

Ars Magica

# The Mysteries

Revised Edition



by Neil Taylor &  
Christian Jensen Romer



## The Mysteries

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## The Mysteries

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## Chapter One

# The Mysteries

Welcome to *The Mysteries Revised Edition!*

Within this book lie many secrets known by the magi of the Order of Hermes. Some of these secrets are held in common, known by all magi. Others, however, are whispered only to chosen Initiates in dark caverns and moonlit shrines. Herein are revealed new Virtues and Flaws, new spells, and new paths to arcane wisdom for those magi brave enough to undertake the quest for hidden knowledge. Also detailed in these pages are the magical societies that flourish within the Order of Hermes, providing knowledge and power (and story opportunities) to those who join them or oppose their plans. Read on to learn of their secret magics, peculiar powers, unusual rites, secret devices, and powerful spells — some of which surpass the known limits of Hermetic magic!

## What are the Mysteries?

A **Mystery** — very simply put — is a secret. It is a term used to describe both a cult that teaches secrets, and the secrets themselves. The latter meaning, when used in this book, usually describes strange forms of magic that have been adapted to the Hermetic system but are not widely known among Hermetic magi. Indeed, these secrets are taught only to Initiates, those who have proven their worth and joined a Mystery Cult.

Hermetic magic is a powerful and successful system, yet there are some magics, such as the heartbeasts of House Bjornaer and the well-known Ritual Wizard's Communion, which do not fit into

Bonisagus's great theoretical framework very well. Many of these are vestiges of older magical traditions that were never fully incorporated into the framework of Hermetic magic. Others are newer ideas, such as Hermetic Alchemy, which was developed from alchemical knowledge first available in Latin translation as recently as 1134, and which comes from the Islamic world. These "exceptions" to Hermetic theory form the basis of many Mysteries.



The Order of Hermes is divided into 12 Houses, which are familiar to all. Four are True Lineages: Houses Bonisagus, Guernicus, Mercere, and Termere. Four — Houses Flambeau, Jerbiton, Tytalus, and Ex Miscellanea — are Societates. The remaining four are Mystery Houses: the followers of Criamon, Bjornaer, Merinita, and Verditius.

The four Mystery Houses are sometimes known as the **Exoteric Mysteries**. Every apprentice in the Order has heard of them, and can tell you a little about their traditions and beliefs. Although they share some similarities with the secretive groups that are the subject of

this book, they do not receive full treatment here.

Important as they are, affiliations of House are not the only associations of magi. Houses themselves have factions and groups within them. Some magi look to their parentes, and their parentes' parentes, above fellow members of their Houses. Magi also gather to live and work in covenants, where loyalty to those they live with often overcomes other loyalties. Further, there are political factions and groups who gather at Tribunals and seek power by agreeing to vote together on matters of common interest.

Finally, however, there are those who gather in secret to share private knowledge, hidden from outsiders. The activities and goals of these groups of magi are many and various. Perhaps all they share is that each group counts members across House boundaries, and each has secrets from which they exclude others. These groups are the **Esoteric Mysteries**, also called **Mystery Cults**, and are the subject of this book.

From this point on, references to the Mysteries, Mystery Cults, or Mystery magic always refer to Esoteric Mysteries, rather than Exoteric House Mysteries unless specifically stated otherwise.

## What Do the Mystery Cults Believe?

Each Mystery Cult has its own unique view of the world. While not all agree or uphold the same views, each teaches a particular mythic history by which it claims descent from the Mystery Cults of antiquity. In truth, however, there is

little direct connection between the 13th-century Mystery Cults and the ancient cults — even the modern Cult of Mercury is only indirectly descended from the Roman priesthood. Another common thread across all Mystery Cults' teachings is the idea that magic has changed since antiquity, and that the ancients were more powerful and glorious than modern magi. Even so, no one can actually prove whether magic is getting weaker, growing stronger, or staying the same; or whether the magicians of old were actually more potent, or simply different from those of today. Even though the notion that the world is degenerating is a powerful mythic image, many have challenged the idea that magic was more powerful in the past. The Knights of the Green Stone, for example, are a Mystery Cult who contest this idea of the decline of magic; one central concept of their mythos is the idea of a quest meant to bring magic fully into the world, resulting in a magical golden age, the enchantment of Mythic Europe.

Mystery Cults are not religions, and their truth claims are not mutually exclusive. Even in antiquity this was the case; their insights or paths of spiritual advancement were merely ways of interacting with pagan pantheons, much as a medieval Christian might further his spiritual growth by going on a pilgrimage to the shrine of a saint, or to the Holy Land. Some Mystery Cults are avowedly pagan, while others are mystical or magical rather than religious. Many cults may be seen as fully compatible with monotheistic belief and practice.

The Church, for its part, often looks askance at practitioners of magic, for reasons both theological and mundane. Many unGifted people are terrified by blatant magic, and the problems caused by The Gift are well known. One of the major reasons the ignorant masses fear magicians, hedge wizards, and Hermetic magi is the fact that many older rites draw on the names of pagan gods, or involve complex invocations to angels or tutelary spirits, which the uneducated and pious can mistake for appeals to demons. (Indeed, infernal rites are not unknown, and the Corruption of House Tytalus is too recent a memory for anyone in the Order of Hermes to forget how easy it is

to slip from practicing the true science of Hermetic magic to the blackest of sorceries of the Infernal realm.)

Here Bonisagus made a great contribution to the success of the Order: when he created his system of Hermetic magic, he dispensed with the necessity to invoke spirits, call upon pagan deities, or recite blasphemous names. Even pious prayer was stripped from the workings of magic; while some in the Order maintain a cautious nine parts prayer to one part spell-casting, Hermetic magic is truly a "hermetic" (closed) system, with no need to call upon external forces, instead directly manipulating the very magical elements of Creation. Although this "secular" method of working magic is extremely potent, some have found its refusal to deal with other spiritual intelligences — whether demons, angels, faeries, or spirits — to be one of its greatest restrictions. All that said, even standard Hermetic magic sometimes contains names, abjurations, and invocations best not uttered in front of pious but ignorant folk. On the other hand, holy magi (see *The Divine*, page 66) relearn the standard ways of magic and practice magic in a properly religious and respectful form.

## Bonisagus and the Mysteries

Bonisagus was an enthusiast of the Mystery Cults of antiquity, and welcomed the four Exoteric Mysteries — those of Criamon, Verditius, Bjornaer, and Merinita — into the Order despite their imperfect match with Hermetic magic. Trianoma, likewise, worked long and hard to bring the Order together, and despite the exotic nature of some of the Founders' magic, all of the Mystery House Founders taught secrets that shaped Hermetic theory.

New magics have continued to enter the Order as other magi have joined after the Founders, and some of their ways have been adopted and reworked to mesh with Hermetic theory, leaving their hedge magic origins far behind. Some of these have emerged as common Virtues and Flaws of magi in the Order; others became associated with Mystery Cults.

## What The Mysteries Revised Edition is Not!

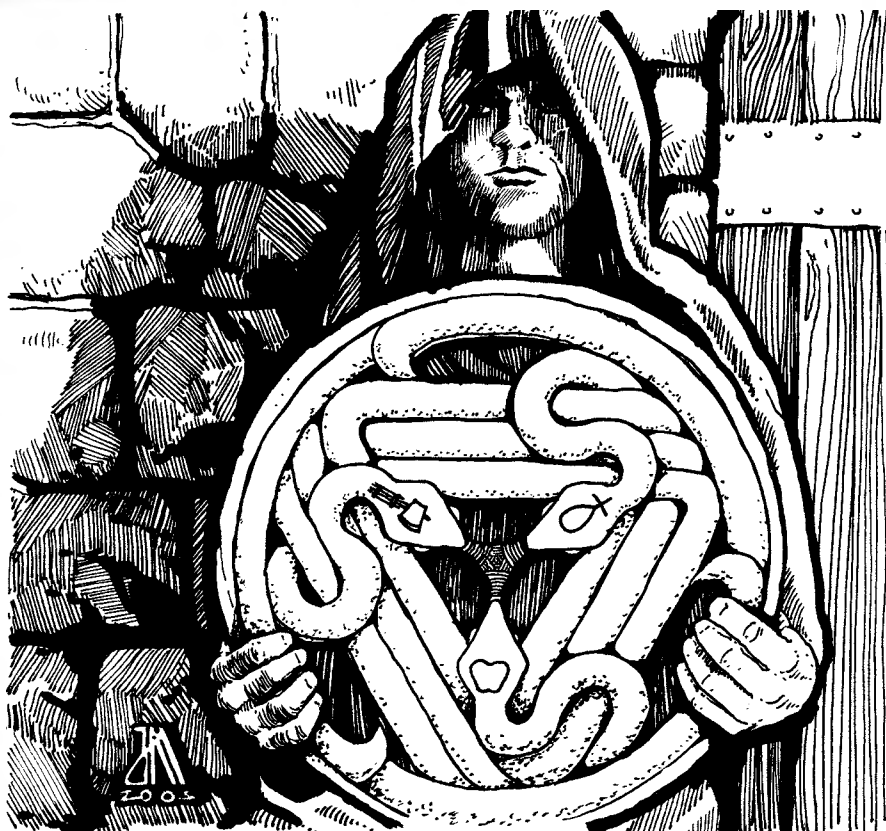
*The Mysteries Revised Edition* discusses both "historical" medieval magic and the fictional magic of the Order of Hermes. Although much of *Ars Magica* is based on what people thought in the 13th century, our chief aim has been to keep the reader firmly grounded in the Order of Hermes and the game experience. The Mystery Cults in this book, while based on legend and magical thought, are fiction created to work with your *Ars Magica* saga. If you seek real occult power, or help with an academic assignment, look elsewhere.

While some Mysteries are just as secular as Hermetic magic proper, others are adaptations to Hermetic theory of older rites, and contain religious elements that some find disconcerting. Pragmatism and discretion therefore restrict these spells and magics to those who have proven their loyalty, wise counsel, and ability to hold their tongues.

Another notable aspect of Hermetic magic is that it can be worked by any Gifted individual who has mastered the appropriate knowledge. Furthermore, any Hermetic magus can recreate any Hermetic effect given time and ability; hence many young magi in Spring covenants invent *Ball of Abysmal Flame* independently, if their covenants' grimoires prove lacking. Yet this is not true of the magic taught by Mystery Cults, whose secrets require something greater, and cannot be reproduced without the correct tuition and often-harrowing Initiation rites.

It is not entirely established why the magical Virtues of the Mysteries cannot easily be taught to non-Initiates. In some cases, it simply requires a peculiarity of worldview, a strange and eccentric way of looking at things not possessed by those outside the cult. Other Mysteries actually change Initiated magi in some subtle way; they are rendered magical themselves by the Initiation, or their Gift is altered to accommodate new ways of working magic. The traumatic rebirth of Initiation itself may explain why some Mystery





magics are not common to the Order. In other cases there is simply no reason for the restriction of the Mystery, beyond the axiom *scientia potentia* — "knowledge is power."

Nonetheless, like supernatural abilities, **Mystery Virtues** can be taught to those who have not been Initiated, under the proper circumstances. This usually requires a Minor Breakthrough (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 26). This differentiates Mystery capabilities from intrinsic magical abilities like Mythic Blood, which are born out of some accident of birth or Gift, and cannot be taught in any way whatsoever. Although an Initiated maga who teaches her sodales Mystery abilities without requiring them to be Initiated themselves, or who transcribes and sends her knowledge by Redcap to Durenmar, is not in breach of the Oath of Hermes, there can be little doubt that terrible vengeance will be brought upon her by her fellow mystae in that cult. Many Mystery Cults back up their bloodcurdling oaths of secrecy with equally bloodcurdling threats of spells that slay those who reveal the cults' secrets, even inadvertently, to outsiders.

## The Mysteries and the Houses

The attitudes of the Houses to the Mysteries vary wildly. The following guidelines are simply that — guidelines. Individual members of Houses are free to make up their own minds about each Mystery Cult.

### THE MYSTERY HOUSES AND THE ESOTERIC MYSTERIES

The Mystery Houses are the smallest of the 12 Houses of the Order, and have a tendency to look inward. Their rites and ordeals bind them in a way that other magi are not bound — except those who take up Initiation in Mystery Cults. To outsiders, the Mystery Houses seem to be closed and their magi committed to each other; they say little about their practices.

To progress in a Mystery House often requires as much dedication and effort as to progress in a Mystery Cult, so members of Mystery Houses may

seem unlikely candidates for Mystery Cults. And yet, there are those who are less dedicated, who find another calling draws them. Perhaps a Bjornaer shape-changer finds something special in alchemy, or a Verditius enchanter years to bind spirits into her fabulous creations. These magi may be looked down on, or even distrusted, by those of their House, but nevertheless find a personal satisfaction in an alternative path. It is likely that at some stage in their careers, the conflicting designs of House and cult may force a crisis for such magi — a choice between loyalties. Although difficult, this tension can be a rich source of stories and development for the character.

### NON-MYSTERY HOUSES AND THE MYSTERIES

The Mystery Houses are open participants in the Order, keen to declare that their practices are private but not untoward. The Mystery Cults are more secretive, and many magi distrust them to a greater degree because of their difference from the Mystery Houses. Other magi, however, note that they themselves can join the Mystery Cults, and perhaps those secrets are private because they are so tempting, so inviting.

Many magi hear of the exotic magics practiced by those with secret knowledge and yearn to try it, to join; these magi often do become the recruits of Mystery Cults. Others turn their backs on the Mystery Cults, asking why, if the cults are so special and their magics so wonderful, have they not come to dominate the Order? This is a valid question, and the answer is that there is no answer, or, perhaps more accurately, that the answer is unknown. A magus who dedicates himself to study of the Hermetic Arts, Magic Theory, and his House magics can rise far in his specialization. A magus who spends years pursuing vanishing secrets may indeed discover exotic powers, but may also end up lacking in skill at the core Arts of Hermetic magic. Which is the more powerful? This has never been tested; perhaps the magi of your saga can provide the answer.

# Lexicon of the Mysteries

The following is a short guide to commonly used terms you may encounter in this book.

**CABAL LEGACY:** A rare Story Flaw, taken only with the storyguide's permission. A magus with a Cabal Legacy was Initiated into an Esoteric Mystery Cult while still apprenticed, and may take cult Virtues and Ordeal Flaws as part of his normal limits. See Chapter 2: Entering the Mysteries, The Initiated Apprentice and Beyond.

**COMMON MAGICS:** Mystery Virtues that were once secret and are still taught to Mystery Cult Initiates, but which have escaped the clutches of the cults and are now well known throughout the Order. Common Mystery Virtues may be taken freely during character creation by any character. Characters who know such "secrets" are likely candidates to be approached to learn more in later life.

**COMMON MYSTERIES:** See "Common Magics."

**CULT OF MERCURY:** Refers to both the ancient Roman priesthood and the modern Hermetic group that has adopted the same name. Hermetic magi like to link themselves to Roman legends, and to claim descent from Rome.

**DAIMON:** Daimons are spiritual intelligences — primarily those of pagan heroes and ancient (now fallen) gods. Daimons are typically more powerful than ghosts and elementals, and have some unique powers. Magi are very careful about spelling and pronouncing this word ("DAY-mon"), lest they be thought to be dealing with Infernal spirits ("DEE-mons")!

**DEGREE:** A rank of status within a Mystery Cult. Not all cults are structured this formally.

**ESOTERIC MAGIC:** Secret variations on standard Hermetic magic practiced by those who belong to Mystery Cults.

**EREMITE:** A magus who prefers isolation from the rest of the Order. A hermit.

**EXOTERIC MYSTERY:** The House Mysteries of Houses Criamon, Verditius, Merinita, and Bjornaer. Initiation into these Mysteries is synonymous with membership in these Houses.

**GNOSTIC:** Those who sought salvation in secret knowledge; heretical magical religions widely practiced in the first few centuries of the Christian era and exterminated by the Church.

**HIEROPHANT:** One of many titles for the leader of a Mystery Cult. Such titles vary widely from cult to cult.

**HOUSE MYSTERIES:** See "Exoteric Mystery."

**INITIATE:** A member of a Mystery Cult, or one undergoing the rite to become such

**INITIATION:** The process of learning a new Mystery, entering a Mystery Cult, or increasing status in a Mystery Cult. This experience changes the nature of the magus magically and profoundly.

**INITIATION SCRIPT:** A document that sets out the rites, teachings, and prerequisites for Initiation, used by a Mystagogue to conduct an Initiation.

**MYSTAE:** A magus who has Mystery Virtues.

**MYSTAGOGUE:** A magus who conducts Initiation or teaches Mysteries; often a senior member of a Mystery Cult. In some cases the Mystagogue may be the Initiate himself, if self-Initiation is being attempted.

**MYSTERY:** A general term for the secret magics of Mystery Cults. These

are represented in *Ars Magica* as Virtues and Flaws, but they differ from normal character Virtues and Flaws in that they are acquired *after* character generation, during the later life of the magus. They are usually acquired through stories and adventures.

**MYSTERY CULT:** An organization that practices and teaches Mysteries, and remains highly secretive as to its membership, rituals, and true purposes. A number of Mystery Cults are described in Chapter 14: Mystery Cults.

**OUTER MYSTERIES:** The most basic Mysteries known to all Initiates of a given Mystery Cult. The term applies most precisely where the Outer Mystery is a prerequisite to learning more advanced Mysteries. Many cults teach magics that are less tightly coupled than this.

**PHILOSOPHY:** The pursuit and love of wisdom. Often used as a code word for "magic."

**PROBATIONER:** One who seeks entry to a Mystery Cult but has not yet been Initiated.

**SCHOOL:** A loose grouping of associated Mystery Virtues. For example, the school of Hermetic Astrology contains several Virtues, all concerned with the influence of the stars on magic. Some Mystery Cults favor one particular school.

**SECULAR:** Worldly, as opposed to religious. When Hermetic magic is described as "secular," this stresses the abstractions of Bonisagus and the ways he removed the invocation of names and powers from the abstract Techniques and Forms. Secular magic avoids some of the Church's proscriptions against magic.

## Chapter Two

# Entering the Mysteries

*Now let us enter within the ancient crypt, where the mysteries of the maggots await. You have come so far blindfolded, stripped of power, stripped of prestige, and stripped of dignity, clothed only in your shroud. Within await the Great Secrets, secrets even death could not hold! Yet I must ask you — are you worthy to behold them?*

— Diana of Ex Miscellanea,  
a Mystagogue of the Disciples  
of the Worm

This chapter describes how one is Initiated into a Mystery, how a Mystery Cult is born, what the benefits are to its members, and the bitter truth that power always has a price.

The price of power can take many forms. The time a magus spends pursuing the mystical rites of his cult, learning its secrets, and preparing for Ordeals, Sacrifices, and Quests is the most obvious price. An often overlooked but no less real cost of membership, however, are the adventures and stories required to progress in the paths of the Mysteries.

## Secrecy and the Mysteries

The first and central concept for any Mystery Cult is that *secrecy is power*. Part of the appeal of the Esoteric Mysteries is that they do not openly discuss what they know; the veil of secrecy is drawn tight around them, fastened by oaths and powerful rituals designed to prevent any disclosure. While some simply believe that sacred secrets should not be spoken

openly, others say that a secret shared loses its potency, either figuratively or literally.

Furthermore, a group whose extent and membership are unknown can claim power and give rise to fear in excess of its true capabilities. A magus who finds a still-living raven nailed to his sanctum door cawing a vile message, or who awakens to discover a whispering dagger on his pillow, knows in a dreadful instant that he has stumbled across a Mystery Cult.

Who can such a magus trust? Even his sodales in the covenant could be members — did not Lucius vanish for three days last solstice? What of Svetlana's late-night journeys to Gallows Wood? She said she was harvesting vis, but who was the crooked old hag who walked under the oaks with her? Can such a magus sleep well knowing he has angered the mighty, yet not even knowing their names?

In addition to engendering fear of the unknown, secrecy also keeps the members of a Mystery Cult safe. If the members of a secret order advertise their status openly, their enemies can break up their meetings and hunt down their members by Wizard's War. The unknown, however, are harder to target.

Even with the advantages of secrecy, however, some Mystery Cults are more secret than others. The Mystic Fraternity of Samos, for example, is a Mystery Cult that openly advertises its existence, attracting recruits by providing hints of its curriculum of learning and philosophical reflection, and even of the nature of the magics it can reveal. Indeed, in your saga the existence and general interests of the Mystery Cults could be open secrets,

or matters of public discussion. Chapter 3: Storyguiding the Mysteries, discusses different ways Mystery Cults might fit into your saga to suit the atmosphere and themes of your game.

A Mystery Cult is more than a special interest group pursuing an obscure magical sideline; it is a spiritual and mystical exploration that changes the practitioner in ways that are not fully understood by even the leading magical theorists of the Order of Hermes. It is not merely that Initiates do not say what secrets have been revealed to them; in some sense, they cannot say. Such mystic understandings are beyond expression in language.

Even when general information about a cult is widely known, however, its secrets are still jealously guarded, and only an Initiate can fully understand and use its magics. Thus, while many Quaesitors have observed the rites of the Pythagoreans of the Samos Cult, and many magi of House Bonisagus have studied them in search of a magical breakthrough that will allow their incorporation in Hermetic magic theory, without the spiritual and mystical understanding that comes from Initiation, it is simply impossible to replicate the cult's magical effects.

While it may be possible in some instances for a non-Initiate to learn a Mystery ability — and indeed this has happened in the past, as Chapter 4 demonstrates — it is an uncertain business, and without the mystical framework of understanding provided by knowledge of the cult's Organization Lore, a hazardous one. The Children of Hermes, for example, introduced in Chapter 14, is a Mystery Cult that seeks to learn the secrets of other cults and introduce them into its own messianic religion.



# Entering a Mystery Cult

If Mystery Cults wrap their very existence in secrecy, how does one even learn of them? Although most Mystery Cults do not seek broad membership, there are three main ways a magus may become embroiled in secret rites.

One possibility is that a magus might learn of a particular Mystery and seek admission. Such a wizard's motives come under great scrutiny by the cult, and the methods by which the magus sets about "applying" are of particular interest. Blatant or indiscreet attempts, which draw unwelcome attention to the Mystery, typically result in the supplicant being barred from admission forever (whether he ever becomes aware of this status or not). An aptitude for subtlety and intrigue is much more useful. Carefully ambiguous phrases spoken at Tribunal, or sealed epistles sent by bribed Redcap to certain magi are much more fruitful routes to finding a Mystery Cult.

However, a word of warning: Even inadvertently learning details about a Mystery can result in a very strongly worded offer, in the words of Flambeau, "*Adjungite nobis an perete!*" — Join us or die! Those who would sooner not join a particular cult had best not go looking.

Another way a magus may enter an Esoteric Mystery is via his parens. Although a few apprentices learn of a Mystery from an Initiated parens, it is far more common for a Gauntleted filius to be allowed to develop and show maturity before his parens considers drawing him further in, since it is well known that many young magi "fly the nest" after their Gauntlets, developing deeply ambiguous attitudes toward those who taught them magic. That said, if the relationship between a maga and her apprentice is very deep and trusting, or if the apprentice was born under peculiar omens of interest to the Mystery, it is not unheard of for a young magus to be taught the first level of a Mystery — the first threshold of the cult's teachings — during apprenticeship.

## Rhiannon's Rite

Alone in a dark and desolate place just after sundown, Rhiannon was terribly apprehensive. The first requirement of the rite was very simple: She was to arrive naked. Not physically naked — although she imagined other cults also required that. Rather, she was to wear no enchanted devices or talismans, to arrive without spells protecting her, to forgo even the benefit of her *Parma Magica*, which she had cast every nightfall since her Gauntlet many years ago. Feeling more vulnerable than mere physical nakedness could explain, completely unprotected, awaiting the Mystagogue, she had been warned not to use her magic in any way until sunrise. The Quest she had endured as an Ordeal to bring her to this moment seemed a small price compared to the fear she felt now, as she waited, essentially helpless, in a cruel test of endurance. Though strange noises, visions, and magic assailed her, she knew she must remain resolute — hobgoblins and foul fiends ignored, she must await the Mystagogue whatever happened.

A noise in the trees! Could it be some horror, stealthily approaching? Or

was it a hidden Initiate watching over her, guarding her against the denizens of the wood? She shuddered as she thought of the tale of Hedvig of the Rhine, who turned up on the wrong night for her induction — or had the Mystagogue forgotten her, or the cult betrayed her? Accounts varied, but all of the legends agreed that she was set upon and consumed by werewolves as she waited, a classic piece of Order folklore about those foolish enough to submit to induction into a Mystery Cult.

In the distance wolves howled, and she heard them approaching. She smiled, for she had heard that the howling of wolves drawing close was a common trick of the Mystagogues. Winifred of the Four Oaks had told her that the only reason she had passed her own acceptance into the Knights of the Green Stone was because she had been frozen in fear, too terrified to run.

Finally, as fear left Rhiannon, a magnificent stag entered the clearing, and as the glade lit with light she knew she would pass the test, and soon become an Initiate of the Mystery.

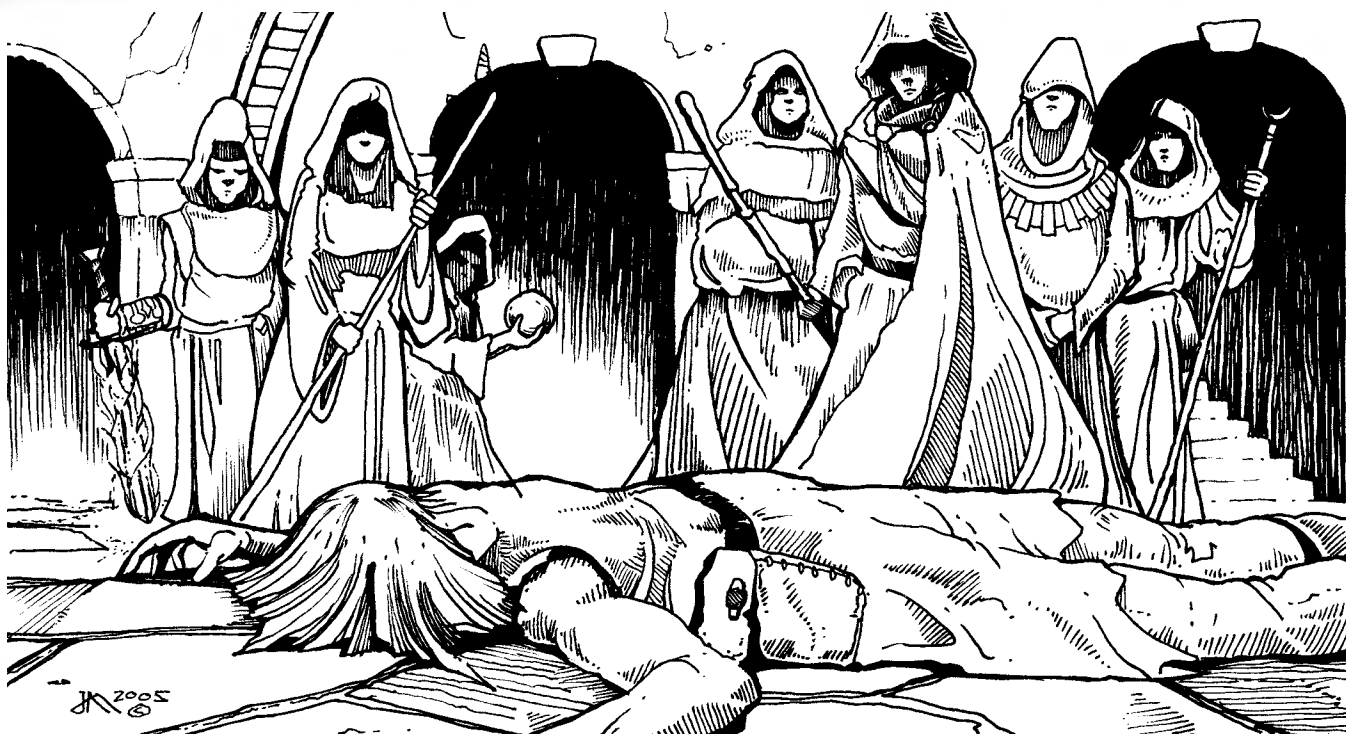
Rules for creating these rare Initiated apprentices (that is, starting characters who begin play as members of a Mystery Cult), can be found later in this chapter under the heading "The Initiated Apprentice and Beyond." Because of the story potential in the process of joining a Mystery Cult, however, and the complexity of the Mystery Virtues themselves, this is not recommended. It is less taxing for the player and more fun for the troupe when a character finds, joins, and is Initiated into a Mystery Cult in the course of play. This has the added benefit of allowing the player more time to learn how the Mystery Virtues conferred complement and add to her character's existing abilities.

But Mystery Cults do not always increase their membership by waiting for potential Initiates to find them.

Perhaps the most common way to gain entrance to a Mystery Cult, is by invitation. And that is usually the result of the magus's reputation: If a maga is

particularly brilliant in some area, owns a powerful or ancient enchanted device of interest, or has shown noteworthy aptitude and interest in the field with which a Mystery concerns itself, that cult may decide to approach her.

How, then, do Mystery Cults approach prospective recruits? Again, nothing is said outright. It is often a matter of implication, circumlocution, and guarded phrases. Odd questions are asked, and the words of the would-be Initiate are noted. Powerful members of the Mystery may set up tests to see if the candidate is suitable. These are not mundane tests, like exams, nor tactical trials, where magical creatures must be bested. Rather, they take the form of odd occurrences, moral challenges, and situations that test one's ability to hold one's tongue. Such tests make excellent stories, and those already Initiated may from time to time be called upon to help devise and prepare them for those who may be under consideration.



