



In huius Herbi de-
 scriptione, no videntur
 convenire Diosco. et in
 author. Nam plerazq. nom
 herb. huius apud Diosco.
 tribuntur Chamelionti, et Dipsaro,
 quibus sunt de genere carduor. Vix
 herba est esse debet eadem
 quod Diosco. Deurion
 tunc appellatur Cuius di-
 scit spes minor et
 minor. Eadem a
 coride flos vocatur
 Quodammodo et a motu
 hodie, item serpentaria

Florilegium

A game hack by Nick Wedig, combining *ARS Magica* by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein*Hagen with *GRASPING Nettle*s by Adam Bell

xiii. HERBA

CRACIS



DRACONTEA.

DICTA DRACONTEA

ASCLEPIAS

PYRTONION

pytonion

It is somewhere in the Middle Ages, but not the real historical time. The existence of magic has caused changes large and small throughout European society. Though some grumble that magic is the work of the Devil, the Pope has given permission to magi to continue their experiments, so long as they are confined to covenants. The hope is that magic can thus be contained in a place, far from the rest of medieval society.

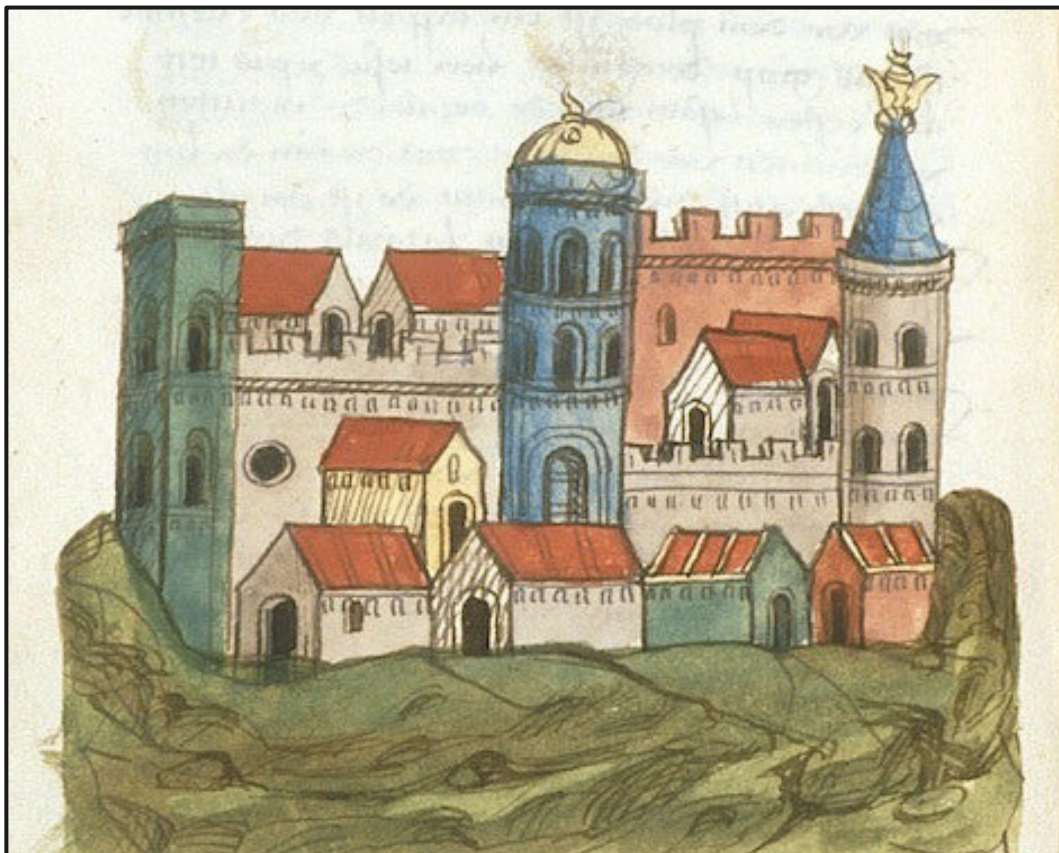
A covenant usually consists of several magi, their companions, and several servants to keep the place functioning. Every covenant choose for themselves how to live, but each is a haven for outsiders and misfits that cannot fit into the strict hierarchies of medieval society.

