

ATLAS
GAMES

CHARTING NEW
REALMS OF
IMAGINATION™

The Sorcerer's Slave

An Ars Magica™
Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure
by **Thomas M. Kane**

AG3020

Credits

Design: Thomas M. Kane

Editing, Cartography, Layout & Coordination: John Nephew

Editorial Assistance: Marty Dennis

Cover Illustration: Fresco of Zeus from Pompeii, photograph by Oliverw (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zeus_pompei.JPG)

Interior Art: John Podeszwa, Anne C. Martin

Editor's Thanks: Betsey Buckheit, Lion Rampant Games, Melissa Moore, Al Nephew, Pam Reister, Shirley Roth, and the Source

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 1. Introduction..... | 3 | Towns..... | 17 |
| Time and Location | 3 | Journey by Land | 18 |
| Summary of Plot | 4 | | |
| Urania's Past..... | 5 | Chapter 4. Covenant Urania | 19 |
| Theme | 5 | The Hermitage | 19 |
| Running The Sorcerer's Slave | 5 | Basil's Return..... | 19 |
| The Message Arrives..... | 7 | The Party on Trial..... | 19 |
| What the Magi Know..... | 7 | Covenant Layout..... | 21 |
| | | Sukhumi | 24 |
| Chapter 2. Constantinople | 8 | Chapter 5. Sanctum Saturnalia ... | 26 |
| The Baths of Zeuxippus..... | 8 | Layout of Farad's Tower..... | 27 |
| Within the Bathhouse..... | 8 | The Genjii Realm | 30 |
| Map Key..... | 9 | End Notes | 32 |
| Chapter 3. Travelling..... | 15 | Appendix: The Genjii | 32 |
| Journey by Sea..... | 15 | | |

Atlas Games
Saint Paul, Minnesota
www.atlas-games.com



Charting New Realms of Imagination™

Ars Magica, Mythic Europe, Covenants, and Charting New Realms of Imagination are trademarks of Trident, Inc. Atlas Games and the Atlas Games logo are trademarks of John Nephew and Trident, Inc. Tales of the Dark Ages, Stalenric, and Atlas Europa are trademarks of John Nephew. Order of Hermes and Tremere are trademarks of White Wolf, Inc. and are used with permission.

Copyright ©1990, 2010 John A. Nephew. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work by any means without written permission of the publisher, except small excerpts for the purpose of reviews, is expressly prohibited.

DIGITAL EDITION VERSION 1.0

Chapter 1

Introduction

A bastard ranked higher than an apprentice in the eyes of Master Blanc, and therefore, 'prentice Pierre found himself constantly dragooned to care for the covenant's strange new child. Pierre did not mind. He galloped across fields with little Andros on his back. He carved wooden swords and fenced. He rediscovered the delights of raiding pantries and instructed Andros in the technique. When Master Blanc started to teach his pupils about the spirits of the dead, Pierre told his charge all the most lurid tales. None of them ever scared his small companion. Nevertheless, when Andros began having his nightmares, everybody blamed Pierre.

The little boy started refusing to talk with people. Andros grew increasingly hysterical until he shrieked whenever a magus approached him. Soon, not even his own mother, the sorceress Cindiana, could get close. The enchantress previously seemed rather remote from her son, but when he ran from her, she stormed away weeping as profusely as the child.

Pierre looked for Andros and found him outside the kitchens, making a fortress out of firewood. The apprentice tried to tell his little friend that the ghost stories had not been true (although Master Blanc said they were). Andros did not seem especially interested. However, Andros happily let Pierre in and put him to work building a bastion, saying, "I knew you'd help." The little boy explained that if they built the fort strong enough, it would keep "that witch" away.

A servant overheard what Andros said and reported it. When Cindiana heard about the fortress, she hunted Pierre down, her face pale and her eyes afire with injured rage. She glared at him and spat, "So, you've taught my son to hate me. Very well, but if I'm a witch, how he'd loathe the one who sired him!" It was the first time Cindiana had ever mentioned Andros' father.