Once a candidate has been found worthy, a formal offer is made. The candidate may still not know the name of the cult, and the one who makes the offer may do so while in disguise or using magic, for example a talking rabbit or words appearing in gold upon a wall. This protects the identity of the one offering. Other formal offers may be more open — or appear to be. In any case, if the candidate accepts the offer he becomes a probationer, one preparing for Initiation in the full secrets of the Mystery Cult.

The candidate is instructed to proceed to some ritual site, telling no one of his plans. This may be a place sacred to the cult, or simply a lonely and frightening location meant to test the probationer's resolve. It may be far away, or within the magus's covenant. The journey may require symbolic and magical conduct significant to the cult. Whatever form the journey and destination, once the probationer arrives, he meets the one who will induct him into the cult, referred to as a Mystagogue. The journey to meet the Mystagogue may later count as a Quest if it required a story, and thus give a later bonus to the first Initiation.

The actual tone of the ritual experience varies markedly. Most reflect a symbolic transition from darkness to light,

a death and rebirth experience designed to mark the psyche of the one seeking power. Each cult's rites reflect the unique spiritual principles of that tradition.

Induction into membership of the cult, and subsequent Initiation into the cult's magical secrets, is a profound moment in the life of a magus that is special and demands a story. It is an intense experience, and the tone of the session should be that of a life-changing occurrence, a rite of passage.

After the probationer's journey, the arrival of the Mystagogue and his assistants marks the second phase of the ritual. The Mystagogue generally appears with some degree of splendor: brilliant light, music, and other Imaginem effects are not spared to make the moment as portentous as possible. Yet there is further mystery, for each of the Initiates present is traditionally costumed, and cloaked in Imaginem magics that conceal their true identities. Upon their arrival, they greet the probationer and ask a series of ritual questions that may be about his willingness to endure pain, torture, and horrific death, or may instead concern his spiritual progress, understanding, and commitment to the cult and its chosen path of magic. If the probationer decides to turn back, refusing the Mystery, a Perdo Mentem spell may be cast to

remove his memory of what transpired, and a further Creo Mentem spell employed to confuse him with false memories of something quite prosaic. Those who fail the test are never approached again, although they are certainly watched, lest their curiosity lead them to betray the secrets they have failed to dare.

If the test is passed, the probationer may be given a new magical name known only to him and his Mystagogue. While it is a liability, it may be invoked for a sympathetic bonus to future Initiations.

The probationer must now commit a season to learning the secrets of the cult, attaining a score of 1 or more in the Ability (Mystery Cult) Lore. Some cults allow the probationer to study from books, or require the probationer to piece together a score of at least 1 on his own from ancient records, but most provide a season of one-on-one tuition from an experienced teacher in the cult. The knowledge of the rites, traditions, and secrets of the cult that is learned through this process is needed before the Initiation of the first Mystery Virtue can proceed.

During the formal test and acceptance into the Mystery Cult, one of the duties of the Mystagogue is to outline for the probationer the nature of the Mystery he is embarking upon and the require-

ments for his first Initiation, which follows once those requirements have been fulfilled. The requirements are laid out in a document called an **Initiation Script**, discussed later in this chapter.

Once a magus has been inducted into a Mystery Cult, and has learned some of its secrets (by gaining a (Mystery Cult) Lore score), he is ready to begin Initiation into the Mysteries of that cult.

Initiation, the process by which one progresses further into the Mystery, is represented in game terms by gaining new Virtues that are not balanced by Flaws, but rather by stories and by service to the cult. In game terms, Initiation is a seasonal activity that culminates in a special rite, often celebrated with a special ceremony in front of the gathered Initiates of the cult, but sometimes by something as simple as a symbolic gesture between the Mystagogue and the Initiate; cults vary in their practices.

The completion of the special Initiation rites changes the magus who is Initiated. It grants a Mystery Virtue, keyed to the Mystery Cult being joined, and also in some cases inflicts one or more new Flaws, which are called **Ordeal Flaws**. An Ordeal, Quest, or Sacrifice is a process one undergoes as either part of, or before, the Initiation.

The nature of the Initiation process makes the changes a true part of the magus, affecting the magus's essential nature. Thus magic cannot undo Initiation effects. Even if a maga subsequently leaves a Mystery Cult, she does not lose the Virtues and Flaws she accrued.

Initiates often develop new Personality Traits that mark the effects of the Initiation on the maga and reflect her new perspective on the world. Typically such a trait begins at +1.

To undergo Initiation requires more, however, than a record of service to the cult and a requisite level of the relevant (Mystery Cult) Lore. It also requires that the candidate fulfill the initiatory requirements peculiar to that cult's Initiation in the Mystery Virtue, by following a detailed set of instruction and rituals and undergoing peculiar magical rites. These rituals and necessary obligations are called Quests, Sacrifices, and Ordeals, and they are explained in the Initiation Script.

## Revised Ability: (Mystery Cult) Lore

(Mystery Cult) Lore is the (Organization) Lore of a particular cult. It provides knowledge of the legends, history, structure, operation, and goals of the Mystery Cult in question. It includes knowledge of the magics, rites, and secret passwords and symbolism of the cult, how to covertly signal membership, and how to assess another magus's membership or non-membership in the cult. Two magi with this Ability for the same Mystery Cult may well be able to hold a seemingly innocuous conversation without outsiders realizing that a second, secret, conversation is hidden within the innocent phrases. In order to prevent outsiders from learning secrets of the Mystery, many Mystery Cults' specialty books require a score in this Ability for a magus to decode their symbolism. (Mystery Cult) Lore also covers the ceremonies of the cult, frequently enacted when the cult members gather formally. It is a key knowledge for a Mystagogue's performance of the Initiation rites, to guide the Initiate through Ordeals, ceremonies, and meditations to gain new Virtues.

Knowledge of this Ability is passed from Mystagogue to Initiate, from mystae to mystae, in a chain of living secrets. Some cults also write down their secret

lore, as this codifies the Mystery and lets others share the same view of the cult. Others prefer the secrecy of an oral tradition. Small cults may fade away from lack of members, especially if they are persecuted, but if they have committed some of their lore to writing, the cults may be restarted by those who discover and understand the texts. Some cults risk the loss of secrecy for this very reason: so that their secrets and magical rites may not be lost forever. Some magi search for lost texts, containing secret lore of the ancients, hoping to re-enact the rites and rituals that led them to power.

In game terms, experience points in (Mystery Cult) Lore can be acquired like any other knowledge, including through teaching, books, practice, and exposure. Learning (Mystery Cult) Lore from another ensures that master and pupil share the same rites; learning in isolation may lead to variant (or even deviant) rites and rituals — from such discrepancies schisms sometimes arise, and cults may break up and fragment.

A magus may build his (Mystery Cult) Lore from zero, even without instruction, but this means he has devised his own cult, and should treat his Lore as an entirely new (Mystery Cult) Lore.

## (Mystery Cult) Lore and Degrees of Initiation

Some Mystery Cults are very hierarchically defined, while others are quite informal and irregular in structure, but there is a general pattern of (Mystery Cult) Lore requirements. A level or rank of Initiation into a Mystery Cult is called a degree, and the number of degrees a cult has — or whether there is a formal degree structure at all — varies from cult to cult.

The first Initiation requires a single level of (Mystery Cult) Lore, which explains the significance of what is to be learned and how to participate in the rites of Initiation. Further Initiations are unlikely to be offered to characters with

a score below 3, but this is sufficient for most members of a cult.

A score of 6 is normally required for Initiation to the inner circle; this is not necessarily a requirement for Initiation to Major Virtues, but to those degrees that the cult considers its most private secrets, which are often synonymous with the Major Virtues.

Finally, those wishing to become Mystagogues and Initiate others are also well advised to study (Mystery Cult) Lore, as it is an important factor in successful Initiations. See the section entitled The Mechanics of Initiation, below.



# Quests, Ordeals, and Sacrifices

*Power has its price* is another of the central maxims of all Mysteries. That price is paid in three distinct ways: through the **Initiation Ordeal**, the **Initiation Quest**, and the **Initiation Sacrifice**.

An Initiation Ordeal is a terrible process such as being ritually branded or scarred, made to walk through a raging bonfire without magic, or being pinned to a tree by a spear for nine days. Such rites permanently and magically scar the Initiate; the mundane wounds slowly heal, but the body or mind is forever marked. This is represented by a new Flaw, dictated by the nature of the Initiation Ordeal. These are generally Minor Flaws, although Major Flaws are sometimes inflicted. Flaws that arise from Ordeals cannot be lost in play or overcome by Hermetic magic. Some cults doubtless have their own unique Flaws, which mark those who have undergone their peculiar rites, but storyguides should feel free to use any Flaws they feel are appropriate in devising Initiation Scripts.

The Ordeal is a terrible price to pay, but has long-term benefits. If one undergoes an Ordeal as part of an Initiation, then, unlike Sacrifices and Quests, a further bonus is given to subsequent Initiations to learn later Virtues from the cult. This means that the most horrific Ordeals often come early in the cult's Initiatory scheme, and later progress draws upon the price already paid. The mechanics for this are discussed later.

The Ordeal is usually performed at the time of and as part of Initiation and is part of that season's activities.

Initiation Quests are perhaps the most common requirement of Initiation Scripts. They usually require a lengthy journey, great danger, and a series of challenges. Quests may take many forms: journeying to a sacred mountain and capturing a dragon's egg, infiltrating a covenant and stealing an item, defeating a Tremere Archmagus at certamen, learn-

ing a lost secret; passing a Gauntlet-like test; delivering a message across Mythic Europe. A well-known Quest of the Philosophers of Rome requires the seduction without direct mind-altering magic of the mistresses of a prince of the realm, cardinal of the Church and a faerie lord, all in one season.

Such Quests are always stories; in some way they usually reflect the nature of the cult, or the type of Virtue being Initiated. Sometimes several Quests are required to gain the necessary degree of knowledge for Initiation. The magus may take his companions and fellow magi along on the story, but he must be the chief protagonist, and may well mislead them as to why he is attempting the feat, so as not to reveal the secret of his mystery.

All Initiation Quests take at least one season. If the Quest ends early, the magus must spend the rest of the season meditating on her experiences. No other study is possible, although Exposure experience in (Mystery Cult) Lore can be granted. Some Quests may, of course, require multiple seasons, or if initially failed, multiple attempts to complete. An Initiation Sacrifice is the least taxing of the requirements of most Initiation Scripts. This may be a Sacrifice of time, represented by seasons teaching new Initiates and probationers on behalf of, writing books for, inventing spells for or any other lab activity required by the cult, or it may be a Sacrifice of vast amounts of mundane wealth, or magical books, or of one's talisman or even one's apprentice or familiar. The Script specifies the exact Sacrifice required, and is usually worded so that no matter how rich or magically powerful the magus, the Sacrifice reflects a real loss. Sacrifices generally make the smallest contribution to the Initiations success, and the number of sacrifices that can be called for in one Script is limited.

Quests, Ordeals, and Sacrifices vary greatly between Mystery Cults and according to the specific Initiation, and should reflect the magical and spiritual nature of the cult, as well as in some way the nature of the Initiation being conferred. They make the process of Initiation easier, as even the most powerful Mystagogue finds it hard or impossible

## Distractions and the Initiate

If a season of Initiation is spent in study with the Mystagogue, the normal study distraction rules apply (see ArM5, page 165).

In addition, for each month lost to distractions, reduce the Initiation Total by one-third of its original amount (rounding fractions up); this may make the Initiation fail so that no Virtue is gained (although Ordeal Flaws are still acquired), and the Initiation must be repeated.

If the Initiate is distracted from reflection upon a successful Quest, this is less of a disaster: she can simply take more time to meditate and consider.

to confer the magical Initiation on an unprepared candidate.

Specific Quests, Ordeals, and Sacrifices are called for by the Initiation Script for each different Mystery Virtue Initiated, although most cults have several Scripts for each Initiation, reflecting the different abilities of the Mystagogues who lead the Initiations. The more powerful and knowledgeable in (Mystery Cult) Lore the Mystagogue, the less difficult and strenuous the Initiation, and the easier the Script's requirements are to achieve.

## Time and Initiation

In addition to any time taken up by the Initiation Sacrifices and Quests, the Initiation (including associated Ordeals) itself requires an entire season. The time may be spent in preparations, such as meditation and fasting, before the Initiation Ceremony (appropriate for Virtues lacking an associated Ability), or in time spent studying with a tutor. When a magus gains a Virtue through Initiation, the Initiation and the required process of reflection, contemplation, preparation, etc. (and in the case of Abilities, studying with a teacher) count as the study for that season — no other activities can take place. The season spent being taught

## Time and the Mystagogue

The Mystagogue who performs the Initiation need not spend a significant amount of time, unless he teaches a Supernatural Ability through Initiation. However all Initiates require some supervision and testing, which generally amounts to a seven-day distraction for the Mystagogue.

If the Mystagogue's time is required, this is noted in the description of the Initiation.

(Mystery Cult) Lore on first joining a cult as a probationer does not count as an Ordeal.

A probationer needs a single level of (Mystery Cult) Lore, so as to understand the significance of what he is to perform, and the rites that will be needed. He may be taught this whenever the cult approves him, but before the first Initiation in any case. He may be subject to an Ordeal first, or simply swear an oath of secrecy. The cult may impose any other requirements it sees fit. Second and subsequent Initiations typically require a score of at least 3 in (Mystery Cult) Lore.

Mystery Cults are often organized into degrees of Initiation, which correspond to ranks within the secret society — each degree teaches a distinct Mystery Virtue. Some cults offer a choice of path, or may even be so informal that there is a free choice made by the Mystagogue as to which Virtue is Initiated next.

## The Mechanics of Initiation

Unlike character generation, where Virtues and Flaws are balanced against each other, progress in a Mystery Cult depicts an increase in power, with more gain than loss, and no fixed ratio. Indeed the greatest 'currency' transacted is the unit of the 'story' in which character

activities reward the storyguide, and in turn the players' characters. At the same time, we adopt the time-unit of the season, so that non-player characters may be assessed for progress using the same scale as player characters. We also extend the list of Flaws to include Hermetic Flaws, as the Sacrifice of Power is mythically very appropriate.

The storyguide and troupe should work together with the player of the Initiate character, to make the Initiation process feel mystical and to make the process into a story.

## The Mystagogue

"Mystagogue" is a technical term for one who teaches a Mystery. It is used of any maga who conducts an Initiation, and is a role rather than a title. A character who enters into a Mystery Cult may well be called upon to Initiate Mystery Virtues to suitable candidates once his knowledge is deep enough, and especially if the character is blessed with a high Presence. In a small cult, almost all Initiations may be conducted by the cult leader; in larger cults with many degrees, the Mystagogue may simply be a higher-ranking Initiate.

Usually the Mystagogue and the Initiate are two different individuals, and the Mystagogue teaches a Mystery he already understands, but this need not be the case. If the Mystagogue is attempting to discover a new Mystery path, or to recover and reconstruct a lost path through recently discovered texts, he then may be attempting to Initiate himself.

The key to the mystical rites of the cult is the (Mystery Cult) Lore Ability, which includes knowledge of these rites. Mystagogues are drawn from those with the best available (Mystery Cult) Lore and are of a higher degree, or rank of Initiation, than those they are Initiating.

A high Presence makes leading Initiations easier; to get the same results, a Mystagogue with low Presence must rely on greater levels of (Mystery Cult) Lore, or more complex Initiation Scripts that are harder for the candidate to complete.

## Virtues Initiated

It is possible to gain almost any Virtue through Initiation, although not those that depend on circumstance such as Landed Noble or Hermetic Prestige, or accident of birth such as Faerie Blood or Large, as common sense dictates. (Some Virtues, such as Temporal Influence, True Love, and Relic, are only Virtues if chosen during character generation; they may be gained through normal play without need of Initiation.)

Hermetic Virtues are favorites for Initiation, along with Supernatural Abilities. (As described in ArM5 page 166, Supernatural Abilities can be taught to anyone with The Gift, but the Study Total is reduced by the sum total of all levels in other supernatural abilities, and the sum all Art scores; Mystery Cults can avoid the penalties described there through Initiation rituals and Ordeals, so that at the end of a season's study with a teacher the Initiate reaches level 1 in the Ability.)

## Initiation Rites

In order to be Initiated into a new Mystery Virtue, the Initiate needs at least (Mystery Cult) Lore 1; the Mystagogue must also know the same Lore, but generally needs a higher level if the Initiation is to succeed. To grant the Initiate a new Mystery Virtue, the Mystagogue generates an Initiation Total that determines the success or failure of the Initiation:

**Initiation Total: Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore + Script Bonus**

There is no die roll; if the total is higher than the required target level the Initiation succeeds — all that is required is for the Mystagogue to be properly prepared, and skilled enough to succeed. Initiation Scripts and their bonuses are described in this chapter, Initiation Scripts. The Target Level depends on the kind of Virtue to be Initiated, Major or Minor:

To Initiate a Minor Virtue known by the Mystagogue, the Target Level is 15

To Initiate a Major Virtue known by the Mystagogue, the Target Level is 21

The Target Level is increased in the unlikely event that the Mystagogue does not know the Virtue to be Initiated. This is most often the case when a maga decides to Initiate herself in a Mystery Virtue, usually while creating a new Mystery Cult or reconstructing the lost rites of an ancient Mystery Cult that has died out.

To Initiate a new Minor Virtue, the Target Level is 18

To Initiate a new Major Virtue, the Target Level is 30

In addition, if the Initiate went through a previous Ordeal for a previous Initiation, the next three Initiations' Target Levels are reduced. Gaining a Major Flaw or losing a Major Virtue is a Major Ordeal. Increasing a Minor Flaw to a Major Flaw is a Medium Ordeal. Gaining a Minor Flaw or losing a Minor Virtue is a Minor Ordeal.

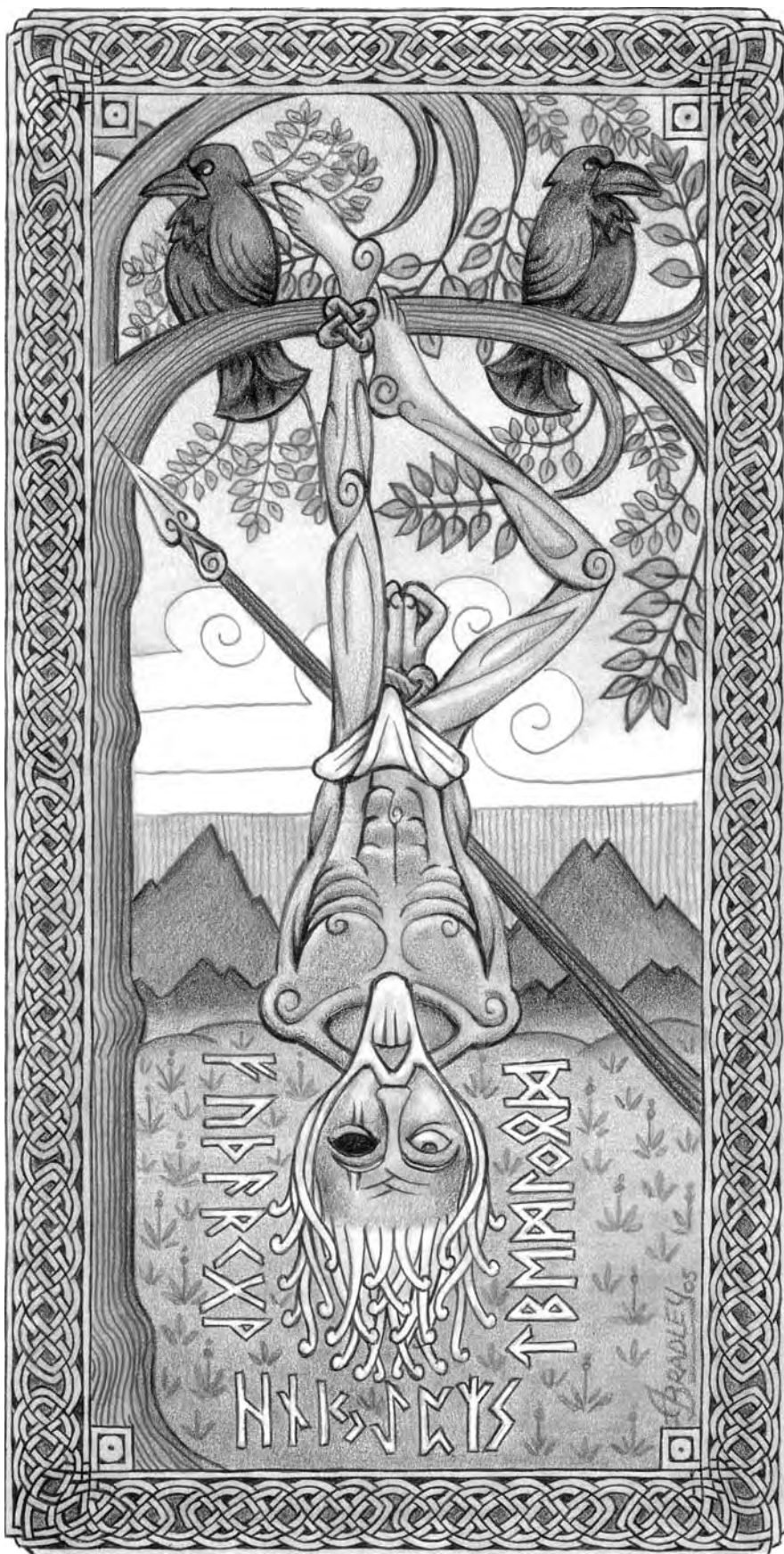
First Initiation after an Ordeal: -3  
for a Minor Ordeal, -6 for a Medium Ordeal, -9 for a Major Ordeal

Second Initiation after an Ordeal: -2  
for a Minor Ordeal, -4 for a Medium Ordeal, -6 for a Major Ordeal

Third Initiation after an Ordeal: -1  
for a Minor Ordeal, -2 for a Medium Ordeal, -3 for a Major Ordeal

Only the past Ordeal providing the largest reduction to the Target Level of a new Initiation is counted. There is a minimum Target Level of 9 no matter how great a reduction is applied.

If the Mystagogue's Initiation Total is too low, he may be able to vary and extend the Script to make it more effective. If that is still insufficient (for example, no Script exists), then the Mystagogue can experiment to attempt to improve the Script.





## THE INITIATION SCRIPT

*Those who wish to be initiated have the custom, I believe, to turn first to the 'Father' of the sacred rites, to map out what preparations need to be made.*

— Tertullian

The Initiation Script is a written text (similar to a Lab Text) that describes a successful Initiation and the process followed: the chants and methods, the places and times, and any sacrifices made. If this Script is followed exactly, the Script grants its bonus to the Initiation Total.

Typical components of an Initiation Script, and their bonus contributions, include:

- +3: The Initiate has to travel far to reach a special place at a special time (one bonus only).
- +3: The Initiate has to complete a specified Quest. The Quest may be performed any time prior to Initiation. Multiple Quests are possible. If the Quest is unique and no similar Quester could repeat it, then the bonus is +6.
- +9: The Initiate suffers a Major Ordeal inflicting a specific Major Flaw during the Initiation.
- +6: The Initiate suffers a Medium Ordeal increasing a specific Minor Flaw to a closely related Major Flaw (e.g., Minor to Major Personality Flaw).
- +3: The Initiate suffers a Minor Ordeal inflicting a specific Minor Flaw during the Initiation.
- +3: The Initiate has a Minor Virtue that is required for, and being replaced by, a Major Virtue; for example, Major Potent Magic requires and replaces Minor Potent Magic. This is equivalent to an Ordeal whereby the Initiate loses the original Minor Virtue.
- +1: The Initiate sacrifices material goods or wealth (one bonus only).
- +1: The Initiate sacrifices time (typically a season) serving another in the cult (one bonus only).
- +3 to +6: the Initiate sacrifices something of great and symbolic value (his talisman or familiar, or a powerful invested device).

## To Gain a Major Supernatural Ability by Ordeal and Teaching

The Mystagogue needs a Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore of 9, and must have the Virtue being Initiated (the Target Level is 21). The Initiation Script provides a bonus of +10 (Mystagogue's time, Ordeal, "special place" and sympathy bonus).

The Mystagogue must spend a whole season teaching the Initiate after the Initiation, which takes place on Easter Saturday, in an ancient crypt in a regio beneath a cathedral, only accessible on this one day. The Initiate voluntarily undergoes a Sacrifice of Power (Ordeal: Deficient Form).

The "special place" of this ritual is particularly difficult to enter, as the cathedral is very busy and full of worshipers and clergy at this time, and magic is hard to use in a cathedral. This

grants an additional sympathy bonus of +1 for the place and time.

The Script bonus is +10 (+3 (teaching) +3 (sacrifice) +4 (special place)), which is not enough to guarantee success even with a Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore of 9. However, if the previous Initiation had involved an Ordeal, then the next Initiation would receive a bonus of +3 – enough for this Initiation to succeed.

The Script calls for the Mystagogue to spend a season teaching after the Initiation ceremony, during which the special link of the Initiation permits the Initiate to learn the Ability and reach level 1 at the end of study. Any breaks in the study must be made up as soon as possible, until a full three months' study is completed.

## To Gain A Minor Virtue By Ordeal and Sacrifice

The Mystagogue needs a Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore of 8, and must have the Virtue being Initiated (the Target Level is 15). The Initiation Script provides a bonus of +7 (Ordeal, Sacrifice, and "special place").

The Initiate must sacrifice several books, impressing the Mystagogue with their worth and the pain of their loss. The ceremony is performed in a hidden cave in the mountains, on the first day of Capricorn. The books are formed into

a sacrificial pyre, mixed with herbs and incenses. The pyre is lit with magical fire, and as the books burn white hot, the Initiate undergoes an Ordeal of fire, plunging her arms into the flames.

Magic is available to ensure that her arms heal back to functionality, but she is not allowed magical healing to restore appearance — if the wounds appear to be healing too well, the Mystagogue intervenes to rub in ashes from the pyre. The Initiate acquires the Disfigured Flaw.

## To Gain A Minor Virtue By Questing

The Mystagogue needs a Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore of 6, and must have the Virtue being Initiated (the Target Level is 15). The Initiation Script provides a bonus of +9 (two Quests and a "special place").

The Initiate must complete two Quests. First, he must defeat a monster

sufficiently powerful that it impresses the Mystagogue. Then he must discover the secret location of the Initiation, meeting the Mystagogue there. No cult member will assist in this task. The Initiation takes place on Midsummer's Eve, on a remote island, in an ancient stone circle.

- +3: The Mystagogue sacrifices time, such as teaching the Initiate a Supernatural Ability. (Any price the

Mystagogue requires for her time is separate from the Initiation itself.)

- +0 to +3 (but can range from -5 to +5): Sympathetic bonus for appropriateness of the rite to the Virtue being Initiated. Sympathetic bonuses should be agreed upon with the storyguide or troupe.
- If experimenting (see Experimental Scripts, below), the bonus is determined at the end of experimentation, once all flaws and benefits are known. Experimental Scripts may be flawed, and include some Ordeals with no bonus.

A bonus is granted only if the component genuinely costs the character something. If, for instance, he lives very close to the "special place" rather than having to travel far to reach it, then the travel takes no effort and is invalid. Worse still, if

any component is invalid then the whole Script is invalidated. Temporary suffering does not provide a benefit — indeed in many rites it is just a normal part of the process.

Quests (such as "Slay a fearsome monster") count toward a single Initiation only: a later Initiation that requires a similar Quest requires the slaying of a new monster. Unique Quests must be very specific; for example, bringing the head of the Minotaur. If your saga has a race of Minotaurs, this is no longer a Unique Quest.

Sacrificing items can be repeated but each significant item only counts once. If a magus previously sacrificed his talisman, and a new rite calls for a similar sacrifice, then he must make a new talisman in order to sacrifice it.

## EXAMPLE INITIATION SCRIPT DESIGNS

An Initiation Script requires that the Mystagogue have a minimum Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore, as specified in the Script. Such a Script can be applied to a nonplayer character by simply noting any time costs (counting a Quest as a season) and any Ordeals imposed.

Given the high totals needed, the Scripts for Major Virtues commonly fall short of providing the Initiation on their own. However, note that previous Ordeals provide a bonus to the Initiation Total, and this usually provides the extra needed to succeed.

Note that the process of Initiation relies upon the Mystagogue's Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore, not the Initiate's.

### Example: Darius Undergoes Initiation

Darius filius Xerxes, follower of Flambeau, is a Hoplite from the covenant of Semita Errabunda. He has been introduced by a fellow Hoplite, Pepino, to the Legion of Mithras, and has already been accepted as a member at a robed conclave, after a night alone in an underground temple, where he faced various magical tests and distractions, but bravely endured. His moral character is outstanding, and he has long been a devoted servant of the Order, as his Personality Traits and Reputation clearly show.

Following this test, he was formally admitted to the Legion and a great feast was held, with 25 other Legionnaires attending, wearing colorful robes symbolic of their rank and ornate masks. Immediately after the feast ended he was introduced to his new teacher, who would instruct him in the basic secrets of the cult. It happened to be his friend Pepino, and the two of them retired to Pepino's sanctum, where they spent the rest of the season together, as Pepino taught Darius the secret rites and philosophies of Mithras.

The storyguide has invented some secrets and ideals that are held by the cult; she now explains them, and a brief overview of the nature and purpose of the cult to Darius' player. She looks

forward to further developing her idea of the mystical and magical principles of the cult later, as Darius learns more.

Darius' player now notes the result of the season of teaching, and as Pepino is an accomplished teacher, Darius manages to gain an ability of Legion of Mithras Lore 1, with 6 experience points left over.

Darius is also told that he will be expected to learn the Ability Teaching, so that he can serve the Legion in the same capacity later, but for now he must prepare for his first Initiation, to be held when he has found time to prepare adequately. He is now a probationer, awaiting his first Initiation.