Within the covenant, magi research magic spells that can have tremendous effects on the world. But magical research is a slow, subtle process taking months or years. And as they labor away on these spells, life goes on. People grow old and change, problems arise for the covenant to deal with, and the world may be a different place by the time a spell is completed.

This game is a story about once such covenant, and the changes it experiences over the course of years, ideally all told in a few hours of gameplay. You'll need 3-7 players (4 or 5 is probably best), a lot of notecards and writing utensils, the print-and-play magic cards, and a copy of the Wheel.



This game is heavily inspired by *Ars Magica*, originally created by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein*Hagen, and *Grasping Nettles* by Adam Bell. I tried my best to make this game coherent, but familiarity with one or both those (no doubt much better) games might help to understand this one.



Tenets

People Come From Many Lives To Make A Covenant

The medieval world is highly rigid and structured, with most people oppressed or abused in some way. A covenant is a place outside of standard medieval society, where people can forge their own identities. Most covenants are physically remote, far from the centers of medieval society. Magi come from any background, from peasants to nobles, and are respected only for knowledge and magical skill. Other members of a covenant, the companions and grogs, are typically misfits or nonconformists who could not fit into the restrictive roles that medieval society had for them. In a covenant, each member can decide for themselves who they are and what to do with their lives.

We All Play Many Parts

Each player controls multiple characters within the covenant, in a variant of troupe-style play. As you play the game, the spotlight will shift from player to player and from character to character. The game is an ensemble story. No single character is central to the entire narrative.

There are three kinds of player characters: magi, companions and grogs. Magi are those who retreat from the world to study wizardry, the center of the covenant. Companions are unique and varied individuals who bind the covenant together. Grogs are the everyday working-class people surrounding the covenant, the servants and guards and cooks and messengers who keep the covenant functioning. They tend to be comic relief characters, who come to the magi for assistance with their troubles.

Magic Is Powerful But Slow

In this game, magic can accomplish great feats, ones that change the world. But Each magical working takes months or years to complete. Sorcery cannot be used to quickly respond to threats or danger. And so the game is about the passage of time, how the world moves on as the magi work to create wonders.

Things Change In Time

The story of the covenant takes place over large spans of time. Nothing stays the same forever. A character that you create with one image in mind may grow and change into someone different. Eventually, in time, death will come for some characters.

The goal of the game is to compress the passage of time, so that this multi-decade saga can be told in a few hours of real-time play. Ideally, a complete saga will last a session or two, but you'll experience the characters growing and changing over much longer in-fiction time.



COVENANT CREATION

The Covenant

Take the magic Verb and Noun cards, spread them across the table. Any player can claim authority over a card which seems interesting to them. Make sure the cards are roughly evenly distributed between players, and that each card is claimed by someone.

Possessing the card means that your magi will be the expert in that field of magic, but also that you make decisions about how that sort of magic works. If anyone has a question about how Adjuration works, they ask the person with the Adjure card.

Each Noun or Verb card has a covenant creation question on it. Each player should answer aloud. If the answer introduces a fictional element like a Location, a minor character, an Issue or a Wonder, write that thing on a notecard so that you can keep track of it, and so you can add more details later on in the game.

Main Characters

Each player will control several main characters. To begin, each player should create a magi and either a companion or grog. Over the course of play, you may acquire additional characters or some might leave play.

All characters start with fictional details: Aspirations, Troubles, Bonds, or Expertise. Record any significant information on a notecard for the character. Over the course of play, these fictional details might change, be solved, be replaced, or otherwise be invalidated. That's totally fine, characters change with time. Any time it makes sense, you can add change or remove these details as part of your action on the Wheel.

