



the Fragile Path

TESTAMENTS
OF THE FIRST
CABAL

Sample file

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A Brief Introduction: THE POINT OF THIS BOOK

By Porthos Fitz-Empress, Hermes bani Flambeau,
Drua'shi Master and Deacon Primus of Chantry Doissetep

My pupil Mahmet tells me, as does my own experience, that no one listens to an old man ramble on these days, even if that old man can level mountains with a thought. Thus, I will endeavor to be brief. A modern book must have a punch, a hook; readers must be snatched from the waters of apathy and thrust into the point of the work before they can grow bored and pick up a magazine instead. I shall forgo my usual thoughts on this state of affairs and introduce the "hook" without further commentary:

WE ARE WINNING THE WAR BUT LOSING THE WORLD, GODDAMMIT!!!

MANY PEOPLE DIED TO GIVE US WHAT WE HAVE TODAY! PEOPLE, NOT NUMBERS IN A HISTORY BOOK! HUMAN BEINGS, LIKE YOU OR I, WHO SACRIFICED EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO GRANT US A FUTURE!!

WE MUST REMEMBER THEM, AND THE THINGS THEY FOUGHT FOR, OR END UP LOSING EVERYTHING WE HAVE NOW AND EVER DREAM OF HAVING, SOMEDAY!

Less than subtle, but I trust I've made my point.

This is a book of the dead, the final Testaments of five mages who helped found our august union, who traveled, with four others, across the world and sacrificed everything they had for a chance to bring wonder back to the world. Wonder through strength, purity of vision, and magick.

They failed. Yet they triumphed.

This group, called the First Cabal of the Nine Mystick Traditions, fell before the swords of early Technomancers, vicious Paradox, and the treachery of their own leader. Their defeat almost destroyed the brittle union of our Council; one Tradition was banished soon after the Great Betrayal and the trial that followed, and the remaining four mages of that Cabal went their separate ways, despondent and disillusioned. Nevertheless, our Council endured; we survived the Betrayal and the tarnishing of our dreams, the fragmentation of the Solificati and the defection of many Dreamspeakers and Akashic Brothers when their homelands fell under western attack. We survived Paradox, the Pogrom, and even the destruction of our Ahl-i-Batin brethren (if, indeed, they are no more) and the induction of the Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts into our midst. Despite Technocratic persecution, our Council has prevailed.

And I have seen it all.

And I have seen it forgotten.

And I have wept, for I knew these five, and the four others who were murdered. I participated in the trial of Heylel, and felt Bernadette's tears on the shoulder of my robe. I cried the day Eloine, whom I had desired, left Horizon forever, her eyes haggard and her spirit, with which she had entranced me, gone as dead as the one who had been her lover. I stood by as Walking Hawk strode into the mists that bore him to his homeland, disgusted with the sight of white men, and I trembled as I unrolled the scroll which bore the revelations of Akrites the Seer, who knew, some two hundred years ago, that I would write this very book.

This story is still living history to me.

And I have seen it pass sterile into textbooks, just more facts to be learned to please a stern tutor, then forgotten when the lesson is over.

But the lessons of the Awakened must never end. By the divine Avatar within each of us, we are bound to history just as we are charged to create it. We, of all mortals, cannot forget what has gone before us. Nor can we shunt it into scraps of paper and shove it onto library shelves, just another book to be checked out when required. *We are history*, the past, present and future incarnate, and we must not forget those who went before us — what they did, what they gave, what they eventually won — lest we become the last chapter in the final history book.

This is the tale of the First Cabal; five Testaments, plus my own observations and commentary. As so few of our kind have the tolerance to sift through archaic wordcraft, I have taken the (laborious) liberty of translating these testimonies into modern English (and Spanish, German, Latin, Hebrew, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Bantu, Cherokee and Arabic, in the appropriate translations), and posted a virtual reality simulation (with help from Tsun-Hsing Kao, Felicia Thomas, and a group of dedicated scholars and actors — see my [Acknowledgments](#)) on the Net for those who wish to experience the full weight of the events. Perhaps, by gathering them together for the first time, I will have added a sixth Testament to those within. For although I was not a part of the First Cabal, their fate — and eventual redemption — has haunted me for half a millennia.