At that point though, Pierre could not reflect on Andros' paternity. The enchantress flew into a rage. It went on and on, with pauses but no conclusion. The sun began to sink west. Cindiana railed at the apprentice in low tones

one moment and piercing shrieks the next, occasionally stopping to pound his ears with her fists, which were bony and inhumanly strong. Over and over, Pierre pleaded that he had never taught Andros to hate Cindiana. Finally, she dragged him toward her and demanded, "If so, then bring me my son."

Pierre hustled back to the log stockade. It now had five towers, and looked quite impressive. The apprentice scarcely looked at them. "Andros—come out."

"Don't want to." The voice quavered from somewhere beneath the wall.

Pierre drew a breath. "Now, Andros!" Getting no response, he pushed into the woodpile, knocking over castle walls, and grabbed Andros around the ribcage. He hoisted the kicking little boy over one shoulder and carried him inside. Andros suddenly stopped struggling. When they reached Cindiana, he had become quite docile. He went home with his mother and dutifully prattled about some flowers she pointed out.

Andros seemed to have completely forgotten the incident. Nobody mentioned the nightmares again. Cindiana spent much more time with her son, which meant Pierre did not have to take care of Andros as often, but when they saw each other, the little boy still wanted to wrestle in the loft. One night he asked to hear another ghost story.

In early autumn, Master Blanc sent Pierre to split wood. When he walked in with his wedge and hammer, he almost tripped over Andros, who was lying flat among the logs.

The little boy immediately spoke, slowly articulating each word. "It's no good."

"What's no good?"

Andros laughed and hid his face. "Not telling." But Pierre did not feel at all surprised a week later day when Andros vanished without a trace, and neither his mother nor the elder wizards of the covenant could guess what had happened to him.

TIME AND LOCATION

This adventure spans a mythic version of Europe and Asia, beginning in the Player Characters' home covenant in France, proceeding to the fading grandeur of Byzantine Constantinople and ending up in the mountains of the Caucasus. Naturally, Storyguides may adapt these settings to places in their own campaign worlds. Byzan-

tium could become any exotic, fading empire. If there is no suitable wilderness nearby, you may add an extra voyage to the adventure's storyline, to get the party from the city to the lonely stronghold where this adventure reaches its climax.

You may also enjoy using the same locations but altering the circumstances under which the adventurers view

them. For example, this adventure assumes that the party comes from a covenant in France, modelled on the Mistridge Saga of other **Ars Magica**™ books. Byzantium seems exotic, almost mythical to these people. Instead, you might have a companion from Italy, where merchants know the Emperor of Constantinople well, and usually hate him. This variant opens up two

more sub-possibilities—do you simply substitute Italy for France in the introduction, or do the adventurers simply hear of strange activities in France and undertake a preliminary adventure to investigate them?

The story also assumes that your campaign takes place in the late 13th Century. However, although Byzantium changes drastically during the 1200s, you can still set this adventure in whatever era your campaign requires. The wizards of this story live somewhat isolated lives, insulated from great historical change. You should still add flavor by referring to recent historical events. The following timeline shows some significant events in medieval Byzantium.

- *11th Century*: Byzantine strength is at high tide, but Western traders (mainly Italians) now compete with Constantinople's merchants. Moslems make their presence known in the East, but Roman Catholics currently present the most dangerous threat to the Empire. The emperors allow gold to "flow like a river" as they vie with their predecessors to build monuments of their reign.

- *12th Century*: Norman Crusaders covet Byzantine lands. In 1147, the French conquer the Greek (Byzantine) territories of Thebes and Corinth.

- *13th Century*: The West clearly dominates Europe's economy, and temporarily conquers Byzantium. Constantinople's decor remains ostentatious and expensive.

