

Player's Section



This document is a player's handout for Turrus Lemurum, an introductory adventure for the HinterWelt Enterprises campaign setting Roma Imperious. To enhance everyone's enjoyment, players should not read beyond the area marked "GM's Section".

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Trouble in Africa

T. Nepius~

I pray to Juno that your household is well in these troubled times. The Berbers rise in the south and threaten the Limes that guard our borders. Know that I will sacrifice to Mars for your victory in this struggle.

*I hesitate to call on you at a time like this for such a minor issue but I have had difficulty with the local Praefectus Fadius Bato. There is a local turrus left over from the days when our borders did not extend as far and I fear trouble is brewing there. We know of *Beastia Gigantea*, a pack of *Aper*, but they seldom bother our people. Recently my youngest son, *Postumus*, has gone missing. We search daily, but it is as though he were spirited away. Surely this is the work of something beyond the power of our local villae.*

If you could send us help or convince the local Praefectus to aid us I would be in your debt.

In friendship and urgency,

G. Aurelius

Sighing, the Praetor turned to his advisor, "Send for that Praetorian, the one who always wants something." Looking over the letter from his old friend he knew he must do

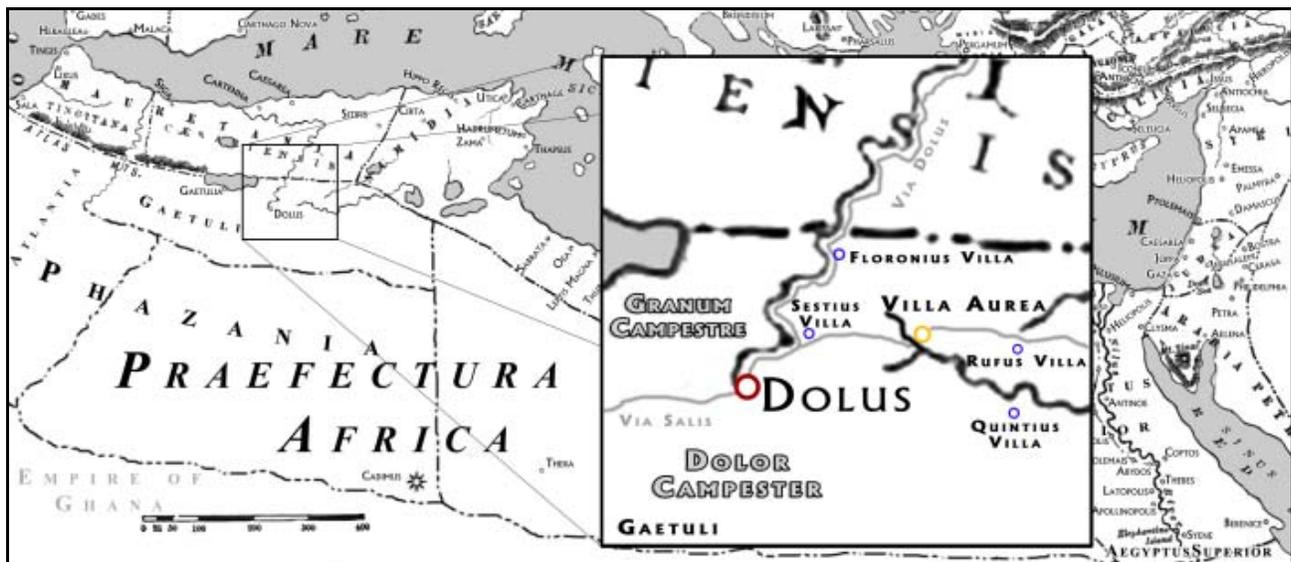
something. Yes, the Berbers were rising but if it was not them then it was the Gaetuli or the Numidaens or some other tribe. He had ignored the interior too long and now he was paying for it.

Into the hall strode the Praetorian Prefect for Gaetuli, Numidius Matius Cyricus. Matius had the airs of a politician, one who was always looking to improve his station.

"You summoned me, Praetor." It was more of a statement than a question. He spoke with just a hint of an accent that Nepius had never been able to place. He smelled faintly of perfumes from distant lands.