BACKGROUND HISTORY: Tempus Dicit; Sapientia Audit

By Master Porthos

Please forgive me a momentary conceit; I know how few of our kind read the Roman language these days and how few still care to hold to the lessons of the past. But the grace of Latin is its musical simplicity. Like the very act of magick itself, the tone of the words carry wisdom beyond their simple substance. A more literal translation, "Time speaks, wisdom listens," lacks, I feel, the musicality of this stately tongue.

Then again, this romantic impression of a warlike race (even the word *romantici* reflects this prejudice) belies the truth behind their deeds; the Romans themselves were disciplined thieves by our modern morality, stealing territory, culture, religion, philosophy and living slaves from every land they entered. By the standards of our age, they were barbarians (as were the grand Athenians before them); as architects of an untamed world, they were merely pragmatic. There is a lesson in this for our kind, a lesson I have lived by for over five hundred years.

That lesson is not the glorification of ruthlessness, though many of my rivals would disagree; it is a simple, if inobvious, truth: ideals and morality are as changeable as the Reality we Awakened command. A simple foundation, however, a common morality, has supported every society, from the earliest cave-dwellers to the Victorian stooges of the Technocrats:

Thou Shalt Not Steal from Thine own Kind.

Thou Shalt Not Lie to Thine own Kind.

Thou Shalt Not Murder Thine own Kind.

Thou Shalt Know that Some Greater Purpose guides Thine every step.

Shite Not where Thou Layest.

(Forgive the wordcraft... I digress, as my pupil Mahmet always tells me, into anachronisms to make a point. You must admit, however, that great thoughts lose something in common translations.)

As I said, these are universal concepts, the pillars of any society that hopes to survive for any length of time. And in our modern world, they have crumbled like fireplace logs gone to ash. And like ash they have scattered to the winds.

This is not news, my friends; our Hollow cousins and Nephandic contemporaries celebrate our coming fall in their songs, clothes and favorite films. All of us, from the nomad shaman to the Thanatoic avenger, feel the icy touch of Entropy winding down the clockwork of our world. We have squandered our prize, we *Sapiens*, by throwing away the morality and vision that is our birthright. The world as we know it is dying, and the blame is partially our own.

Now, lest I resemble some mortal street-preacher, allow me to qualify this: *we have seen such days before*. Many times past, the collective hand of the gods has seen fit to rewind the clockspring, granting our kind another chance to fulfill our Destiny. Our World, ephemeral though She may appear, does not die easily. Our kind, humanity, is another matter. Our hold on existence, potent though it may appear, is a tenuous thing, easily snuffed by a careless thought or suicidal gesture. We are, in the grand scheme of things, expendable. It is upon our principles, our morality, which springs both from our Divine Self and the preservation of self, that we depend for our fragile lives.

I can hear you snickering, you know. Even here, at my desk, I sense your dismissal even as I put pen to paper. Morality is a joke, you might say, cheapened by preachers and renegades. And you would be wrong. Morality, some sense of purpose and principle, is all that keeps us from oblivion. We Awakened, of all humanity, should know this much. Such principles are not dead, no matter how poor the circumstances, until we dump them into our own grave. As I said, we have seen — I have seen — darker days before; darkness has been our lot since the beginning of time (if, indeed, Time has such a beginning). We have, as a species, as enlightened and Awakened souls incarnate, faced such times before. We may not have always triumphed, but we have always endured.

Our rivals would say otherwise; one seeks to bind the World in Technocratic chains while the others wish to drag Her down into chaos or destruction. Each group would claim victory; our continued existence as a Mystick Council, however, proves that they are wrong. For five centuries, near a dozen lifetimes, I have seen our Council rise, stumble and rise again. In these Twilight days, we hold a power we have not known since the formation of our Brotherhood (or Fellowship, or whatever else passes for correct in these gender-bollixed times...). Despite the cyber-magickal nightmares that stalk our kind in street and village, I know this to be true. I have been here since our formation, you see, since the Great Convocation of 1466, and I know our ups and downs like few mages alive.

The Grand Convocation

The gathering of Magi known as the Grand Convocation was a riot of color, sensation, wisdom and novelty; I doubt we shall ever see its like again. Over a period of years, we came together from the cities and covenants of Europe to the peaks of Tibet, from the grasslands of Africa to the vision country now called the outback, from lands undiscovered, uncharted and undreamt of by the feeble minds of Medieval man. As the Portals were opened and the grand meeting place called Horizon was formed, we poured in from every known culture, place and practice to create a Fellowship of Awakened Ones, to save our world from ignorant indifference.