The Legion of Mithras is well-organized in the Tribunal, and picks Sebastiano, Lion of Mithras, to be the presiding Mystagogue at Darius' Initiation. Sebastiano has a Presence of +3, and a Mithras Lore of 7. His Initiation Total before the Script bonus is, therefore, a respectable 10. He himself was Initiated into the Virtue Strong Willed as a Raven; if he was to teach this to Darius he would require a total of 15, as he knows the Mystery Virtue he is Initiating. However, Darius is already Strong Willed, so that will not suffice. An alternative Initiation is required.

After hunting around in the temple archives, Sebastiano discovers an old and little-used Initiation Script that teaches the Virtue Self-Confident. Sebastiano himself does not have this Virtue, but he can still Initiate it; the Target Level is, however, 18 not 15. Luckily the Script grants a +12 bonus which, with his Presence +3 and Legion of Mithras Lore 7, provides an Initiation Total of 22; more than the required Target Level of 18. The Initiation Script prescribes a rite that is much more arduous (Initiation Total 22) than technically necessary to exceed the modified Target Level of 15, but Sebastiano does not wish to try vary the Script to make it easier. The Target Level is reduced by 3 to 15, as it is Darius' first Initiation after the previous Ordeal. Darius is certain to be successfully Initiated into the Self-Confident Virtue if he can fulfill all the requirements of the Script.

The Script bonus is comprised of a Minor Ordeal +3, a Quest +3, the Sacrifice of a talisman +5, and a sympathetic appropriateness bonus +1. The details of the Script have been outlined to Darius as the path he must pursue for Initiation; he sets out to fulfill the requirements, painfully aware that he is giving up much to receive little in

However it is the Initiate's Quests, Sacrifices, and Ordeals that lower the Target Level. As there is no die roll, either the candidate has fulfilled the obligations required to meet the total and the Initiation succeeds, or it will not be attempted; the Mystagogue will not waste a season.

## MODIFYING THE INITIATION SCRIPT

Any time a Mystagogue leads an Initiate (even himself) through an Initiation rite, following a Script, he may try to vary the Script. At the end of the Initiation, if successful, he may write down his precise actions as a Script for others to follow.

There are many reasons to vary the Script: the Script may not be valid for this Initiate, or the Script bonus may not guarantee success (particularly if this Mystagogue is less charismatic than his predecessor). Scripts have a tendency to become long and elaborate over time, as it is easiest to extend the original and quite hard to simplify it.

To vary the Script, the Mystagogue makes a roll of

**Stress Die + Intelligence + (Mystery Cult) Lore vs. Ease Factor**

The Ease Factor is 9 to extend the Script by adding a new component, such as an additional Quest. A magus with a low Presence or (Mystery Cult) Lore may try to extend a Script in this way.

The Ease Factor is 12 to make a change to a component, such as varying the place, the time, or the subject of a Quest. (Varying a Unique Quest should replace it with another Unique Quest.) It is not possible to change which Virtue the Script Initiates, or to modify a Script to Initiate a Minor Virtue into Initiating the Major Virtue.

The Ease Factor is 15 to remove a component from the Script, reducing the Script bonus.

The Mystagogue may only attempt one of the above changes in a given Initiation. If the attempt fails, the new Initiation Script is nonfunctional (and the Mystagogue knows this without attempting the Initiation), but the original Script works as normal. If the attempt is successful, the modified Script can be used to generate the Initiation Total.

ordinary terms in return, at this time at least.

The Minor Ordeal is that Darius must take the Flaw Dutybound: Serve the Order of Hermes — this is little cost to a magus who has devoted his life to that cause. This and the Sacrifice of his long spear talisman will occur during the actual ceremony of Initiation. Neither will require any time beyond the season he must spend on the Initiation itself. This means that he must fulfill one Quest, and, as the sympathetic appropriateness bonus of +1 suggests, it is somehow related to the gaining of Self-Confidence, the Virtue to be Initiated. The Quest requires Darius to identify his nemesis, that enemy who is most contrary to what Darius personally stands for, and his goals and aspirations, and who has personally thwarted or deceived Darius at least three times, and defeat that nemesis. Darius is already committed to defeating a renounced magus, from whom he narrowly escaped (as detailed in his character history).

After several seasons of lab work, and serving his covenant, Darius finally is ready to embark on his Quest. He decides to take along a fellow maga from the covenant, and several grogs and companions, but Darius must be the star of the story for it to count as his Quest; the others understand that this is a personal score.

The storyguide runs the adventure, and after the story, the nemesis is (apparently) killed, having fallen into a chasm. While his death cannot be verified, Darius has defeated him, and after a few seasons more of study he sets off for his Initiation. He is loathe to lose his talisman, but the Script demands it, and he starts to plan its replacement.

The Initiation ceremony takes a few hours at the temple in front of the gathered assembly, and subsequent study takes an entire season, but at the end of it, Darius is a proud and valued Raven of Mithras. His player writes the Virtue Self-Confident on his character sheet, reflecting Darius's new-found confidence and mystically reinforced self-assurance.

Darius now needs to learn more about his cult and achieve an Ability score of Legion of Mithras 3 before he can be Initiated into the second degree. After several years' more dedicated duty and heroic adventure, he manages to learn the basics of the Ability Teaching, so that in the future he can instruct new Initiates. During that time, the cult also asked him to carry a message, which required a story, and Darius made a copy of some useful laboratory texts in his possession to give to the Legion, for which they were grateful. Most importantly, his studies of a tractatus he was lent and

two seasons' more teaching from Pepino (who received vis and a lesser enchanted device in return for his services) gave Darius a score of Legion of Mithras Lore 3. He is ready to undertake further Initiations, and the cult invites him to prepare for his second degree, Bride of Mithras.

Sebastiano can use the normal Script this time, as Darius does not possess the Virtue Clear Thinker already. The Script calls for a Quest, to investigate a possible threat to the Order, and to show clear signs of good judgment +3, and there is a sympathetic appropriateness bonus of +1. This gives Sebastiano an Initiation Total of 14, less than the Target Level of 15 required for Initiation into a known Minor Virtue, but the Target Level is reduced to 12 as this is the first Initiation after the Ordeal of taking the Flaw Dutybound (it's also the second Initiation after the Ordeal he underwent upon first entering the cult, but that would only reduce the Target Level to 13, so that Ordeal is ignored). Providing Darius completes the Quest set him, he is successfully Initiated into the Legion's second degree.



## Example: Darius Undergoes Initiation, Revisited

In Darius's first Initiation, discussed in the previous example, the Initiation Total was 22, and the modified Target Level was 15. The Initiation Script could have been less arduous, providing a bonus of up to 7 less and still have succeeded. If Sebastiano had felt that the sacrifice of the talisman was unnecessary and unlikely to be mystically useful in granting Darius improved confidence, he could have decided to try modify the Script by dropping the requirement Darius sacrifice his talisman. Sebastiano has an Intelligence of +3 and Legion of Mithras Lore 7. He would, therefore, have a total of 10 plus a stress die to try to beat an Ease Factor of 15 to drop an element from the Script. If he succeeded, the Script bonus would be +7, and he could record it for use in future rites.

If Darius had already possessed the Flaw Dutybound: Serve the Order of Hermes before joining the Legion of Mithras, Sebastiano could have tried substituting Higher Purpose in the Initiation Script, rolling against an Ease Factor of 12.

If a single change is not enough to make this Script work, then either a different Script is needed, or the Mystagogue must study more (Mystery Cult) Lore, or experiment.

### EXPERIMENTAL SCRIPTS

If the Mystagogue has no Initiation Script, or only has an inadequate one, then she may experiment to discover a new Script. This involves risk and uncertainty, with no guarantee of benefit at the end, but it is the only way to begin a new Initiation under such circumstances.

Determine the Initiation rite components (Quests, Ordeal, Sacrifices) that the Mystagogue proposes as a method for Initiation to this Virtue, and total the bonus this rite would have. The

Mystagogue also determines how much risk she will take in experimenting: a Risk level from 0 to +3.

The Initiate carries out the steps of the rite, including all Quests, Sacrifices and Ordeals, and then the rite is checked to determine success or failure.

First the Mystagogue checks whether the rite invoked the correct sympathy with the desired goal, whether it had the power to bring about change, and whether experimentation went well or badly:

Roll a **Stress Die + Risk Modifier** on the Extraordinary Results chart on ArM5, page 109.

- Side effect and minor benefits or flaws results are usually (positive or negative) Personality Traits related to cult goals, affecting the Initiate, which become part of this Initiation Script.
- Major flaw results add an extra Ordeal Flaw (usually Minor), affecting the Initiate, which becomes part of this Initiation Script. A flawed rite offers no Script bonus for this additional Flaw.
- A fatal flaw result inflicts an Ordeal Flaw but fails to provide the Initiation Virtue.
- A major benefit is an increase or stacking of the Initiated Virtue if this is possible (for example, Minor/Major Magical Focus, or a double increase to a Characteristic) or a second Minor Virtue. The benefit becomes part of this Initiation Script.
- A discovery usually results in experience points in either (Mystery Cult) Lore or the Ability being Initiated, affecting the Mystagogue.
- Modified effect Initiates a different Virtue, related sympathetically to the cult's goals. The extent of change should be reviewed with the storyguide in the light of the suggestions in the Modified Effect table.
- Disaster indicates that the Initiation fails completely, inflicting a Major Flaw on both the Mystagogue and the Initiate.

Second, the Mystagogue must check the validity of the rite.

Roll a **Simple Die + Risk Modifier + Intelligence + (Mystery Cult) Lore vs. Ease Factor of (9 + Proposed Bonus)**

If experimenting on another Initiate rather than himself, the Ease Factor increases to (15 + desired bonus). If the validity roll fails, the rite fails too, with no Virtues, although Ordeal Flaws are still inflicted.

Third, the storyguide reviews the rite and awards a sympathy bonus (or penalty) according to how well the rite matches the final Virtue. The sympathy bonus becomes part of the Script.

The Mystagogue now generates the Initiation Total (no die roll):

**Presence + (Mystery Cult) Lore + Revised Script Bonus + Risk Modifier**

If this equals or exceeds the Initiation Target Level, the rite has worked, benefits are gained, and a Script can be written down for others to follow, including experimental flaws, benefits, and modifications. (The experimental Risk bonus is not carried over into the Script.)

## Inventing Your Own Cult

Ars Magica players being creative and imaginative sorts, the idea of the characters creating their own Mystery Cult, perhaps tied to a secret of their covenant, is bound to arise. Perhaps the magi have established themselves in the site of an ancient lost covenant, and discovered some old books that reveal much of the odd magics that were practiced there; or perhaps they have discovered a hedge magic tradition that, following much work, and maybe a Hermetic Breakthrough, seems adaptable to Hermetic theory. They now wish to establish their own Mystery Cult, based upon their researches, and Initiate others into appropriate Virtues and Flaws.

The first steps are for the storyguide to create a new (Mystery Cult) Lore for the new cult, and to assign some experi-

ence to the characters based on their work. If the new explorers of the old ruined covenant of Natura Antiqua in the Fens of the Stonehenge Tribunal have found secrets that seem appropriate, then the Ability of Natura Antiqua Cult Lore 0 may be conferred upon them.

Further investigations and seasons of study, as they read moldy ancient books, learn the mystical secrets, and set about devising appropriate rites and magical philosophies to pursue will grant increases in this new Organization Lore, and eventually one of the magi will be ready to experiment and create the cult's first Initiation Script, using the rules for Experimental Scripts and Self-Initiation above. Within a few decades, the Order of Hermes will possess a new Mystery Cult.

Creating a new Mystery Cult should be arduous, intriguing, and the basis for many sessions of exciting play, not least when curious Quaesitors learn of the strange goings on at the covenant. The storyguide can base many stories on the adventures of the magi as they experiment, research, and learn Mystery Virtues from both the curious common magics and the established Mystery Virtues, or any existing Virtue that is deemed appropriate to this new mystical path.

## The Initiated Apprentice And Beyond

If the troupe agrees, an apprentice whose parens is a member of a Mystery Cult may be Initiated while still an apprentice, and gain one (or very rarely more) of the Mystery Virtues of that cult. All starting members of House Cramon, House Merinita, House Verditius, and House Bjornaer have passed through this process, but are not required to follow these rules — it is part of the standard character generation process for Initiates of these Exoteric, or House, Mysteries.

For those who wish to play characters already initiated into an Esoteric

## Experimenting To Discover a New Minor Virtue Script

Lucius of Flambeau has created a new cult, the Seventh Wave, a group dedicated to rediscovering the lost magics of a ruined covenant where he dwells. The first Initiation of the new cult is designed to teach the Virtue Affinity with Art (Aquam). Lucius acts as Mystagogue, and desires but lacks the intended Virtue, so his Target Level is 18. Lacking an Initiation Script, he sets out to devise a new Script that can be used in future rituals of his cult.

Lucius has studied an ancient book on the magics practiced by his predecessors, and has also practiced on his own, devising new chants and rites that he has repeated with his circle of would-be Initiates, and has reached Seventh Wave Lore 9. He is charismatic for a magus, with Presence +2, Intelligence +3.

He performs what he hopes will be a Quest (discovering a lost magical wand in ancient ruins guarded by ghosts, and presenting it to the cult), and travels to the bottom of the deepest river in the Fens to commune with the spirits on the spring equinox (a day he hopes will be auspicious, as the high tide will rush up river and create an odd natural phenomenon called a tidal bore). These will afford a Script bonus of +6 if they work out.

He experiments on himself, adding a Risk Modifier of +1, and the Extraordinary Results chart roll is 6: Side Effect. A 3 on the Side Effect table is a minor flaw — he gains an undesirable Personality Trait related to the cult's activities; for example, he may become over-dedicated, becoming a fanatic who protects the Fens from all threats, and who constantly serves and protects his new cult.

Checking the viability of the proposed rite, Lucius's player rolls a simple die, scoring 9, + Risk Modifier 1 + Intelligence +3 + Lore 9 for a total of 22 vs. an Ease Factor of 9 + 6 = 15, and so it is valid.

The storyguide rules that the Personality Trait brings the Initiate more into line with the cult, and awards a +1 sympathy bonus, making the final Script bonus +7. With Presence +2 + Lore 9 + Script +7 + Risk Modifier +1 vs. Ease Factor 18, he succeeds.

If he had failed, he would have wasted his time and effort, and could count neither the quest nor the putative special place in future attempts.

Succeeding, he gains the desired Virtue, and also writes down his actions and rituals. The next Initiate will benefit from his teaching, with an Initiation Script bonus of +7 (the Risk Modifier will not count for later Initiations). Since next time he will possess the Virtue, Lucius's own Initiate pupils will have a Target Level of 15, not 18.

His apprentice Mystagogue, once Initiated, wishes to teach her own small circle of Initiates, but her (Mystery Cult) Lore is only 6, and her Presence is 0. She tries to vary the Script, adding a second Quest to the rite.

Her player rolls Intelligence +3 and Seventh Wave Lore 6 vs. an Ease Factor of 9 (to add a component). She succeeds if she avoids botching the roll. The apprentice Mystagogue's modified Initiation rite requires more effort of her Initiates, but will work under her tutelage, and she writes down the Script for future Mystagogues to benefit from.

Mystery Cult, membership in the parens's cult is represented by a required Story Flaw **Cabal Legacy**, representing the fact that others suspect the master (and hence the apprentice) of participating in hidden and untoward activities, and therefore do not fully trust them.

Once past Gauntlet and character generation, the purchase of Virtues and Flaws by character points ends — for

most magi their powers grow by study and practice, and they do not normally acquire additional Virtues. Initiation into Mysteries is almost always by story and roleplaying, but (again with troupe permission, or to create an experienced non-player magus), a magus who is being advanced some years beyond apprenticeship may use some of those seasons for Initiations. As this rules out interesting

stories, it is not encouraged for player characters.

Initiation with a Script is designed as a fixed process, much like other experience activities (although it is more complex than others), so that it can be applied as background experience if necessary. More details are provided in the rules for The Mechanics of Initiation, but a summary follows here.

An Initiation Script indicates how many Quests are required, and any Ordeal (Flaw) imposed. The whole process takes one full season per Quest, and one for the Initiation itself. In addition, the Initiation may require sacrifice of items of value to a magus — books, vis or even an invested device or similar — and you must allocate seasons of background experience to making such an item for sacrifice (the time expended is a major part of the cost). You may wish to account for the vis expenditure too. As with background seasons allocated to

Laboratory work (ArM5, page 32), each season of Initiation or Questing means the character loses 10 experience points from

If a detailed Initiation Script is not available, you can create a sketched-out Script using the Initiation Rites rules above. Note the Presence and (Mystery Cult) Lore of the parens, and add sufficient Script components to provide a Script bonus that lets the parens meet the Initiation Target Level. It is usually appropriate for a probationer's first Initiation to include an Ordeal, as this also provides a bonus for subsequent Initiations.

Experimentation to discover new Mystery paths is not really a matter for background experience rules, and player characters should go through a full roleplaying process to achieve this. If you are designing an nonplayer character cult founder, then you should discuss the process and estimate the number of failed attempts, but assume eventual success — else

they would not be founders of the path you are creating!



## Cabal Legacy — Minor Hermetic Story Flaw

This Flaw applies to magi beginning play as Initiates in a Mystery Cult; it is not required of those seeking Initiation later, by story actions, nor is it required for membership in one of the four Mystery Houses. It allows a magus character to be designed with cult Virtues as normal Virtues, part of the standard ten Virtues and Flaws — something not otherwise possible. These Virtues and Flaws are accounted for exactly as normal: in particular, Flaws acquired now do not later count as past Ordeals. Note that if a particular Virtue requires some other

specific Virtue or Flaw, then this is still required during Cabal Legacy character generation.

The magus's master was an initiate of a Mystery cabal and taught him its secrets. As an apprentice, he was marked by the Mystery. Even if he renounces all the occult trappings of the society, most magi associate him with the Mystery, especially the mystae themselves. When a magus with Cabal Legacy speaks, magi often think he speaks for his entire cabal. When he acts, the mystae often assume he's acting as their agent.

From time to time (rarely more than once every few years) he is approached by a senior mystae and commanded to perform a laborious task or undertake a bizarre quest on behalf of the cabal, usually requiring a season's worth of activity. Performing this task well increases his status with the mystae and deepens his perceived connections to them. Refusing or bungling the task earns their wrath.

This Flaw is similar to a Minor version of the Major Story Flaw Favors.



## Chapter Three

# Storyguides & the Mysteries

What duties are involved in membership of a Mystery Cult? What stories do they inspire? This chapter is written primarily with storyguides in mind, but can be browsed by players, who may find much of interest within.

## Responsibilities of Membership

On joining the cult and undergoing Initiation, the magus immediately takes on board certain obligations and duties. Each cult varies in its ideals, aims, and long-term ambitions: whereas The Children of Hermes require primarily the payment of vis dues and the Initiation of more members into the Mystery Cult, the Neo-Mercurian temple may require an arduous journey to the sands of Egypt and participation in a search for a lost shrine, or several seasons' work mapping the magical energies of a stone circle in Loch Leglean. Whatever the Mystery Cult, the magus is expected to participate in furthering the aims of that cult by committing time and effort, which might usually be spent on his own researches. While it is impossible to generalize, participation in a Mystery Cult should generate stories, not just the stories required to earn Initiation, but also other stories driven by the agenda and the need to progress within the cult.

Some cults require annual dues. This is usually not specified in the cult description, and is a matter for storyguide discretion. A single pawn of vis a year is a reasonable symbolic requirement, being used

to pay for cult rituals and fund work on enchanted devices that are then used for the benefit of the whole cult. In vis-rich sagas this amount should be significantly increased. A donation of perhaps seven or more pawns of vis seems appropriate for Initiation into a new degree. Some cults have almost no interest in vis; instead service is rendered in other ways.

Storyguides should balance the cost to the character against the slowing of character progression; these costs should be significant enough to have some effect, but not to make Initiation undesirable or replace the fact that the new Virtues are primarily paid for in stories, not magical or mundane wealth.

Time is another consideration: Commitment to a Mystery Cult will take some of the maga's available time that she could otherwise choose to spend in the lab, and also act as a brake on her progression as compared to her non-Initiated sodales. The exact amount of time required by a Mystery can vary widely: If attendance at a festival or ceremony is necessary, the travel may be only a distraction from the season's laboratory work, but at least occasionally the magus should be asked to spend a season extracting vis, writing a book, teaching a new Initiate, creating an enchanted device, or performing other duties that further the cause of the cult.

It is up to the storyguide to ensure that the price of commitment is felt, but not to render it so time-consuming that the Initiate gains no practical benefit from his membership. Such duties, if freely undertaken on a voluntary basis, should eventually be rewarded with a loan of a book on the mystery of the cult, or a season being taught by the Mystagogue, allowing progression in (Mystery Cult)

Lore. Those who volunteer to spend time on cult business, especially in the tedium of lab work, gain respect and are offered Initiation faster than those who seek power and privilege but do not offer anything but the bare minimum in return. This does not however replace the need to participate in stories.

Overall, the vast majority of the character's involvement with the Mystery Cult should be in the form of participating in actual stories, telling their adventures.

## Mystery Stories

Such stories can have many themes. Along with the requirement to attend Initiations and to participate in testing probationers, many Mysteries have yearly festivals or ceremonies that require attendance — for example, the Neo-Mercurian celebration of Mercuralia — and storyguides should make the first attendance (at least) at each of these events the focus of a story so that a sense of atmosphere, people, and location is built. "Show, don't tell" is good advice here; having the character participate in a rite, smell the incense, feel the strange magics, and hear the chanting makes the Mystery mysterious, and far more evocative. Mystery Cults should feel strange, distinct, and unlike other parts of the life of the magus; there should be a strong contrast between the warmth and familiarity of the covenant, and the strangeness and sense of awe in participating in the rites of the Mystery.

When designing stories, the storyguide should think about how they lead

## Mystery Cults in the *Ars Magica* setting

Although the existence of Mystery Cults is an official part of the setting of *Ars Magica*, the schools outlined in *The Mysteries Revised Edition* mostly exist as hidden traditions within the Order of Hermes. The Mystery Cults depicted in this book are primarily examples, and while they may be referred to in future *Ars Magica* supplements, storyguides should feel free to omit, alter, or change them as required.

It is very unlikely that the entire set of Mystery Cults will be mentioned even fleetingly in a single saga. The apparent absence of others does not mean they do not exist; rather, by their very nature Mystery Cults are secretive and hidden from view. They can, therefore, be introduced into a story at any time as required,

without upsetting the background of the saga — the organization was always present, but only now have the magi become aware of its existence.

Storyguides are positively encouraged to change the details of the cults here to suit their own sagas. A Mystery Cult whose details are freely available to read, is, well, not very mysterious! Changing things prevents players who have read deeply in this book from becoming jaded, and allows the sense of awesome secrets and strange enigmas to pervade this part of the saga, as is proper. It also allows troupes free rein to use their own imaginations and creativity to great effect, making the saga an expression of the ideas and desires of the whole group.

the character deeper into the secrets of the Mystery Cult and how they reflect the ultimate aim of the school.

For example, the Philosophers of Rome ultimately aspire to godhood, yet their hedonistic orgies and libertine excesses may prevent that from being apparent until the interested party has spent much time in the cult, trying to reconcile the reckless pursuit of sensuality with the dry academic researches in early Christian texts that that group carries out. A story may be told in which, in the course of an investigation of a hidden catacomb, a number of books clearly written by a Gnostic philosopher are found; yet shortly thereafter there are inscriptions venerating the same man as a god. In a later story the same being is met in a hidden magical regio, yet by now the young Philosopher has found records showing that the mysterious author/deity was once a member of his own covenant, and indeed worked in the very same lab that today is used by that Initiate.

As each layer of the mystery is peeled away, new secrets present themselves, and new questions requiring answers are uncovered. The player's and character's growing knowledge of the cult naturally creates many story ideas as well. The troupe should craft the Mystery Cult outline into something unique, using it

as a guideline and thinking of secrets and revelations that can be learned in the course of play. Each revelation should change the way that the cult is perceived, and be quite dramatic — and make the Initiate wish to know more. These stories should be linked to the outline of the cult provided in this book, but go beyond it, exploring and defining the role of the cult in the saga, and changing details or even whole sections to better fit what the troupe wishes to do with the cult. Initiation into a mystery is a minor story arc, yet in a well-plotted saga it can link back to the themes and motifs of the main saga arc in surprising ways.

## Character Focus

It is, perhaps, normal in a saga for stories to focus on the covenant's members working together to achieve some shared aim, resolve a conflict, or defeat some threat. Of course some stories focus on individual magi or companions, putting them in the spotlight — typically those that focus upon a Story

or Personality Flaw — but even then the story often results in their fellows from the covenant joining the afflicted character, and seeking to find a solution together. At the very least they are usually aware of the problem their sodalis faces.

As the saga grows, House loyalties crop up, and parentes attempt to embroil filii in their own machinations. Magi develop long-term projects: creating greater invested devices or talismans, or finding and bonding familiars — quests that take them away from the other magi — but the saga adapts, and players find characters within the saga who join the errant magus, so that all the troupe members remain active. Characters acquire debts of favor: magi who have performed a vital service for a young magus (such as creating an enhanced Longevity Ritual) inevitably call in that favor later.

Introducing player characters into the Mystery Cults might seem to shift the balance away from the covenant and troupe play. Certain characters acquire new loyalties outside the covenant, and are oath-bound not to reveal the nature of that secret. Attempts to uncover their secret may be made, including formal challenges to certamen duels, yet still they refuse to divulge their activities. Suspicion can rapidly escalate to paranoia: This should not be pushed into causing a problem for the saga.

The involvement of the character in a Mystery Cult requires some stories that focus on the relationship between the Initiate and the cult, and the adventures



## How to Deal with Mystery Stories

Have the other players play cult-involved companions and grogs. If you can involve these other characters in a Mystery Cult, it gives you opportunities to have an adventure with everyone playing a part. It is quite normal to play adventures with only one magus, although players must be careful to keep separate player knowledge and character knowledge.

**TROUPE PLAY; BETA STORYGUIDES.** A Mystery Cult is a good opportunity for another player to do a bit of storyguiding. You can divide responsibilities and even story time, with one group running a Mystery Cult adventure, and another running a different adventure or performing laboratory activities.

**NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS TAKEN ON BY PLAYERS.** As at Tribunal, you can create powerful story characters that are part of the Mystery Cult, and encourage side-lined players to play them. It heightens the tension of an Initiatory rite when the Initiate is suddenly facing four completely new characters wearing black masks and judging his actions, and it's easier (and more fun) for four players to run four NPCs than for the storyguide to do it all.

**PROACTIVE QUESTS.** When the characters go on an adventure, have them think about what their cult would want them to do. Perhaps they can apply their adventure experience retrospective-

ly to Initiation Quests if they do things with significance to the cult; then seek Initiation and favor within the normal stories they engage in. **Evangelize.** Since cults want members, make Initiating others into the cult an important goal, perhaps even a common Initiatory Quest can be held. If the character can get some or all of the other characters to join, you can run Initiatory rites as a group activity, and all problems vanish; the covenant may become more cohesive than ever. This works particularly well when the covenant members found their own new cult.

**INSTRUCTIONS.** Cults that are close to their members might give characters instructions to follow while on adventures, in lieu of a solo Mystery Quest. This gives the Initiate a particular goal that the rest of the party might not know about. It should, however, never include killing another player character: such betrayal rarely makes for good gaming experiences.

**CATCH UP LATER.** You might tell the player of the Initiated character that the magus went on an adventure for his cult, but leave it aside to play at another time when there are fewer players present. The player gains the Virtues but has no memory of the event until he goes back to play it through.

**BLUE-BOOKING.** The Mystery stories are handled by exchange of e-mail,

Internet chat, phone calls, letters, or stories between the storyguide and the player. It never takes up a session, but events happen, stories unfold, and the plot is advanced through a non-traditional roleplaying medium. The player keeps a book in which he records his character's off-camera stories — but it doesn't have to be blue.

**MAKE IT SECRET.** Since the other characters aren't supposed to know that the character is in a cult, or what goes on at the cult rites, arrange to game privately with the cult member's player for those bits, and pretend that the character is doing something else in-game. While possibly the most elegant solution, it depends on your time available before the next session, and can result in problems if one story is taking a long time, leaving the other characters playing grogs facing mundane threats as they wait for the mystery character to return so the game as a whole can progress at the same narrative rate.

**ABSTRACT IT.** Since it is a seasonal activity, you can do cult Initiation like you do other kinds of study. Everyone announces what they're doing that season, and then you address each character in turn, making the necessary rolls and moving on. Not as much flavor this way, but it gets the job done, although it defeats the purpose of Mystery Cults as a way of driving stories.

arising from this. Some of those adventures — the search for a lost temple, or to slay a dragon, or to uncover a Hermetic criminal in clear breach of the Code — can easily involve all of the magi who wish to participate, the character undertaking the Quest inventing a cover story that explains the necessity to his sodales. Some stories, however, especially Initiation ones, require that magi to act alone — although even then he may have recruited a few loyal grogs and companions who are affiliated with the cult at the most basic level, for many cults prize even unGifted members if they know how to fight or possess useful skills.

While player knowledge is not character knowledge, some troupes will elect to conceal any knowledge of the Mystery Cult's secrets from the players of non-Initiates.