"Yes, Matius, we have a problem. Walk with me." As the pair began to stroll out into the gardens, the Praetor looked the man over. He knew he could not trust Matius. No one trusted too deeply in Gaetuli, or the Empire for that matter, and rose to Praetor of even a small province. Still, if it was in his interest, Matius would do what the Praetor asked.

Nepius handed the letter from Aurelius to Matius. "As you can see, we need to address this before it gets out of hand. Aurelius has friends in high places and has made new allies with his marriage that will have far reaching effects." Nepius eyed Matius looking for a reaction. On some men you can see the wheels



turning as their thoughts come around to what they must do. With Matius, it was a matter of going directly to the solution.

“It would be wise to appear to help without being directly involved, at least not in a way which we cannot later deny.” Nepius felt his stomach twist at the thought of dealing so casually with his friend's son. He could not deny it though, he had to position himself to be able to claim credit if all went well and to blame someone else if anything went wrong.

“Might I make a suggestion, Praetor?” Nepius nodded his consent, “We could use this miscreant Fadius. He has just enough ambition to aid us but not so much that he will attempt to claim the laurels. If the effort fails, the blame is assuredly his since he is the local Praefectus. If he succeeds, we have the letter to prove our good intentions.” Matius stopped to smell a bouquet of flowers at the edge of the path.

Knowing that he had set in motion a thing as unstoppable as the tide, Nepius looked at Matius. A man so cool in the face of such challenges would do well in the Empire.

“Matius, I will write a dispatch for your courier by tonight. Make sure you send a man capable of dealing with this and anything that may need his attention afterwards.” Nepius turned away, aware that he had just killed a small part of himself.

Group Ideas

Any group ideas should be discussed with the GM and the other players. If the GM has an idea for a group's origin, it may be easier to develop a character around the idea.

Some possible origins:

- The group consists of members of a bandit gang sentenced to death by crucifixion along the Via Salis. This is their second chance. They are fitted with neck bands

that constrict if they disobey the Praetorian Guard sent with them.

- A band of mercators and their guards who have enjoyed the friendship and hospitality of the Villa Aurea decide to help. Legends of gold at the Turrus don't hurt either.
- A band of local farmers pluck up their courage and agree to accompany the Praetorian Guard. Scared but committed, they follow the Praetorian to the Turrus and inside.
- Suffering from extreme debts, the people who owe Fadius money are called upon to settle their debt. This means going to the Turrus with the Praetorian Guard. Maybe it also means making sure the Praetorian does not come back.
- Fadius, under pressure to do something, sends a collection of his guards, medici and any number of slaves to solve this issue. A motley band of rogues, but they may just have what it takes to get the job done.

Character Ideas

The characters made for this adventure should fit with the groups that everyone decides on.

Here are some characters that might work.

- Venator - You are pulled into the party due to debts owed Fadius. Fadius supplied money for your hunting expeditions to replenish the Arena's animals. You owe him a favor and the giant boar that roam near the Turrus could make a profitable trip.
- Gladiator - You have been bought and sold from Germania to Aegyptus and now you have ended up in Fadius' household. This mission was not your idea but it gets you away from Fadius and the way he looks at you.

- **Medicus** - A healer by training, you were given shelter and help your self when your caravan was attacked on the Via Salis. You still remember Postumus binding your wounds. The Aurelius family were kind when others would have left you for dead. Of course, now, in their time of need, you will return the favor.
- **Praetorian Guard** - Matius had to send someone and you were it. Your orders are: retrieve the boy; gain the good will of Gaius Aurelius; pin the blame for anything that goes wrong on Fadius. Should things go truly wrong, you are to make sure Fadius cannot contradict the story.
- **Shaman** - Your spirit guide tells you of an evil growing in the Roman tower. It also advises you to seek aid in rooting it out. You know of the Aurelians and their generosity towards your people. You will begin there.

Setting Characters

The following people are those known to your characters. They are involved in many of the decisions and motivations of your characters. Get to know them well.

Praefectus Marcus Fadius Bato

Marcus Fadius Bato is a Praefectus charged with maintaining order amongst the Villas of eastern Gaetuli. He is noted for his voracious appetite and equally dedicated brutality. Although he looks like a dullard, behind his beady eyes is an active and scheming mind.

