

Heije Schnitger

Personal Mage of the Vlaardoen Family
Head Mage of the 3rd Division

AC 1014
By Michael Berry

'I've seen many things, but none gave me more pleasure than seeing fire finally vanquish air'

I. Appearance

Heije in his youth was marked by the common Flaemish physical traits of bright red hair and coppery complexion. Schnitger's flaming red hair is gone these days, and he is now bald and has a snow-white close-cropped beard. He is of normal height at 5'9" and is still active and athletic for his age and weighs 160 pounds. Heije is missing part of his left ear and has a distinctive scar running down the side of his head from his left temple to his jaw that makes him quite easy to recognize due to the injury he suffered as a young adult.

Heije is always richly adorned and has particular love of spider silk robes dyed in various bright vibrant colors. In public however, to obscure his disfigured ear he often wears a helm made of gold and with several rubies set around the helm's crown. Schnitger is also never seen in public without his walking staff and often seeing leaning on it as an old man might, but few believe he needs it to walk, and suspect it is a magical staff of great power, which of course, it is.

II. Personality & Quirks

Though known to be an archmage and suspected to have attained ultimate mastery of magic Heije is surprising down to earth and quite easy to talk with, as long as one is not an Alphantian. Schnitger is more tolerant of non-Flaemish Glantrians than most Flaemish wizards are, but he does have the same hatred of Alphantians that most Flaem do and far from being slaked by the Flaemish (Glantrian) victory over their hated foe, the horrid losses Glantri suffered due to the unprovoked war Alphantia inflicted upon Glantri have only made his hatred of them all the more intense. He considers himself far too old to go pick fights with the few remaining Glantrians of Alphantian descent still left in Glantri but show a very different side from his usual friendly and cheerful demeanor when forced to meet or interact with one. Thankfully since the end of the Great War there have been very few times in which he has been in the same room with any Alphantians.

After over 50 years serving as the personal magist to the Vlaardoen family Schnitger has entertained thoughts about retiring and living on an a beach in Ierendi but strangely enough a conversation he recently had with that nation's Ambassador to Glantri has sort of rekindled a bit of the intellectual and scholastic spark now that Princess Juliana is well on her way to becoming the wizard she can become, and since that conversation has been noticeably more perky and has even considered doing what he has always rejected doing and taking some potions of Longevity.

III. History & Background

Heije Schnitger was born in AC 926 in Glantri City the only child of Beatrix Schnitger who was a Mistress of Evocation at the Great School of Magic. Heije was never told who his father was and was raised solely by his mother. He was doted on by his mother and her circle of friends in Glantri City and had a happy childhood and surprised no one, considering his mother's enormous talent with magic, when he started showing signs of magical talent at a very early age. Formal testing at age 5 confirmed a very strong Maga-Cromagamoron count indicating a very strong talent and affinity for magic. However talented he might be for magic, his mother Beatrix worried about the physical development of her son who was rather slight short for his age and didn't enroll him into the Great School of Magic until Heije was 7 years old after he had started to grow into his normal age.

Heije was assigned to the Swan dormitory and assigned Senior Professor of Magic Erika Vandierendonck, the future Arch Mistress of Conjuraton, as his master for magical studies. Young Schnitger took to both his academic and magical studies easily but fell in socially with the large Flaemish crowd at the Great School and often ran into disciplinary problems as he and his friends were involved in fights with students of Alpathian ethnicity at the school. He narrowly escaped expulsion in his 2nd year at the school after a fight between Flaemish and Alpathian students on Alexander Platz went too far and Heije was accused of pushing a young Alpathian student into the freezing cold waters of the canals and who nearly drowned. Only the personal intervention by his mother to the Grand Master Momai Virayana saved Heije from being kicked out but he was placed on probation with having his city passes revoked for the rest of the term. The imposing and intimidating Momai Virayana and the sight of his mother practically begging for mercy really affected young Heije and he left behind his hoodlum ways and focused more intently on his studies, even if his marks never suffered.