For Aspirations, Bonds and Trouble, describe those aspects of the character in more detail, identifying what the specific Aspiration is, who the Bond is with, what is the cause of your Trouble, etc.



Magi

Each Magus has expertise related to the Nouns and Verbs controlled by their player. In addition, give them an Aspiration, which is some sort of goal they have for the world.

Aspiration

- † To discover...
- † To master...
- † To create or invent...
- † To prove (or prove wrong)...
- † To improve...
- † To change...

Or some other lofty goal.

Magi names

- † Trivulzianus
- † Oldoyne
- † Gunteric
- † Zarya Flambeau
- † Alethia, of Merinata
- † The Hammer of Carthage

Or another scholarly name



Companions

Each companion has an area of expertise, and a bond to someone else in the covenant.

Vocations

- † Scholar
- † Mercenary
- † Outlaw
- † Changeling
- † Merchant
- † Diplomat

Or something similarly significant or unusual.

Your area of expertise probably is something related to your vocation, but it's entirely up to you what it is.

Choose a Bond to another player's PC.

Bonds

- † Rival to...
- † Romantically involved with...
- † Guardian to...
- † Family to...
- † Jealous of...
- † Responsibility of...

Or a similarly emotional bond

Names

- † Solyas
- † Volodymyr
- † Chamont
- † Gabrien Ironheart
- † Lady Fitz-dottrell
- † Saviolina

Or another noteworthy name

GROSS

Every Grog has an job, a Trouble and a Bond with a minor character.

Choose a job you fulfill in the covenant, or in the surrounding area.

Jobs

- † *Scullery maid*
- † *Hog reeve*
- † *Cartwright*
- † *Town drunk*
- † *Weaver*
- † *Wetnurse*

Or something else similarly low class occupation

Troubles

Every grog has problems they can't solve on their own, so they turn to companions and magi for help. Choose some Trouble that you need help with.

- † *Money and monetary problems*
- † *Food*
- † *Shelter*
- † *Romance*
- † *Some impossible daydream*
- † *Family drama*

Or some similar issue you can't solve for yourself.

Bonds

Choose a Bond you have with a minor character.

- † *Dislikes...*
- † *Child of...*
- † *Doesn't understand...*
- † *Employed by...*
- † *Caretaker to...*
- † *Causes trouble for...*

Or a similarly lighthearted relationship

Names

- † *Osbert Littlewit*
- † *Babcock*
- † *Eggler*
- † *Downright*
- † *Tib*
- † *Fastidious Brisk*

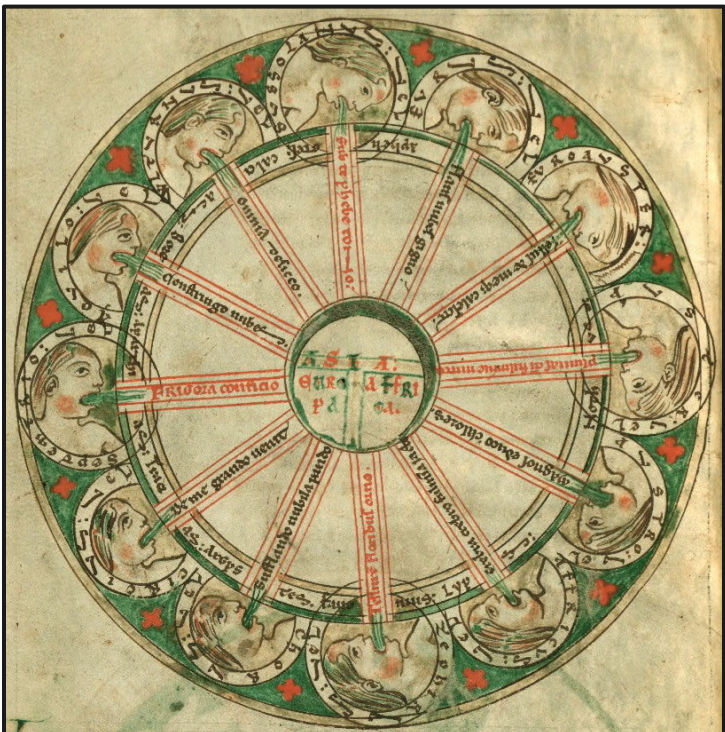
Or another comic name.