Born to a provincial equestrian family, Fadius has done little with his title and life. He has climbed to the position of a mid level bureaucrat while maintaining adequate wealth for his base pleasures. Some suspect him of graft and corruption but as long as he keeps grain and beef flowing to the Empire his superiors are willing to turn a blind eye.

Fadius is an immense man, easily weighing 300 pounds. He has black hair and dark eyes. He often clothes himself in silks died blue or green and has the look of a man loathe to do any form of war craft.



Gaius Aurelius is not one of his favorite people. The Villa Aurea has been a source of continual complaints and bothersome calls for help, although he respects their ability to produce and meet his taxes and levies.

Still, Aurelius has gone too far this time and sent his complaints to Gaetulia and the Praetor Titus Nepius Catulus. Nepius and Aurelius studied together at the Scholare in Alexandria where they became great friends. To this end, Fadius has been forced to comply with the Praetor's wishes.

Gaius Aurelius

Gaius Aurelius is the grandson of a Legionarius who was granted land for his faithful service to the Empire. The Aurelius family has built the small farmstead into a villa of some note. Gaius has had no small part in that.

As a boy Gaius played with his brothers, enjoying a carefree life. Then one day a caravan lost a member while camping on the Via Salis, near the Turrus Lemurum. From then on, Gaius and his brothers were kept in line with threats of being sent to the Turrus.

As he grew older, Gaius was sent to the Scholare at Alexandria to be taught by the finest minds. There he met the future praetor of his province and learned of magic. Both struck deep feelings in the young man that would shape the rest of his life. After a brief stint serving aboard merchant ships, he was suddenly summoned home as his elder brother disappeared without warning. It was his duty to take up the mantle of leadership for the villa and Gaius has never looked back.



Today, Gaius is in his sixties but still vital and active. After the death of his first wife, Secundia, Gaius married Papiria, a sixteen year old from the influential family of the Villa Sestius. He has four boys by Secundia but only two are at the villa.

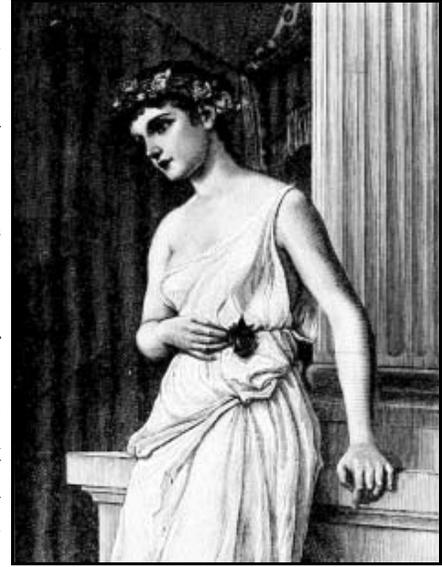
Gaius has called upon his friend, Nepius, to aid

him with the troubles that seem to be brewing from the Turrus. The neighboring villa will offer no aid hoping for the Villa Aurea to fail and give them a chance at its lands. The local prefect Fadius has proven a greater obstacle than any form of help. Left with nowhere to turn Gaius has received aid from the Praetor.

A reasonable man, Gaius accepts that he himself cannot accompany the investigation of the Turrus, so he offers the healing power of his magic, Medicina Maga, should the party need it. He will, of course, tell them everything he knows of the Turrus Lemurum.

Papiria

Papiria is of the Sestius family, a wealthy family more like mercatores than farmers or ranchers. She is only sixteen but has a composure that speaks



to her familiarity with the finer things in life.

She has very fair skin and jet black hair. She often wears jewelry and is fond of gold in her hair. Her eyes are a golden hazel but bear little warmth. Her carefully composed face belies her bitter heart.

Postumus Aurelius



Postumus is Gaius' youngest son and has just celebrated his twelfth birthday. He is an energetic young man and dreams of travelling and joining the legions. Gaius has done his best to dissuade him but Postumus is not listening.

Postumus has the brown hair of his mother as well as her grey eyes. He is slight of build but has every promise of filling out to his father's formidable proportions.

Two weeks ago he went missing when herding sheep near the Turrus. Although Gaius tried to find him, no trace was uncovered. They found his staff and water bottle but no tracks leading away. Some sign of boars were found but no blood. Postumus is an even headed boy and will keep his wits about him if he is still alive.