As Heije entered his 3rd year at the Great School, he focused himself on not merely succeeding but excelling in his studies and also developed a closer relationship with his master of magic Erika Vandierendonck. It was during his 3rd term that he took his first trip to the stronghold of the Secret Craft of Fire in the City of Brass located on the Plane of Fire and started to feel a strong affinity to the spells of the School of Conjuraton. By his 5th term, now 12 years old, at the Great School he discovered his first uncommon spell through his own research, the 1st level *See Through Fire*, and was later that year sponsored by Erika into the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism. It was his 6th term however when the die truly was cast and Heije took his first academic class on planar studies, Intro to Planar Studies, that his interest turned into a deep passion, especially for the Plane of Fire. The last few years Heije spent at the Great School were spent focused on learning Conjuraton spells and more about the Elemental Plane of Fire and Schnitger graduated the Great School in AC 942 at age 16 scoring very highly, 31,700, which caught of many including the High Master of Fire Prince Pieter Vlaardoen.

While Heije was offered several positions after graduation, including being a lecturer at the Great School, Schnitger decided to accept an invitation from Prince Pieter, who had become Chancellor of Princes several years earlier, to join the staff of the Glantrian Ambassador to Thyatis. Heije fell in love with the city of Thyatis during his stay there and especially enjoyed attending classes at the Collegium Arcanium where he took multiple classes in magical military tactics finding the tactics the Thyatians had devised, over the centuries to counter Alpathian magical firepower, to be especially interesting. Schnitger's stay in Thyatis was a short one though as he received another offer from Prince Pieter that he immediately accepted. In AC 945 Prince Pieter's grandson, the 5-year-old Vanserie, was enrolled at the Great School of Magic and Heije was asked by Prince Pieter to return to Glantri City and help look after Prince's grandson and serve as a mentor and chaperone/bodyguard during the times when little

Vanserie was outside the controlled confines of the Great School. Heije accepted the Princes offer which gave him plenty of time, and coin, to advance his own magical studies and also allowed him to establish a big brother relationship with a possible future Prince of the Flaemish but also build upon the friendly relationship with Vanserie's father, Pieter's youngest son Wilfred, that began years earlier during trips to the City of Brass and the Plane of Fire sponsored by the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism. Schnitger also became far more involved in the meetings of the Secret Craft after returning to Glantri City and became a 3rd circle member the year he returned often spending winter breaks, when Vanserie was back home at Linden, exploring the Plane of Fire with other members of the group.

In AC 947 Prince Pieter died in a skating accident, when the ice broke under him, and he drowned. He was succeeded by his eldest son Willem who had failed to produce any children with his wife and continued to retain Heije as a mentor to Vanserie, the eldest son of his younger brother. As Vanserie continued his studies the friendship with Schnitger continued to deepen, progressing beyond a brotherly bond to Heije filling in as a father figure to the young Vanserie as his own father had little time for him. When Vanserie graduated from the Great School in AC 954, at age 14, he remained in Glantri City staying at the Vlaardoen Estate and Heije remained with him through these hard years as Vanserie not only had to deal with puberty but also the effects of being an underage wizard. Heije himself had continued to become a more experienced wizard and reached the 4th circle and the senior rank of the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism (level 16 in AC 954) via his own research done on the Vlaardoen coin. Once he attained 4th Circle he learned of the identity of the High Master, Willem Vlaardoen, though it was no surprise as it had always widely assumed by junior members that Prince of the Flaem would have been the High Master.

When Prince Willem was assassinated by Flaemish extremists opposed to his good relations with the Ethengarians of Krondahar in AC 961, his younger brother and Vanserie's father Wilfred suddenly became the next Prince of Bergdhoven and Vanserie the direct heir. Noteworthy in this was that neither Wilfred nor Vanserie had reached the level of mastery to reach the 5th Circle in the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism so neither were able to succeed Willem as High Master. At the first meeting of the senior members after Prince Willem's death it was decided a temporary High Master should be chosen from amongst them with the understanding that the Secret Craft was always to be led by an eligible Vlaardoen. Though Heije had progressed quickly in his magical abilities, being a 20th level wizard in AC 961 who could have attained 5th Circle and become High Master, he was not considered for the caretaker role and instead an old Flaemish wizard who had attained ultimate mastery of magic (M36) and been a senior member for decades was chosen until one of the Vlaardoens was able to become High Master.