## Progression in a Mystery Cult

The need to spread attention between the players, and to ensure that an equal number of stories concentrate on each

character, is the prime method of determining how quickly magi should progress in a Mystery Cult. In a fast saga, where years pass between stories, it should take a very long period for the magi to achieve a high degree in the Mystery Cult, and by the time they do they should be ready for the awesome power that can be attained. In a slow saga, it may never prove possible to progress far into a mystery, but the figure of three years per Initiation provides a reasonable rule of thumb, whereas in a medium saga seven years could pass between degrees of Initiation. Ultimately, though, progression is measured by stories not years, and the number of stories that is required to attain each Initiation



## Mysterious Knowledge

A wise old magus known to the magi confides in them a secret. A maga named Flora, who has been brought before the Tribunal on a high crime, is almost certain to be found guilty and Marched tomorrow, so strong is the evidence against her. Yet, through the secret art of Divination, taught in a manner he cannot reveal as part of his Initiation into an ancient Mystery, he has learned that she is beyond all doubt innocent. Because he cannot confess his affiliation with the cult that taught him,

and his nonstandard powers will not be counted as evidence, he can do nothing. However divination has provided him with a few seemingly contradictory clues as to the real culprit, who it seems has faked Flora's casting sigil and used high-level spells to block the Intellego magics of the Quaesitors.

Can the player magi find enough evidence before dawn to prevent a miscarriage of justice and bring the real offender to light?

is set by the storyguide and the Initiation Script design.

The number of characters in the game also limits progression; a game with only two players will see more rapid advancement than a game with six. As always, the troupe should set the pace to suit their own tastes. Many of the Mystery Virtues do, however, require extensive commitment to lab work and considerable levels of ability in Arts and Magic Theory, or other Abilities, which may also prove decisive in establishing the pace of Initiation.

## Player Knowledge

The next question facing the troupe is whether to allow everyone access to *The Mysteries* or to allow its secrets only to those within a specific Mystery Cult. Both approaches have their advantages.

In the first, players can and should buy a copy, so that they may make intelligent design choices when creating their characters, and the major mysteries can act as long-term goals to work toward. Perhaps one player loves the hedonistic scholars who comprise the Philosophers of Rome, and wishes to aim at apotheosis into the Hall of Heroes. Another is

excited by the idea of playing a magical archaeologist uncovering lost secrets, and chooses to play a member of the Neo-Mercurians. In such a way all of the troupe participate in deciding which mysteries are involve in the saga, and they may also decide which of the Mystery Cults, if any, become enemies of the covenant, and purchase an appropriate hook at covenant creation.

This is the default option; it is hard to restrict player access to books, although some will cheerfully agree not to read certain parts if it could spoil their enjoyment of the game. Everyone at the every least should have access to Chapter 4: Curious Common Magics, which outlines new Virtues and Flaws that, while rooted in the Mystery Cults, are now fairly common across the Order of Hermes. In a troupe-style game, or if you enjoy allowing players to seek the best potential for their characters through informed design, allowing access to this book is probably the best way; however you will need to make small changes to the Mystery Cult outlines, to ensure they remain mysterious.

With the second option, the storyguide restricts knowledge to those who are involved in a particular Mystery, perhaps allowing only a small part of the Mystery at a time to be revealed and the ultimate aim of the cult to be hidden from low-degree members. In fact, such members may even be fed false myths and untrue information, with the truth being

only slowly revealed. If you play with a single storyguide and he alone tends to buy *Ars Magica* books, then this may be a fun option, but it can be used even if everyone in the troupe has read this book; simply declare chapters 5 through 14 off-limits, and make changes to frustrate players who succumb to the temptation to peek.

## Mystery Cults as Antagonists

Those relatively new to *Ars Magica* games may already be reeling from the wealth of options available to their characters, and may not be ready to embark on the process of Initiation into the Esoteric Mysteries. Most cults prefer to recruit from relatively mature magi, maybe ten to 30 years out of Gauntlet, and some, like the Legion of Mithras, require an exemplary record of service to the Order, or some equivalent degree of proof of worthiness, before they consider a character a potential probationer. (There are, however, also other societies, such as the Children of Hermes and the Volshebnii Mechtateli, who prefer to recruit from the younger magi of the Order.) It is usually wise to allow a player time to familiarize herself with the rules, setting, and Order of Hermes background before encouraging her to design characters who seek Initiation into the Mystery Cults, where the rules and options become even more complex.

Troupes that are not yet ready to embark on Initiation into the Mysteries should however consider another option: Mystery Cults as antagonists. Mystery Cults make superb villains, and unmasking the threat of a Mystery Cult that has designs inimical to the Order as a whole, and the player characters' covenant in particular, can make for a memorable long-term saga arc. Cultists are secretive, have hidden bases to uncover and loot, have plans to disrupt, and have mysterious powers that must be learned and thwarted.

# Curious Common Magics

There are certain arcana known with the Order generally, yet of special interest to certain of the Mystery Cults: the mysteries of the memory palace, how to render spells permanent by evoking powerful magical spirits, and the secrets of Hermetic Alchemy, Planetary Magic, and other curious and potent lore known to magi who study these magical paths. These Virtues are available to all within the Order of Hermes without Initiation, yet only the mystae fully comprehend their significance and potential, and understand the deeper secrets to which they provide a cryptic introduction.

## The Art of Memory

The Art of Memory deals with the creation of memory palaces, a form of mnemonic, in which one visualizes a number of loci, where the scholar commits to memory a symbolic representation of a fact to be remembered.

This was once a Mystery Ability, but even in antiquity had spread beyond Mysteries to be taught among scholars. It has entered common knowledge and can be learned by any scholar, although it remains uncommon and many lack the Ability, even though there is no formal barrier to their learning it.

The Ability may be taught or studied during play as a normal Ability, or acquired during creation by any character with access to Academic Abilities — although the troupe may choose to

review the choice if the Ability is ceasing to be “uncommon.”

### NEW ABILITY: ART OF MEMORY

This is the traditional Art of Memory as practiced by scholars throughout Mythic Europe. To memorize a complex scene, image, or piece of writing (such as a long letter, but not as long as an entire text), the character must succeed at a roll of:

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Art of Memory vs. Ease Factor of 9 (or higher)**

The Ease Factor may be higher depending on the length or complexity of the item to be memorized. If the character succeeds, he remembers the item in exact detail, and may recall it at will although it may take time to explore a locus.

Characters without the Art of Memory may memorize similar items with a stress die + Intelligence roll (with three extra botch dice) against the same Ease Factors, but must also repeat the roll to recall the memory perfectly. Each roll failed introduces errors in the memory, which are repeated each time it is recalled. Those without the Art of Memory also lack the well-defined location system of loci.

### CONSTRUCTING A MEMORY PALACE

It is perhaps helpful to diagrammatically represent your character's memory palace by drawing a floor plan. The tra-

ditional approach is a square villa, with a central courtyard and entrance archway, although magi may choose more unusual designs if they so wish, to reflect their personal interests and background. Rooms lead off this central courtyard, containing five loci each, wherein distinct complex pieces of information can be retained for later access. A scene one witnesses, the details of a conversation, an alchemical formula, the names of all magi present at a tribunal or residing at a covenant, or any other lengthy piece of information less than an entire text may be committed to each locus. The number of rooms in the memory palace is equal to the score in the Ability Art of Memory; for example, a maga with Art of Memory 6 may have access to six rooms and 30 separate distinct memories. Memories stored thus may be deliberately forgotten at will at any time, to make space for new memories.

Each memory thus stored should be marked on the floor plan, and a symbolic representation noted. There are certain magical ways by which intruders may enter a memory palace, so this floor plan and the symbolism may come into play.

### HERMETIC MEMORY SPELLS

Mentem spells have been devised specifically to interact with a memory palace. Since typically only scholars (and not all of them) know how to construct a memory palace, most such spells have been formulated with the caster's own memory palace in mind.

For the following spells to be effective, the target must have already constructed a memory palace.

## Memorization Ease Factors

9 (AVERAGE): Memorize a single-page letter verbatim; a conversation up to five minutes long; a room as seen from a single vantage point; or the layout (but not contents) of a castle.

12 (HARD): Memorize a letter of up to 12 pages; an hour's conversation, lecture, or debate; a room explored and seen from many vantage points; a whole manor house seen from a single vantage point in each room; or the contents (but not details) of a castle.

18 (IMPRESSIVE): Memorize an extended missive up to 100 pages; a day's lecture or debate (such as a day at

Tribunal); a whole manor house in detail; or the contents of a castle in detail.

Anything longer must be broken into sections and memorized as separate loci. If the subject matter is highly technical, add 3 or even 6 to the Ease Factor. If the subject is technical and falls within an Ability that the scholar possesses, the scholar may use that Ability in place of Art of Memory (but must still roll to recall as well as memorize); for example, a lawyer using Civil and Canon Law to memorize court proceedings, or a magus using Magic Theory to recall a Bonisagus expert's lecture.

### ENHANCE THE MEMORY PALACE

CrMe 20

R: Per, D: Moon, T: Ind

This spell magically constructs an extremely detailed locus in the caster's memory palace. The subject of the locus

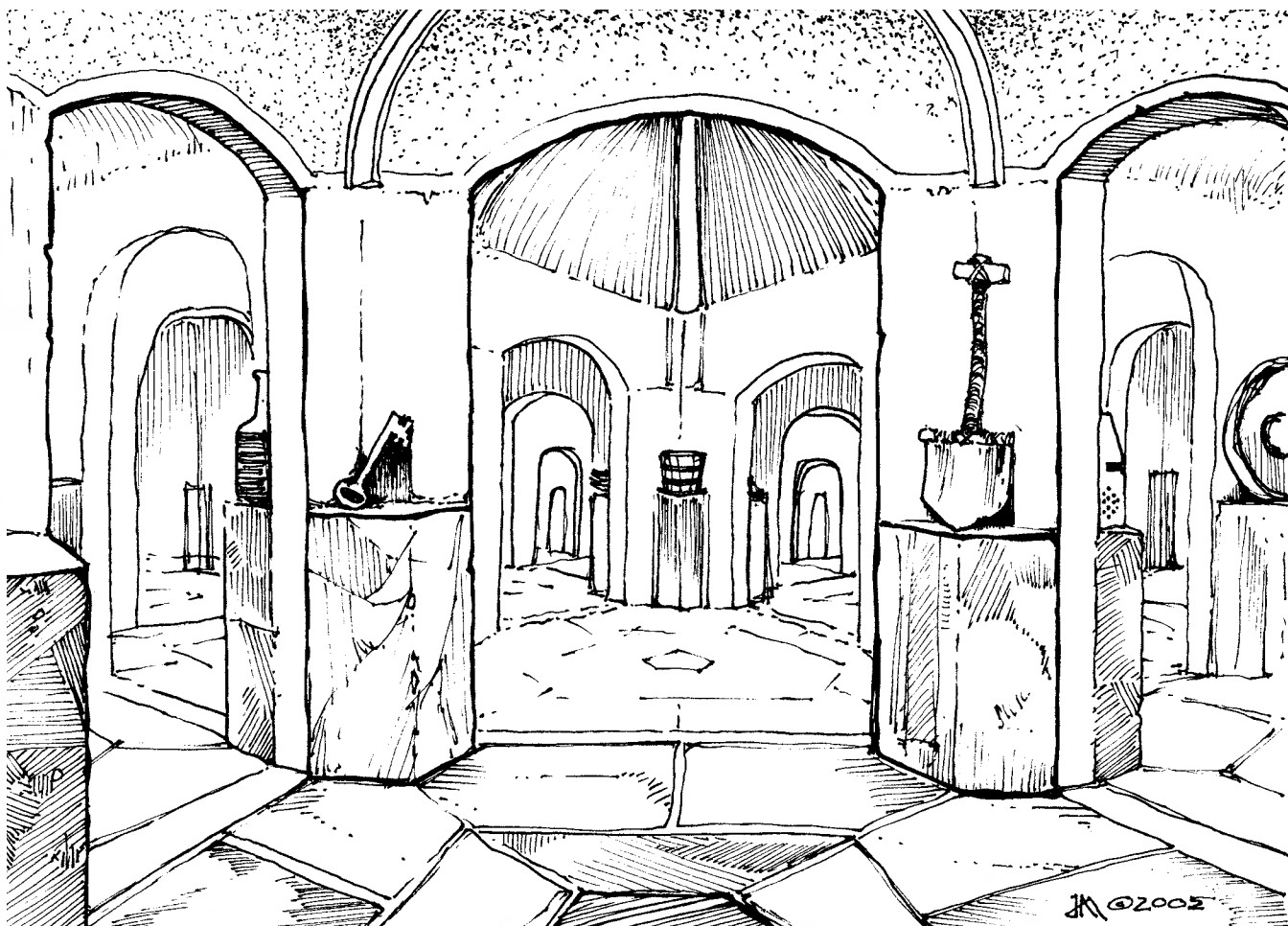
must be observed while the spell is being cast. The subject can be a single object, all the objects in a particular location, a discrete scene or event, or any written material less than a complete text. While the spell lasts, the caster can recall even

obscure details by spending several minutes in reflection, "exploring" the locus. Multiple instances of this spell cannot be cast on the same subject. For example, a magus cannot use *Enhance the Memory Palace* to memorize an entire text by casting the spell on one page at a time. The locus can be destroyed with *Perdo Mentem* magic. When the spell ends, so does the memory.

The magus may permanently memorize the information by spending seven days in meditation and succeeding in a roll of Intelligence + Art of Memory vs. an Ease Factor of 9 (Average). There is also a Ritual version of this spell, which creates a permanent memory locus.

Magically created loci may exceed the limit on loci in memory: count them separately from normal loci. However, if the caster wishes to permanently memorize the locus to last beyond the spell, it must fall within all normal limits.

(base 5, +3 Moon)





#### CONSTRUCTING THE MEMORY PALACE

CrMe 20

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Ritual

The Target of the spell may construct an extremely detailed locus in her memory palace, as in *Enhance the Memory Palace*. As ritual Creo magic, the locus becomes a natural, permanent part of the target's memory, which remains after the spell ends.

This ritual may create loci outside and above the normal limit of five per room, number of rooms limited to Art of Memory score; for example, the locus may stand in a normal room, but obviously distinct from the others, or may have a new room created for it, away from the "courtyard." Count magically-created and normally-memorized rooms and loci separately from each other.

(Base 5, +1 Touch, minimum 20 for Ritual Magic)

#### MEMORY PALACE OF THE SAGE

CrMe 25

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind, Ritual

Creates a locus for the contents of an entire text in the target's memory palace. Once the locus is in place, the magus can recite the entire text and replicate any illustrations. Perdo Mentem magic can destroy this locus. As with *Constructing the Memory Palace*, a magical locus may exceed the normal locus-count limit.

As the spell is cast, the magus magically reads through the book, reading the entire text (no matter the length) in the exact time it takes to cast the spell. The pages seem to rustle by as if caught in the wind. Once memorized, the magus does not require an actual copy of the text to study or transcribe it.

The Library of Durenmar is permanently enchanted to prevent this Ritual from being performed within its walls, although only the Primus of the House knows how this was achieved. Additionally, rumors exist of texts that contain traps against such memorization, even fatal ones, and of the dangers of memorizing a text written by an incomprehensible Criamon or an author close to Final Twilight.

(Base 5, +4 magnitude for complexity)

#### FORTIFICATION OF THE MEMORY PALACE

ReMe Gen

R: Per, D: Moon, T: Ind

Reinforces the target's memory palace against magical attacks or attempts to modify his memories. To affect the protected target's memories, a spell's level must exceed twice the (level of this spell – 15), as well as penetrating any Magic Resistance.

This spell protects the caster's memories for a single Moon; longer durations are possible, but continuous protection brings magical Warping.

(General, +3 Moon)

## New Virtues

Knowledge of the following new Virtues is widespread throughout the Order of Hermes and any of these Virtues may be taken by Initiates of some Mystery Cults or during character creation by magi without Mystery ties. Some, such as Vulgar Alchemy and Planetary Magic, were once Mystery secrets, taught only by certain Mystery Cults. The secrets were betrayed and, despite efforts to suppress the knowledge, the mystae were eventually forced to accept the reality.

It is not necessary to be a member of a Mystery Cult to know these Virtues, and it is possible to select them at character generation as part of your usual allotment of ten Virtues. Characters who are Initiated into an esoteric Mystery Cult in the course of play may well come to gain these Virtues through Initiation, as explained in Chapter 2, in which case they are in addition to the usual allotment of Virtues.

### Spell Binding — Minor Hermetic Virtue

Spell Binding teaches the secret of binding spells into containers, within which a spirit may be confined and compelled to sustain the spell indefinitely. The spirits so commanded are the lesser spirits: elementals and airy spirits. It is possible to

### Sustain a Spell of (Form)

ReVi Gen

R: Touch, D: Special, T: Ind, Ritual

**Req:** Form (or Forms) of the spell to be sustained

Allows another spell to be bound to this and to a physical container. The base level of this container ritual must equal or exceed the spell to be sustained. The container spell duration must maintain the container until casting begins for the spell to be sustained, after which the spells are entwined.

(General, special)

command ghosts, too, but as these usually have names, it is frowned upon by some magi, and is classed under necromancy.

To sustain a spell in this manner, the magus needs three things: the spell to be bound and sustained, a container, and a spirit to provide Might to sustain the spell. The spell to be sustained cannot be a Ritual spell, nor have a duration of Momentary.

The container is an inanimate physical item — if that item should ever break, the magic is broken, the spells end, and the spirit is freed. The magus must transform the container with a general Ritual spell *Sustain a Spell of (Form)*: the base level of the container ritual must equal or exceed the spell to be bound.

Normally the bound spell is cast immediately after the container spell is complete, but extended container spells exist that remain passive until linked to a spell — the passive duration is determined as for a normal spell, adding magnitudes to increase from a Momentary passivity. Once casting of the spell to be contained begins, the two spells become entwined, and both spells last together for the duration of the bound spell — both spells end if either spell ends or fails. Now linked, the bound spell's magical effect and the physical container become Arcane Connections to each other.

*Example:* Sustain A Spell of Fire, ReVi(Ig) Gen, R: Touch, D: Special (Momentary), T: Ind, Ritual — will contain a spell up to its level, cast immediately after the Sustain ritual is cast.

*Example: Delayed Sustenance of Fire, ReVi(Ig) Gen, R: Touch, D: Special (Sun), T: Ind, Ritual — will contain a spell up to (level – 10), if the fire spell is begun before the sunrise or sunset after the Sustenance spell is cast.*

Once a spell is bound but before the bound spell reaches the end of its normal duration, a magus may command a spirit to enter the container, where it is trapped and forced to sustain the contained spell for as long as it remains trapped. Various spells command spirits (see below), and it is also possible to trick a spirit into entering the container without a spell to command it.

## SUITABLE SPIRITS

The spirit must be a disembodied spirit (not, for example, a Beast of Virtue) and must have a Might at least equal to the level of the spell to be sustained. The spirit should have something in common with the spell to be sustained; for example, an elemental can sustain any spell of its element, a ghost any Mentem spell. If a spirit has a supernatural power or leaves raw vis in defeat, the Form of that may provide the desired link.

In addition, the realm of the spirit must match the magus's magic: for most magi this requires a spirit of the Magic realm, although magi with Faerie Magic can use Faerie spirits. Those who succumb to the foul cause of diabolism may bind Infernal spirits; whether magi who have Divine links would have the temerity to bind a Divine spirit is not known.

## SPIRIT, SPELL AND CONTAINER COMBINED

While trapped, a spirit is limited in what it can do. It cannot use its Might for any purpose other than sustaining the spell or resisting other spells cast at it. It cannot leave the container. Many spirits can perceive the world around them, and may be able to converse with passers-by and attempt to bargain for their freedom. The spirit is trapped within the container item, but may be able to perceive the world around the spell effect through the Arcane Connection linking container and

spell. Some spirits may manifest minor effects (similar to a magus's sigil) in the bound spell; for example, a fire elemental sustaining a flame spell may appear within the magical flames.

If the physical container is broken, the spells end; if the spells end, the spirit is freed. If the spirit's Might falls below the level of the spell, the sustained spell fails (unless its initial duration has not yet ended), and the container fail with it (releasing the spirit).



A spirit may be magically commanded to leave the prison. Such a spell must have a level that exceeds the level of the container spell that binds both the spell and spirit, and must be able to command the spirit as if it were free, but need not exceed the spirit's Magic Resistance (because the spirit chooses not to resist such a command), although it must overcome other magics that have been used to ward or protect container.

*Example: Constantine has prepared a stone as a container with a level 25 Delayed Sustenance of Fire, casting the ritual before leaving his tower. Later that day he casts Sunlight Without Flame (an enhanced, level 15 variant of Lamp Without Flame) in a faerie cave. While concentrating on the Sunlight spell, he commands a small (Might 15) fire elemental (already commanded to follow him) to enter the container and sustain the spells.*

*His rival Mari Amwithig comes across the scene some days later, and wishes to restore darkness for the faeries. Observing an elemental presence flickering within the light, she contemplates commanding the spirit to leave: a Rego Ignem 20 will coerce a fiery spirit, but here a level 25 spell is needed to overcome the binding magic. This is*

*too hard for her: as a Perdo specialist, she is better off draining the spirit's Might or using the Arcane Connection to locate and destroy the container.*

Finally, if the sustained spell has a duration of Concentration, then the spirit must concentrate on the spell — if it is distracted from this purpose and its concentration lapses, then the spell contained lapses too. Needless to say, most spirits are not inclined to tax themselves unduly to maintain concentration, and such spells are to be avoided where possible.

## NEW SUMMON AND COMMAND SPELLS

Mentem spells (using the Rego Mentem guidelines, ArM5, page 151) can command any spirit with an Intelligence score; Animal spells likewise command beast spirits with Cunning. Some spirits, such as some elementals, lack both Intelligence and Cunning, and cannot be commanded with Mentem or Animal, but only by their own Form.

The following new guidelines and spells are standard Hermetic magic, and require no special Virtue, but are useful to magi working spell binding.

### REGO (FORM)

Spells of a specific Form can command any spirit tied to that Form: for example, Ignem can command any fiery spirit. Vim spells using these guidelines can command spirits aligned with one of the four realms; Divine, Faerie, Infernal, or Magic. The Form of the spirit is irrelevant.

**Level 5:** Control a disembodied spirit of (Form)

**Level 15:** Summon a disembodied spirit of (Form)

For example, the following two spells affect spirits of fire using the Form of Ignem. There are similar spells for other Forms.

### COERCE THE SPIRIT OF FIRE

Relg 20

R: Voice, D: Conc, T: Ind

Makes a fiery spirit obey the caster as long as she can coerce it with threats. The

more lurid and dramatic her threats, the more cooperative the spirit is. If the spell penetrates the spirit's Magic Resistance, make a stress roll of Com + Leadership to see how effective the maga's threats are. The storyguide should always give a bonus or penalty depending on the potency of the threats, but note that any roll other than a botch compels at least minimal obedience, while increasing rolls indicate a more cooperative spirit.

(Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Conc)

#### SUMMONING THE SPIRIT OF FIRE

Relg 40

R: Arcane, D: Conc, T: Ind

Calls a fiery spirit if the magus has an Arcane Connection or knows its full name, and overcomes the spirit's Magic Resistance. (The name can be a non-magical name; it need not be a magical true name or name of power). A fire serves as an Arcane Connection to any elemental fire spirit that resides in the area.

(Base 15, +4 Arcane, +1 Conc)

## Performance Magic — Minor Hermetic Virtue

In Mythic Europe, many Hermetic magi have learned how to disguise their magical practices by incorporating them fully into a mundane task or action at which they excel. This Virtue lets the magus conceal spellcasting by using the actions and/or words of some Ability to replace the normal Hermetic gestures and words, and lets him maintain a spell without needing Concentration rolls.

### DESCRIPTION

When the Virtue is acquired, specify the Ability to which it applies. You may choose any Craft, Profession, or other Ability with a clear verbal or physical practice. You may not choose any Language, Supernatural, Academic, or Arcane Ability.

There are distinct Virtues for each possible Ability, as each allows different methods to work its actions into magic: knowing one method of Performance

## Performance Abilities

Of the Abilities listed on ArM5, page 63, the following qualify for Performance Magic (although not all are particularly effective, and some may be hard to use effectively):

**PHYSICAL:** Athletics, Brawl, Chirurgery, Hunt, Legerdemain, Ride, Stealth, Swim, Bows, Great Weapon, Single Weapon, Thrown Weapon

**VERBAL:** Bargain, Charm, Guile, Intrigue, Leadership, Teaching

**VERBAL AND PHYSICAL:** Animal Handling, Carouse, Music

**VARIABLE:** Craft (Type), Profession (Type)

While Brawl and Martial Abilities may be used in Performance Magic, the magus needs to perform semi-ritualistic movements to cast spells, responding to the needs of the spell, not to the actions of an opponent. If the magus is in combat, then he may only use Performance Magic (Brawl or Martial Abilities) if the player rolls a stress die with three extra botch dice, and treats all non-botches as die rolls of zero. (This represents ignoring the opponent and casting the spell.)

## Sorcerous Music (Performance Magic)

Performance Magic (Music) is often known as *Sorcerous Music*.

Music is unusual among Performance Magic Abilities — perhaps because instrumental music is similar to the human voice — in that playing a tune on an instrument can freely replace either or both of gesture and words. The magus needs to play an instrument in order to replace gestures, but has a free choice as to whether he sings or plays a tune to replace mystical words. Indeed, wind instruments require that he play a tune to replace

words, as he cannot sing while playing a whistle!

Sorcerous Music can be performed as singing-only and not replace gestures (with normal spellcasting penalties and benefits of *Subtle Magic*), or can be performed without singing (if the magus plays an instrumental tune), but cannot be performed silently.

When using Voice Range with Sorcerous Music, the spell carries as far as the music (song or instrument) could be heard. For some loud instruments, this may be a long way.

Magic does not let the magus use any other Ability in magic.

It is the action or words of the practice that are the focus of this Virtue, not the products of craft-working. An Ability that is *verbal* (such as story-telling) replaces the words of spellcasting; similarly, an Ability that is *physical* (such as hunting) replaces gestures. An Ability that encompasses both verbal and physical aspects (such as music, or mumming (acting)) allows the performer more flexibility.

The magus must actually perform the Ability to count as using this Virtue, and other Virtues or Mastery Abilities do not remove that requirement. For example, he cannot sing silently, although he can hunt silently.

Words or gestures that are not being replaced by Performance Magic remain as normal mystical components of spellcasting: use the normal ArM5 rules and adjustments (including Virtues such as Quiet Magic and Mastery Abilities such as Still Casting).

*Example:* Orlando is a musician and magus, and knows Sorcerous Music and Subtle Magic. He may cast spells while he sings (with no penalty for no gestures), plays his lute, or sings and plays. If he sings or plays quietly, he suffers the normal -5 penalty. He can cast spells silently, but only by not using Sorcerous Music.

His friend Furioso, another Sorcerous Musician, lacks Subtle Magic. If he has no instrument with him, then, unlike Orlando, he must use normal Hermetic gestures or suffer the penalty for no gestures.



## Recognizing Performance Magic

Most people do not recognize performing an Ability as spellcasting, so the performer may act more openly than most magi; even other Hermetic magi do not automatically recognize his actions:

If a Hermetic magus contemplates Fast Casting to oppose a spell and the caster is using Hermetic words and gestures, a magus may determine the Form automatically (ArM5, page 83). In other circumstances, the magus must work the Form out.

**Determining the Form of a Magical Effect: Stress Die + Perception + Awareness vs. 15 – effect magnitude**

If the spell is being cast with mundane words or gestures, the Ease Factor is adjusted as follows:

- 3 if Hermetic words are spoken (and can be heard)
- +0 if Hermetic gestures are made (and seen)
- +3 if both words and gestures are mundane

The magus may choose to vocalize loudly, or move exaggeratedly, and gain the equivalent bonuses as for loud words or exaggerated gestures. Bystanders may notice this as unusual activity, and take interest where they might not otherwise.

### NEW DURATION FOR PERFORMANCE MAGIC

**New Duration: Performance.** The spell lasts as long as the caster performs the Performance Ability. Performance is equivalent to Concentration Duration.

To cast a Performance Duration spell, the magus must succeed in a roll (simple or stress die, according to circumstances) of Characteristic (varies with Ability) + Ability against an Ease Factor of 3.

The spell fails if this fails, and botches if the roll botches. The spell ends when the magus ceases to perform the Ability,

but no Concentration or Ability rolls are needed to maintain the spell while the performance continues.

Formulaic spells must be devised with the new Duration to use this Ability; if so designed, the spell cannot be cast without performing.

*Example: Harold knows Performance Magic (Hunt), and casts Hunter's Tracks of the Faerie Glow (a variant of Tracks of the Faerie Glow), and succeeds with his simple Hunt roll. His magically enhanced vision persists as long as he keeps up the hunt, even if he is distracted by chatter or other spellcasting.*

*Example: Orlando sings while he casts a Sung Lamp Without Flame. The light continues while he continues to sing, however badly, but ends when he stops singing. Needing to convey urgent instructions to a recalcitrant grog, he uses an enchanted device with Maintaining the Demanding Spell to maintain the spell while he stops to shout at the grog, before the Maintaining effect ends he resumes his sung performance.*

## Planetary Magic — Minor Hermetic Virtue

Hermetic magi have developed their own understanding of the subtle astral influences of the stars. Using Planetary Magic it is possible to select an appropriate governing planet for most effects instilled in enchanted devices. The magus should select the most appropriate planet for the nature of the enchantment, and invoke its influence when casting.

This Virtue is commonly taught to apprentices wishing to work the subtle influence of the stars into their magics. It is also available by Initiation in certain Mystery Cults, but has long since passed into general knowledge throughout the Order, and may be taken without any need for Initiation during character generation.

**Description:** Allows a bonus to Lab Totals to create an enchanted device (and only to create an enchanted device), by calculating the best hours and periods to work, modifying incantations, and instilling astral influences from the planets to gain the greatest possible effect.

The instilled effect must fall within the area of influence of one of the

planets, which are described in Chapter 6: Hermetic Astrology, Appendix — Astrological Correspondences. Only one planet, and thus one bonus, may be invoked for any given season of work on an enchantment.