Sextus Aurelius



Sextus is the eldest son of Gaius and Secundia and is Gaius' second in command. He is 34 years old and has a well toned body. He is always sharp and alert and

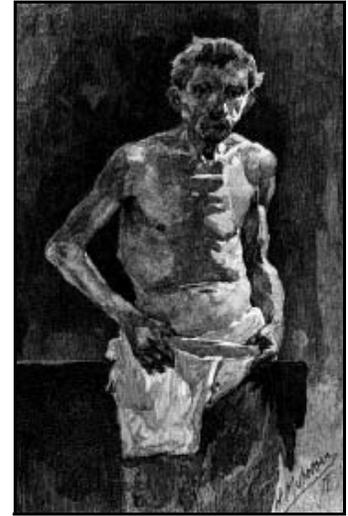
has done an increasing share of the work of organizing the villa.

Sextus was to go off to the Scholare at Alexandria like his father but was delayed again and again. He has received some tutoring from local teachers but has no formal education. He does not seem to regret it but a look of longing can be seen in his eyes sometimes when he is sitting at dinner or performing some of the more mundane of the chores on the villa.

Sextus will offer to go with the group and is very concerned for the safety of young Postumus. He is skilled with the spear and shield.

Cabio

Cabio is the head of the cliens (clients) who owe their allegiance to the Villa Aurea. He is in his forties and mostly bald. A thin man he does not inspire confidence but commands obedience. He is very loyal to Gaius and



highly distrustful of outsiders. He will use his people to track the movements of the party and he will also keep a close eye on them.

Cabio is not eager to lead the party to the Turrus but will obey Gaius' commands. Cabio thoroughly believes in all the folk tales of the Turrus Lemurum and will take a certain joy in foretelling the party's doom should they go to the Turrus...all out of earshot of Gaius.

Places

The following places are located around the Turrus Lemurum. The characters will have knowledge of them.

Dolus

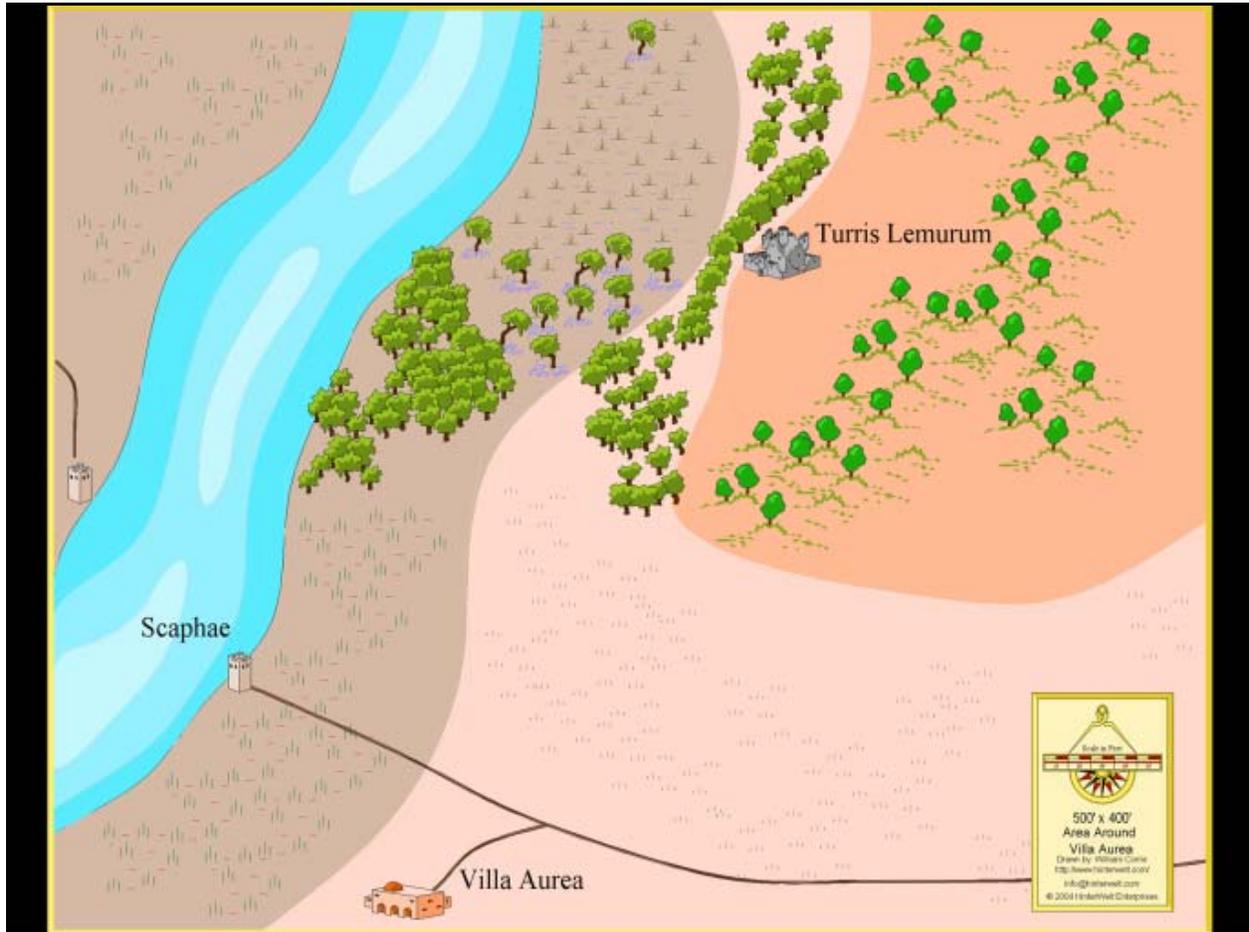
Dolus is a city located on the high plateau just north of the Sahara Desert. It deals in salt from the local salt flats and in the taxation of mercators passing through the city. Located at the cross roads of the Via Dolus and the Via Salis, Dolus has grown to 35,000 people.

