Points of Interest

As well as the Colleges, there are a number of locations within the great city of Altdorf and beyond that wizards frequent or that have a special magical nature. Although undoubtedly centred on Altdorf, there are a good number of sites throughout the Empire that the Colleges make use of, from wells of magical power to institutions, way-houses and sanctuaries, sacred sites and traditional stomping grounds.

The University

The University of Altdorf is one of the most important sites in the Old World for mundane knowledge and education. Its sprawling campus dominates a whole district of the city, crammed with students and masters. And its ancient practices and traditions put the magical Colleges to shame. In many ways the College structure is modelled on the university, for when the Colleges were created that was the familiar learning establishment.

The university looks down its nose at the academic standards of the Colleges, but reluctantly respects its magical virtues. There is a good amount of to-ing and fro-ing between a College and the university, and their needs are complementary. The university is often in need of magical advice or practical help and is generally the least fearful of magic of all the Empire’s mundane institutions. And the knowledge and expertise of the university is frequently called upon by the more inquisitive apprentices and wizards.

The Imperial Palace

The Imperial Palace, as the hub of Imperial activity, is remarkably tolerant of wizards. Many Imperial counsellors take advice from one or more Colleges in the running of the Empire. And wizards’ influence spreads to facets of Imperial rule far removed from where they might be most expected. The common people may not trust wizards, but those who rule them often do.

A particularly charismatic or diplomatic wizard might find himself appointed to palace duties, where he is expected to aid the Empire and further the ambitions of his College, equally. Many wizards of different stripes inevitably meet and clash within the palace’s marble halls. They wheedle for more influence while trying to put down their rivals.

Some nobles and advisors consider that the influence of the Colleges has gone too far. They do all they can to curb this, believing that such reliance is dangerous to the very survival of the Empire. After all, it continued well enough for two thousand years. The last two hundred years, when the Colleges have carved out their unique position in the Empire and the palace, has not exactly seen an improvement in the general state of affairs.

Mezzo’s

Giovanni Mezzo is one of the finest Tilean chefs in the Empire, and his banqueting house in Altdorf, in the shadow of the Imperial Palace, is infamous throughout the Reikland. Over the years the establishment has become known as a magical haunt and high-ranking wizards from many of the Colleges eat here often.

Mezzo’s has become one of the more popular neutral grounds for wizards of different Colleges to meet and to trade business, news and gossip, and even magical techniques, away from any sort of official scrutiny. Because of this, the Grey College keeps a special eye on the place. Some wizards even suspect that Mezzo himself is a Grey Wizard.
If someone has business with an important wizard, especially business of a dubiously legal or particularly delicate nature, then the chances are that they will meet at Mezzo’s rather than the College. One advantage of this is that the parties can meet in private amid the darkened rooms and secluded snugs, and the other is that they get excellent food.

**The Catacombs**

The catacombs of Altdorf comprise labyrinthine tunnels lined with skulls and bones of long-dead Altdorfers that run for miles under a significant portion of the older parts of the city. No one knows how long Altdorfers were burying their dead in this way, but it must have been for many hundreds of years. Nowadays the practice has fallen out of fashion but the legacy remains.

Because of the nature of these tunnels, the Amethyst Wind pools around the passages in prodigious concentration and so the place is often visited by spiriter. It is supposed common knowledge that the College of the Amethyst Order has many secret passages that lead to every corner of the catacombs. It is also common knowledge that the network is visited by any number of other creatures attracted by the morbid remains.

The Catacombs are also home to a number of forsaken types that find safety and shelter in parts of the network. The place is an ideal lair for mutants escaping persecution. Gangs of footpads and cultists make their home down there, too.

**The Unity**

Amongst the wizards of the Colleges of Magic there is a gossip of a secret group of College wizards whose mission is to discover the magical secrets that would allow a wizard to tame more than a single wind. Known as The Unity, it is thought its members believe that by changing their techniques in subtle ways they can overcome the limitations of Teclisian theory, and that they search for forgotten rituals and ancient knowledge from across the world.

They say the Unity meets in secret in a number of locations throughout Altdorf, and even beyond, where they reveal the progress of their research and compare notes. The wizards see their goal as the highest aspiration of human wizardry and manage to not let the petty rivalries of the Colleges get in the way of their potentially ground-breaking experiments.

The wizards of the Colleges whisper rumours about the Unity and their great purpose, but it is not even clear whether the organisation actually exists. The witch hunters believe they are simply a front to transmutation has been discovered. If that could be believed it would explain Kemperbad’s great wealth, but the notion raises many more questions than it answers. Some say it is just a scheme and a lie by the Gold College to get as much money as they can.

The tower of Vane is a spectacular sight, rising from the Grey Mountains far above Übersreik; it can be seen for many miles around. It appears almost as a needle, tall and virtually featureless, formed from the stark rocky landscape, and crowned by a glass dome. The place is a centre of Celestial divination away from the confusing signs of Altdorf, a lofty peak where the Celestial Wizards can survey the portents in splendid isolation, surrounded in the dominant wind of Azyr.

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The tower is situated off the beaten track and receives hardly any visitors except for Celestial Wizards from all across the Old World and their retinues. It is difficult to reach and situated in an area infamous for goblin raiding parties. Needles to say, getting assigned a place at the tower is an exciting, but dangerous, prospect for a budding Celestial Wizard.

Because of the nature of prediction, the relative difficulty of long range forecasts and the suddenness with which the portents can change, the Celestial College makes sure a variety of delivery methods are available to bring any important news back to Altdorf as quickly as possible, from messengers and trained birds to magic spells. The messengers are led by an Acolyte of the Celestial College to make sure any missive is properly respected.

**The Golden Bull**

In the swanky Neustadt district of Kemperbad the Golden Bull appears as a genteel inn or gentlemen’s club, and the clientèle would seem to support this notion, save for a few ostentatiously-dressed, golden-robed patrons.

The inn is a place for the rich businessmen of Kemperbad to meet and learn from the Gold College. What they learn exactly, is kept strictly behind those closed oak doors. Nobody talks about it to strangers, and the members are a tightly knit bunch. According to some, they would reveal the nature of events there on pain of death. Needless to say the aspiring merchants of Kemperbad want nothing more than to be admitted into such an exclusive club, and regard insiders with bitter jealousy.

A number of alchemists have moved permanently to Kemperbad, and great plans are afoot. Some are already saying that the secret to transmutation has been discovered. If that could be believed it would explain Kemperbad’s great wealth, but the notion raises many more questions than it answers. Some say it is just a scheme and a lie by the Gold College to get as much money as they can.

The thing they call the Unity? It cannot exist. It just could not. Imagine a secret society of wizards, all working directly against the fundamental principles of the Colleges.

The wisdom that Teclis brought us, thrown back in his face, in the name of some magical chimaera of ultimate power. The idea is entirely preposterous, and I would not waste my time, or that of my Acolytes in attempting to get to the bottom of such ludicrous rumours.

– Gavius Klugge, Grey Wizard