The magus must then create a **Laboratory Horoscope** for this season's work to maximize benign influences of the chosen planet, by working at the correct times, and minimize unfavorable aspects by avoiding certain associations or hours.

Decide in advance on an Astrological Modifier to the Lab Total, from +1 to +5. To gain this bonus, you must succeed in a roll of:

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) vs. Three Times the Desired Bonus**

If successful, add the Astrological Modifier to the Lab Total. If the roll fails, there is no effect other than losing the bonus; it is not possible to reroll this season. On a roll of zero, roll a number of botch dice equal to the desired bonus. If any botch results, the entire season is wasted, and any vis expended in the project is lost.

*Example: Astra has Intelligence 3 and an Artes Liberales (Astronomy) score of 6. She intends to create a device with an Aura of Rightful Authority effect. This is a kind of rulership and is governed by the sun, one of the astrological planets (see Astrological Correspondences in Chapter 6). She would like a boost for her laboratory work, and tries to create a Laboratory Horoscope for the work. She decides that she would like an Astrological Modifier of +4, so the Ease Factor for her proposed Horoscope is 12. Her player rolls, and gets a 2, and fails. Astra curses, as she needed those 4 points.*

### DISTRACTIONS FROM PLANETARY MAGIC

If a maga commits her lab work to astrologically favorable hours and then loses time from the laboratory, and attempts to catch up by working harder for the rest of the season (ArM5, page

103), she is forced to include work at unfavorable hours as well as favorable hours. Because of this, she loses the benefit of the Astrological Modifier if she is ever forced to miss a whole day away from the laboratory. Other than this, distractions are as stated on ArM5, page 103.

## LAB TEXTS AND PLANETARY MAGIC

If the magus writes up his lab notes as a Lab Text, he produces a normal Lab Text usable by any magus without special benefits or restrictions. To gain an Astrological Modifier in a subsequent season using the Lab Text, a magus (even the original magus) must create a new Laboratory Horoscope using Planetary Magic.

## Potent Magic — Minor or Major Hermetic Virtue

The maga's magic can be particularly attuned to a narrow field, much as in a Magical Focus. The benefits of Potent Magic are compatible with a Magical Focus; unlike a Magical Focus, a magus may have more than one area of Potent Magic, although only one Potent Magic Virtue applies to any single activity.

Potent Magic provides the maga with a bonus in her field of magic, and permits her to devise Potent spells that gain a casting bonus from the sympathetic magic in shapes and materials.

Potent Magic can be taught as an alternative to a Magical Focus. Although this is a Mystery Virtue, it is common for parentes to teach this to their filii, without deeper involvement in Mysteries, and therefore it is classified among the common magics.

### DESCRIPTION

Minor Potent Magic covers the same narrow fields as a Minor Magical Focus, and grants a +3 bonus to Lab Totals and Casting Score.

Major Potent Magic covers the same wide fields as a Major Magical Focus, and grants a +6 bonus to Lab Totals and Casting Score.

A maga with Potent Magic may also invent new Potent spells (see below) within the field of her Potent Magic, and may vary spells she knows. See Potent Magic and Potent Spells.

### POTENT SPELLS

A Potent spell has a bonus known as its Potency, which is arrived at by combining one or more Casting Items into the design of the spell. Casting Items use the factors given in the Shape and Material Bonus table (ArM, page 110): each Casting Item provides one bonus. (If more than one bonus is possible, the spell design states which one is used.)

**Potency Score = Sum of Bonus from each Casting Item**

**Potency Bonus: Add Potency to Casting Score**

Potency is part of the spell design; a Lab Text for a Potent spell includes the specified Casting Items and Potency Score. A magus teaching a Potent spell teaches the formula he knows, including the Casting Items and Potency Score. The level, for the purposes of inventing it as well as for casting, of a Potent spell is unaltered by the Potency Score. However, a magus may not invent a Potent spell with a Potency higher than his Magic Theory score, even with the aid of a Lab Text or teacher.

Any magus can learn a Potent spell from a Lab Text or teacher, and apply Potency to his Casting Score; the Potent Magic Virtue is required to design a Potent spell from scratch, but not to reproduce one from a Lab Text.

To cast a Potent spell, the caster must touch the specified Casting Items. The items need not be large; they may be small and symbolic (for example, a shield-shaped brooch is still symbolically a shield). If the caster does not have the Casting Items available, the spell cannot be cast at all.

## Initiation into Major Potent Magic

Major Potent Magic may be (and normally is) Initiated as a progression from a Minor Potent Magic with a narrower span, in which case the Initiation requires and replaces Minor Potent Magic. This makes loss of the Minor Potent Magic an Ordeal, and so the Initiation is easier than otherwise.

*Example: A wand provides several bonuses including +2 "repel things" and +4 "control things at a distance." A Potent version of Disguise of the Putrid Aroma could use either bonus in its Potency. Combining it with magnetite (+3 Animal) allows a design with either Potency 5 (requires Magic Theory 5) or Potency 7 (requires Magic Theory 7). The caster must hold a wand and piece of magnetite (or a wand set with magnetite) to add the Potency to his Casting Score.*

Potency applies only to Formulaic spells — Spontaneous Magic allows Ceremonial Casting to produce similar results, and enchanted devices use Shape and Material Bonuses during enchantment.

### POTENT MAGIC AND POTENT SPELLS

A magus with Potent Magic may create new Potent spells or alter Potent spells to vary the Casting Items.

When inventing a spell within the field of his Potent Magic (including from a Lab Text), the magus simply chooses Casting Items for the design, and then invents the spell as normal. Each chosen Casting Item (up to the limit of Magic Theory) adds a single Shape or Material Bonus to Potency; if more than one bonus might apply to the spell, choose one and note it in the design. The total Potency may not exceed the magus's Magic Theory.

A Lab Text written for this spell includes the Casting Items and Potency, and is usable by any other magus.

In addition, a magus who knows a spell within the field of his Potent Magic may invent a variant spell with different Casting Items (including a variant with no

Casting Items). If the only difference is a change in Casting Items, he may invent the variant in a single season.

## DESIGNING COVENANT LIBRARIES

When creating a covenant and choosing Lab Texts for the library, add Potency (if any) to spell level when counting Build Points, and record the Casting Items required.

## GRIMOIRE OF POTENT SPELLS

A number of familiar spells, modified by magi with Potent Magic who have contributed their own Lab Texts, are included in this volume. Variants of the spells obtained from other magi may have different Potency, or different Casting Items.

A magus cannot learn a Potent spell if its Potency exceeds his Magic Theory, so some of these spells are powerful but very difficult to learn.

*Shiver of the Lycanthrope*, InAn 10, Potency 8, Casting Items: silver-chased (+5) hazel (+3) wand.

*Beast of Outlandish Size*, MuAn 15, Potency 6, Casting Items: magnetite (+3) carved into the shape of Behemoth (+3).

*Cripple the Howling Wolf*, PeAn 25, Potency 7, Casting Items: wolf bone (+4) set with a piece of magnetite (+3).

*Mastering the Unruly Beast*, ReAn 25, Potency 7, Casting Items: carved wand (+4) set with magnetite (+3).

*Mighty Torrent of Water*, CrAq 20, Potency 7, Casting Items: a piece of carved jade (+4) inset with aquamarine (+3).

*Enchantment of the Scrying Pool*, InAq 30, Potency 7, Casting Items: a piece of jade (+4) inset with beryl (+3).

*Curse of the Desert*, PeAq 25, Potency 8, Casting Items: a jade-inlaid (+4) wand (+4).

*Stench of Twenty Corpses*, CrAu 10, Potency 6, Casting Items: a piece of green turquoise (+4) and a pin feather (+2).

*Talons of the Wind*, MuAu 20, Potency 8, Casting Items: a fan (+4) constructed from the fabric of a ship's sail (+4).

*Cheating the Reaper*, CrCo 30, Potency 8, Casting Items: a disc inlaid with Jasper (+2), amber (+3), and a sapphire (+3).

*Whispers Through The Black Gate*, InCo 15, Potency 9, Casting Items: green turquoise (+4) and a star ruby (+5).

*Curse of Circe*, MuCo(An) 30, Potency 7, Casting Items: a piece of pig skin (+7).

*Grip of the Choking Hand*, PeCo 25, Potency 10, Casting Items: a wand (+4) of human bone (+4), bound with cord (+2).

*Rise of the Feathery Body*, ReCo 10, Potency 8, Casting Items: a glove (+4) with a magnet (+4) sewn into the fabric.

*Ward Against Faeries of the Wood*, ReHe 25 (gen.), Potency 9, Casting Items: an iron (+7) horseshoe (+2).

*Pilum of Fire*, Crlg 20, Potency 11, Casting Items: a miniature lamp (+4), a miniature hearth (+7), and a wand (+3). The magus must hold or touch all three items to cast the spell.

*Trapping the Fire*, Mulg 25, Potency 9, Casting Items: a piece of fired clay (+4) bound in a net (+5).

*Wizard's Icy Grip*, Pelg 30, Potency 7, Casting Items: a wand (+4) with a rock crystal sphere (+3).

*Haunt of the Living Ghost*, Crlm(In) 35, Potency 8, Casting Items: a rock crystal sphere (+5) set on a hazel wand (+3).

*Summoning the Distant Image*, InIm 25, Potency 8, Casting Items: a rock crystal sphere (+5) set on a hazel wand (+3).

*The Captive Voice*, Relm 25, Potency 7, Casting Items: a mask (+3) and a necklace (+4). The spell suggests the magus wears the mask, but it is sufficient to have a small token mask on his person so long as he touches it while casting the spell.

*Weight of a Thousand Hells*, CrMe 25, Potency 9, Casting Items: a dagger (+3) with amethyst (+3) and frankincense (+3) inset in the hilt.

*Posing the Silent Question*, InMe 20, Potency 5, Casting Items: a silver-chased (+2) hazel (+3) wand.

*Vision of the Haunting Spirits*, MuMe(Im) 40, Potency 8, Casting Items: green turquoise (+4) and cinnamon (+4).

*Confusion of the Numbed Will*, ReMe 15, Potency 7, Casting Items: a magnet (+2) carved in the shape of a miniature human skull (+5).

*The Crystal Dart*, MuTe(Re) 10, Potency 6, Casting Items: a dagger (+2) and a spade (+4).

*Ward Against Faeries of the Mountain*, ReTe 15, Potency 9, Casting Items: an iron (+7) horseshoe (+2).

*The Enigma's Gift*, CrVi 30, Potency 4, Casting Items: parchment inscribed with Ink of Hermes (+4).

*Sight of the Active Magics*, InVi 40, Potency 6, Casting Items: a hazel (+3) wand stained with Ink of Hermes (+3).

*Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, PeVi 30 (gen.), Potency 12, Casting Items: red coral (+10) and frankincense (+3).

The authors of these spells often prescribe the components as "a wand inlaid with jade" or some such. This is convenient, but might require a great many wands. Fortunately, while their prescription is inclusive (the wand must have jade in order to work with the spell), it is not exclusive; a hazel wand, with a handle of wolf bone, inset with silver, magnetite, and aquamarine, would count as the Casting Items for all of *Shiver of the Lycanthrope*, *Cripple the Howling Wolf*, *Mastering the Unruly Beast*, *Enchantment of the Scrying Pool*, and *Curse of the Desert*. Obviously magi favoring Potent spells tend to construct elaborate wands with multiple strips of inlay, and mounted with precious and semi-precious stones.

Large items such as "a spade" may use a real spade, a miniature spade, or even a toy, so long as it is properly spade-shaped.

## Vulgar Alchemy— Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

Vulgar Alchemy is said to derive from hedge alchemy, the brewing of potions and charms. With Vulgar Alchemy, a maga can discover new associations between common ingredients and magical enchantments. The incorporation of folk-

magic associations into Hermetic magic has brought benefits to laboratory work for all magi. As a pre-Hermetic tradition, it involves Magic Lore in addition to Magic Theory.

By experimenting with new shapes and materials, a maga may create enchanted devices in other than standard forms. Verditius magi have a similar (more powerful) ability, when they use Verditius Runes to add their Philosophiae to standard Shape and Material Bonuses. (Vulgar Alchemy experimentation is not compatible with Verditius Runes.)

When a maga experiments (using the ArM5 Arcane Experiments rules, page 107), she may use the Experimentation Bonus (simple die + Risk Modifier) to discover new Material Bonuses. Because she is experimenting, and prepared to change (and risk!) the device, she can make changes not otherwise possible. As she experiments, she adds or removes minor components such as herbs, crystals, slivers of wood, feathers or fur, she hopes might provide a sympathetic bonus to the enchantment; if she is making a set of charged devices, she can also experiment with their shape, and discover new Shape Bonuses.

Vulgar Alchemy is not usable on invested devices, as these must be fully crafted and magically opened before the enchantment season begins, whereas Vulgar Alchemy relies on tweaking the design as the maga invests an effect. However, the process works well with charged devices and lesser enchanted devices.

Personal Shape and Material Bonuses determined from previous experiments may be used in any of the maga's own enchantments, including invested devices.

## THE EXPERIMENT

Begin a season of enchantment with a selection of materials (and possibly shapes) gathered in the laboratory. The magus may choose any number of components up to the limit of his Magic Theory score (since some components may be rejected, it is best to include as many as possible). Do not use the normal Shape

## New Shape and Material Bonuses

These shapes and materials are based on the discoveries of alchemists, but can be used by any magus. They are particularly useful in Potent spells and Hermetic Alchemy.

Aloe	+3 friendship
Amethyst	+3 dreams, +4 temperance
Astrolabe	+5 Astrology
Carving of Behemoth	+3 great size
Cinnamon	+4 Imaginem, +2 destroying ghosts
Cinquefoil	+4 resist poison, +3 drive away demons, +2 making amends
Copper	+3 bloodshed, +2 passion
Emerald	+2 calm
Frankincense	+3 Perdo Vim, +3 dreams
Garnet	+4 repel insects, +2 strengthen body and mind
Gold	+4 nobility, +4 peace, +2 health
Ink of Hermes	+3 Vim, +5 books
Iron	+3 bonds
Lead	+3 hatred
Lion's Blood	+4 protection from wild beasts, +3 courage, +2 leadership
Magnet	+4 Rego Corpus, +4 Rego Terram, +2 Rego
Mercury	+3 arts and sciences
Myrrh	+3 spirits
Opal	+4 memory, +2 imagination
Pepper	+2 Perdo
Peridot	+3 protection against nightmares
Red gold	+4 war, +1 Perdo
Rock crystal	+3 ice, +4 clarity
Ruby	+3 battle wounds, +2 courage
Saffron	+4 physical strength
Sapphire	+3 reducing anger, +2 Perdo Vim against spirits
Silver	+5 lycanthropes in general, +2 Intellego, +1 Terram
Sulfur	+3 binding tongues, +2 sowing discord
Tin	+3 weakness, +1 law
Yellow sandalwood	+3 binding people

and Material Bonuses table for this process, other than to verify that the bonuses he seeks are compatible with the existing

correspondences of the item. (Check with the storyguide or troupe on this.)



## Repeated Experiments to Determine a Category

The broader the category, and the higher the proposed bonus, the more the magus must experiment to confirm that the material is sufficient. The number of successful tests on a component varies, but the following formula is suggested:

**3 x proposed bonus score, plus a scope factor:**

- +3 if the scope is similar to the field of a Minor Magical Focus (or narrower)
- +9 if the scope is similar to the field of a Major Magical Focus
- +9 if the scope is a single Technique + Form combination
- +12 if the scope is a single Hermetic Form
- +15 if the scope is a single Hermetic Technique

Wider scopes are not possible.

Complete the enchantment, and determine the experimentation rolls. If he avoids disaster, note the Experimentation Bonus (as in ArM5, page 107):

**Experimentation Bonus = Simple Die roll + Risk Modifier**

## TESTING THE COMPONENTS

Now the magus must determine which experimental elements worked to help the enchantment, and which failed. (Record all the results for future reference.) This is done by dividing up the Experimentation Bonus between the components. If he included any materials or shapes with a known bonus that apply to the enchantment, it is assumed they automatically succeed and use up their points from the experimentation pool before any others are tested; this may leave no points to allocate.

For items without known bonuses, for each Casting Item in turn, decide on

## Ink of Hermes

This ink (also called "Hermaic Ink") is mentioned in many alchemical texts. The ingredients are four drams of myrrh, three karian figs, seven pits of Nikolaus dates, seven dried pine cones, seven piths of single-stemmed wormwood, seven wings of the Hermaic ibis, and spring water. The ingredients are burned, reduced, and mixed. When properly prepared, the ink provides powerful Material Bonuses, listed on the New Shape and Material Bonuses table.

a bonus score you think it may have contributed, and roll against Perception and Magic Lore. If the storyguide agrees the bonus seems *particularly* appropriate, he can reduce the Ease Factor by a story factor of up to +5 (typically +1 to +3), but if it's inappropriate, he can increase the Ease Factor by a like amount.

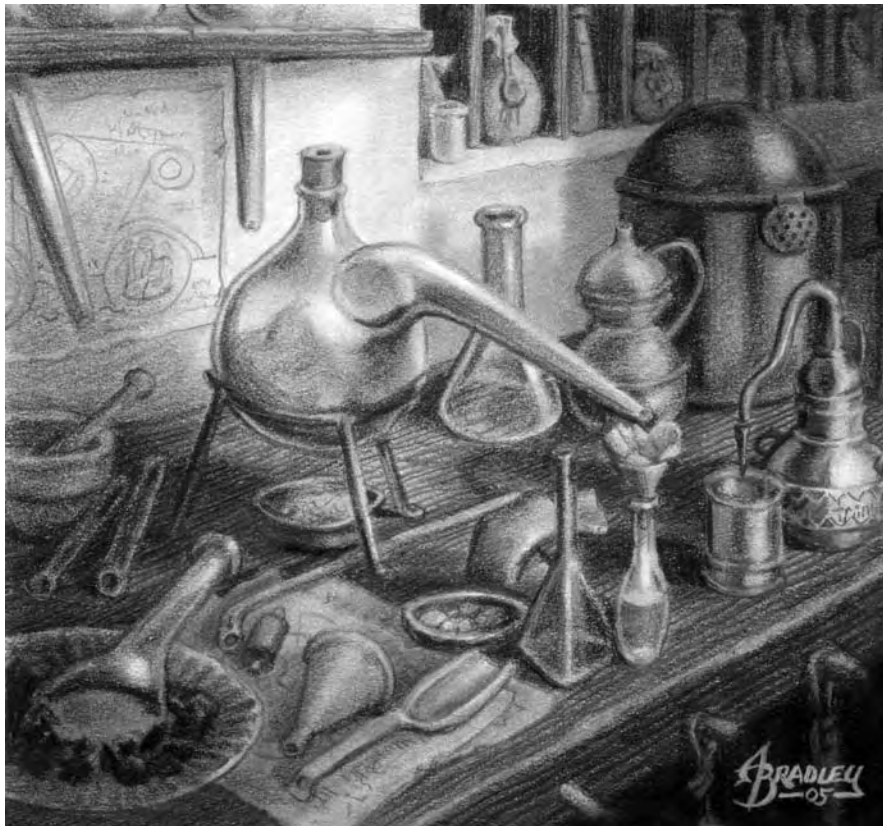
**Simple Die + Perception + Magic Lore vs. an Ease Factor of 3 + (3 x proposed Material or Shape Bonus) +/- story factor**

If this roll is a success, the magus has correctly determined a Material or Shape Bonus for this component, and can record this for future use. For example, if you think "fur from the tip of a fox's tail" might have contributed a Material Bonus of +4 in this experiment, then the Ease Factor is  $(3 + [3 \times 4])$  or 15, minus the storyguide's story factor. The discovered component will also have added its bonus to this enchantment.

Work through all the components, until you have used all points from the Experimentation Bonus, or you have tested each material or shape once. If you run out of points before all components are tested, the remaining components are ignored. If you have points remaining after all components have been tested once, those excess points are lost.

## FINAL RESULT

When the testing of shape and material components is finished, you may return to the Lab Total calculation. The magus's Vulgar Alchemy Lab Total for this experiment is:



Intelligence + Magic Theory +  
Technique + Form + Aura + Magic  
Lore + Experimentation Bonus +  
Successful Component Bonuses

As always, the total of Shape and Material Bonuses is limited by the magus's Magic Theory. The final Lab Total determines the success or failure of the project, and how many charges are invested in a charged device.

Once the magus has determined and recorded the Vulgar Alchemy Lab Total, others can reproduce the item from the Lab Text, but will not benefit from the special Shape and Material Bonuses. The Lab Text does state which items worked, and allows the magus to omit the failed items in future repeats. Furthermore he need not experiment again to repeat the enchantment, and may include other known components. If he repeats without experimentation, the Lab Total is:

Intelligence + Magic Theory +  
Technique + Form + Aura + Magic  
Lore + Component Bonuses

If the magus writes out a Lab Text for others, they must follow his design as to ingredients, but they cannot use his personal bonuses.

## THE BONUSES

Initially, the bonuses are personal to a maga's own magic and to a specific enchantment effect. She can apply discovered bonuses to enchantments (including invested devices) that satisfy the similar spells relationship to the original effect, and they can be applied without further experimentation. Magi sometimes experiment at making charged devices in order to determine Shape and Material Bonuses they can use for planned invested devices.

A new Casting Item may be refined into wider categories (such as those in the Shape and Material Bonuses table) by performing more experiments using the same materials. Once the maga has an item with a consistent bonus and several applications, and all the applications are compatible (subject to storyguide or

## Example of Vulgar Alchemy

Julius has Magic Theory 6, Perception +1, Magic Lore 5. He plans to make powder (a charged device) to cast a concealing illusion over items.

He included the maximum six items (fur from the tip of a fox's tail, foxglove petals, mint leaves, dock leaves, rose petals, rose hips) in the experiment. Julius claims that foxes are masters of trickery, and their fur is particularly appropriate — the storyguide agrees.

He chooses a Risk Modifier of 2, and his player rolls 6, so the Experimentation Bonus is 8.

He must now divide the Experimental Bonus between the components. The first item he looks at is "fur from the tip of a fox's tail" and tries for a +3 bonus. The roll has an Ease Factor of 12 ( $3 + [3 \times 3]$ ), with a -3 reduction from the storyguide for an appropriate connection. His player rolls  $2 + \text{Per } 1 + \text{Magic Lore } 5 = 8$ . No, fox fur did not help this experiment.

Moving on to foxglove petals, trying again for the first +3 bonus factor. Again Julius claims that the foxiness of foxgloves is appropriate. This meets with less agreement, and the story factor only provides a -2 reduction. His player rolls  $8 + 1 + 5 = 14$  — success! The foxglove did add +3 to the experiment.

None of the remaining components has enough of a connection to receive a story factor adjustment, but Julius decides to continue, now looking at mint leaves for another +3 bonus, his player rolling  $2 + 1 + 5 = 7$ : a failure. He tests the dock leaves for a +3 bonus, his player rolling  $6 + 1 + 5 = 12$ : a success — they have a +3 bonus too.

Six points have been allocated, leaving 2 more. He tests rose petals for a +2 bonus: his player rolling  $1 + 1 + 5 = 7$  against an Ease Factor of 9: a failure. There is only one component left (rose hips) and 2 points remain still. Julius may try for an easy roll for a +1 bonus, or an average roll for a +2 bonus. Being confident, he tries for the +2 bonus, but his player rolls a  $2 + 1 + 5 = 8$  vs. an Ease Factor of 9: a failure. The excess points are lost.

In this experiment, two +3 bonuses were discovered, and the final 2 points were lost. Note that Julius could test the bonuses in any order.

Julius can now include the discovered Shape and Material Bonuses in his illusion powder, but only the +6 that were successfully tested, not the +8 of the Experimental Bonus roll, and only up to his Magic Theory score, as normal.

troupe approval), she may merge these to create a category similar to the Shape and Material Bonus table categories.

*Example: Although Julius failed when he tested "fur from a fox's tail" in his first glamor powders, he later succeeds in creating powders for a number of CrIm visual illusions, all with a +3 bonus from fox-tail fur. The storyguide agrees that he has established a category of effects, and that Julius may use "fur from a fox's tail" for a bonus "+3 to create a visual illusion" in any enchantment, without further testing.*

Once the magus has determined a category to which a bonus applies, he may teach this to others. When a magus writes a tractatus on Magic Theory, he may choose a Shape or Material and its particular bonus and category as the thesis for the book. He may do this provided his

Quality (Com + 6 + bonuses) for writing the book is at least twice the Bonus Level.

Those who study the book then both learn Magic Theory (Quality XP) and also learn how to use this component in their own enchantments. When they, in turn, teach students, through direct teaching or by writing in a summa, they incorporate all their experience of enchantment into their teaching. Eventually, the new magical correspondences may become a standard part of Hermetic theory taught to all students.

## Withstand Casting — Minor Hermetic Virtue

The Mercurian cult teaches a number of Virtues and Abilities to its members, some of which may be taught outside the cult. One such is the Virtue Withstand Casting, which bolsters the magus against the draining Fatigue of casting spells, knowledge of which is now reasonably widespread in the Order.

If a magus has this Virtue, then whenever he is about to lose Fatigue from casting a spell, he loses 1 less Fatigue level than normal, with a minimum of 1 Fatigue level — but if the spell would have been cast without Fatigue loss, then he still loses no Fatigue.

A magus may take the Virtue more than once, and withstand 1 Fatigue level for each level of the Virtue, although the minimum Fatigue loss remains. If he has Withstand Casting (3), he may withstand up to 3 Fatigue levels lost, with a minimum of 1.

The Virtue decreases the severity of the Fatigue lost in the exact manner of the existing Fatigue loss. Thus, if the magus casts a Formulaic spell, the Fatigue is short-term Fatigue, easily recovered, and if he runs out of Fatigue levels he is rendered unconscious, loss of extra Fatigue levels results in him being unconscious for one hour for each overflowing level, and the respite of Withstand Casting lessens this. If, on the other hand, he casts a Ritual spell, then the Fatigue is long-term Fatigue, and losing more Fatigue than he has remaining causes wounds — the respite of Withstand Casting reduces the severity of wounds, and this may result in him taking no wounds (with the minimum Fatigue lost rendering him unconscious).

### WITHSTAND CASTING AND VULNERABLE CASTING

You may not start your character with both Vulnerable Casting and Withstand Casting. However, she may acquire both in the course of play (Withstand Casting from Initiation rituals or beneficial Twilight effects;

Vulnerable Casting from Ordeals or bad Twilight effects).

If this occurs, apply the extra loss from Vulnerability first, then withstand the increased loss.

### LIFE BOOST AND LIFE-LINKED SPONTANEOUS MAGIC

Some Virtues, such as Life Boost and Life-Linked Spontaneous Magic, actually use the magus's life-force to power the spell: the lost Fatigue powers the spell, and without that loss, no power boost is possible. While a magus may choose to apply Withstand Casting to such a spell, if he does then he loses the benefits from withstood levels.

*Example: Vita, a maga with Life-Linked Spontaneous Magic, aims to cast a level 20 spell, but falls short and only generates a level 16 result. She will lose 2 Fatigue levels (1 for spontaneous casting, 1 for the shortfall in Life-Linked Magic).*

*Although she has Vulnerable Casting (1) (from past Twilight experiences) so suffers an extra Fatigue level loss, she also has Withstand Casting (3) (from Initiations), and can use this to withstand the Fatigue lost to the Vulnerable Casting.*

*She has another 2 levels of Withstand Casting, but if she eliminates the Life-Linked loss,*

*the spell will fail (and she will still suffer any remaining Fatigue loss). She cannot Withstand the base spontaneous casting Fatigue.*

It is, however, useful to have the Withstand Casting Virtue even with Life-Linked Spontaneous Magic, in case that shortfall is extreme; for example, if the magus botches and the Casting Total is reduced to zero.

*Example: Vita tries again, hoping to cast another level 20 spell. However, she botches, and her Casting Total is zero. She would normally lose 6 Fatigue levels (1 for spontaneous casting, plus 1 for Vulnerable Casting, plus 4 for the shortfall in Casting Total), but she can withstand 3 Fatigue levels lost, and only suffers a net loss of 3 Fatigue levels.*

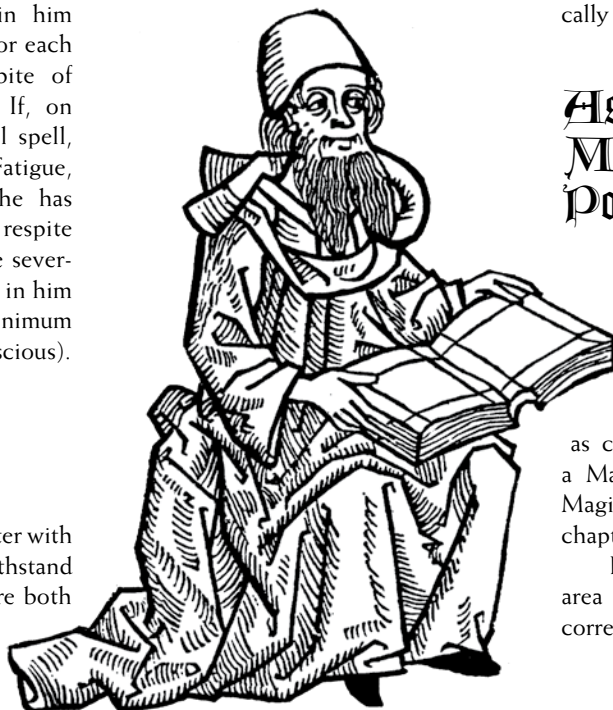
## Modified Virtues and Flaws

Normally Virtues and Flaws are applied continuously or to the cycle of days, moons, or seasons. It is also possible for Virtues and Flaws to be linked to astrological cycles or subjects. A magus need not study Hermetic Astrology itself in order to have (or Initiate into) astrologically linked Virtues or Flaws.