Dolus is a dangerous city. It is not uncommon for the unwary to go missing or to become slaves. The city is not so much lawless as it is ruled by the Facinus, elements of organized crime. They are a growing cancer throughout

the Empire and nowhere so much as Dolus. They are brazen and quite capable of accomplishing anything on their terms.

The worst punishment that can be doled out in

and now raise millet, goats, chickens and herds of cattle. This is difficult in the climate around the villa but with some help from magic and good water management, they have managed to grow the villa to 250 people.



Dolus is to be sentenced to the salt fields. This tends to result in the slow death of the condemned. When workers are needed it often falls to the citizens of Dolus to contribute their efforts. This has led to the desire to supply the prefect with a steady supply of criminals to ensure the populace is not called on.

Villa Aurea

The Villa Aurea or Aurea Villa was founded by Antonius Aurelius around 100 years ago. Through hard work and good fortune the Aurelians have turned the farm into a success

The villa faces dangers though, mostly from local tribes, bandits and even other villae in the area. The other villae are jealous of the success of the Aurelians and Gaius' close connections to the Praetor Nepius. This has not come to violence yet.

The villa survives by being very generalist in all things it does. It supplements its income by running the local scaphae (ferry) across the river Salsus. In addition, as with everyone in the area, they deal in salt. Dried meats, fruits and even a little grain is also produced.

Turrus Lemurum

Originally called the Turrus Custodiae, or Tower of the Guard, the Turrus Lemurum, or Tower of Ghosts, is now a source of legend and fear. The ghosts that haunt the Turrus are said to be the spirits of those slain by the legionnaires who once manned it. No one has actually seen a ghost there but everyone knows someone who has.

The Turrus is now thought to be inhabited by a pack of giant boar. The Bestia Gigantia do not normally bother the villas and little has been done about them as long as they stay to themselves. The Aper seldom raid the villas' fields but protect their territory ferociously. The last year had a grown man slain by one of the Aper when he came too close to the Turrus.

The latest story is of old Iustus who went to find the treasure of the Turrus. The local belief is the Legion left its warchest behind when it left the Turrus. Iustus felt he had nothing to lose after his farm burnt to the ground and decided to brave the tower in search of the riches within. Some four months have passed and no word from him. The night he disappeared, people said they heard owls flying: a powerful omen.

The Turrus is an aging structure but was reinforced with magic and so has stood the test of time. Despite a hundred years of neglect, it is largely unchanged. Much scrub and some stunted trees have sprung up around it but do not touch the structure.

