

Collegia Magia

JOHANNES

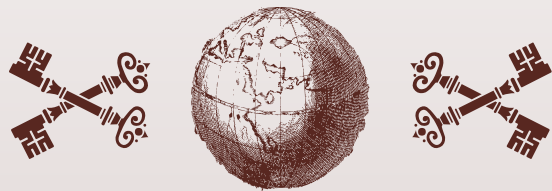
INSTITUTE

OF SCIENCE



THE FOLLOWING IS THE SECOND part of *Collegia Magia*, a series focusing on magical academies that can be dropped into a campaign with minimal preparation. Each article presents detailed NPCs, points of interest, and loose plot hooks that can be developed during play. Also included are lore and options for enrolled PCs! This installment of the series details the Johannes Institute, which uses science to decipher the multiverse's secrets.

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INTRODUCTION

At the base of a mountain range, in a sprawling castle of curious architecture, is the Johannes Institute of Science. Nearly an hour's jaunt from the nearby town of Johannes, the Institute is comfortably isolated enough to practice their myriad projects and daring experiments. On wide rooftops, mages in training practice their ancient arts without fear of starting a forest fire. In spacious courtyards, aspiring engineers create devices the like never before seen in this world.

Though cozy and rural, the Institute is renowned throughout the region for academic rigor. Through the power of science, the Johannes Institute hopes to differentiate magic from mundane, and develop each to their extremes. Like a spring pulled apart, the better the natural and magical laws are understood individually, all the more powerful their recombination.

CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

Members of any spellcasting class can gain something from associating with the Johannes Institute.

Alchemist*. The Institute's dedication to science has revolutionized the field of alchemy. The Institute's Alchemy Club hosts a fair every spring to exhibit daring experiments and amuse the locals.

Bard. While not particularly drawn to the academic extremes, bards find the spirit of discovery at the Institute absolutely palpable. To broaden their horizons, some indulge in auditing classes here.

Cleric. Clerics dedicated to the classical elements[†] or to healing may advance their path at the Institute. Most consider "differentiating magic from mundane" boringly consistent with

Rumors and Plot Hooks

1. You need a spell, alchemical formula, or the like? The library's got a little bit of everything. (True)
2. We at the Institute have set the new standard on magical research... Admittedly, the President says our limited metallurgy and glass working hold us back. (True)
3. I bet if you grab old Two-Coins by the ear, he'll tell you where he stashes his treasure. (False)
4. You know, the Fairmane family still has the deed to this land. (False)
5. My friend tells me the townsfolk don't like us that much. I think they're jealous. (False)
6. They say the President has a whole book of new inventions that we can't even imagine! (True)
7. Did you know? The President came here from another country after he invented science. (False)
8. Did you know? The President was born on another plane! (True)

polytheism and multiverse theory.

Druid. The Institute always welcomes druids' insights into the natural world. When nearby enclaves collaborate with the Institute, they produce druids specialized in biology and the classical elements.[‡]

Sorcerer. The Institute finds sorcerers and their chaotic powers fascinating... But sorcerers rarely appreciate the attention that comes with poking, prodding, and signing consent forms.

* C. Richard Davies, "The Alchemist: Where Madness Meets Magic," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/alchemist-where-5739275>

† C. Richard Davies, "Priests of Elemental Power," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/priests-of-power-4785677>

‡ Mark Kernow, "Circles of Power: Three New Druid Circles," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/1973600>

Open Game Content

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Warlock. To differentiate supernatural entities from alchemical metaphors, the Alchemy Club indexes occult entities suitable for pactmaking and jealously guards these tomes.

Wizard. The librarians are tasked with the mission of collecting and copying arcane tomes. The library's chief curator allows students to copy from library spellbooks for free, and visitors for a fee. There is at least a 75% chance the library possesses any given spell within the core rules.

New Spell

Characters affiliated with the Johannes Institute of Science are familiar with the true substances of being. The following cantrip is added to their class's spell list, if they have one.

Transfiguration

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

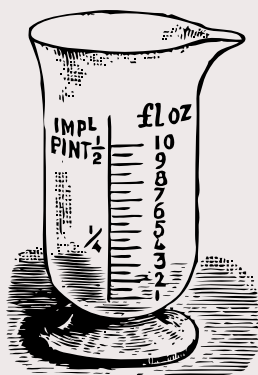
Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

By understanding the alchemical composition of objects, you can transmute them into different forms. You transfigure two cubic feet of raw materials you touch into a new form made of the same substance, conserving mass. For example, you can transfigure clothing into rope, electrum coins into gold and silver bars, bricks into a clay jar, or scrap metal into a weapon.