We failed, yet we succeeded. We lost our unity, and nearly our souls, but we won the future — the future that is now our modern world. For all the darkness of this world would have increased a thousandfold if our Council had despaired when the First Cabal fell...

But I've gone ahead of myself. There is a point to all of this, which I shall explain momentarily, but suffice to say that our Council, and our world, have seen darkness ascendant before. And we have survived. For it is our vision, and our dedication to it, and the universal morality which I spoke of earlier, that has seen us through other trials. We are the shapers of reality, the Awakened few, and our wisdom can save our world from final death. Our wisdom, guided by the lessons of the past...

An Autobiographical Pause

For those who do not know me (and many, I pray, do not, for my reputation is not as pristine as I would like), I am a Hermetic Master of Doissetep and one of the founders of her present Horizon incarnation. I have survived over five hundred years of wars, intrigues, plagues, persecutions, romances, loves, betrayals, Quiets, backlashes and assassination attempts. Some call me eccentric, deluded, even murderously insane; they may even be right. Surely, my mind is not what it once was. I have, however, survived and prospered, though not without cost. I've known more defeats than all the nations of the Earth combined, and my survival is my greatest victory. My survival, and the lessons those defeats have taught me.

The details of my birth and early life are both tedious and unimportant; suffice to say that I Awakened on my own and was soon taken in and trained by mentors of the Hermetic House Flambeau. In my twenty-eighth year, I helped move Doissetep to the Shard Realm of Forces during the crumbling Mythic Age of Europe. The Houses of Hermes united at that time to send what covenants (Chantryes) we could save into custom-built realities to safeguard them from the Order of Reason (the infant Technocracy) and their mortal and ephemeral allies. The grand

magicks we wove killed over a dozen of my cabal, even in those days when Paradox was more a threat than a certainty; we survivors had to rebuild largely from scratch. For my part, I was barely an apprentice when we moved Doissetep into her current location, and my survival had more to do with luck and incompetence, I fear, than with magical skill. As the decades passed, our work on Earth grew harder and more hazardous; many of us remained in the Realm full-time. When I was forty-four, we had a visitor — Master Baldric LaSalle, of House Tytalus — who brought us news of an impending Tribunal, a Grand Convocation of Magi from across the world.

The lessons of the past years had taught us that survival lay in cooperation. Amid much protesting, we sent a delegation to the meeting place, a Node called *Caverna Ominorum*, in the ruins of a Roman pavilion. I was chosen to go with them. From there, we eventually traveled to Horizon, the Realm where that Convocation began. For all the sorrow I witnessed and the tedious years I endured, I have never regretted that journey. It was nearly ten years before I saw my Chantry again, but by that time I had, in the Horizon Meetingplace, witnessed all the wonders of the world.

A thousand Magi assembled! More than a thousand, perhaps; I have never seen accurate numbers offered for that vast herd of Awakened humanity, beasts and custos, I merely know that it was vast. In a Realm carved from Primal Force, siphoned from nine sacred sites chosen by those who would found our Traditions, I saw the many faces of the One incarnate. I had no doubt, when first I arrived, that such a multitude could crush the Technocratic upstarts and free our Reality from their constraints. How wrong I was, how foolishly naive, to believe that force and numbers alone could turn back the changes that bore down upon us all! The Order of Reason may have been small in comparison to our flock, but they had unity and purpose on their side. We had dissension, greed, pride, and an ethnocentric shortsightedness that cost us dearly years later when the Dreamspeakers' lands were conquered. It is not always numbers or force that shape reality, you see. Solidity of purpose is often enough.

The Convocation was wondrous while it lasted, however; cert-mins, often fought before the standard etiquette was established, raged daily, and the Common Hall buzzed with a Babalous multiplicity of tongues — ideas incarnate, expressed in more ways than the mind could fathom. A Spanish priest could be seen talking to a shaman blacker than the cleric's Cassock, and they might agree as often as not. A Frankish dragon might be seen trading blows with a grizzly bear larger than any ursine alive today. A hundred sacred symbols be-decked corridors which might lead from a desert plain to a Nordic cliffside. It was miraculous — nothing less! — and though it may sound quaint to mages weaned on television, VR, intercontinental travel and the United Nations, it was absolutely unprecedented.