The Wheel

Central to the play of this game is the Wheel, which acts similar to a game board would in a board game. You should find it in the digital files to download along with this game. Place the Wheel somewhere that all players can see and interact with it. If playing in person, print it on a large sheet of paper. If online, you want it shared through whatever systems you're using.

Each space on the Wheel has a unique action that you will take as a player. Every action will add to the story in a different way. On your turn, you move one of the three tokens, then take the action that the token has landed on. Follow the specific rules for that space's action, then your turn ends. The player to the left then takes the next turn, once again moving a token and taking a space action. They could choose to move the same token, or move a different token. (If moving a different token, the same action might be taken twice in a row or even three times in a row.)



Moving Around the Wheel

On your turn, roll the die, choose one of the three character tokens on the Wheel, and

move exactly the number of spaces shown on the die. There are 3 rules of movement:

1. You must move orthogonally
2. You must not move counterclockwise
3. You must not enter the space that you most recently left during your movement

The three different tokens on the Wheel each represent a different type of character. One represents the magi, one the companions and one the grogs. When a token lands on an action space, you will perform that action using your character of that type as a focus. So if you move the grog token onto the Connect space, the relationship that is discussed will be between your grog and someone else's PC.

(If you don't have a character of the type that matches your token, you might have problems using actions like Connect, Scene or Project. You either want to choose a different token to move, choose a different space to move into, or establish a new character of the appropriate type as part of your action.)

Each space on the wheel has its own unique rules for how you add to the fiction. These rules are spelled out below.

The First Few Turns

At the beginning of the game, the three tokens all start off the wheel. On the first turn, the first player must select one token (magi, companion or grog) and put it on the Character space without rolling the die. They then take the Character action as normal.

For subsequent turns, you can choose to roll the die and move a token on the wheel, or you can choose to take one of the remaining tokens off the board and place it on the Character space of the wheel, taking that action. Once all three tokens are on the board, then players continue rolling the die and choosing a token to move.

This means that we have a few characters established at the start of play.



Minor Characters

The magi, companions and grogs played by the players are our focal characters, the people we pay the most attention to and care the most about. But they aren't the only people in the game world, or even in the covenant. During any space's action, players can invent minor characters to fill a role in the action. Minor characters aren't owned by any player. Any player can narrate their behavior as part of a space's action. During a scene, you can assign a player who doesn't have a PC in the scene to roleplay any minor characters.

If you grow attached to a minor character, they can be upgraded to a full PC by using the Character space and giving them details like any other main character of the appropriate type.

ACTIONS

Character

EITHER

Create a character of the appropriate type, and introduce them to the covenant. Make a card for them, with name and details the same as during covenant creation.

OR

Reveal something about a character you control of that character type, telling us a detail about them or their life that wasn't obvious from what went before. Describe it to the table, and make a note on their character card.

Location

Describe a new location in your community, or modify an existing one. Give it a name and narrate an overview of its size, its use or non-use, and where it is in relation to the rest of the locations.

Project

If you land here the active character can start a new Project. Think of one of the current issues or the goals of the character and note the method they're using to address the subject of their project.

Note who started the project. For mundane projects, put three empty circles on the project card. If they possess a relevant expertise, fill in one circle. Magical spells are a special kind of project, see the Magic rules section for detail on how to start a magical Project. While magical spells are powerful and flexible, mundane projects are limited to what a handful of ordinary people can accomplish while working together.

If the character beginning the project has a relevant expertise, you may fill in one circle on the Project's card.