## Astrological Magical Focus and Potent Magic

A Magical Focus or Potent Magic covers a minor or limited area. Examples are given in ArM5 for both Major and Minor Magical Focus. Potent Magic is defined as covering the same possible areas as a Magical Focus. For details of Potent Magic Virtues, see Potent Magic in this chapter.

It is possible for the magical subject area to be determined by astrological correspondences:



**Major Magical Focus (Sign or Planet) or Major Potent Magic (Sign or Planet):**

- Any magus may have a Major Magical Focus or Major Potent Magic covering effects governed by a single astrological sign.
- Any magus may have a Major Magical Focus or Major Potent Magic covering effects governed by a single astrological planet.

**Minor Magical Focus (House) or Minor Potent Magic (House):**

- Any magus may have a Minor Magical Focus or Minor Potent Magic covering effects governed by a single astrological house.

Spells cast with a benefit from Potent Magic or a Focus in a sign, planet, or house are Astrological spells. Other spells cast by the maga need not be Astrological. Astrological spells are discussed further in Chapter 6: Hermetic Astrology.

## INITIATING MAGIC FOR BIRTH SIGN, PLANET, OR HOUSE

The Initiation of astrological Potent Magics and Foci differs slightly from the normal requirement that the Mystagogue have the Virtue being taught: if the Initiate has a natal correspondence to the sign, planet, or house, then he has a special connection to that. (Without this modification, the Mystagogue could not easily teach the magic of the Initiate's birth sign unless he shared the sign with the Initiate).

An Initiate may be taught Potent Magic for his own birth sign by any magus who has Potent Magic (Sign), no matter which Potent Magic (Sign) the Mystagogue has. Similarly for Potent Magic (Planet) and (House), and Magical Foci.

Indeed, the connection is so strong that magi Initiating into the magic of their birth have a +1 sympathy bonus for Initiation, while magi Initiating other conjunctions have a sympathy penalty of -1, and the sign or house opposite their

birth sign or house causes a penalty of -3. (Planets do not oppose each other.)

*Example: Stellus is being Initiated into astral magics by his Mystagogue leader Astera. Stellus was born under the sign of Capricorn, with Venus in the fourth house. He may learn Major Potent Magic Sign (Capricorn), Major Potent Magic (Venus) and Minor Potent Magic (Genitor, the fourth house), even though Astera was born under (and has learned Potency for) Sagittarius, Mars, and Valetudo (the sixth house).*

For details of the range of effects governed by the signs, planets, and houses, see Chapter 6: Hermetic Astrology: Appendix — Astrological Correspondences.

## Astrological Cyclic Magic — Minor Hermetic Virtue or Flaw

Any magus may have astrologically Cyclic Magic, in which the cycles of the Virtue or Flaw may be astrological cycles. Having such a cycle does not make the magus's magic Astrological, but just determines when the Virtue or Flaw applies.

The properties (gender, temperament, element) of the signs of the Zodiac are explained and listed in Chapter 6: Hermetic Astrology: Appendix — Astrological Correspondences.

In the Virtue and Flaw of Cyclic Magic, it is stated that the bonus or penalty must normally apply for an amount of time equal to the time when it does not. In the astrological cycles, the cycle may apply for less time than it does not, so the bonus or penalty is increased to match this:

- Male and female signs divide the signs (and year) into two equal halves. Cyclic magic (male signs) and cyclic magic (female signs) attract the standard bonus or penalty of 3.
- The cardinal signs, fixed signs and mutable signs each occupy one-third of the year and leave out two-thirds of the year: The bonus or penalty is increased to 5.
- Signs of a single element (earth, air, fire, water) occupy one-quarter of

the year: The bonus or penalty is increased to 6.

As stated in ArM5, page 41, the bonus from Cyclic Magic only applies to Lab Totals if it covers the whole season. A penalty from Cyclic Magic applies to a Lab Total if it applies at any point of the season.

*Example: Stella has the Virtue Cyclic Magic (Cardinal Signs) and the Flaw Cyclic Magic (Fixed Signs). During the signs of Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn (one-third of the year), she has a magical bonus of +5, which doesn't apply to her Lab Totals; during the signs of Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius, and Taurus (one-third of the year), she has a penalty of -5.*

## (Astrological) Mutable Virtue or Flaw

A Virtue or Flaw normally applies all the time, but for some characters, it may only apply to the magus during the four mutable signs of the year, and is known as a Mutable Virtue or Mutable Flaw. (Cardinal, fixed, and mutable signs are defined in Chapter 6: Hermetic Astrology, Appendix — Astrological Correspondences.) Mutable Virtues and Flaws do not mark magic as being Astrological; all that is affected is the time period over which the character is affected.

Mutability affects Major and Minor Virtues and Flaws differently:

- For a Major Virtue or Flaw, the effects only apply in mutable signs, and the Virtue or Flaw is reduced to being Minor. (If this is not possible or sensible, then the Mutable variant cannot be applied.)
- For a Minor Virtue or Flaw, the effects only apply during the mutable signs, but the effect is doubled in intensity. (If this is not possible or sensible, then the Mutable variant cannot be applied.)

*Example: Raucus has a Mutable Blatant Gift. The extra penalties of the Blatant Gift apply only during the signs of Sagittarius, Pisces, Gemini, and Virgo, and he has a "normal" Gift*



during the other eight signs. *Mutable Blatant Gift* is a Minor Flaw.

*Effica has Mutable Puissant Terram. During the three mutable signs she has a double bonus of +6 to her Terram Art, but no bonus during the other eight signs.*

As with Cyclic Magic, the bonus from a Mutable Virtue would only apply to Lab Totals if it covered the whole season, but this is never the case.

Virtues and Flaws that normally permit multiple application but with stacking limits (such as Great or Poor Characteristics) count Mutable Virtues and Flaws twice. Thus a magus may have a Minor Virtue Great Strength +1, or twice for Great Strength +2, or a single Minor Mutable Great Strength (+2 when applicable). Each Characteristic is assessed separately.

## Vulnerable Casting — Common Minor Hermetic Flaw

Some magi are better able to withstand the Fatigue loss of casting spells, and some less so. If a maga has this Flaw, then whenever she is about to lose Fatigue from casting a spell, she

loses 1 more Fatigue level than normal. If the spell would have been cast without Fatigue loss, then she still loses no Fatigue.

A maga may have, or acquire, this Flaw more than once, losing 1 extra Fatigue level for each level of this Flaw. If she has Vulnerable Casting (2), then she loses 2 extra Fatigue levels whenever she casts a fatiguing spell.

Magi of the Mercurian cults often succumb to this Flaw, but other magi may suffer from it, regardless of their affiliation.

The Flaw increases the severity of the Fatigue lost, in the exact manner of the existing Fatigue loss. Thus, if a maga casts a Formulaic spell, the Fatigue is short-term Fatigue, easily recovered, and if she runs out of Fatigue levels she is rendered unconscious, loss of extra Fatigue levels results in her being unconscious for one hour for each overflowing level, and so does the Fatigue from Vulnerable Casting. If, on the other hand, she casts a Ritual spell, then this is long-term Fatigue, and losing more Fatigue than she has remaining causes wounds, so the increased Fatigue of Vulnerable Casting does the same.

You may not start your character with both Vulnerable Casting and Withstand Casting, but the maga may acquire either

in the course of play (from Initiation, Ordeals, or Twilight effects). In this case, apply the vulnerability first, then withstand the increased loss.

## New Mastery Ability — Ceremonial Casting

The maga may apply the rules for Ceremonial Casting (ArM5, page 83) to casting this spell. The option does not apply to Ritual spells that already use Ceremonial Casting.

This Mastery Ability is not commonly available to most magi, having been discovered by the Cult of Mercury, but other Mystery Cults may teach it to their members if the cults know the Mastery Ability.

More Mastery Abilities are listed for the Mercurian cults (see Chapter 13: Mercurian Magic), some others of which may be taught outside the tradition.

## Chapter Five

# Hermetic Alchemy

In the 13th century, the practice of alchemy is a new science that is proving popular all over Europe, following the introduction of the alchemical principles from the Arabic world in the mid-12th century. The alchemists seek to learn the innate properties of materials, and by their experiments to refine substances and seek new discoveries, such as dyes, alloys, and useful chemicals or drugs. There are alchemists in most large European cities and it is a growing and fashionable area of study. The secret of turning lead in to gold is the ultimate goal of much mundane alchemy, but even unGifted alchemists

also seek spiritual perfection, and the science draws upon what is believed to be an ancient secret of mystical initiates.

Hermetic Alchemy is a specialized branch of this knowledge that adapts the insights of the alchemical science and applies them to the Hermetic Art, in particular to the transmutation of vis. The basic principle of this then-secret Art was rediscovered by Jahm of Alexandria, an Ex Miscellanea magus, in the tenth century, and he first adapted the alchemical sciences to Hermetic usage in a series of magical breakthroughs that also resulted in the discovery of Philosophic Alchemy.

## Hermetic Alchemy — Hermetic Minor Virtue

Hermetic Alchemy lets the magus extract more vis from an aura, or to extract Form-specific vis rather than Vim vis.

### IMPROVED EXTRACTION OF VIS

A magus can increase his Lab Total for vis extraction by crafting an object to provide the physical form for the vis, choosing one that provides Shape and

## The History of Alchemy

Alchemy is an ancient tradition. The earliest known Greek alchemical text, dating from the first century, is the *Pysika kai Mystika* by Pseudo-Democritus. Synesius states that the work was originally in four books about the manufacture of gold, silver, gems, and purple. These, together with the school of Mary the Jewess (who was credited with inventing an efficient still, the water bath and the kerotakis), form the early basis for alchemical thought, although the ultimate origin of Pseudo-Democritus' alchemical tradition was probably Bolos of Mendes who lived two centuries before Christ.

This tradition was later amalgamated with Gnostic concepts, such as the Ouroboros, in the *Gold-Making of Cleopatra*, and the *Dialogue of Cleopatra*, which describe the working of metals in terms of the death and resurrection of the soul, and the late third century *Visions of Zosimos*. In Zosimos, the alchemical process is identified with Jesus Christ, who, as

the Son of God, became one with Adam, in order to restore him to his place among the Men of Light.

The Greek works were translated into Arabic in the ninth century and the theory expanded by Jabir Ibn Hayyan, who stressed the role of mercury, and the qualities of hot, cold, moist, and dry, which were to become the cornerstone of alchemical theory. The simile of marriage for a chemical process first appears in the *Turba Philosophorum*, a translation of an Arabic work that may have been written as early as 900 AD. Rhases, the great physician, also wrote on alchemical theory, discussing the production of an elixir through a process of coagulation.

Avicenna in his work *De Congelatione*, however, denied the possibility of real transmutation, although he did believe alchemists could make effective imitations. This influenced Albertus Magnus, Vincent of Beauvais and Ramon Lull. However, another work attributed to Avicenna, *De Anima in Arte Alchimiae*, sup-

ported transformation, thus enabling the alchemists to dismiss *De Congelatione* as a blind.

Thus, when alchemy entered Europe in the 12th century, the sulfur-mercury theory of metals, the elixir, the color sequence produced during the process, the ferment, the separation and conjunction of elements or qualities, the process of distillation and the analogies of marriage, death, and birth and their mystical interpretation, were all present in Morienus Romanus' *Liber de Compositione Alchemiae*, the first Arabic alchemical work to be translated into Latin, by Robert of Chester in 1144. This was followed by Gerard of Cremona's translation of *De Aluminibus et Salibus*, attributed to Rhases, and the *Aristoteles de Perfecto Magisterio*. In the 13th century Vincent of Beauvais, Aquinas, Ramon Lull, and Roger Bacon all discussed alchemy in their encyclopedic works, and after their deaths alchemical works attributed to them began to appear.

## Alchemical Equipment

An assortment of the following equipment can be found in any Hermetic Alchemist's lab.

**FLASKS:** Ceramic, crystal, or glass containers in a variety of shapes, sizes, and thicknesses.

**STILL HEADS:** Flask lids, with glass pipes leading to other flasks.

**CUCURBIT:** A flask with a still head attached.

**ALEMBIC:** A distilling device that looks like a flask with a narrow-necked opening leading down from the top.

**PELICAN:** A still with two necks that allow a distilled substance to be returned to its original nature, ready

for re-distillation and subsequent further refinement.

**PHILOSOPHER'S EGG:** A special retort (similar to an alembic) into which substances are distilled. Eventually the Philosopher's Stone will be "hatched" from this "egg."

**KEROTAKIS:** A closed vessel in which materials such as thick leaves of metal are exposed to vapors in order to distill essences.

**FUNNELS:** Made of glass, with a selection of cloth and charcoal filters.

**MORTARS AND PESTLES:** Made of stone or ceramic, designed for grinding down ingredients.

**CRYSTALLIZING DISHES:** Shallow dishes allowing for rapid evaporation.

Material Bonuses for the activity (see below).

**Alchemical Vis Extraction Lab Total**  
= Creo + Vim + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura Modifier + Shape and Material Bonuses

**Vim Vis Extracted = one-tenth (round up) of Vis Extraction Lab Total**

A Verditius magus may also add his Craft Ability and incorporate Verditius Runes (Philosophiae).

### FORM-SPECIFIC VIS

A magus using Hermetic Alchemy may choose to extract Form-specific vis, but the process is less efficient than extracting Vim vis, and the yield is halved. Technique vis cannot be extracted by this method.

To extract Form vis, the magus chooses the shape and material of the object receiving the vis to be appropriate to the desired Form, and the Creo Vim Lab Total is limited by a requisite of the Form desired.

**Form-specific Vis Extraction Lab Total**  
= Creo + Vim (Form requisite) + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura Modifier + Shape and Material Bonuses

**Form Vis Extracted = one-twentieth (round up) of Vis Extraction Lab Total**

### CHOOSING APPROPRIATE SHAPE AND MATERIAL FACTORS

To determine whether a Shape and Material table Bonus applies for vis extraction, look for a single invested effect that might in principle be instilled in this device and that uses the Form desired. (The object is not being enchanted or opened for enchantment at this stage, but see Philosophic Alchemy).

Any component that would add a bonus to this guideline effect can be used to benefit the Lab Total for this extraction. The object can take the form of a compound device (ArM5, page 97) with multiple components, but the total Shape and Material Bonus is limited by the magus's Magic Theory score.

*Example: Rufus wishes to extract Vim vis. He considers that Demon's Eternal Oblivion would be a Vim effect if enchanted, and so a piece of red coral (+10 vs. demons) is appropriate. He has Intelligence +3, Creo 15, Vim 7, Magic Theory 7 and the aura is 5. His Magic Theory is less than the possible bonus from red coral, so limits it. His Lab Total is: Creo 15 + Vim 7 + Int +3 + Magic Theory 7 + aura 5 + bonus (limited by Magic Theory) 7 = 44. Rufus extracts five pawns of Vim*

## New Spell

Hermetic Alchemy fills an object with several pawns of vis, but magi often find it useful to have individual pawns of raw vis in separate objects, handy for use when needed. The following spell divides raw vis among several objects.

**DIVIDE THE GATHERED ESSENCE**

ReVi 25

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Group

Transfers the raw vis from an item into one or more containers. The maga may freely choose how the vis is to be divided.

(Base 10, +1 Touch, +2 Group)

*vis. (He would only have extracted four pawns without Hermetic Alchemy.)*

*Later he decides he would really like some Ignem vis, but lacks a ready source, so decides to extract some from the aura. He posits a Ward Against Heat and Flames effect, and puts together a piece of fired clay (+4 contain or protect from fire) with a lead seal (+4 wards). The bonus from these is +8, which again exceeds his Magic Theory. His Ignem score is 19, which is greater than his Vim, so his Lab Total is again 44. Extracting Form-specific vis halves the yield to (44/20) rounded up, so he extracts three pawns of Ignem vis.*

## Philosophic Alchemy — Minor and Major Mystery Virtue

Philosophic Alchemy builds on Hermetic Alchemy and lets the magus settle the alchemical object into the process so that it digests and ferments on its own, and extract Vim or Form-specific vis from the aura (by Hermetic Alchemy) with little attention from the magus. (This Virtue requires Hermetic Alchemy as a prerequisite.)

Alternatively, the magus may process the object to create ready-opened enchantment spaces instead of raw vis. The decision whether to extract vis or create ready-opened spaces is made at the start of the process.

If a maga already has Minor Philosophic Alchemy when she seeks to Initiate the Major Virtue, the new Virtue replaces the old. The "loss" of the Minor Virtue counts as an Ordeal Flaw (loss of a Virtue) for the Initiation.

Minor Philosophic Alchemy requires a year (four continuous seasons) of fermentation and digestion before the vis extraction is complete and the vis may be used. Major Philosophic Alchemy allows a more efficient digestion to be established, which is completed in a single season.

## AUTOMATIC EXTRACTION OF VIS

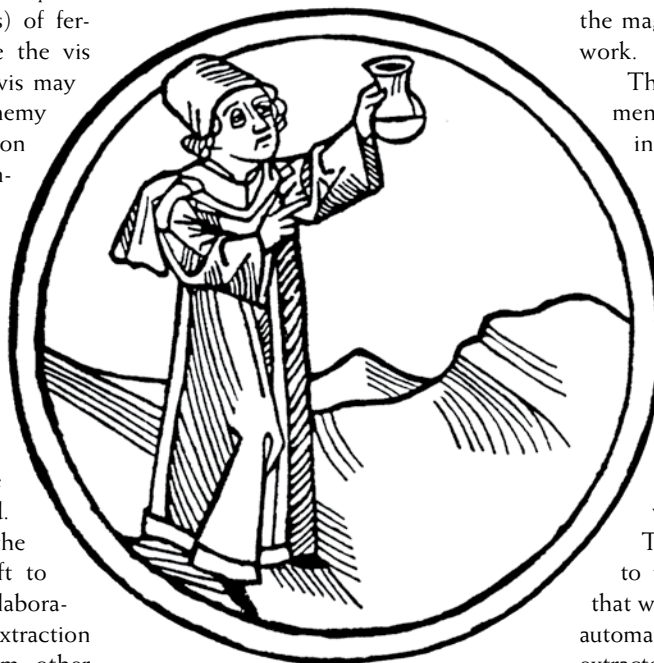
The magus prepares an object just as he would to extract with Hermetic Alchemy, with the same bonuses, and the same amounts of vis extracted. However, he understands how the process may be settled and left to itself, and may perform other laboratory activities, treating the vis extraction as a seven-day distraction from other lab work. (He can do other things while in the laboratory, such as study from books or vis, even though these are not laboratory activities.) Since the vis extraction proceeds largely by itself, he is not restricted to another activity of the same kind, Technique, and Form. However, he cannot run another vis extraction, not even one that does not use the Virtues of Hermetic Alchemy.

He must attend daily to the extraction, so whatever activities he plans must revolve around being in the laboratory. Any distractions from the laboratory are applied to the vis extraction Lab Total as well as any study or lab work running in parallel; if the distractions exceed 20 days, the digestion is spoiled and must be abandoned (ArM5, page 103). (Add the seven-day distraction (for attention to vis extraction) to the other activity only.)

*Example: Parella starts a Major Philosophic Alchemy vis extraction in her laboratory. She has a Creo Vim Lab Total of 62, plus a bonus 9 (limited by her Magic Theory 9) for the Shape and Material of the device, and hopes to get (71/10 rounded up) eight pawns of Vim vis. She*

*also has a Perdo Mentem Lab Total of 63, and wants to invent a level 30 spell, which she can do in one season while also tending the digesting vis extraction.*

*However, a party of covenant grogs has an unfortunate accident and needs rescuing, and she*



*is called away from her lab for 11 days. This is a 12-point penalty to vis extraction, reducing her Creo Vim Lab Total to 49, so only five pawns of vis are extracted at the end of the season.*

*The 11 days' absence adds to the seven days' distraction from spell research (for attending to the vis extraction) and her Perdo Mentem Lab Total is penalized by 18 days or 26 points. Her spell Lab Total is now  $63 - 26 = 37$ . She does not complete the spell, but only accumulates  $(37 - 30) = 7$  points toward inventing it, and threatens to turn the grogs into toads.*

## TIME NEEDED FOR AUTOMATIC EXTRACTION OF VIS

Minor Philosophic Alchemy requires the process to continue for a complete year. For each of the four seasons, record the Lab Total (less any distractions). At the end of the year, the vis extracted is determined by the lowest of the four Lab Totals. If any season is lost (more than 20 days out of the lab), then the whole extraction is lost, and should be aban-

doned. (A new extraction can be started in the next season.)

A magus may only manage a single vis extraction in any season, whether using alchemical or standard methods. He cannot run two separate laboratories simultaneously and still maintain the magical harmonies necessary for lab work.

The magus may not safely experiment while an extraction is digesting, as the distortions in the aura destabilize the extraction and it will fail.

## READY-OPENED DEVICES

Philosophic Alchemy can produce a device with already-opened enchantment spaces. Opening a device for enchantment uses Vim vis, so a Creo Vim vis extraction Lab Total is used. The number of spaces open is equal to the number of pawns of Vim vis that would have been extracted into it as automatic vis extraction. (No vis can be extracted: It is as if Vim vis was extracted and opened into the device at the same time.)

An item opened by Philosophic Alchemy is ready for enchantment, or may be opened normally in the season immediately following the alchemical process. The magus opening the device normally need not be an alchemist. A magus may count the already-open spaces either as a bonus on top of what the device could normally contain, or as reducing the pawns of vis required to open the device.

*Example: Parella repeats her vis extraction in a later season, without distraction, but chooses to settle the object to create open enchantment spaces. Her Lab Total + bonus is 71, so (71/10 rounded up) eight open spaces are created.*

*She is using a small piece of red coral (semi-precious gem, x2 size) that requires 24 pawns of Vim vis to open. Since she has a Magic Theory of 9 she can handle 18 pawns of vis, which is normally not enough to open such a device. However, since eight spaces are already open, she chooses to reduce the vis requirement instead of creating bonus spaces: she only needs 16 pawns of vis — well within her capacity.*



## The Lesser Elixir — Minor Mystery Virtue

Alchemists quest for eternal life. Some believe that if only they can create the perfect Longevity Ritual, they can live forever. As a stage along this path they have discovered an improved formula known as the Lesser Elixir of Life.

The Lesser Elixir increases the aging bonus of a Longevity Ritual by incorporating additional ingredients. The Lesser Elixir is a personal formula, unique to the magus; unlike a Longevity Ritual, it cannot be created for another.

Most magi choose a consumable formula for their Elixir, such as a potion, as they are probably working toward the Great Elixir.

The Lesser Elixir requires Hermetic Alchemy.

Magi questing for eternal life often also seek to gain the Virtue Unaging (possibly through cult Initiation), as this adds to the seeming of immortality.

### CREATING THE LESSER ELIXIR

The magus may invent a Lesser Elixir formula, adding ingredients to his Longevity Ritual, and increasing the modifier of the combined formula.

The magus performs his Longevity Ritual and invests the required vis, which prepares a dose of the formula. This may be done even if he has a currently active Longevity Ritual. The magus's Longevity Ritual may be his own invention or the invention of another magus (such as his parents), but the Lesser Elixir must be the magus's own work.

By spending a season in the laboratory, the magus creates or extends a list of special ingredients. Each time the magus reinvents the Lesser Elixir, he adds an ingredient to the list: each ingredient adds points to a total of Elixir Points. The **Elixir Level** is determined like an Art, using Elixir Points instead of XP, but may not exceed his Magic Theory when he devises the formula. The Elixir Level is added to the normal Aging Bonus of the base Longevity Ritual.

## Longevity Ritual Vis Limits

When a Longevity Ritual is designed in the laboratory, the enchantment requires one pawn of vis for every five years of age (rounded up). The magus designing the Longevity Ritual can handle twice his Magic Theory in vis in a season-long laboratory activity. This places a ceiling on the age of the magus for whom the potion is designed.

When rebrewing the Longevity Ritual after an Aging Crisis (or to prepare a dose as base for the Lesser Elixir), using the Lab Text for the ritual, the process takes no significant investment of time — in practice, it takes about 15 minutes per magnitude of the Lab Text of the Longevity Ritual, as if casting a ritual spell. The limits on the vis handling for this process are those of a magus casting a ritual: Art specific vis is used, limited for each Art by the magus's Art score.

Thus, if the magus obtained a Longevity Ritual formula from a specialist potion brewer, with a bonus set to last him several centuries (in principle), he can rebrew replacement doses for himself without needing to spend his whole life studying Magic Theory.

In practice, since the Longevity Ritual itself inflicts Warping Points for a continuing effect, most magi succumb to Final Twilight before the limits of the enchanter's ability to design aging bonus formulae. Even the extra bonus points awarded by the Lesser Elixir are mostly cosmetic, a stay in the face of the looming end of Twilight.

The only way the alchemist can hope to extend their Longevity Potions into true immortality is to discover the secrets of the Great Elixir.

### Elixir Points = Total of Points from Extra Ingredients

The Elixir Level is determined from Elixir Points, limited by Magic Theory score:

ELIXIR LEVEL	ELIXIR POINTS
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21
7	28
8	36
9	45
10	55

### Aging Bonus = Longevity Ritual Modifier + Elixir Level

The Lesser Elixir replaces the normal Longevity Ritual modifier while the Lesser Elixir remains active.

### ELIXIR POINTS

Elixir Points for each ingredient are determined from the Shape and Material Bonuses table, choosing items that are appropriate to the form and function of the potion (Creo, Corpus, longevity, healing, health, and the physical form of the formula), or by qualities of the maga herself (based on her best Arts, or Magical Focus, or whatever best defines her magic — you should discuss this with the storyguide or troupe).

Alchemists have an especially close affinity with bonus items they devise personally (by experimenting with Vulgar Alchemy), and the Elixir Points for such items are doubled. No single item may have a bonus exceeding the alchemist's Magic Theory score.

*Example: Desperata's Longevity Ritual was created by her parents, and with her assistance she had a Lab Total of 74, so her Longevity Ritual grants an Aging Bonus of 15.*

*Now 53, she has learned the secret of the lesser Elixir, so she invests another  $(53/5) = 11$  pawns of vis to create a dose of her Longevity Ritual. She adds bloodstone (+4 blood and wounds) as her first special ingredient, so her Elixir Level is 2. Her combined Aging Bonus is  $15 + 2 = 17$ .*

Some time later, she has reinvented her Lesser Elixir twice more, adding amber (+3 Corpus), and laurel oil (+3 to healing oils, a Vulgar Alchemy bonus devised by herself, so the bonus is doubled). Her Elixir Points are now  $3+4+5$  (the laurel oil double bonus of 6 is capped by her Magic Theory of 5) = 12, and her Elixir Level is 4. Her Aging Bonus is now  $15+4 = 19$ .

## REPEATING THE LESSER ELIXIR

If the magus suffers an Aging Crisis, the Lesser Elixir loses its effectiveness, and must be repeated. He may reperform the Lesser Elixir ritual, taking little more time than repeating the existing Longevity Ritual: first, repeat the Longevity Ritual with a new investment of vis, then add the Lesser Elixir special ingredients.

The alchemist may instead reinvent his Lesser Elixir formula at any time, consuming another dose of his Longevity Ritual formula, and a further season in the laboratory. Spending a season reinventing the Lesser Elixir lets the magus add other special ingredients to the list.

## The Great Elixir — Major Mystery Virtue

The ultimate goal — the Elixir of Life — achieved so far by very few alchemists is to transform themselves into beings of magic, truly immortal, although at the cost of the loss of their humanity. This Virtue teaches a method that is itself a form of Mystery Ordeal, creating and consuming a Great Elixir potion.

The magus must have both the Virtues Unaging and the Lesser Elixir.

## PREPARING THE GREAT ELIXIR

The magus opens an invested device in the form of a consumable item such as a potion. He also prepares a dose of his Lesser Elixir formula. The Lesser Elixir uses up (Longevity Ritual level/10) enchantment spaces in the Great Elixir device.

The magus invests the following as if they were enchantment effects, but based



on non-Hermetic rituals. Each time the enchantment is prepared, it is unique to the magus and the dose of Lesser Elixir; if the Great Elixir must be attempted more than once, the Lab Texts from previous attempts only grant similar spell bonus points to the next attempt.

### BECOME A BEING OF MAGIC

MuCo(Vi) 50

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Always On, T: Ind, Mystery Effect

If the Great Elixir works, the magus transforms into a being aligned to the Magic realm, making him a magical creature.

Note that this is a Mystery Enchantment, outside Hermetic theory, and may not be replicated by those without the Greater Elixir Virtue. Hermetic theory does not in itself possess the ability to transform a human into a being of the Magic realm. It only functions as part of the Elixir ritual, and may not be cast as a spell.

(Unique Mystery)

#### GRANT MIGHT

CrVi, Gen

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Always On, T: Ind, Mystery Effect

If the Great Elixir works, the magus gains Magic Might equal to half (effect level–20).

Note that this is a Mystery Effect, outside of general Hermetic theory, and may not be replicated by those without the Greater Elixir Virtue. Hermetic theory does not in itself possess the ability to grant Magic Might to a human. It only functions as part of the Elixir ritual, and may not be cast as a spell.

(Unique Mystery)

#### TESTING THE GREAT ELIXIR

When the potion is complete, the maga drinks it, and tests the Elixir with a roll of:

**Simple Die + Stamina + Lesser Elixir Level + Reroll Bonus vs. Ease Factor of (Age/10, round up)**

If the maga fails, then she knows that the particular *Become a Being of Magic* and *Grant Might* effects attempted did not work for her. However, all is not lost: She merely needs to create another dose of Lesser Elixir (possibly reinvented to include more Elixir Points), and use it to create an alternative Great Elixir potion.