The Convocation ended with the acceptance of the Resolutions and the formation of the First Cabal. Our unity ended when that same Cabal returned in ruins. Since the day the Great Betrayer was scattered, our Council has been likewise. When I returned to Doissetep, it was with a leaden heart and a rage which has not abated to this day. In my youth, I felt we had been mistaken, that we had squandered our time and efforts on grand gestures. I was wrong. I know that now.

Irony's Ring

Despite that wisdom, I am old, now, and dying like our World. For the half-millennia since the fall of the Cabal, I have devoted myself to an endless War and pointless bickering with those who ought to be my allies. The halls of my Chantry home are rife with intrigues and I have participated as much as any man and more than most. I am guilty of wasting lives and lifetimes in backbiting and counter-plotting, and I have been a fool.

Perhaps it was inevitable. It is a cruel irony of our Awakened state that, although we are crafters of possibility, age settles over our souls like a shroud. I fear I am one of the oldest of our kind alive; though I have heard tales and crossed paths with Magi whose years rival the mountains themselves, our static age must have brought them low by now. The borders of possibility are not what they once were, and there is rough cosmic justice in that. Although

"science" marches at a maddening pace, it loops its own snare around its feet; sooner or later, the Technomancers will trip upon the chain they themselves have made, cutting off their own possibilities as brutally as they have savaged our Arts. I have already seen the signs of this, and I laugh. Fate plays such bitter jests.

Mere force is not enlightenment, nor is age alone. We mages are bound by the Entropy within. Dynamic as we may appear, powerful as we may become, we cannot help but settle into patterns; these patterns limit our potential, and new blood must wash the slate clean again. My history of intrigue and the perpetual rivalry which tears at my own Chantry are proof enough of this. Perhaps I have never Ascended to join the Oracles because I limit myself with this belief. Nevertheless, I am convinced that youth is vision; undisciplined, of course, and ignorant and untrained, but vital. That vitality is siphoned from us with age. Even if we slow the advance within our bodies, we cannot keep the weight from our enlightened minds. The more we see, the more we think we know. The more we believe we understand, the more set in our ways we become, and the more we limit our potential. Thus, youth is the flame that ignites the future. Power is merely polish on blunted blades.

Rejoice, my young brethren. The Master has paid you a compliment.

Our Euthanatos friends have the right of it; Entropy is inevitable, even to immortals. This is the lesson our nightshade cousins, the vampires, have yet to learn. As one who has survived many of their kind, I can only smile ruefully at the ache in my bones and the crackling of my joints. Time may be sidestepped, but she can never be ignored.

If my words seem bitter, it is because I am tired. I'm weary of the politics which hamstringing our Council even as we snap at the Technomancers' heels. As the Twilight Age approaches, we are collectively stronger than we've been since our inception. Nine we stand, united, for the first time since the Ahl-i-Batin fled the dream they helped create, only a few short years after the Sons of Ether filled a seat left vacant for almost four hundred years! In the mortal world, faith and wonder gnaw at the Technomancers' hollow truths. Who knows what the next decades might bring? Yet we drift apart within our own Fellowship, cursed by shortsightedness and a lack of faith in our own miracles. What fools we are, to throw away the future on division! And yet we seem trapped, like I am, here in my sanctum, watching the shadows, waiting for the tingle of the dolor-wards which alert me to yet another threat. I am tired of fighting my own kind; I am weary of our stupidity.

And I am digressing. To the history, then, of the First Cabal, and to Hell with an old man's ramblings!

For ages without number, magick, in one form or another, ruled the minds of humanity and the fabric of reality. During this time, there were no "Traditions" as we know them, though common philosophies and magickal orders existed. As the force of static "reason" closed in about the miracle workers, however, the balance of power shifted. Many people rose up against the mages who had worked so freely for so long and reality itself began to close in, limiting or even destroying millennia of magickal work. The process was gradual but unmistakable.

As the boundaries of reality became firmer and the tolerance of the Sleepers grew shorter, Magi warred against each other. The resulting battles, plagues, persecutions and divisions decimated the Awakened and non-Awakened alike. The fledgling Order of Reason, composed of science-minded mages and philosophers, thrived in the chaos. With their unity and purpose, the Alliances of the Order — the Artificers, Cabal of Pure Thought, Craftmasons, Masters of Reason, Seekers of the Void, High Guild, Philosophers' Union and other smaller groups — arbitrated internal disputes, declared a common goal of common good and worked towards a single unified reality theorem. The scattered mystick orders didn't have a chance.