When you land on this space, you can also describe your character helping work toward the completion of an existing Project. Briefly describe what progress is made, then fill in one circle on the Project card.

When all the circles on a Project have been fill the Project is complete. The player who began the project describes what the result of the project looks like, and make updates on any other notecards affected. Other players can add details, or give suggestions, on what impact the project has on the world. Mark this notecard as complete and add a brief summary of what happened.

CONNECT

Think about the relationship between your character of the token's type, and a character played by another player. Ask that player an open-ended question (not just yes-or-no) about how those two characters relate to each other. This could be something that has happened in the past, or a change in their relationship now, or something one character thinks or feels about the other.

That other player then answers your question, providing additional detail about both characters. Make any appropriate notes on one or both characters' notecards.

This is an opportunity to invent details about the other characters, don't abuse this power. Check with your fellow player if you're going to put something out there that you think they might not like and take it back if they don't.

Scene

Select an existing notecard and zoom in on something specific happening with it.

To frame a scene, they need to establish three things: the focus of the scene, where and when the scene occurs, and a question that will be answered by that scene.

The focus of the scene can be any card or notecard in play. The active player selects that card, and then asks a question about that thing that they wish to have answered through the scene. Identify where and when the scene occurs, who is present and what is happening at the start of the scene. Then players freely roleplay, portraying their characters

Any player who doesn't have a main character in the scene can roleplay any minor characters, or provide detail about the setting, or ask questions and provide suggestions.

Avoid if possible having two main characters of the same player interact with each other. If possible, have one leave the scene, or allow another player to roleplay one for a time.

Roleplay the scene until the framing question has been answered, then wrap it up. If necessary, you can skip ahead in time, move the action, or otherwise edit the scene to try to make sure the question is answered.

If the scene focuses on a Project, you may fill in one circle on that Project's card.



Question

Select a notecard on the table (any card except a player character). Ask a question aloud about the item. Then point to one player, and they give an answer to the question.

Once their answer is complete, point to a second player, who gives a different answer to the question. The second answer must be distinct from the first in some way. It might be totally different, or only in one key detail. But it has to present the asker a meaningful choice.

After hearing both answers, the asking player chooses one answer to be true. They let the other players know, and mark any appropriate changes on the relevant notecards.

Death

A main character meets their demise. Select one main character you control of the type associated with the token. Explain why and how they have died.

Each other player chooses one Character, Location, Event, Issue, Project or Wonder, and explains how that thing was affected by the character's death. Mark how that thing is changed by the character's passing on its card.

Any Projects that the character had started have to be taken over by another character (by another magi if it is a magical project) or they are abandoned, incomplete.

If you don't have a main character of the appropriate type, you must kill off a minor character, or introduce a symbolic death, or otherwise have death change the circumstances for the covenant.

Season

When you select this space, time passes. This could be weeks, months, years, even decades. Tell the other players how long has passed, and what the new time of year it is for the covenant going forward.

Every Project that is currently in progress gets a circle filled in. If that fills all the circles on the Project, then the Project has completed. The owner of that Project tells us how the game world has changed because of the Project.

Each player also chooses a Character, Location, Event, Issue, or Wonder and updates the card to represent how that thing has changed with time. Characters grow and change, Locations show the marks of time, Issues might grow worse or fade away entirely. Events often end after a Season, but some might endure for longer or turn into something else.

If a player wishes, they can remove the card they choose, explaining how a Character has died or permanently left, how a Location was destroyed or abandoned, how an Issue was resolved in the interim, or how the magic faded from a Wonder. They can also turn a card into something different. Perhaps an Event becomes an Issue, or a monstrous creature Wonder becomes a Character and part of the covenant.

Issue

Make a mess of the world – something big that can be felt across the whole world as you know it. It should be a problem for the covenant. Make a card for it, and describe the problems it causes for the covenant.

Event

Something big happens! It could be a festival, a holiday, anything that may reverberate through generations. The important thing that's different between this and the Issue action is events don't create a problem that needs to be solved, but rather change the world in an interesting way.

