

GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

INFINITE WORLDS[™] COLLEGIO JANUARI[™]



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INTRODUCTION

In a world lit only by fire, knights clash on muddy battlefields to decide ownership of a hundred acres of land, and priests bicker in darkened abbeys about the precise meaning of a single sentence. Everywhere, men and women are locked into a great chain of being by their birth and their stars, toiling in the fields or sweating in their armor. Everywhere, that is, except within the halls of Janus.

Here, the scholars know that more worlds exist than just the one presented to mankind by God. They know there are bright gems for the taking, and whole libraries of lost lore to study. They know that knowledge is power, and they have devoted their lives to both. Do they seek to remake the world, healing and raising it up, bathed in the light of golden possibilities? Or to rule all the worlds as magical overlords, harnessing all the kingdoms of all the worlds to their chariot? The doors of Janus swing both ways . . .

Infinite Worlds: Collegio Januari is a medieval fantasy campaign frame for crossworld adventure, centered on a small magical conclave, the Collegio Januari (the College of Janus). With the secret arts conveyed to them by Janus himself when the ancient empires passed through his gates to their doom, the Collegio seeks out other worlds and the knowledge and power therein.

QUAE TERRA?

The proper names and some of the legends and lore in this campaign frame come from Earth history, so slipping this setting into any historical fantasy milieu is relatively simple. However, the Collegio Januari is designed to mesh snugly with any fantasy world that has wizards and knights. (In a pinch, the Game Master can leave out the knights.) Just

*There were boundless,
unforeseeable realms, planet on
planet, universe on universe, to
which we might attain, and
among whose prodigies and
marvels we could dwell or
wander indefinitely.*

– Clark Ashton Smith,
“The City of the
Singing Flame”

change the names to whatever “lost god of the old empire” and “mysterious huntsman knight” seem appropriate.

The Collegio on Earth

If you decide to set the Collegio in Earth history, it fits relatively well into any time between around 600 A.D., with the revival of monastic learning in Western Europe, and 1700, when secular knowledge starts really outpacing clerical knowledge openly, and when secret societies of wizards start seeming silly enough that people invent Freemasonry instead. The Order of St. Eustathius is a slightly more awkward fit; the great era of the knightly orders only starts going around 1100, and the last hurrah of the armored knight is on Bosworth Field in 1485. Some time in the 1200s would be eminently workable for both.

However, knightly orders remain in existence to this day; the Hospitaller Knights of St. John, for example, still run an ambulance service and are recognized as a sovereign nation by many countries. (Some conspiracy theorists believe they’re a CIA front, as well.) There’s no reason you couldn’t turn the Collegio Januari into a secretive order of ritual magicians like the Mermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Order of St. Eustathius into a vengeful, globetrotting special ops force like the Special Air Service.

The Janiculum would be located in Switzerland or the Italian Alps, or perhaps the Pyrenees or somewhere in an obscure Balkan valley. It should be near a main road, to allow its scouts to find something adventurous to do without a lot of tedious traveling, but not close enough to a major city that it gets embroiled in petty local politics.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Hite lives in Chicago, a monarchical city-state impinging on many strange and wondrous dimensions. Every so often, he writes users’ manuals and field guides to such, including *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, *Adventures Into Darkness*, and *Trail of Cthulhu*. He records his more theoretical and exploratory notes in “Suppressed Transmission,” in Pyramid magazine. He has been assigned a cat, who along with his wife, Sheila, keeps his Ashlar secure.



Roman iconography depicted Janus as a god with two faces (joined at the back of the head) looking in each direction. In some carvings, Janus wears a wide-brimmed hat; often, one face is clean-shaven and one is bearded. This is Janus Bifrons (“two-faced”). Other cognomens for Janus include Janus Geminus (“the twin”), Janus Consivius (“he who plants”), Janus Patulcius (“the opener of doors”), Janus Clusivus (“the closer of doors”), and Janus Quadrifons (“four-faced,” lord of the four corners of the earth).

The oak is Janus’ sacred tree. He is represented with a staff and a key or a gate. Janus’ holy days were January 1 and, to a lesser extent, the first of all months. January, of course, was his

holy month, and his main feast was the Agonia or Agonalia on January 9. Janus’ other feast was the Portunalia, on August 17. The Collegio celebrates both feasts with banquets, magical contests, and similar revels.

Certain scholars have identified Janus as the future destiny of Jupiter; or as another identity of Cronus, god of time; Juvenal and Herodian knew that he was the first and last of the gods. In some sense, he personifies the Old Gods; as Janus Pater he was even revered as the “god of the gods.” All the gods must pass through Janus’ gates, after all, and he must remain behind to close and lock them at the end of things.