In the early 1440s, three mages, representing what would later become the Celestial Chorus, Verbena and Order of Hermes, met and discussed the problem. Across the world, magick faltered and wizards battled. Something had to be done; a common purpose, ideal and methodology had to be forged. These three mages and their allies spent years traveling the world convincing others of their kind to come together. The resulting Tribunal, called the Grand Convocation, began in 1457, meeting in a great Realm called Horizon.

With unthinkable magicks, the first Masters pooled their resources and carved Horizon from Reality itself. As each different group joined the confederacy, it added a place of power to the Realm, feeding it with Primal Essence. The soldiers of Reason laid siege to those Nodes that they could find, but new sources were added and the old ones reinforced. Great battles raged at the Canyon of Qu'Dali, the floating tip of Lyonesse and Stonehenge itself, but we mysticks cloaked the remaining Nodes with other magicks and drove the invaders from our lands.

The Realm we built contained a Grand Hall, filled with nine cloisters and a tenth central Common Hall. Each cloister fed into another sub-Realm, created to match the preferred climate of the representatives. Outside the Grand Hall, the Realm mirrored the seasons of Earth; huge fields provided food for the visitors and gave a place of recreation for those who felt trapped within the Hall. Some lived outside and ventured in only when they had to. Mythic beasts, whose numbers had thinned back on Earth, found sanctuary in the fields of Horizon. And there the Council met.

With hundreds of mages gathered from dozens of magickal paths, conflict was inevitable. Nevertheless, the Council affirmed, in its initial Protocols, a determination to work together for the common good and mutual survival. Many of the most prominent sorcerers of the age met in Horizon, the refuge of the would-be Council and their flocks. For over nine years, these mages debated, maneuvered and battled, sometimes literally, over the guidelines of the newborn "Traditions," the Spheres of magick and the definitions and duties of the Nine. The result, though far from perfect, remains more or less intact to this day.

In 1466, the Council of Nine finally reached a Resolution; we would proceed together towards a common goal, Ascension, with an established code and (hopefully) the blessings of the gods. After the establishment of the Protocols and goals of Ascension, the Council appointed a nine-member cabal of Adepts to venture back out into the mortal world and gather support for the Council among the Sleepers and Awakened of the world. Nine mages, one from each Tradition, went forth. Their mission, though short-lived, changed the world.

These nine Adepts were not amateurs; each was hand-picked by the Council members (amid much politicking) as a sterling example of his or her Tradition. By word and deed, these Magi were to win over wizards, messiahs and other practitioners of True Magick and give aid, comfort and wisdom to the distrustful mortals, who, having had enough of witches, had fallen under the spell of Scientific Reason. They were to battle the magickal enemies of the Council — the Nephandi and Diabolists, the orphan renegades and demon-ridden hedge-warlocks, Disparates (mages who condemned the Council's plans) and the Order of Reason — whenever necessary, but were counseled to shun violence and avoid the lure of pride. First and foremost, the mages of the First Cabal were to be emissaries of goodwill. Of good intentions are great evils wrought.

Their leader, Heylel Teomim, hermaphroditic chosen of the Solificati, waxed powerfully in hubris and betrayed the others. In 1470, Heylel led them into a trap set by the Cabal of Pure Thought (a witch-hunting forerunner to the New World Order). Only the Traitor and the Ecstatic mage, Akrites Salonikas, escaped. Three mages died in combat; the remaining four were taken and tortured by mortal Inquisitors. One more died there and the others were sentenced to burn. A troupe of Tradition mages, led by the escapee, rescued the survivors and tracked down the Betrayer. Taken alive, Heylel was sentenced by the Council to both Gilgul and death. Before the Council, he gave one last defiant yet repentant speech, telling of his sorrows, pride, despair and scorn for the Council. Heylel's twin Avatars were then ripped from their body and mystickally shredded while the body itself was consumed to dust by fire and ice, then scattered by winds across Horizon.