The quality of objects made by the spell is commensurate with the quality of the raw materials.

Living matter and magic items can't be created or transmuted by this spell. You also can't use it to create items that ordinarily require a high degree of craftsmanship, such as jewelry, weapons, glass, or armor, unless you have proficiency with the type of artisan's tools used to craft such objects.



BACKGROUND EXPANSION

If you are affiliated with the Johannes Institute, you can take the following trait options, replacing the normal trait from your background. You can also replace one your background's proficiencies with the optional proficiencies below.

Optional Proficiencies: Arcana, alchemist's tools, artisan's tools

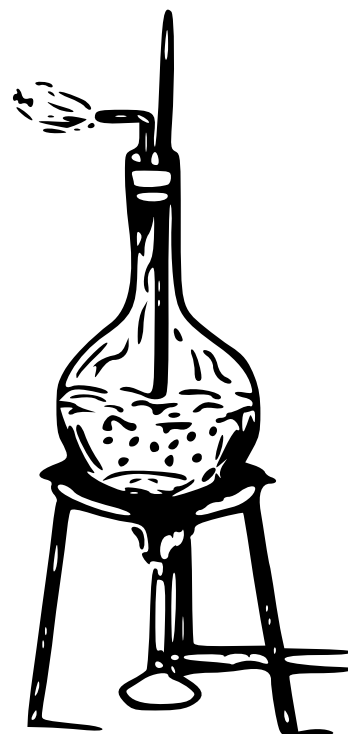
OPTIONAL BONDS AND FLAWS

d6 Bonds

- 1 My way with books and card catalogues is enough to make a librarian swoon.
- 2 Someone sabotaged my science fair demonstration! Damn you, Alchemy Club!
- 3 Whenever I make an important discovery I record it in the notebook of my late classmate, who I accidentally incinerated freshman year.
- 4 As Huxley's assistant, I learned to appreciate savants like him. There are lot of students who share his social difficulties, but they are incredible wizards. Best not to judge their differences too quickly.
- 5 Since I met President Hughes, I keep having strange dreams about a world without magic...
- 6 I secretly collect data on the Institution to share with my co-conspirators.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My coughing fits come from the caustic fumes I breathed in an alchemy experiment gone wrong.
- 2 I brook no rivals. I only fight fair if I've already won.
- 3 When asked a question, I can't so much as move until I arrive at an answer.
- 4 I prefer the days before science, back when we knew everything.
- 5 No peril is too immediate to prohibit academic analysis!
- 6 O, the joy of belittling scientifically illiterate idiots.



SIGNIFICANT NPCs

Christopher Hughes, Physicist & President of the Board (lawful neutral)

This middle-aged human with dark complexion, blue eyes, and voluminous back hair. He wears pants and tunic under his crimson robes. He has a magnificent scientific mind, but is a very poor wizard.

Trait: He talks like he's from another plane, using strange words like "molecule" and "gravity."

Ideal: Discernment. "I follow your reasoning, but how rigorously have you tested this hypothesis?"

Bond: His mother gave him a holy symbol of their faith, which he wears under his shirt.

Flaw: He is unaware of basic facts about the world that most wizards take for granted.

"Just" Huxley, Cosmologist (lawful neutral)

A balding elderly human wizard of fair complexion and a long white beard. He spends most his time at Institute's observatory, nightly gazing into the telescope and scribbling painstaking notes.

Trait: A note on his door reads, "Sleeping. Do not disturb until dinner."

Ideal: Knowledge. "The globe turns. Kingdoms fall. I discover."

Bond: Though midnight chats with the young Christopher, Huxley personally renovated the field of astronomy.

Flaw: He is soft-spoken but curt. Speaking interferes with his thoughts, and he gesticulates silently where others may "think out loud."

Filip "Two-Coins", Menace Illusionist (chaotic neutral)

This gnome with coiffed black hair wears entirely too many layers of clothing. His raven familiar Fred follows him everywhere, often disguised by illusion as an orc. Though outcast for his antics, Fil's illusions keep the groundskeepers from ousting him.

Trait: He compulsively casts illusions to trick others, even when these ruses are obvious. He's infamous at the canteen for paying with two coins—one real, one figmentary.