Willem's death also reflected a turning point for Heije. The new Prince of Bergdhoven was deathly afraid of suffering the same fate as his older brother and since he completely trusted Heije he chose Schnitger to become his personal magist and commissioned him to craft protective magical devices for him, his son Vanserie, in addition to the Hertogspaard. With the vast resources of the Vlaardoen at his command and with a mandate to create magic items Heije gained massive amounts of experience creating various magical items such as Rings of Fire Resistance, Wands of Fireballs, even Talisman of Elemental Travel. This routine continued, with Heije steadily gaining experience and power, for the next six years till Prince Wilfred died at age 59 of a heart attack and his son and heir Vanserie became the next Prince of Bergdhoven. Tragically for Heije his mother, who had retired from teaching at the Great School of Magic a few years earlier passed away in AC 965.

By the time his friend Vanserie had become Prince Heije had become an archmage and was one of the most famous Flaemish mages. He continued to serve Vanserie, as he had his father, and served as the personal magist to the Vlaardoen family. The only real change in Heije's routine of personal magical research, explorations of the Plane of Fire, and crafting magic items for the family was a change in scenery as Vanserie decided to reside primarily in Glantri City while his wife lived at Linden and saw to ruling of Bergdhoven. Heije took up residence at the Vlaardoens Estate and given several towers above the Museum Kunst & Geschiedenis Den Flaem and continued to serve House Vlaardoen and Prince Vanserie personally. Heije achieved ultimate mastery of magic at the age of 56 in the same year, AC 982, that Vanserie and Wilhamine finally had their first child, a beautiful baby girl they named Juliana.

The next several decades were some of Heije's most enjoyable years as he was able to fully participate in the Secret Craft of Fire, with Vanserie as it's High Master, and reconnected with his old master Erika Vandierendonck who had recently been promoted to Arch Mistress of Conjuration. Heije also formed a strong bond with Juliana and was whom Juliana would often turn to for comfort and advice when she had her many battles with her domineering and controlling mother, which did little to improve the cold relationship between Heije and Wilhamine. While Heije had spent most of his life serving the Vlaardoen family thus had gained a measure of great respect and notoriety among Flaemish spellcasters he was little known outside that circle. That changed when the Great War came to Glantri in AC 1004.

After the assassination of Serena Aendyr, Dorothy McAllister, and Letizia di Malapietra by Alphatian agents in AC 1004, Heije was asked by Prince Vanserie to accompany and protect Juliana any time she left their city went into public. He had noticed the strange withdrawn and distracted behavior of both Juliana's parents over the last couple of years, and suspected both were delved deeply into secretive research that they kept even from Schnitger. The fear of assassination kept Juliana, and Heije, from participating in the defense of Glantri City when it was placed under siege by King Thar in 1007 and Vanserie and Wilhamine were wrapped up in their own personal research projects. Soon afterward tragically the great plague of 1008 struck Glantri and first claimed Wilhamine's life and then a month later Prince Vanserie thus the young and unprepared Juliana became the new Princess of Bergdhoven and Heije, along with her uncle Anton, was her closest and most trusted advisor. While Anton advised Juliana on the practical matters of her new duties Heije became more prominent in magical matters.

With Vanserie's death and Juliana's low level (still only a 9th level wizard/2nd Circle member) there was a need for a new High Master of the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism. There were three long time 4th circle members who had achieved ultimate mastery of magic, Heije, Lord Aart Verlien, and Arch Mistress Erika Vandierendonck. Erika being the senior of the three bowed out from consideration when the senior membership met right after Prince Vanserie's death as she was over 100 years old and even with uses of Potions of Longevity did not feel she was up to the extra duties which would take more than a decade before Juliana was experienced and powerful enough to attain 5th Circle and become High Master. Lord Verlien though senior to Heije by a few years also bowed out stating he thought Schnitger, who would be guiding Princess Juliana's magical development and educating her on fire magic, would be the appropriate choice for High Master thus Heije was selected to become the next High Master of the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism.