The four survivors of the nine scattered as well. Eloine, the Verbena, was inconsolable; Heylel had been her lover and the parent of her children. She forsook our Council and died in a witch-hunter's gaol some fifty years later. Kind Bernadette, the Celestial sister who never spoke except in song, retreated from Horizon amid rumors of collusion with the Inquisitors; her death-song was given to our archives only recently. Walking Hawk, a Seneca shaman who traveled across the Atlantic to join us, returned to his people, presumably to warn them of our existence. Had his warning been heeded, history might have turned out differently. Akrites, whom some called hero and others called coward, exiled himself after the trial had concluded.

Some said he'd seen the future and done nothing to prevent it, and they cursed him for the mission's failure. His guilt must have been an enormous burden because, as I later discovered, the story was true. The Betrayer's Tradition, the alchemical Solificati, crumbled soon after their chosen did the same. Some joined the Technocratic Artificers while others went Errant or joined that mysterious Craft called the Children of Knowledge. Within less than two-score years, their seat was empty. It remained so until 1905, when the Sons of Ether forsook the Technocracy. By that time, the last of the Cabal were long since gone.

On the surface, their story is a depressing failure; it certainly seemed to be so at the time. Only an appraisal of the survivors' tasks after their defection shows the depth of their commitment. Sister Bernadette ministered to the sick and suffering of Europe for lifetimes afterwards; she appears here and again in Chorus lore, and did not die until 1723. Eloine aided refugees from the witch-hunting madness that swept Europe, her Arts forsworn but her respect for life undimmed. She was only caught when age reduced her to easy prey and she died defiant, her faith restored. Walking Hawk, regrettably, died soon after giving the Oration preserved here. Though many of his own people regarded him as an hysteric in later years, his words still commanded great respect among the tribes and may have laid the foundation of the Iroquois Confederacy. Akrites, even in his exile, amassed a great library, which he bequeathed to Doissetep when he finally passed on. Despite the tragedy that destroyed their fellowship, the survivors of the First Cabal carried on the spirit that had led them to the Council long after they parted ways.

Conclusion: A Point is Made

During a recent class, I saw Apprentices dozing off or gazing into daydreams as they learned about the Nine. It angered me at first, but I realized that history without voices is a dry and sterile thing, devoid of passion and easily dismissed. I knew these Nine as people — some were my friends, two I would have had as lovers if they'd have had me, one was an enigma. All of them were human beings, not names upon a page. Few youngsters have the patience, I'm afraid, to listen to an old man prattle on about his own youth (relatively speaking; I was almost fifty when the Convocation began!). I feel the words of the survivors themselves would speak more vividly than my own flawed recollections. Thus, I have collected these Testaments to tell the story of their trials in their own voices. I offer these accounts as personal portraits — nothing I could say would do justice to their quests.

I spoke earlier of common morality; I can find no better example of such morality than these nine Awakened. Even the Betrayer, whose treachery rent the Cabal asunder, lived and died by his (or her) own moral code. Morality is not about sexual activity, or language, or taste in clothing or entertainment. It is about conduct and honor, about finding one's principles and standing by them, despite the cost. The Romans and Athenians, butchers though they might be by our modern codes, believed in honor and lived and died by it. So, too, did the Nine. We can all learn much from their example.

The mistakes of the Council and the deeds of the First Cabal offer many lessons, but this last point is most important to us in these Twilight Days: those survivors clung to their vision, even as their ideals were shattered and their lives destroyed. It is a fragile Path we Awakened walk, moreso those of us who seek to balance stasis, darkness and insanity. The voices of those who went before us can guide our steps along that Path, if we care to listen. The First Cabal persevered, even unto death, and their courage should inspire us all.

I offer this book as a rallying cry, a call to arms and to the ideals of the Council. Nine we stand, now, mystically linked in Oath and numerology to a grand pattern of Balance, dynamic through our vision, yet shaped by our unity. Nine in One, for the first time since the Betrayal. Such strength is critical in this Twilight time.

Change uncontrolled is madness. The Marauders prove this regularly, but it took the follies of the First and Second World Wars to show me the perils of unchecked pride and the scars we leave upon our Earth. We must honor the Nines' example; otherwise, our power carves the Tapestry a grave.

Thus endeth the sermon. Let the tales begin.