The Lab Texts for the previous Great Elixir enchantments give a similar spells bonus of (effect magnitude) to the new Great Elixir effects, but no other benefit. In addition, each attempt at the Great Elixir grants a cumulative +1 bonus to the roll, to a limit of the maga's Magic Theory.

*Example: Desperata has studied alchemy for many years. She is 157 years old. She has Stamina +2, Magic Theory 10, and 53 Lesser Elixir Points — an Elixir Level of 9. Her player rolls 4 + Stamina 2 + Lesser Elixir Level 9 = 15 vs. Ease Factor 16 — failure. Desperata curses her bad luck, and plans several seasons more to enchant different effects into her Great Elixir, and then to test the new formula.*

#### SUCCESS! EFFECTS OF THE ELIXIR

The magus who succeeds in creating the Greater Elixir ceases to be human, and becomes an immortal, alchemical being of the Magic realm, with a Might score determined by the Great Elixir potion. He may be slain, but he will not die of lesser wounds, nor age or Warping.

The transformation is complete and irrevocable, and cannot be dispelled; for example, by trying to dispel the Great Elixir focus — indeed, the focus no longer exists, having been consumed and digested by the magus.

See Appendix A: Immortal Magi for description and rules for immortals and immortal magi in particular.

#### IMPROVING THE ELIXIR AFTER TRANSFORMATION

The now-immortal magus may later create a new Great Elixir with an improved *Grant Might* effect. The magus repeats the process, creating and testing a Great Elixir potion. The Ease Factor to test the potion remains fixed at the age when the magus transformed, as he now does not age. Any cumulative bonus from a previous Elixir process is reset when he starts to make a new Great Elixir.

If the new Great Elixir fails the test, the Elixir is wasted, but no other ill effects befall the immortal. The new potion grants a cumulative +1 bonus to testing the Great Elixir until eventually successful, when the magus's Might improves to that provided by the new *Grant Might* effect.

*Example: Desperata finally succeeded four years, and two potions, later (aged 161). Her level 80 Grant Might enchantment gave her a Might Score of 30. Forty years later, she has improved her Arts and wishes to boost her Might further. She creates a fourth Great Elixir potion (with a level 100 Grant Might), beginning a new series of tests. The Ease Factor to test the potion is the same as when she became immortal (161/10 or 17). The roll is Stamina 2 + Lesser Elixir 9 + roll 3 = 14 — failure. Undismayed, she creates another potion and tests this with a +1 bonus: 1+2+9 +roll 9 — success! Her Might Score improves to 40.*

## The Order of the Green Cockerel

*While the new science of alchemy is still establishing itself in much of Europe, a secret society of Hermetic alchemists meet to discuss the Great Work, not the transmutation of base metal into gold, but the attainment of the Elixir Vitae and eternal life.*

### The History of the Order of the Green Cockerel

The Green Cockerel was born out of the reconciliation of alchemy with Hermetic theory by Jahm of Alexandria in 956AD. It received little attention in the Order of Hermes until, in 1144, Roger of Chester published *De Compositione Alchemiae*, the first Latin work to introduce the ideas of Arabic alchemy to the wider European community. This created a great sensation and a wide spread of interest among mundane, unGifted scholars, and alchemists became common in most large cities as the new science developed.

Then a small Hermetic Mystery Cult, patiently working toward the Great Work, the Order of the Green Cockerel was instantly fashionable and popular in Hermetic circles, as more and more magi wished to learn more of the new science. The existing society coped well with the influx of new blood and talent, and has achieved some repute. Its existence is something of an open secret in the Order of Hermes, and members make few efforts to conceal their interests or affiliation with the group.

### The Order of the Green Cockerel Today

The Order of the Green Cockerel is a learned society that studies advances in

the new science of alchemy, attempting to reconcile them with Hermetic theory. When members deal with unGifted alchemists, they always don disguise, disassociate themselves as far as possible from the Order of Hermes, and use cryptic hints and demonstrations to encourage development of the mundane science, rather than explicitly explaining the secrets. Its role is to guide and nurture the development of the experimental science of alchemy, not to reveal its secret mysteries.

The members of the Green Cockerel, however, have a secret that would possibly cause much consternation among their Hermetic sodales should it ever be revealed: They are in frequent and friendly communication with many wizards of the Islamic world, whose knowledge of alchemy is believed to far exceed that in Mythic Europe. This communication goes beyond the trading of magical secrets, and it is rumored that members of the Green Cockerel have actively worked to prevent crusaders from interfering with cities, or even from setting out, to further their cultivation and protection of their non-Hermetic allies. Many members of the Green Cockerel are frequent visitors to exotic locations in the Levant, North Africa, and Granada. Arabic is taught within the Order of the Green Cockerel, and some high-level texts may only be found in that language; all Green Cockerel texts are highly coded in Hermetic alchemical symbolism to prevent the inadvertent betrayal of the secret mysteries.

The Great Convocation of potentially all Initiates is held once every seven years in Alexandria; pressing lab work, however, prevents many from attending. Here new devices, insights, spells, and Shape and Material Bonuses are shared, and a competition is held for the best breakthrough in this period, known as the Fermentation Cycle.

## Structure of the Order of the Green Cockerel

The extent of the Green Cockerel remains a matter for conjecture; what is certain is that mundane alchemy flourishes in the courts and cities of Mythic



Europe, although it is still rare in the Novgorod, Hibernian, and Loch Leglean tribunals. The number of members is not known, although it is probably one of the larger Mysteries given the current interest in alchemy among unGifted scholars.

What is certain is that the Great Work has only comparatively recently been achieved by the Hermetic method, and probably only once, although some skeptics deny even that. The single Initiate who completed the Great Work is never seen by the members of the Green

Cockerel, and is referred to as the Secret Master, although, confusingly, accounts vary greatly from those who have claimed to have met this Initiate as to his actual gender — Secret Mistress may be equally appropriate.

The seven degrees of the Order of the Green Cockerel reflect the seven traditional stages of the alchemical process. Each of the degrees is associated with a planet, a color and a metal, and is named for an alchemical symbol. The rich symbolism of the Green Cockerel is some-



times reflected discretely in the colors and symbols that adorn Initiates' robes. The actual processes of alchemy are hence reflected in the outer world, as the True Work is not the alchemical processes, but the purging and magical refinement of the spirit of the Initiate, as it prepares him for the Great Work.

## THE TOADS

The first degree represents the first process: calcination, associated with Saturn, the color black, and the metal lead. The unrefined probationer is exposed to the heat of the Initiation, and learns of the invisible sun, and the influence of the planets. Regarded with awe by mundane alchemists they meet, owing to their great knowledge, Toads are the lowest members of this secret society, their role largely that of lab assistants, as yet unversed in the mysteries. Quests for rare ingredients or alchemical literature are common at this degree. The Initiate learns the Virtue of Planetary Magic.

## THE WHITE SWANS

The second degree represents the alchemical process of dissolution. It is associated with the planet Jupiter, the color grayish-white, and the metal tin. Now the Initiate is asked to make sacrifices; to dissolve his worldly concerns in the pursuit of the work that she is just beginning. To prove her knowledge, she must add new knowledge to the corpus of alchemical understanding, by creating at least seven new Shape and Material Bonuses before progressing to the next degree of Initiation, in addition to the usual requirements. Using exotic and difficult-to-obtain ingredients found on quests is greatly admired. To assist in this aim, she is Initiated into the Virtue of Vulgar Alchemy.

## THE GREEN KINGS

The third degree represents the process of separation, is associated with the planet Mars, the metal iron, and the color green. Note that while red is the traditional color of Mars, green is the complementary color of red; the Initiate seeks to symbolically separate out the "greenness" of his physical "red." After Initiation the Green King (a term used for males and females of the third degree) removes himself from contact with his alchemical brethren until he is ready to face the fourth-degree Initiation, and does not participate in any rites or Convocation.

During this time the Initiate is expected to purge himself of material dross and discover his true potential. The Mystagogue leads the way by Initiating the Virtue Unaging before the exile begins, in a rite designed to purge the Initiate. The principle of elimination of unwholesome and negative personality traits features heavily in this degree, and stories may reflect the attempt to overcome Personality Flaws or Traits through heroic endeavors.

## THE PEACOCKS

This fourth degree represents the process of conjunction, as the now purged and spiritually purified Initiate is rejoined to the Green Cockerel, welcome once more amidst the alchemical community. The planet Venus governs this degree. The metal copper is associated with the Peacocks, and the Initiates robes bear the splendor of all the colors of the rainbow. They are now expected to serve as active members for the cult, and learn some of the secrets of the Great Work. They are Initiated in the Virtue Hermetic Alchemy.

## THE UNICORNS

This degree covers the alchemical principle of fermentation. The symbolic planet and metal is Mercury, and the color is the purest white. Unicorns are the ambassadors and emissaries of the cult, and watch over mundane alchemists with a kindly eye, guiding experiments and helping research through veiled hints and cryptic allusions. Now the Great Work begins in earnest, as the Initiate learns the secret of the Virtue Lesser Elixir.

## THE PELICANS

The sixth degree is the process of distillation. It is symbolically associated with the Moon, the metal silver, and the color red. Now one learns the true secret of distillation as represented by Initiation into the Virtue Philosophic Alchemy, and takes on the role of Mystagogue and earthly representative of the Order of the Green Cockerel, acting as intermediary between the true spiritual master who has completed the Great Work and the alchemical brethren, mundane and esoteric.

## THE PHOENIX

The process of the seventh degree is that of coagulation, the planet the Sun, the metal and the color gold. The Initiates now learn the secret of the Virtue Great Elixir, taught by the Secret Master. Should they succeed, they rise like a phoenix, having transformed themselves from base led to alchemical gold, and achieved magical immortality. This is the true secret of alchemy of which mundane alchemy is but the slightest distorted reflection as though seen through a glass darkly.

# Hermetic Astrology

From the earliest ages, man has sought wisdom in the stars and wondered what influence the planets have in shaping events on Earth. The most famous astrologers of the past were the Chaldeans, and Babylonian astrological lore was considered the epitome of the science. Astrologers point to the action of the tides and the turning of the seasons, which are clearly linked to astronomical phenomena, as proof of their science's validity.

The Romans became great enthusiasts for astrology, which came to rival and ultimately supersede many earlier forms of divination owing to its claims to scientific precision; it was used both to predict the future and to find the best time for certain types of activity, and soon became an intrinsic part of many magical operations, as well as being much resorted to by private citizens. The influence of the stars encouraged *fatalism*, the belief that a person's destiny was written in the stars, and that his own actions were unable to confound his eternal fate. Philosophies that encouraged courage and resignation in the face of this inevitability grew fashionable in the Roman Empire.

The Church fathers attacked astrology for three basic reasons. First, its practice bears traces of pagan superstition and star worship. Second, it denies the fundamental Christian principle of free will. If the stars control all human action, people are not responsible for their good or evil deeds, and the hope of salvation is meaningless. Third, astrology exposes the stargazer to the operation of hostile spirits.

St. Augustine makes the strongest assault on astrology. In *City of God* he brings together a number of ancient arguments

against astrology and underscores the science's incompatibility with Christian beliefs. His sentiments are familiar to any scholar who studies the stars. Augustine decries the lack of accountability in a world where God rules the stars and the stars rule humanity. "How is any room left for God to pass judgment on the deeds of men," he writes, "if they are subject to astrological forces, and God is Lord both of stars and men?" Further, the responsibility for human evil rests upon humanity itself and not upon God. Astrologers blaspheme by claiming God and the stars, as his agents, are the sources of human wickedness.

Most Christian philosophers, nevertheless, accept astrology's place in medicine and science, following the famous motto, "The wise one will rule the stars." Astral influence, they argue, can be overcome by the strength of will. Learning astrology, in other words, helps to defeat astrology.

Many astrologers are simply indifferent to their theological critics, and do not bother to refute what they see as irrelevant.

Scientific astrology was rare in Europe before the 12th century, but popular astrology, based on phases of the moon, was known from an early stage. This form of astrology used charts showing which days in the lunar cycle were good or bad for various activities. Scientific astrology, involving the drawing-up of charts and detailed examination of planetary influences was, however, practiced extensively by many magicians, and by court astrologers who were gaining influence all over Europe, often to the dismay of the other courtiers. A clever man could gain by this means an influence usually reserved

for powerful nobles and trusted retainers, and even barons often maintained a personal astrologer, while merchants frequently consulted with the astrologers and soothsayers who practiced in the growing towns and cities.

Astronomy is taught in the universities as part of the liberal arts, and so astrology could be included as part of the curriculum in this way. Regarding the influx of Arabic learning, Abu Ma'shar's *Greater Introduction to Astrology* was translated into Latin in 1133, and Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in 1138. One of the most popular works is the *Centiloquium*, a collection of aphorisms falsely ascribed to Ptolemy. Ulius Firmicus Maternus' writings on astrology are also used extensively. Frederick II had his children's horoscopes cast, and Michael Scot gave astrological advice to the king when he entered his service.

It was also considered that the influences of the heavens could also be artificially drawn down and utilized through the use of periapts — amulets inscribed with the names and sigils of the stars and planets. A very small minority of writers claimed this process worked merely through natural magic. One of the standard Arabic texts for this process was that of Thabit ibn Qurra (836-901) and his formula for ridding a place of scorpions. The best known work of astral magic is the *Picatrix*, translated into Spanish and Latin under Alfonso the Wise. In addition to the use of astrological talismans, including images, to achieve various effects, it also includes sections on substances with magical properties, and how to pray to the planets.

Astrology is seen as a reputable science in Mythic Europe, and while churchmen do, from time to time, denounce it,

it is generally considered acceptable and is tolerated, and indeed can be considered a mainstream form of learning and discourse.

While astrology is known throughout Mythic Europe, Hermetic Astrology deals with working the influence of the heavens, as they manifest on Earth, into Hermetic magic. Many systems of magic contain ways of dealing with the astral influences, but Hermetic magic is able to ignore them owing to Bonisagus's breakthroughs. Astrological Mystery Cults often teach a Magical Focus or Potent Magic relating to their interests in Divination, covering various aspects of Intellego magics. Divination by astrology is dealt with in Chapter 7: Divination and Augury. The most basic principle of Hermetic Astrology is Planetary Magic, which is known throughout the Order and discussed in Chapter 4: Curious Common Magics.

The Ability *Artes Liberales* (Astronomy) is often simply abbreviated Astronomy, and is a key ability for the success of astrological magics.

Astrological correspondences, and the meanings of signs, planets, and houses, are explained in an appendix to this chapter.

## Periapt — Minor Mystery Virtue

A periapt was originally a small amulet with astrological symbols, which contained a simple one-use enchantment; Hermetic theory has allowed magi to generalize this to make astrological amulets as any form of Hermetic charged device.

By creating a special Horoscope for the season, the magus is able to infer the correct aspects of the heavens to create amulets with greater efficiency than normal: the charges resulting equal those that the magus would produce if he already had a Lab Text for the enchantment.

### CREATING A PERIAPT

A magus with this Virtue may create a Periapt Horoscope for a proposed activity, and use this as a temporary, single-use

Lab Text for creating charged devices (ArM5, page 102). The magus must have a Lab Total that equals or exceeds the level of the proposed enchantment. In addition, the Effect level instilled using a Periapt Horoscope is limited to the enchanter's *Artes Liberales* (Astronomy) times 5.

$$\text{Number of charges} = \text{Lab Total} / 5 \\ (\text{rounded up})$$

$$\text{Maximum Effect level} = 5 \times \text{Artes} \\ \text{Liberales (Astronomy) score}$$

A magus may work on several periapts that share a single Technique and Form. A separate Horoscope is needed for each formula he wishes to enchant.

### CREATING A PERIAPT HOROSCOPE

The Horoscope is prepared at the start of the season, on the day of the equinox or solstice. This takes one hour, and applies to that season only. To create the Periapt Horoscope, roll:

$$\text{Stress Die} + \text{Intelligence} + \text{Astronomy} \\ \text{vs. an Ease Factor of 9}$$

If the roll fails, the magus knows that the Horoscope is faulty, and may consider a different activity instead of this enchantment. If the roll botches, the magus doesn't realize the Horoscope is faulty and attempts faulty alignments: the entire season is wasted. If a magus works on multiple periapts, then a botch on any of the Horoscope rolls spoils the whole season.

## Celestial Magic — Major Mystery Virtue

The astrologer uses his great knowledge of the movements of the heavens to determine the most effective times to perform magical operations in the lab, by calculating the best hours and periods to work, by modifying incantations, and by instilling astral influences from the ruling

signs, planets, and houses into his work to gain the greatest possible effect.

This Virtue includes and replaces the benefits of Planetary Magic, which is a required prerequisite. The benefits of Celestial Magic include:

- Widens the scope of Laboratory Horoscopes (from Planetary Magic)
- New celestial Durations
- Determine a favorable hour of the day for spellcasting
- Creating astrologically linked enchantments

An Initiate sacrifices Planetary Magic in order to gain Celestial Magic, which counts as an Ordeal (Loss of a Virtue) for the Initiation.

### IMPROVED LABORATORY HOROSCOPES

The magus may create a Laboratory Horoscope just as for Planetary Magic, but now may apply the bonus to any Laboratory activity. The magus maximizes the benign influences of the stars and planets by working at the correct times, and minimizes unfavorable aspects by avoiding certain associations or hours.

Decide in advance on an Astrological Modifier to the Lab Total, from +1 to +5. To gain this bonus, the magus must succeed in a roll of:

$$\text{Stress Die} + \text{Intelligence} + \text{Astronomy} \\ \text{vs. Three Times the Desired Bonus}$$

If successful, add the Astrological Modifier to his Lab Total. If the roll fails, there is no effect other than losing the bonus; it is not possible to reroll this season. On a roll of zero, roll a number of botch dice equal to the desired bonus; any botch results in the entire season being wasted, as well as any vis expended in the project.

*Example: Astra has Intelligence +3 and an Astronomy score of 6. She would like to improve her laboratory work in the coming season, and considers casting a Laboratory Horoscope for her work. She decides that she would like a bonus of +4 in her work, so the Ease Factor for her proposed Horoscope is 12. Her player rolls 7+3+6 = 16,*

succeeding easily. She adds 4 to her Lab Total this season.

**HOROSCOPE BONUS:** When opening an invested device, subtract the Laboratory Horoscope bonus for the opening season from the number of pawns of vis required to open the device (minimum of one pawn). This does not reduce the number of enchantment spaces available.

**DISTRACTIONS:** As with Planetary Magic, if a maga commits her lab work to astrologically favorable hours, and then loses time from the laboratory and attempts to catch up by working harder for the rest of the season, she is forced to include work at unfavorable hours as well as favorable hours. Because of this, she loses the benefit of the Astrological Modifier if she is ever forced to miss a whole day away from the laboratory. Other than this, distractions are as stated on ArM5, page 103.

## ASTROLOGICAL DURATIONS

The astrologer can link spell duration to the rising and setting of constellations, and the times when the constellations and sun coincide. Although the true constellations and zodiacal signs vary in length along the zodiacal band, for convenience, astrologers assume that all signs have equal size.

An Astrological Minute for spells is the same as a Hermetic Diameter Duration — the time for the sun to move across its own diameter. Hermetic magic does not distinguish between the length of these two periods.

An Astrological Hour is the time for a sign (its constellation) to move from rising to centered over horizon, or centered to fully risen (12 signs, 24 hours per day).

An Astrological Day is marked by the sun returning to the same constellation. This is almost exactly one day of 24 hours.

An Astrological Sign ("month") is marked by the sunrise moving through one full constellation. Assume a calendar month rather than calculating exact periods.

Using Astrological Durations requires a roll of Astronomy. Having aids or desiring extra precision can modify the basic Astronomy roll. The roll normally uses a

## Limits on the Use of Astrological Time

Astrological time varies from place to place, as the sun, stars, and heavens shine differently everywhere. Beyond modest limits, neither Daily Horoscopes nor astrological times can be applied consistently. However, the steady increment in time as the day progresses in a single place is a natural part of astrological calculations and is already included in calculations: a Daily Horoscope lasts for one day in the place it is calculated for.

For the purpose of Hermetic spells, conditions are essentially identical over an area extending approximately 500 paces in all directions from the point of measurement (an area approximately

100 standard Boundaries, or a Size of Boundary +2 magnitudes). A magus cannot increase the area of measurement, as it is the heavens' own movements that bring about the limit.

This limits, for example, the spread of a Group Target (all members must be within 500 paces of the measurement point), and the Size of any Target (which must fit within the measurement radius). If a Hermetic Target spreads further than the measurement allows, then no spell or effect using Astrological Time can affect that Target. (The target may move out of the area once the spell has been cast.)

Stress Die, but the magus can take extra time and measurements and make a non-stress roll.

**New Duration: Minutes = Diameter**

The magus can have a spell last a certain number of Astrological Minutes then end. To calculate the duration correctly, he must succeed in a roll of:

**Die Roll + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. 6 + Number of Diameters Desired**

**New Duration: Hours = Sun**

The maga can have a spell last a certain number of Astrological Hours then end (regardless of sunrise/sunset). To calculate the duration correctly, she must succeed in a roll of:

**Die roll + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. 6 + Number of Hours Desired**

**New Duration: Days = Moon**

The magus can have a spell last a number of Astrological Days then end (regardless of lunar phase). To calculate the duration correctly, he must succeed in a roll of:

**Die roll + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. 6 + Number of Days Desired**

**New Duration: Signs = Year, Ritual**

The maga can have a spell last a number of Astrological Signs. To calculate the duration correctly, she must succeed in a roll of:

**Die roll + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. 6 + Number of Months Desired**

The maximum duration is one year, regardless of all other factors.

If the magus fails the Astronomy roll to calculate an Astrological Duration, he has miscalculated, and the actual length of the spell effect is out by a number of time units up to the error in the roll. (This is a storyguide decision, as the magus won't know until spell ends.) Botching the Duration calculation makes the spell botch.

*Example: Erratus wishes a spell to last ten Hours, with an Ease Factor of 16, but only rolls 11. The actual spell effect lasts anywhere from five to 15 Hours, as determined by the storyguide.*

## FAVORABLE HOUR FOR SPELLCASTING

The maga can attempt to identify an hour of the day that will be favorable to her and her intentions and gain an Astrological bonus to spells cast during



## Options: Calculating an Astrological Duration

**Option: Calculate a Daily Horoscope.** As described in ArM5, page 84, this requires an Intelligence + Astronomy roll vs. an Ease Factor of 9, taking one hour to complete. Having a Daily Horoscope for the target location subtracts 3 from the Ease Factor of Astronomy rolls for duration calculation. The Horoscope is valid for spells cast over the course of that day, but only for the area it was created for (see Limits on the Use of Astrological Time for distance limits imposed by astrological time).

If the roll fails, the magus realizes this and may ignore the Horoscope. If the roll botches, the magus doesn't realize until he uses the Horoscope in a spell, and that spell botches because of the miscalculation.

**Option: Measure the exact astrological time.** Using a spell such as *Sight of the Astrological Hour* subtracts 3 from the Ease Factor to calculate an Astrological Duration.

**Option: Precision astrology.** The maga can choose to specify exactly when the spell will end, to the nearest Astrological Minute (even up to months away). Precision astrology adds 3 to the Ease Factor of the roll to calculate the exact duration. She must also either calculate a Daily Horoscope for the day of the planned end of the spell, or consult a magical armillary sphere. The effect is largely cosmetic, but can be quite striking!

**Option: Consult a magical armillary sphere.** The calculations for Astrological Durations are complex and easy to mistake, requiring the magus to

juggle factors for both the current astrological time and the time when the spell will end. An enchanted armillary sphere (see below for description and construction) can be created that will adjust itself to show astrological time now and at the end of the spell, for both the caster and (the location of) the target of a spell, which greatly eases the calculations.

The Ease Factor of the Astrological Duration Astronomy roll is halved. The halving is done after all additions to and subtractions from the Ease Factor.

**Option: Non-stress calculations.** The magus must know the exact astrological time (see *Sight of the Astrological Hour*) and have already calculated a suitable Daily Horoscope or consult a magical armillary sphere. He needs to check his calculations by making observations of the changing conditions over the course of a full Diameter, that is two minutes.

If he does this, then although he may still make errors in the calculation, you can use a simple die and avoid disasters.

**Calculate Daily Horoscope: Subtract 3 from Ease Factor**

**Measure Exact Astrological Time: Subtract 3 from Ease Factor**

**Precision Astrology (Specify Exact End Time): Add 3 to Ease Factor**

**Consult a Magical Armillary Sphere: Halve the Adjusted Ease Factor (after all Additions and Subtractions)**

that hour. Only one hour in any day will favor the maga.

The maga must create a spellcasting Horoscope for herself, which takes one hour. Decide in advance on the Astrological Modifier you desire as a spellcasting bonus, from +1 to +5. To gain this bonus, you must succeed in a roll of

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. Three Times Desired Bonus**

## The Time of the Favorable Hour

Rather than consult genuine astrological tables to determine when a favorable hour would arise, the storyguide may use the following simple process: roll a simple die read as 0-9 and multiply by 10, and add another simple die (a number from 1 to 100), then divide by 4 (round up). Reroll results of 25 (or choose a number to suit). The hours of the day are most easily counted from midnight to midnight. If the hour indicated has already passed, then either the magus has missed the opportunity, or this indicates an hour after the next midnight.

### ASTROLOGICALLY LINKED ENCHANTMENTS

A maga may create enchantments that are astrologically linked to a particular target or time of the year.

**Astrological link to a Target:** Linking an enchantment to a single target requires a Nativity Horoscope for the target, and may also use an Arcane Connection if available. The enchantment is automatically restricted to acting on the single target, without the usual +3 Effect level cost for restricting Effect use, this is part of the astrological link.

The maga gains a bonus to her Lab Total for this effect. To calculate the bonus, add the bonus for a Nativity Horoscope (+2) and if she has an Arcane Connection, consult the Arcane Connection Bonus table on ArM5, page 84, and add the multiplier bonus.

*Example: Notara wants to enchant her talisman to help make herself fly. Her talisman counts as an Indefinite Duration AC (bonus +4), and she has previously calculated her own Nativity Horoscope (bonus +2). She applies a bonus of +6 to her Lab Total. The effect is automatically limited to Notara only (at no cost to the Effect level).*

**SEASONAL ENCHANTMENTS:** It is possible to create a device that is attuned to a particular astrological cycle: either one particular sign, such as Leo, or to a group of signs associated with one of the four elements.

ELEMENTS FORM OPPOSED PAIRS: fire vs. water and air vs. earth. If the maga applies a bonus in one element's signs, the device receives an equal penalty in the opposing element's signs.

The astrological cycle adjustment is the maga's Artes Liberales (Astronomy) score at the time she opens the device for enchantment (or creates it, for lesser devices or charged items). The whole device has a single astrological cycle, governing all effects in the device, but the particular adjustment is chosen when the maga instills an Effect:

- **PENETRATION BONUS:** Add the bonus or penalty to the Penetration score of the Effect.
- **FREQUENCY BONUS:** Add (or subtract) the astrological cycle bonus or penalty (round up) to the Effect levels used in the Effect Frequency table, and note the adjusted uses per day. If this takes the frequency levels below 0 (one use per day), the effect cannot be used while the adjustment applies. There is no benefit to increasing the frequency above ten levels (Unlimited uses).

Astrologically enchanted devices are by their nature more potent, but tend to be limited by astrological factors.

*Example: Notara creates a wand of Pilum of Fire. She attunes the wand to the cycle of elemental signs, and chooses the fire signs as the device's cycle. Her Artes Liberales (Astronomy) score is 7, so during the signs of Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, the wand has a +7 bonus, but during water signs (Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces), the wand has a -7 penalty.*

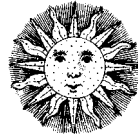
*Notara must choose whether the Pilum of Fire effect has a cyclic penetration or cycle use level. She chooses use level, and enchants the effect with a basic +3 levels for six uses per day. During the fire signs, this counts as +10 levels, or Unlimited use, but during water signs the wand is unusable. For the other half of the year, she may use it six times per day.*

## SPELLS TO DETERMINE ASTROLOGICAL TIME

These spells do not require Astrological Virtues to learn or cast, but

the information is most useful to magi using Astrological Durations.

To cast a spell relying on a measured astrological time it is sufficient to measure the astrological time near the target, provided the measurement point and the target of subsequent spells are close enough. As such, these measurement spells are normally indirect and Aimed rather than Targeted (see ArM5, page 86).



### NEW INTELLEGO VIM GUIDELINES

**Level 5:** Discern and measure a single astrological factor in the environment. Discern and measure the astrological time in the environment. (The caster is learning the conditions at the target location, not at his own locale, so usually extend range.)

**Level 10:** Discern and measure all astrological factors in the environment. This provides sufficient information to reset a magical armillary sphere to the conditions in a different environment.

### SENSE THE HOUR

InVi 10

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

Measures the astrological time in the area around the magus. Knowing the hour exactly subtracts 3 from the Ease Factor of the Astronomy roll for an Astrological Duration spell.

Measuring the conditions at a single point is sufficient, as identical conditions (suitable for Astrological Durations) extend for some 500 paces away from the point (standard Boundary area x 100). Increasing the size of the spell Target serves no purpose, as the measurement area is limited by changes in the astrological conditions, rather than by the magus's spell.

(Base 5, +1 Touch)

### SIGHT OF THE ASTROLOGICAL HOUR

InVi 20

R: Sight, D: Mom, T: Ind

Measures the astrological time in the area around a point the caster can see.

(Base 5, +3 Sight)

### DIVINE HEAVEN'S ASPECT

InVi 30

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Ind

Reports all aspects of the astrological conditions (minute, hour, day, sign, planets) at a point that the caster can see, or to which he has an Arcane Connection. Identical conditions extend for some 500 paces away from this point (100 standard Boundaries).