During the last days of the war the Alphatians launched a direct assault upon Glantri City with many high-level wizards teleporting over the city in order to destroy it in retribution for the destruction of the Alphatian capital of Sundsvall. As might be expected the large and prominent Vlaardoen Estate in the Noble Quarter of Glantri City was a prime symbolic target for the Alphatians. However great the Alphatians thought themselves in magical power they got a rude awakening once they arrived in the

skies over Glantri City. An alert observer atop the Citadel spotted the Alphatians as they assembled and activated the fearsome defenses of the city whose centerpiece was the dual barrel Radiance powered (range enhanced) rapid fire Meteor Swarm cannon atop the Citadel. Instead of surprising the Glantrians it was the Alphatians who were surprised as many were shot out of the sky at ranges, they felt were beyond any ranges they could be attacked over the city while they assembled before attacking the city. Once they started the actual attack but losing any element of surprise, no few than 15 arch mages attacked the Vlaardoen Estate. With some help from other nobles living close to the Vlaardoen estate the attacking Alphatians were engaged by Heije and eventually driven off with eyewitnesses giving credit to Schnitger killing seven of them. Schnitger was hailed as a hero and awarded a special medal by the Council of Princes and Heije took his place among the most famous of Glantrian arch mages after having spent decades in the shadows of personal service to the Flaemish rulers.

Since the end of the Great War Heije emerged further from the shadows of the Vlaardoen family estates. He accepted a request by both Juliana and Anton in AC 1010 to serve as the head mage of the elite Glantrian 3rd division. While Anton Vlaardoen had been tied up in his duties as a Field Marshall commanding Glantrian Army divisions Heije emerged as Juliana's top advisor and not just for magic but would often consul her regarding matters of the Council of Princes. Heije had often been at Juliana's side during social events and even attended a few on his own, in his own stead. None of this had taken from his primary duty, the magical education of the young Princess, and she had been progressing quickly since the end of the war and just this year Princess Juliana became a senior 4th Circle member of the Secret Craft of Fire Elementalism. By Heije's estimation, Princess Juliana should be ready to take over the Secret Craft, by AC 1019. At which time Heije had given great thought to not just stepping down from High Master but retiring from service to the Vlaardoen House.

IV. Web of Intrigue

Heije has spent a year short of 70 years in the personal service of House Vlaardoen thus has few friends or even many acquaintances outside the tight circle of Flaemish fire wizards. Not surprisingly Heije until very recently had shown zero interest in Glantrian politics and outside of his hatred of Alphatians showed little interest in the racial purity crusades against the Ethengar, elves, and even Thyatians that consume so many Flaem. Though like many powerful wizards he has heard rumors of the Radiance and strongly suspected that Vanserie and Wilhamine had discovered it, he has shown little interest in either trying to penetrate their secrets or trying to discover it himself.

However, one can barely hope to escape intrigue in Glantri, and Heije may be able to do so as he was approached by one of the very rare members, and the only non Flaemish senior member, of the Secret Craft, the Ierendian Ambassador to Glantri Lady Gherynid with an offer that intrigues him mightily. He has yet to tell anyone of it, not even Princess Juliana, while he mulls it over but likely will inform the Princess of the offer soon and see what she thinks of the offer.

V. Statistics & Style of Magic

Statistics: 36th Level Wizard, High Master of Fire
Str 9, Int 17, Wis 16, Dex 11, Con 10, Cha 14; AL – Neutral

Languages: Flaem, Thyatian (common), Alphatian, Ignan (Plane of Fire)

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger (B), Staff (B)

Skills: Planar Geography (I+1), Alternative Magics (I), Alchemy (I), Magical Engineering (I), Knowledge of Plane of Fire (I+3), Detect Deception (W), Teaching (I+1), Military Tactics (I), History of the Flaem (I)

Heije has not carried a weapon in over 60 years and has not needed to due to his immense power as a spellcaster. He achieved ultimate mastery of magic (M36) over 40 years ago and knows all fire related and conjuration spells up through rare and even knows most of the very rare spells. Schnitger, in addition to his spells, has a wide assortment of magic items he can draw upon and it is rare he does not have his Staff Of Elemental Power close at hand even when he is not out in public. As he showed during the Alphatian attack on Glantri City, he is far from just an academic wizard and is very proficient in combat and especially against other wizards.

"It is because of Schnitger that the 3rd Division tops the 1st Division as the most powerful Glantrian Army Division. He alone is worth a 1000 men on any battlefield. "

(Colonel General Chanash Teval to Colonel General Hans Grüber during wargame exercises outside Glantri City earlier this year)