Wonder

Magic infuses the world. When you select this action, you will describe the effect magic has upon the world. To add a Wonder, give a name to some sort of magical creature, supernatural phenomenon or consequence of a spell. Then say one sentence about it. Each other player adds one sentence of their own, and then the action is finished. If you want to learn more, you could always set a scene about it later.

Glimpse

A Glimpse is a brief picture of a place outside of the covenant, somewhere else in the world. Glimpses add the context of the broader world to your story. To add a Glimpse, give a name to the place and then say one sentence about it. Each other player adds one sentence of their own, and then the action is finished. If you want to learn more, you could always set a scene about it later.



Magic

A magical spell is a special kind of Project, one that only magi characters can begin. When you begin a magical work, you describe the effect the spell will have. Every spell has two parts, a Verb and a Noun. The Verb identifies what the spell does, while the Noun identifies what the spell affects. So you might Conjure Earth to create a land bridge between two islands, or Banish Spirit to keep away ghosts, or Ensorcel Death to make a weapon more deadly. (It's very common to be able to perform a spell using multiple different combinations of Nouns and Verbs. Choose the combination that makes sense to you.)

On a notecard, write the spell's desired effect, the Verb and Noun it is based on, and the magi that began the spell.

Each player will have authority over one or more Nouns or Verbs. When you begin a spell, you declare which Verb and Noun govern the spell.

A spell takes a long time to complete. Every spell takes at least one season to complete, but each Noun and Verb has a short list of questions listed on its card. These questions will add seasons to the time it takes to complete a magical project.

On the notecard for the spell, draw one empty circle, to be filled in when progress is made on the project. The player in charge of the spell's Verb and Noun will each read their list of questions from the card and tell the other players their answers.

Once the Noun and Verb players declare their answers, the magi starting the Project has a chance to reconsider. They can refine their spell's effect, negotiate with the Noun or Verb player, or suggest a different combination of Noun and Verb. Work together with your fellow players to determine what the spell's effect will be, and how long it will take to complete.

For each additional season, add one circle onto the spell's notecard. Thus, a magical spell could take anywhere from 1 season to 8 seasons, depending on how complicated it is. The magi that begins the Project then fills in one circle if they have expertise in either the Noun or the Verb of the spell. (If you have expertise in both the Noun and Verb, you still only fill in one circle.)

When players take certain actions on the wheel, they will fill in circles on some or all ongoing projects. Once a spell has filled all its circles, the project is complete and the spell takes effect. The player who began the spell narrates what changes the spell has on the world, making changes to any existing characters, issues, locations, etc.

Verbs

CONJURE

Use this to create, increase or strengthen the Noun, or to summon magical beings associated with that Noun.

When Someone Uses Magic

Are you beginning this project in the spring? *If not, +1 season.*

Are you attempting to summon a magical being associated with that Noun? *If so, +1 season.*

If you are attempting to create or affect more of an element than a strong man can carry, *+1 season.*

Covenant Creation Question

Why was the covenant created? How long has it existed?

Banish

Use this verb to weaken, destroy, protect against or drive away the Noun in question.

When Someone Uses Magic

Do you wish to destroy the Noun entirely (*+1 season*) or simply drive it away or weaken it?

If you are attempting to destroy or weaken more of this Noun than a strong man can carry, *+1 season*.

Do you want to keep the Noun away permanently once banished? *If so, +1 season*. Otherwise, the Noun can return at a later time according to its natural way.

Are you beginning this project in the autumn? *If not, +1 season*.

Covenant Creation Question

What does the covenant want or need? What is lacking?

Ensorcel

Use this verb to imbue the essence of that noun into something else, or to transform something into this Noun (or transform this Noun into something else).

When Someone Uses Magic

Does this spell permanently transform the thing? *If so, +1 season*. If temporary, then the spell ends with the next full moon.

Are you beginning this project in the summer? *If not, +1 season*.