Ideal: Acquisition. "I need this. Ask Fred. He'll tell you I need this."

Bond: His parents' good standing at the Institute landed Fil his short-lived scholarship.

Flaw: Filip's powers originate from his troubled mind. He sees "ownership" and "truth" as illusions for him to manipulate.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Johannes Institute of Science did not begin as such. A century or two ago, outside the frontier town of Johannes, a second-son noble from a nearby province determined to set up a castle and expand their family's legacy. An unfortunate outbreak of plague took the noble's life, leaving the castle to the court wizard and her faculty. Within a generation the castle turned into a local school of magic. Even with little funding, the far-seeing mages made frugal choices to maintain and expand their resources. Word spread through the frontier of the "school in Johannes," a haven for the magically gifted.

Thirty years ago, the school's elders performed an arcane experiment which changed the school forever. The experiment coincided with a planar alignment, and created an arcane disturbance swept Christopher Hughes from his home plane to this one. In his homeworld it was Earth year CE 1986, and Christopher was a sophomore physics student at a globally renowned university. An extracurricular science experiment coincided with the elders' arcane experiment. The result brought Christopher face-to-face with the wizarding enclave outside Johannes. In the days to come, they discovered the planar alignment had passed, and they could not return Christopher whence he came.

As he grew accustomed to his new home, Christopher and the wizards shared the most profound secrets of each world's workings. They

immediately investigated whether his world's natural laws applied to this plane. The years to come completely innovated the school's practices, including an absolute dedication to the scientific process. Even with Christopher's incomplete knowledge of his homeworld's technology, he and his new associates began to reverse-engineer many innovations.

By selling the fruits of their labor, the school finally had a means of income. They acquired new resources and expanded their facilities. By this time, students began to realize that the Johannes Institute of Science had something that even Granspire Seminary could not offer. Attendance spiked, and Christopher implemented the application processes and academic competition he knew from his homeworld.

Hughesian Innovations

With Christopher Hughes's insights on science, he is an indispensable resource to the academy; any traditional student of magic can renovate their field with just a few short conversations. The following are just a few possible fruits of such collaborations. Each radically changes how the characters see the cosmos; some even enhance capabilities through scientific knowledge. The GM can use the following innovations as rewards related to the Institute.

RANDOM INNOVATIONS

d12 Innovation

- 1 Hypothetical evolutionary chart linking lizards, dinosaurs, birds, and dragons. Scribble marks. Inconclusive.
- 2 Hypothetical evolutionary chart linking humans, dwarves, halflings, and elves. Scorch marks. Inconclusive.
- 3 Theorems on momentum, air friction, and acceleration due to gravity. Using this, a creature proficient with artisan tools can spend 100 gp of supplies over an hour to permanently improve a siege weapon's attack by +1 and increase its damage dice by one step (d6 to d8, etc.).
- 4 Potato-powered radio transmitter. Range 500 feet.

d12 Innovation

- 5 Potato-powered radio receiver with metal dish antenna. Must face direction of signal to receive.
- 6 Treatise on hypothetical "periodic table of elements," with notes on many more elements than the four you know. It takes 42 hours to read, which can include 2 hours of a long rest. After reading it all, make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, you permanently gain advantage on Intelligence (alchemist's tools) checks.
- 7 Theorems on the structure of light. Note reads, "Ask dwarves about optic glass formulae." It takes 4 hours to read, which can be done as part of a long rest. After reading it all, make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, whenever you deal radiant damage, treat any damage die showing 1 as showing 2.
- 8 Treatise on the principles of electricity. It takes 42 hours to read, which can include 2 hours of any long rest. After reading it all, make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, you permanently ignore resistance to lightning damage.
- 9 Heliocentric planetary chart, with notes on celestial bodies whose movements remain unexplained. A creature casting *teleport* can use this chart to increase "description" and "viewed once" destinations to "seen casually." A creature using this chart casts teleportation circle for half the material component cost.
- 10 Essay validating both the "periodic table of elements" and the classical elements of magic. It takes 4 hours to read, which can be done as part of a long rest. A creature who reads this makes a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, the spellcaster permanently gains a +2 bonus on spellcasting ability checks performed when casting counterspell or dispel magic.
- 11 Bestiary stuffed with notes on new explanations and mysteries for various monsters' life functions. A creature reading this book has advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) checks related to non-humanoid physiology.
- 12 Sketch journal of possible future inventions, and notes on the technical limitations at this time. Inconclusive. 