THE JANICULUM

The headquarters of the Collegio is a large walled compound on a solid shelf of rock fed by a number of mountain springs. Inside the Janiculum are chambers for the mages, barracks for the staff, refectories and banquet halls, great and small kitchens, a crypt for dead members, a vegetable garden, workrooms and laboratories, and the finest library in the world. (Many of the books are printed books from other worlds, of course.) The Janiculum is stoutly defended

with high walls, magical traps, and arcane devices from other worlds. (The GM decides if these include Gatling lasers and force fields, or more conventional weapons, or simply odd magitech from other sorcerous realities.) It has a substantial arsenal with all manner of weapons in it, and plentiful stores of food against a siege or a long winter. There is no chapel, only a fane to Janus – this will appall any right-thinking visitors from a Christian kingdom, if they happen to notice it.

CHARACTER TEMPLATE

COLLEGIO MAGUS

118 points

This template gives a general guideline for Collegio magi; they will vary as much as any magi do, of course. The spell list is a very basic curriculum, the minimum spells needed to learn Plane Shift, which is a spell known only to the College in this setting. (Or, if the GM already has magi Plane Shifting around to the Astral or Elemental planes, only the Collegio knows about parallel worlds, and knows the spells for travel to them.) The Secret implies that Janus worship is both secret and shameful, as it would be in medieval Europe. In polytheistic settings, the GM may wish to imply that Janus or the College has an unsavory reputation, or remove the Secret (and raise the total points by 10). The GM may also want to consult the Cabalist template (see *Infinite Worlds*, pp. 195-196) for another world-hopping mage model.

Attributes: ST 9 [-10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 11 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 10 [-15]; FP 13 [6]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Latin: Spoken (Accented)/Written (Native) [5]; Magery 1 [15]; and Patron (Collegio Januari, 12 or less; minimal intervention) [15]; • Two of Eidetic Memory [5], Language: Spoken (Accented)/Written (Native) [5], Reputation [5], Single-Minded [5], Status 1 [5], Versatile [5], or Will+1 [5].

Disadvantages: Duty (The Collegio, 12 or less) [-10] and Secret (Janus worshiper) [-10]; • -30 points chosen from among Absent-Mindedness [-15], Bad Sight [-25], Bad Temper

[-10*], Compulsive Behavior [-5, -10, -15*], Curious [-5*], Gluttony [-5*], Oblivious [-5], Obsession [-5 or -10*], Sense of Duty [-2 to -15], Shyness [-5 to -20], Stubbornness [-5], or Weirdness Magnet [-15].

Primary Skills: Thaumatology (VH) IQ [4]-13†.

Secondary Skills: History (any) (H) IQ [4]-13 and Research/TL3 (A) IQ [2]-13; • Five of Games (Magical challenges) (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Hidden Lore (any) or Occultism, both (A) IQ [2]-13; Astronomy/TL3 (Observational), Expert Skill (any), Mathematics (any), Naturalist, or Theology (Roman or other), all (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Alchemy (VH) IQ-2 [2]-11; or Dreaming or Meditation, both Will-1 (H) [2]-12.

Background Skills: One of Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-11; Riding (any), Shortsword, or Staff, all (A) DX [2]-10.

Basic Spells: Counterspell, Ignite Fire, Lend Energy, Light, Purify Air, Seek Earth, Seeker, Seek Water, Sense Foes, and Shield, all (H) IQ-1 [1]-12†.

Spells of Janus: Planar Summons (H) IQ+1 [4]-14† and Plane Shift (VH) IQ [4]-13† for the Collegio’s home Earth and for four other worlds.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† +1 for Magery.

Once a mage of the Collegio gazes upon a world’s Ashlar with magical eyes, he knows it.

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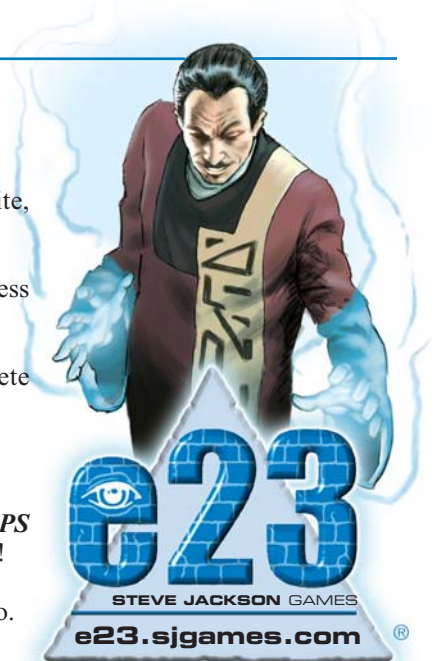
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