Are you attempting to ensorcel something of a supernatural nature? *If so, +1 season*.

Covenant Creation Question

What does the covenant provide, or have plenty of?

Adjure

This verb lets you control, command or manipulate the Noun in question.

When Someone Uses Magic

Are you attempting to command more of the Noun than a strong man can carry? *If so, +1 season*.

Does this adjuration permanently change the subject? *If so, +1 season*. If not, the spell effect ends on the next new moon.

Are you beginning this project on the solstice, equinox, an eclipse or other astrologically significant date? *If not, +1 season*.

Covenant Creation Question

Who has demands the covenant cannot ignore? What do they want from the covenant?

Scry

This verb lets you magically gain knowledge about the Noun.

When Someone Uses Magic

Is the Noun hidden by magical or supernatural means? *If so, +1 season*.

Have you personally been in the presence of the subject of your scrying? *If not, +1 season*.

Are you beginning this project in the winter? *If not, +1 season*.

Covenant Creation Question

What rival outside group causes problems for the covenant? What is the cause of this conflict?

Nouns

The World

This Noun controls all the things of this crude matter that comprises the physical world. Use it to control and transform inanimate physical objects.

When Someone Uses Magic

Does this spell require manipulating Earth, or things of a solid nature? *If so, +1 season.*

Does this spell require manipulating Water, or things of a liquid nature? *If so, +1 season.*

Does this spell require manipulating Air, or things of a gaseous nature? *If so, +1 season.*

Does this spell require manipulating Fire, or lightning and energy? *If so, +1 season.*

Covenant Creation Question

Where is the covenant located? What does their home look like?

The Soul

This Noun is responsible for the minds of thinking beings, as well as intangible and magical entities, such as souls, ghosts, angels, devils, and fairies.

When Someone Uses Magic

Is this soul of a mortal human? Or is it of some supernatural nature (*+1 season*)?

Is the soul in question still in this realm, or has it passed to another existence? (*+1 season for another plane*)

Is this soul cooperating with your magic? *If not, +1 season.*

Covenant Creation Question

What magical creature or phenomena does the covenant have to deal with?

Life

Though The Soul affects the human mind, this Noun affects the physical bodies of living beings.

When Someone Uses Magic

Is the being in question resisting your spell? *If so, +1 season.*

Is the being a human or other being possessing a language? *If so, +1 season.*

Are you affecting your own body, or someone else's? (*+1 season for someone else*)

Covenant Creation Question

How does the covenant make its living? What does it do for sustenance and to earn wealth?

Death

This Noun governs any dead beings, or any necromantic acts you might attempt.

When Someone Uses Magic

Did this being die within your lifetime? *If not, +1 season.*

Did you know the deceased when they were alive? *If not, +1 season.*

Do you have the body of the deceased? *If not, +1 season.*

Covenant Creation Question

What conflict must the covenant deal with?



Credits

This game is heavily inspired by *Ars Magica*, originally created by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein*Hagen, since then published in many editions by various publishers. The mechanics and gameplay are largely derived from *Grasping Nettles* by Adam Bell

“*Florilegium* is based on *Grasping Nettles*, but is an independent production by Nick Wedig and is not affiliated with Adam Bell or adamebell.games.”

THIS GAME REINVENTS
THE WHEEL

If you enjoy this game, please let me know at nickwedig@yahoo.com, especially if you play it or make your own hacks of it. You can find this game and others at nickwedig.itch.io or at nickwedig.libraryofhighmoon.com.

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On the Title

In Medieval Latin, *Florilegium* (from the Latin meaning ‘a gathering of flowers’) was used to mean an anthology of choice writings from a variety of authors, made of literary excerpts, poems, aphorisms and ballads. Each extract was chosen as the best example, the fairest flower of its kind, and the entire book was a sort of literary bouquet.

Similarly, this game is assembled out of short creative works by a variety of authors: you and the other players each create a small moment, that assemble into a larger whole more wonderful than its constituent parts.

Florilegium