Timeline for the COUNCIL OF NINE

1210-1457 — Early Beginnings

- Destruction of Mistridge Covenant by the Craftsmasons — early Technomancers who, by most accounts, united the Order of Reason (Winter, 1210).
- Convention of the White Tower (March 25, 1325).
- Ascension War begins; across the world, reality begins to tighten. Many Magi fall to persecutions, revolts, assassinations, plagues and outright battles with the Order of Reason (1330-present).
- By some accounts, the Seers of Chronos (now Cultists of Ecstasy) and Ahl-i-Batin encourage the Houses of Hermes to call a worldwide Tribunal for the good of all Magi. Response is mixed (early 1420s).

1440 — Mistridge Tribunal

- Hermetic Master Baldric begins a quest for great Magi. After many adventures, he meets with Lady Nightshade (founder of the Verbena) and Master Valorian (founder of the Chorus) during the turning of the year. They confer in the ruins of Mistridge, and it is said that faeries visited them there. Reasons for this meeting vary, but all three come to an agreement to found a magickal order of their own. They depart to find other like-minded Masters. (1439-1440)

1440-1457 — The Quests

- Nightshade follows the Paths of the Wyck from Britain into North America; she meets Star-of-Eagles, who spreads the word among the Indian tribes, and Ali-beh-shaar of the Ahl-i-Batin. Later, she battles the English Inquisitor General Wyndgarde in Ireland and freezes his army in a sudden blizzard.
- Master Balric and Valorian journey into the Middle East and Africa with Sh'zar the Seer (founder of the modern Cult of Ecstasy) and Ali-beh-shaar. The latter sparks conflict with Valorian by introducing him to "Lustee Sprites" during the trek. Valorian goes East; the others meet with wise woman Naioba, of the Mo-Mo Keu dreamlands, and convince her of the rightness of their cause. The death-mystic Chalech greets the group in Rome.
- Valorian meets with the master alchemist Diplomate Luis, who introduces him in turn to the Akashic Brother Wu Jin. They ascend to the fabled Mt. Ki'wee and gain the blessings of their gods, then return to Mistridge.
- The Second Mistridge Tribunal (1449); Star-of-Eagles and Naioba, both somewhat befuddled by the trip, agree to share leadership of Those-Who-Speak-With-Dreams. Craftsmasons attack Mistridge again, solidifying the mages' resolve.

- After the Craftsmasons' defeat, the Primi — founders — of the Council agree to construct a great Realm in which to meet. Each returns to his or her native land and raises great power with which to fuel this "Horizon" Realm. After a series of fits and starts, the Nodes are connected and the Realm is formed. This takes five years.
- Star-of-Eagles and Naioba marry (1456), the first such union among the Traditions. She bears him three children.
- Magi and custos from across the world trickle into Horizon. The Council begins to grow.

1457-1466 — The Grand Convocation

- Nine years of debate ensues. Some factions drop out or declare themselves "Disparate;" others consolidate under the Nine Traditions — the Ahl-i-Batin, Akashic Brotherhood, Celestial Chorus, Dreamspeakers, Euthanatos, Orders of Hermes, Seers of Chronos, Solificati, and Verbena. The nine Spheres of magick are adopted as universal, and each Tradition picks a specialty.
- Naioba assassinated by Dreamspeaker *barabbi*. (1464). Star-of-Eagles is inconsolable. Her people rally to his side against the European Traditions when the Chorus seeks to convert the Africans "for their own good."
- Resolutions and Protocols passed, (Summer Solstice, 1466). The Council later appoints the First Cabal from among the finest mages in Horizon.

1466-1470 — The First Cabal

- After leaving Horizon, the Cabal crosses Europe and the Middle East, easing plagues, ministering to Sleepers in distress, and battling the Order of Reason. While liberating accused witches in the French town of Garoche, the Cabal burns the town to its foundations. A hunt is declared, and the Cabal passes across the Paths of the Wyck into central Africa to liberate Naioba's people from a conquering tribe. Their travels take them from France to Tibet, to lost Dis in the heart of Africa and the frozen wastes of Greenland. They never reach the Americas, however.
- Twins born to Eloine and Heylel (1469). Their names are lost to history.
- The Great Betrayal; in the province of Narbonne, an army of Inquisitors, led by Heylel and twelve Templars of the Cabal of Pure Thought. Four among the Cabal are killed; the others are imprisoned until Akrites leads a secret mission to free them (summer 1470).
- The trial and destruction of Heylel Thoabath and the final scattering of the Nine (November 1470).