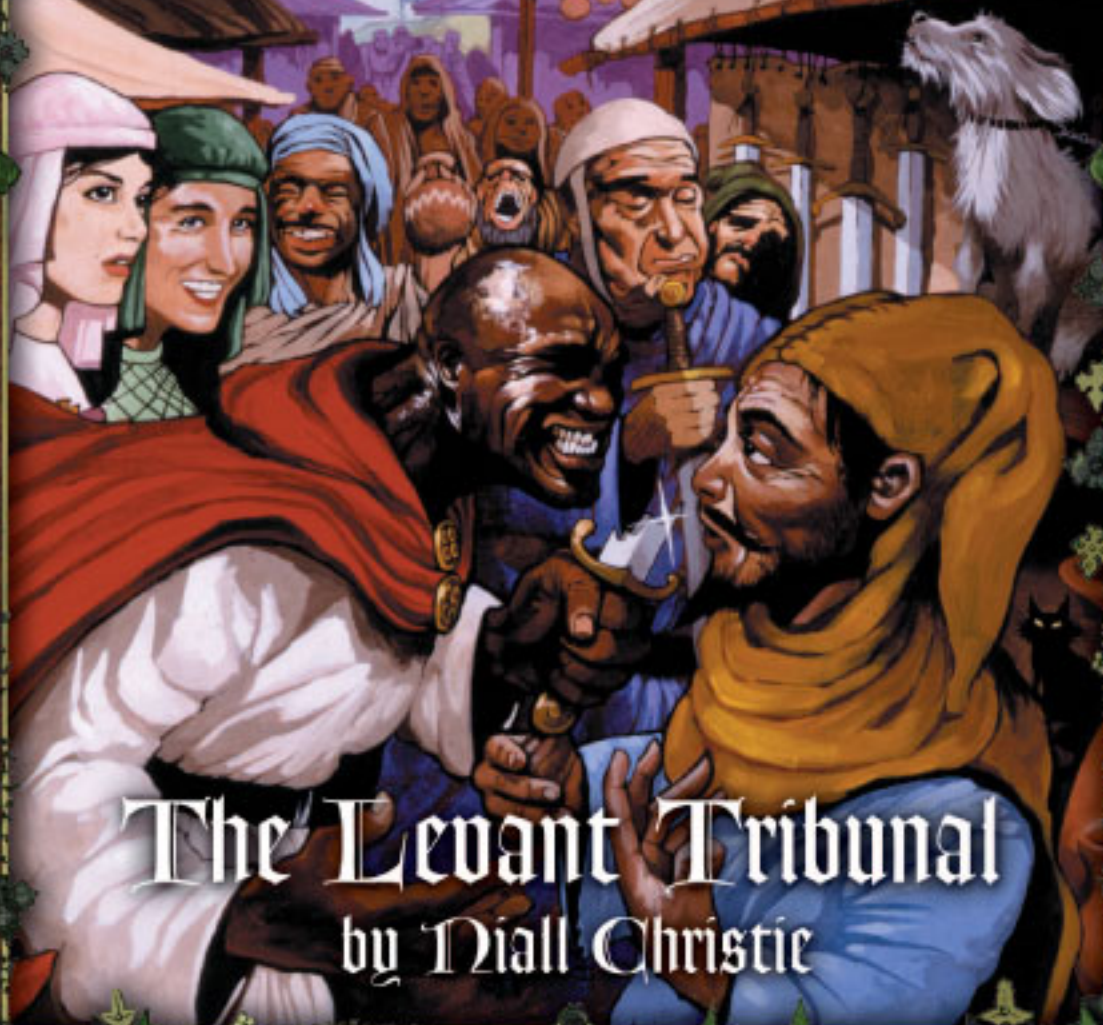


Arx Magica

Blood & Sand



The Levant Tribunal
by Diall Christie

Blood and Sand

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Ahlan wa sahlan! Welcome to *Blood and Sand*, the guide to the Levant Tribunal for **Ars Magica**. This book presents information on both the mundane and Hermetic history of the area Hermetic magi call the Levant, stretching from the valleys of Egypt to the mountains of Asia Minor. Descriptions are given of the mundane and magical inhabitants of the area, as well as the covenants of the Order, items of power and sites of holy and mystical importance. In addition, this book also describes Islam in **Ars Magica**, including rules for playing Muslim characters, be they religious scholars, Mamluk warriors, or mysterious sorcerers.

The Arrangement of this Book

In this book every effort has been made to indicate where the real-world information ends and the **Ars Magica** material begins. This means

Mysterious are the works of the Creator, the author of all things! When one comes to recount cases regarding the Franks, he cannot but glorify Allah (exalted is He!) and sanctify Him, for He sees them as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else; just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads. I shall now give some instances of their doings and their curious mentality.

— Usama ibn Munqidh (1095-1188)

For we who were Occidentals have now become Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a Galilean or a Palestinean. He who was of Rheims or Chartres has now become a citizen of Tyre or Antioch. We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already these are unknown to many of us or not mentioned any more.

— Fulcher of Chartres (b. c. 1058)

that in chapters 2-5, which deal with almost entirely historical material, game information is distinguished by being placed in boxed sections. This will allow storyguides to decide how far they wish to integrate the mythic material and real-world history. To avoid separating them from the background surrounding them, rules have also been placed in boxed sections throughout the text. A Rules Reference Guide at the back of the book will allow you to find game-related material quickly when necessary.

Comparing chapters 4 and 5, some may feel that this book is rather unbalanced, in that it devotes a large proportion of its space to Islam and Muslim life. This arrangement is entirely intentional. The life of medieval Europeans has already received a large amount of attention in a number of **Ars Magica** supplements, most particularly *Ordo Nobilis* and *Heirs to Merlin*. Therefore, it has been decided that this supplement should only detail how the life of the Latins in the Levant differs from that of their European counterparts. Given the importance of Islam to the Crusades and the Levant, this

book has the task of introducing the religion and culture into **Ars Magica**, and showing how it interacts with that of the Crusaders. This has necessarily taken up a large amount of space. I believe, however, that by adopting this approach I have enriched the possibilities for roleplaying in the Levant.

Words of Caution

Before proceeding with our description of the Levant, there are one or two thoughts that should be borne in mind.

On Historical Accuracy

Due to limits of space and the **Ars Magica** system, this book gives an imperfect depiction of the Levant and Islam. Information has often been condensed, sometimes at the expense of accuracy. Do not use this book for school or university research! In addition, while an attempt has been made to remain true to the real-life material, I have not hesitated to flavor it with

the pinch of mythic salt that distinguishes the mythic world from the real world.

On Language

Many Arabic or Persian words have been used in this book. Generally, the first time such a term is used, a translation is provided. Sometimes the Arabic or Persian word is given after a more commonly used English word, in which case it is indicated in parentheses as Ar. (Arabic) or Pe. (Persian). Thereafter Arabic and Persian terms are used without the translation. The words and their translations are also listed in the Glossary of Middle Eastern Terms at the back of the book.



Onward!

The preparations for our journey are now complete. Let me take your camel's rein and lead you into a time not entirely unlike our own Middle Ages, and a land of strange and wonderful things. Let me lead you into a land of *Blood and Sand: The Levant Tribunal*.