- *1203-1204*: Incited by Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice, the Fourth Crusade sacks Constantinople. Survivors of the Byzantine court establish semi-independent kingdoms in Nicaea, Anatolia and Epirus. Victorious Westerners attempt to impose a Belgian as Emperor (Baldwin of Flanders) and forcibly establish the Roman church in Byzantium. The Venetians win complete control over trade and maritime activity.

- *1261*: Michael Palaeologus, King of Nicaea, re-captures Constantinople for the Byzantines. He receives aid from Venice's trading rival, Genoa. Palaeologus founds the longest-lived Byzantine dynasty—and the last.

- *14th Century*: Civil wars and dynastic quarrels wrack the impoverished empire. Art and philosophy flourish, but the Empire is clearly doomed.

- *1301*: The Ottoman (Turkish) Emirate wins its first victory over the Byzantines.

- *1347*: The Black Death kills two-thirds of Constantinople's population.

- *1362*: Ottomans conquer parts of Greece.

- *1391*: The Ottomans cancel a planned assault on Constantinople in order to fight the Mongols.

- *15th Century*: The Turks become Byzantium's nemesis and eventually destroy the empire.

- *1422*: The Ottomans besiege Constantinople once more, but this time, a revolt in the Sultan's own lands distracts him.

- *1453*: The Turks finally capture Constantinople and extinguish the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman Empire renames Constantinople, Istanbul, and survives until the twentieth century.

The party must cope with a variety of languages in this adventure. Unless otherwise mentioned, all NPCs speak Greek as their native tongue. Numerous local languages appear in the steppes of Georgia and beyond. The Genjii in this story speak Greek. At least some of these languages should seem strange to the adventurers. Nevertheless, someone who can speak Latin can talk with all the wizards and educated people here. Greek and Turkish allow the party to converse wherever they go.

Make sure the multiple languages add to the adventure, not detract from it. The party should have to develop inventive ways of communicating, such as gestures, or the use of *Animál* magic to let two wizards speak in the common tongue of animalkind. At the same time, try not to let translation interfere with plot. Both magi and grogs should spend most of their time looking for friendship and information among the non-player characters. Do not let language rolls stop them.

SUMMARY OF PLOT

Almost thirty years ago, Cindiana, a female wizard in the party's covenant (or perhaps of the covenant in which a player magus was apprenticed), bore a son and named him Andros. Nobody knew the father. For some time, the mother kept her son away from the other wizards, but as he grew, she could not restrain him, and the magi realized that Andros understood magic at a level the scholars of Hermes could not comprehend. He knew the future and the past. He could see and speak with spirits. He had the potential to become a legendary wizard. Then, suddenly, he developed an intense fear of magic. Shortly thereafter, he ran away.

Now, the covenant has a chance to get its precocious child back. When the story begins, a mysterious messenger arrives from Byzantium. According to him, Andros lives as a slave of Farad Sahda, the Old Physician. The author of the message enjoins the covenant to rescue the child of its sorceress. Farad owns the famous Baths of Zeuxippus in Constantinople, and adventurers can expect to find both him and his slave there.

In Constantinople, the adventurers discover Farad's bathhouse sanctum. The adventure opens with a raid. Furthermore, the presence of other magi and city police means that the party must rely on stealth and subterfuge as well as grogs' brawn. As they probe the bathhouse, they make another discovery: Andros is not there. He and his owner fled, just before the adventurers arrived. To find more information, the party must cross the Black Sea and travel in the perilous Caucasus Mountains.

There, where the steppes meet the foothills of the Caucasus, adventurers discover Covenant Urania, the local community of wizards. The Consul, or ruler of Urania recently lost his sanity, perhaps in an encounter with spirits beyond mortal control. Nobody expects him to recover. The other wizards must choose his successor, using the ancient rituals of their covenant. To rule Covenant Urania, a wizard must obtain the servitude of one of the spirits called *genjii* (genies).

Farad appears likely to claim the service and rule the covenant. He owes