(Base 10, +4 Arcane)

## New Enchanted Device: Magical Armillary Sphere

An armillary sphere is a complex mechanical device that indicates time and the movements of the planets and stars. By making an accurate armillary sphere and marking it accurately with astrological signs, the maga can set the wheels to any configuration of the heavens, and read off from the wheels and dials the configuration of the heavens at an earlier or later time. The prediction of astrological conjunctions at times in the future is possible because the wheels of the heavens continue to cycle indefinitely and precisely. (The armillary sphere does not predict or break the Hermetic Limit of Time, it just mechanizes the calculations of the astrologer.)

By linking an enchantment moving the circles with a *Know the Heavens* effect, the magus obtains a device that both reports the current astrological conditions and translates between those and some other time. This is of some limited use in Horoscopes, which are mostly a matter of interpretation, but greatly assists in calculating and working with Astrological Durations.

### MAKING AN ARMILLARY SPHERE

A magical armillary sphere requires an actual functioning armillary sphere of considerable accuracy that is then animated by the invested effects. Making such an armillary sphere requires a precision physical mechanism: its markings must be

## The Armillary Sphere

An armillary sphere, or spherical astrolabe, is a model of the celestial sphere, centered on the Earth. Its name come from armilla, a bracelet or circle, which is to say that its form is that of metal circles (graduated to mark signs and degrees) linking the celestial poles, equator, meridians, and parallels, and the circle of the Zodiac (also known as the ecliptic). The armillary sphere was devised by Eratosthenes in antiquity, and is mentioned in the writings of Ptolemy and other great authors on astronomy and astrology. The device indicates the motion of the stars around the Earth, and can be extended to show the planets.

For the practical-minded magus, the wonder of this device is that it may be adjusted to display any configuration of the heavens, and readings made from the graduated circles are available for astrological calculations. An enchanted armillary sphere can be made that con-

tinually adjusts itself as the heavens shift, yet can be adjusted to indicate the heavens at any time past or present.

The planar astrolabe, or simply astrolabe, is a related device that collapses the design into a series of flat disks and has sights to measure the position of stars. It is used by navigators and astrologers alike to measure the stars. It is less suited to the special purposes of celestial magic than the armillary sphere; however, as a measuring device, the astrolabe is favored in Divination (Astrology).

### NEW SHAPE AND MATERIAL BONUSES

**ARMILLARY SPHERE:** +5 display the heavens, celestial time

**ASTROLABE:** +5 measure the stars and heavens, astrology, and navigation

exact for the astrologer to be able to read it accurately (and safely use it in magic). The interplay of cycles and the precision markings makes the mechanism difficult to construct:

Firstly, it is necessary to design the armillary sphere to work on astrological principles. The designer (the magus) must succeed in a roll of:

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. an Ease Factor of 12**

or the design itself is flawed. Then the magus must make his armillary sphere. This requires the magus crafting the device to succeed in a roll of:

**Stress Die + Dexterity + Craft (Mechanisms or Clocks) vs. an Ease Factor of 12**

or the mechanism is faulty. He can use Craft (Blacksmith) instead of Craft (Mechanisms), but with -3 to the roll and +3 botch dice. The astronomer can employ another as the craftsman to make the mechanism, but must then supervise

him throughout the construction, offering advice and corrections throughout. This adds +3 to both design and craft Ease Factors.

**Design an Armillary Sphere to be Made by Another: Stress Die + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. an Ease Factor of 15**

**Craft an Armillary Sphere Designed by Another: Stress Die + Dexterity + Craft Mechanisms vs. an Ease Factor of 15**

The Ease Factors are reduced by 3 if copying an existing precision armillary sphere.

It takes a full season of mundane work to make an armillary sphere, during which the astrologer needs to test, diagnose, and determine adjustments to the growing mechanism, correcting anything that causes the alignment to slip. It takes a great deal of time because of a need to keep repeating astrological measurements as the heavens move and then rework parts of the mechanism.

If the astrologer is not the craftsman but only testing a mechanism he

designed, he may perform other activities — it is effectively a seven-day distraction.

### MAGICAL DUPLICATION

Crafting a precision armillary sphere is sufficiently complex and time-consuming that many magi turn to magic to create one. An easy way to obtain a ready-built (mundane) mechanism is to magically duplicate an existing one.

#### DUPLICATE THE MECHANISM

Cr(In)Te 35

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Group, Ritual

This spell creates an exact duplicate of an existing mechanism. An armillary sphere itself is complex and fiddly, but nonmagical. The precision of the mechanism is limited by the precision of the duplicated source.

Status-conscious magi may prefer the alternative Level 45 ritual *Duplicate the Noble Mechanism*, which creates a precious metal (silver or gold, or both) mechanism.

(Base 5 create metal, +1 Touch, +2 Group, +2 for finesse, +1 for Intellego requisite).

A similar spell without an Intellego requisite, *Craft the Mechanism*, can create a new mechanism, but is limited by the magus's understanding of what he is creating and requires Finesse to match design to instant magic.

#### CRAFT THE MECHANISM

Cr(In)Te 35

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Group, Ritual

To make an armillary sphere with Craft the Mechanism, the magus must design the device with an Intelligence + Astronomy or appropriate Craft Ability roll:

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Astronomy or Craft (Mechanisms or Clocks) vs. an Ease Factor of 18**

and then must guide the magic to the correct crafted form: Stress Die + Perception + Finesse vs. an Ease Factor of 18

If either roll fails, then mechanism is flawed and imprecise; if either roll botch-



es, then the flaw is subtle and overlooked until used in a non-test situation, when it introduces a botch into an important calculation made with the device.

### ENCHANTING THE ARMILLARY SPHERE

Once the mechanism is crafted, it is ready to be enchanted. The mechanism must be opened as an invested device, needing 15 pawns (base metal, x3 for skull sized), or 18 if constructed of silver, 30 for gold.

Two effects are now needed:

#### KNOW THE HEAVENS

InVi 29

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Always on, T: Ind

The armillary sphere continually senses the astrological time and the influence of the planets around itself.

(Base 10, +1 Touch, +2 and 4 levels for "always on")

#### TRACK THE HEAVENS

ReTe 28

Pen +0, unlimited uses

R: Pers, D: Mom, T: Group

The armillary sphere keeps adjusting itself back to the current local astrological time.

(Base 2, +2 metal, +2 group, +1 complexity, +10 levels unlimited uses, +3 levels linked to *Know the Heavens*)

The two effects combined consume seven spaces and seven pawns of vis, leaving spaces for other enchantments should the magus wish.

### CONSULTING THE ARMILLARY SPHERE

Consulting the armillary sphere before casting an Astrological Duration spell mechanizes the difficult calculations needed, providing instant access to current and predicted conditions as the magus juggles the conjunctions in his head and works the spell. This halves the Ease Factor of Astrological Duration calculations.

The magus can use the armillary sphere without adjustment if the target location shares the magus's astrological time (all of the intended spell target is within 500 paces of the instrument). To use the magical armillary sphere for calculations based on a more distant location, he must know the conditions there (for example, through casting *Divine*



Heaven's Aspect), and make an Intelligence + Astronomy roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to adjust the armillary sphere settings.

**To Adjust the Armillary Sphere: Stress Die + Intelligence + Astronomy vs. an Ease Factor of 9**

This takes but a single round, if the roll is failed, the magus may try again (if it's botched, the spell botches too). When the magus finishes his readings and releases the armillary sphere adjustment wheels, the enchantments adjust the settings back to local time. Further readings require another spell and more adjustment.

## The Magoi of the Star

*Wise astrologers who see in their arts a means of defeating the destiny of the stars and practicing God-given free will.*

## The History of the Magoi of the Star

Since ancient Rome, scholars have argued about whether the influence of the planets is compatible with human free will. If the stars dictate our every action, and the astrologer can tell the course of a man's life just by looking at his Nativity Horoscope, are we not bound by their influence? Can one punish a criminal when his actions were dictated by the planets at the time of his birth? Does the ability to foretell the future mean that our eventual salvation or damnation is already established?

The Magoi say no; they believe that Christian principles of free will are completely compatible with the influence of the stars, which are influences, not determinants. A man born under a well-aspected Mars may well be a great warrior; yet if he chooses to ignore the call to arms and become a farmer, the stars cannot make him a soldier. The Limit of Time is a

Divine limit according to these theorists, and only God can have true knowledge of the future. The stars dictate general patterns, and forces that act upon men, but do not actually force them to make certain decisions; the Magoi rigorously refute astral determinism and the resulting heresy of fatalism, where a man has no control over his destiny. Did not God who made humanity with the divine gift of free will not also set the stars in the sky? To assert that astrology is incompatible with free will is clearly nonsensical.

The Magoi are heavily influenced by the thinking of Origen, a theologian and biblical scholar of the early Church. During the persecution under Emperor Trajan Decius (250 AD), Origen was imprisoned and tortured but survived to die several years later. His tomb at Tyre is held in honor by the local church to this day and is a site of great importance to the Magoi of the Star, yet even more important to their minds are the relics of the three Persian magi in Cologne.

The Magoi of the Star hold that despite the fact the influence of the planets cannot directly dictate one's future, their influence is still felt and strong. Many human weaknesses and mistakes result from the baleful influence of the planets, which cloud one's reason and cause unfortunate choices. Only by understanding what the influences are, and by acting in full knowledge of their impact, can one truly exercise free will and reason and be freed completely from the dictates of the planets. Therefore they take an ironic

stance: They learn astrology so as to be able to use its secrets to counteract negative influences and make themselves free of the objects astrologers study.



They claim to be descended from the magi of the Bible who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus, having followed a bright star. Avowedly Christian, they pay particular reverence to the Three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, whose bodies lie in The Shrine of Kings at Cologne Cathedral, having been brought there from Milan in 1164 by Frederick I, and having originally been discovered by the Empress Helena on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The secrets of the magi of the Bible were those of the astrological sciences, and some say the Magoi of the Star are awaiting the Second Coming, and pay particular attention to the prophecy of the end times given in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. They

are not holy magi, however, and many of their beliefs would be looked upon with deep suspicion by orthodox churchmen, as incompatible with the wisdom of the great Augustine.

## The Magoi of the Star Today

The Magoi of the Star are the Order of Hermes' greatest astrologers and experts on matters pertaining to astrological magic. While the group is loosely organized, every member is expected to make the pilgrimage to Cologne Cathedral at least once to celebrate Christmas Day, and many also brave the journey to Bethlehem. The cult's festival is Christmas Day, December 25th, and individual members also celebrate their own birthdays with elaborate rites — both occasions are marked by lavish gift-giving to fellow Magoi of the Star. The cult has recently become concerned with prophecies of an Antichrist, and is fervently searching for information as to the veracity and meaning of these portents. Their divination and astrology allow an understanding of the present, but do not let them see into the future, and even the wisest diviner must know the right questions to ask.

## Structure of the Magoi of the Star

The cult teaches its secrets by direct transmission from master to pupil, with little structure beyond the teacher-student relationship. When the master believes the pupil is ready, the pupil is Initiated to another secret. When a master decides a pupil has learned enough, the pupil goes forth to become a master. The group is rumored to have cult headquarters (in Bethlehem, Babylon, Cologne, and possibly other places besides) that contain great repositories of astrological lore and ancient magical books, but the truth of this is a closely guarded cult secret.

The cult is organized into seven separate degrees of Initiation.

### DEGREE OF SATURN

This is the first degree of Initiation, and members traditionally wear black gowns, emblazoned with stars and moon symbols for rites. To be Initiated requires a knowledge of Artes Liberales at 4 or greater, reflecting a sound knowledge of astronomy and the mathematical ability to construct astrological charts. The Initiate is taught how to overcome planetary influences, and how to use them to his advantage. The Virtue Initiated is Planetary Magic.

### DEGREE OF JUPITER

The second degree grants the Initiate the Minor Virtue Potent Magic in her own birth house (Chapter 6: Appendix — Astrological Correspondences, and Chapter 4: Curious Common Magics, Modified Hermetic Virtues and Flaws: Astrological Magical Foci and Potent Magic), as the Initiate learns how to use her knowledge of the astral influences to even greater effect. The robes for this degree are emblazoned with astrological symbols and are often a deep blue color.

### DEGREE OF MARS

The Initiate, resplendent in robes of red, is now required to actively serve the cult by watching for signs of the infernal, and by actively opposing the schemes of diabolists and other infernalists. As his knowledge deepens, the Initiate learns the Virtue Periaptis. He is often taught the ability Medicine for a season, as he learns more about the four humors.

### DEGREE OF VENUS

Wearing a copper circlet and an emerald robe, the Initiate is now responsible for actively working to gather information in line with the cult's current interests, and must participate in the pilgrimage to Cologne for Christmas Day if she has not before now. The Initiate is taught the secrets of astrology now, namely the Major Virtue Celestial Magic.

## Doctrine of Origen

For Origen, there is no damnation of Hell; all things will eventually be saved and join God, in what is known as the Perfectibility of Man, a heretical doctrine. Evil is the result of the soul's free will, not the result of matter. In fact, for Origen, the soul pre-exists birth, and it makes an evil choice of its own to be put into a body in the first place. The embodiment of souls is therefore a kind of fall from grace. Origen opposed the idea that a person's entire life could be determined from a horoscope.

To admit the truth of horoscopes annihilates free will. According to Origen, the stars and planets are living, rational beings comprised of both matter and spirit. The stars possess free will and glow because they are filled with knowledge from the reflection of the everlasting light of God's wisdom. The stars are even capable of sin. Origen interpreted a passage in Deuteronomy to mean that the stars have in general been assigned by God to all the nations beneath Heaven. He admits that the stars foretell many things, and puts special faith in comets as omens. Origen holds that the stars are merely signs instituted by God, not causes of the future. Divine foreknowledge does not impose necessity, and the wise individual is able to overcome the power of the stars' influence on the Earth.

Despite his theological confusion on the issue of Hell, Origen is still greatly admired by the Church.

### DEGREE OF MERCURY

This degree requires the Initiate begin to teach on behalf of the cult, and to train new Initiates in the mystery. It is the degree where the Initiate also travels most, to Cologne, Bethlehem, and Babylon, seeking out astrological secrets and meeting with other leading astrologers, both from the Magoi of the Star and from other traditions. He is taught the Virtue Major Magical Focus, relating to

the Initiate's Potent house (as taught in the Degree of Jupiter), unless he already has a Magical Focus, in which case he may be taught Potent Magic for his birth planet or sign. The robes for this degree are of orange or amber.

## WISE ONE

Now considered a leading member of the cult, the true secrets of the cult philosophy and activities are finally revealed in full. Wearing a robe of silver bearing the symbol of the New Moon, this degree confers some of the great secrets of astrology on the Initiate, and she is taught the secrets of the Major Virtue Divination and Augury: Astrology (see Chapter 7).

## THE HIEROPHANTS

The greatest astrologers of all, the three Hierophants who lead the Magoi of the Star are said to know many Virtues concerning Astrological magic, and be able to Initiate a large number of astrological Virtues on those who attain this position of cult leadership. The three current Hierophants' true identities are mysterious, and only when one of them dies or passes into Final Twilight will a new opening become available.

# Appendix: Astrological Correspondences

The 12 great constellations (the signs of the Zodiac) and the seven planets revolve around the Earth in a complex sequence. (The magical armillary sphere, detailed earlier, can be used to track this sequence, and by the use of cunning mechanisms mimic here below the great engine of the heavens above.) Astrology studies the influence of the signs and the planets, and the complex calculations and charts known as a horoscope describe how

the heavens influence a person, place, or event.

As described in ArM5, page 84, a magus can calculate a Daily Horoscope for a person, if he knows the person's location, by succeeding in an Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Creating a Daily Horoscope takes one hour. A magus can create a Nativity Horoscope if he knows the target's time and place of birth, and succeeds in an

Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Creating a Nativity Horoscope takes a day's work. Note: Most magi are careful to conceal and disguise information about their birth.

## SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

The signs of the Zodiac fall into several categories, some opposing others. Signs

## Signs by Category

ELEMENT	HUMOR	GENDER	CARDINAL	FIXED	MUTABLE
Fire	Choleric	Male	Aries	Leo	Sagittarius
Water	Phlegmatic	Female	Cancer	Scorpio	Pisces
Air	Sanguine	Male	Libra	Aquarius	Gemini
Earth	Melancholic	Female	Capricorn	Taurus	Virgo

## Signs and Decans

SIGN	FIRST DECAN	SECOND DECAN	THIRD DECAN
Aries	adventure, zeal, dishonor, and misfortune	nobility, leadership	propaganda, scandal
Taurus	determination	struggle, competition	mastery, physicality, materialism
Gemini	mastermind, deduction	fidelity	reason, objectivity
Cancer	moods, poetics, drama	revelation, energy, emotion	research, curiosity, restlessness, and sexual confusion
Leo	conqueror, hedonism	astute observation	ruthless ambition
Virgo	achievement, great tasks	experience, diplomacy	duty, renunciation
Libra	wisdom, subtlety	independence, rebellion	arts and letters, outwitting others
Scorpio	excess energy, fertility	restriction, vivid passion	victory, vivid ideas, intuition, sex
Sagittarius	devotion, instinct	questing	illumination, revealing illusion
Capricorn	organization, coordination	martyrdom, tireless effort	idealism, knowledge
Aquarius	manipulation, teaching	inspiration, convincing others	repression
Pisces	mysticism, truth-seeking	barriers, self-sacrifice	vicissitudes, sex

## Astrological Houses

NUMBER	NAME	PROVINCE
I	Vita	Personality, appearance, and childhood
II	Lucrum	Possessions and finance
III	Frates	Family, communication, and speech
IV	Genitor	Parents, childhood home, and seclusion
V	Nati	Offspring, sexuality, and creativity
VI	Valetudo	Subordinates, work, and health
VII	Uxor	Marriage, partnership, and close friends
VIII	Mors	Death, accidents, and mysticism
IX	Pietas	Study, contemplation, and travel
X	Regnum	Career, ambition, and achievements
XI	Benefacta	Ideals, worthy causes, and society
XII	Carcer	Restriction, sorrow, and illness

## Spheres of Influence of the Planets

The Sun	Influences rulership, kings, leadership, and authority, health, and well-being, and governs the characteristics Presence and Stamina.
The Moon	Influences emotions, tides, any cyclic magic, fertility, and child-birth, and governs the characteristic Dexterity.
Mercury	Influences journeys, writing, books, and messengers, and governs the characteristic Quickness.
Venus	Influences beauty, romance, marriage and the performing arts, and governs the characteristic Communication.
Mars	Influences war, violence, ambition, and sex, and governs the characteristic Strength.
Jupiter	Influences merriment, reason, prosperity, luck, and games of any type, and governs the characteristic Intelligence.
Saturn	Influences age, time, wisdom, and resisting distractions, and governs the characteristic Perception.

are accorded correspondence with the four elements (fire, water, air, earth), four humors (choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic — corresponding to the four elements), three temperaments (cardinal, fixed, mutable), and two genders.

The 12 signs of the Zodiac govern the world below, influencing different aspects of the world. Each sign is also divided into three sub-periods called decans, revealing different aspects of the signs' influence as the sun passed through each house:

## THE 12 ASTROLOGICAL HOUSES

At any time and place, one sign will be rising over the horizon in the east. The sign is known as the ascendant, and is the starting point of the horoscope. In the horoscope chart, the circle of the Zodiac is mapped into a circle of 12 divisions (known as houses) starting with the ascendant sign, and the remaining signs placed in the remaining houses in counter-clockwise order. Different signs reside in the houses depending on the time and place of the horoscope. The house a sign resides in influences how the sign influences the world. The 12 houses have their own influences, or provinces, as shown.

## THE PLANETS

Hermetic magi have developed their own understanding of the subtle astral influences of the stars. Using Planetary Magic it is possible to select an appropriate governing planet for most effects instilled in enchanted devices.



## Chapter Seven

# Divination & Augury

Augury and divination were known throughout the ancient world, and comprise possibly the most practiced magical tradition in Mythic Europe. In the 13th century, the most prestigious divinatory art was astrology, which had become ascendant in the Late Roman Empire and was certainly known to the Founders. The noble and royal courts are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for astrology and other divination, and some say this is because courtiers who have little real power can wield enormous influence over the magnate. John of Salisbury (1115-1180), in the *Policraticus*, complains about the various types of diviners common at court: augurs, astrologers, chiromancers, dream interpreters, and crystal-gazers. This role is strictly forbidden to Hermetic magi by the Code, and preparing a horoscope of a king or kingdom is usually viewed as a treasonable offense by the king in question.

Divination and augury are, as one would expect, a staple of 13th-century hedge magicians, and many forms are less exalted than in previous ages as astrology has come to be seen as preeminent. There is also a link with mystical names. The Leiden papyri contain a list of 37 substances and plants with their mystical names. In England, John of Mirfeld gives a series of techniques for prognosis using magical means, including one specimen of onomancy or divination through calculations based on names: "Take the name of the patient, the name of the messenger sent to summon the physician, and the name of the day upon which the messenger first came to you, join the numerical values of all their letters together, and if an even number result, the patient will not escape, if the number be odd, then he

will recover." Other divinatory practices including casting dice, and writing various talismans that would allow the user to see the thief who stole his property in his dreams.

Dream interpretation remains a very popular form of augury, but opinion as to its efficacy is mixed. Medieval writers were indirectly influenced by early critics of astrology and divination, such as Carneades (219-126 BC) and Cicero (106-43 BC). In his treatise *On Divination*, Cicero ridiculed the notion that the gods communicate messages in dreams, which were in fact merely confused and ambiguous recollections from waking life. Besides, if the gods wanted to communicate their truths to mortals they could find some better and more dignified way than to "flit about" people's beds and "when they find someone snoring, throw at him dark and twisted visions" that he has to take next day to some interpreter. Furthermore, according to one penitential, that drew part of its material from the Synod of Ancyra, anyone celebrating auguries, omens from birds or dreams, or using other pagan forms of divination, including inviting the magicians who used such techniques, was, when he became a penitent, to be cast out if he was a member of the clergy, or, if he was a lay person, to do penance for five years.

## Divination & Augury — Major Supernatural Virtue

Hermetic Divination allows interpretation of signs and connections to answer questions in a manner inspired by the

magus's knowledge of Hermetic magic. The divination is inherently interpretive in nature and not predictive, and is subject to the Limit of Time, like the rest of Hermetic magic. Therefore, it is entirely possible to make judgments by divination about future actions like "Is the Quaesitor Remus intending to visit the covenant?" — the question addresses the future, but a success will only give information current to the Quaesitor's motives at this time. If the answer is no, but later that day Remus discovers evidence pointing to a breach of the Code and decides to visit after all, the successful divination has become inaccurate.

Not wishing to publicly acknowledge the limitations of their oracular powers, some diviners prefer to couch their answers in deliberately vague or cryptic ways when explaining their knowledge to their sodales, while others are unabashedly direct "Remus is not *currently* planning to visit the covenant." This liability of things to change given time has caused even great diviners problems, as their less knowledgeable fellows often accuse them of being misleading or wrong.

The Limit of Time, however, plays a vital role in the defense of augury against its critics, especially in the Church. One of the objections brought against oracles, diviners, soothsayers, and augurs is that by their actions they actually cause the future events that unfold. The foreknowledge of the events is believed by superstitious folks to cause those events, and it is widely feared that demons can mislead the diviner to bring about catastrophic results. Hermetic Divination, however, is carefully designed to avoid both the lures of the infernal and the abrogation of free will that lesser divinations *may* entail.

## HERMETIC DIVINATION

Hermetic Divination provides results equivalent to casting Hermetic Intellego spells of any Form. It is only available to Hermetic magi, as it requires the magus to have Hermetic Arts opened so as to model their divination. (There are other divinatory abilities available to hedge magic traditions.)

It is more flexible than Formulaic Magic spells, but weaker; it is generally more powerful than Spontaneous Magic, but only within the Technique of Intellego. Divination covers all ten Forms by a single Ability but is hard to improve, whereas a magus choosing a few Forms can specialize and exceed the diviner. A magus choosing this method is turning his back on general Intellego magics and choosing to specialize in divination. He is likely to study divination fairly intensively, enchant ceremonial tools, and devise methods to gather arcane connections; the Ease Factors are calculated on this basis.

## METHOD AND ADDITIONAL METHODS

You choose your character's method of divination when the Virtue is acquired: This is the manner in which she makes her divinatory interpretations. Particular methods give a bonus for certain types of question posed in Ceremonial Divination. (Some methods have other Virtues as prerequisites.)

When a magus learns his first method of divination, the Initiation rites enable him to learn the Supernatural Ability Divination at level 1. Specialties: particular methods of divination, particular times of day for questions, particular types of target.

If he later Initiates additional methods as Minor Virtues, those Initiations grant no additional levels of Divination Ability, but do allow him to change his specialty if he wishes.

If he has access to further Initiations, he can acquire additional divination methods as Minor Virtues once he has the Major Virtue of Divination. Additional methods let him phrase questions in dif-



ferent ways and use different tools, and let him gain further bonuses in Ceremonial Divination.

Note: Astrology and Numerology as methods of divination are branches of this Supernatural Ability; Hermetic Astrology and Hermetic Mathematics are concerned with working influences into general Hermetic magic. (See Chapter 5: Hermetic Astrology and Chapter 11: Arithmetic Magic.)

Hermetic Divination (Astrology) requires Planetary Magic as a prerequisite; Hermetic Divination (Numerology) requires Hermetic Numerology as a prerequisite; Hermetic Divination (Dream Interpretation) requires the Virtue Dream Interpreter (which is itself a variant of, and compatible with, Divination and Augury).

## LIMITATION

Divination only answers questions; it cannot provide senses, or allow the magus to "speak with X." This is represented by limiting the effects to those with Momentary duration (see ArM5, page 149: "a momentary spell can answer a single question, although the answer need not be brief.").

Hermetic Divination cannot simulate the effects of Ritual Magic.

## EASE FACTOR

Any question that can be posed as a non-Ritual Hermetic Intellego spell (of any Form), of any range and tar-

## Example Divinations

### DID WILLIAM STEAL MY BOOK?

This is an Intellego Mentem base 10 "discover the truth of a statement," but as the information comes from William's mind, the total would also have to beat his Magic Resistance, if any.

The question "Who stole my book?" would use the same base, but the Target would vary depending on the number of individuals to be investigated. A covenant with grogs and covenfolk would have an Ease Factor of 30 (+1 Touch, +2 Group, +1 Size). A modest medieval city is a Boundary Target, and has an Ease Factor of 35 (+1 Touch, +4 Boundary).

### IS THURYDICES THE REDCAP MERELY DELAYED, OR HAS HE BEEN SLAIN?

Overlooking the fact that using magic to answer questions about a fellow member of the Order is a breach of the Code, the question is really, "Is Thurydices still alive?" Since he is not present, the maga has no idea where he is, she requires an Arcane Connection to him. An Intellego Corpus level 4 allows her to "sense general information about a body." The Ease Factor is therefore 5 (adding one magnitude for Touching the Arcane Connection).

### DID I PUT OUT ALL THE CANDLES IN MY LAB BEFORE SETTING OUT VIS GATHERING?

This can be formulated either as a Group target (the candles) or a Room target (the laboratory). The guideline is level 1 "locate a fire."

As a Casual Divination, standing on the threshold of the room before leav-

ing, the Ease Factor is 4. If considering the matter en route to dinner, holding an Arcane Connection to the laboratory, the Ease Factor is also 4 (Base 1, +1 touching AC, +2 Room).

### WILL IT RAIN DURING THE AEGIS RITUAL?

This is equivalent to the Formulaic spell *Sailor's Foretaste of the Morrow*, Intellego Auram 20. The Ease Factor is 20.

### IS ETIENNE LYING TO ME?

The Ease Factor is 15 (Base 10, +1 Eye, or +1 touching an AC). Unlike the common spell *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, the question is momentary and the answer personal — no frosty breath emerges.

### IS THERE A HIDDEN REGIO IN THE COVENANT?

Detecting a Regio is straightforward, but given the uncertainty as to location, a Boundary target seems best. The Ease Factor is 20 (Base 3, +1 Touch, +4 Boundary). This reveals the presence and rough shape of the boundary.

### IS THERE A VIS SOURCE ON THAT MOUNTAIN?

Ease Factor is 20: Intellego Vim base 1 "detect the presence of vis," +3 magnitudes for Sight range, +4 magnitudes for Boundary target.

If the diviner holds an Arcane Connection to the mountain, the range drops to Touch, and the Ease Factor drops to 10.

If the vis source is to be precisely located, this complexity adds 2 magni-

tudes, increasing the Ease Factor back to 20.

If vis is hidden inside the mountain, in caves or tunnels or buried, a Hermetic spell to find the vis would need a Terram requisite and add +1 magnitude, and that magnitude is needed in divination too, making our final Ease Factor 25.

### WILL THE TRIBUNAL TOMORROW CONVICT ME OF INTERFERING WITH MUNDANES?

At first glance this appears to breach the Hermetic Limit of Time, but what is really being asked is, at this time, before they have heard the evidence, "What is the gut feeling of those magi who have heard the charge is to be brought?" Such a question can be asked, but the answer is unlikely to prove very helpful in making an informed decision, as many of the magi will change their minds on hearing the evidence, or hear of the case for the first time, after the divination is cast.

This is Intellego Mentem, base 15, "pick a single answer from the mind of a target," affecting a group of up to 100 magi, for an additional +3 magnitudes, +1 for Touch (including the caster in the Group). The Ease Factor is therefore 30, but the caster also has to defeat all their Magic Resistances, and is in breach of the Code, having scryed upon his sodales. As some will undoubtedly resist the divination, the answer will be based on those with poor Magic Resistance, and since others may change their minds tomorrow, the caster could be much better employed intriguing, bargaining, and preparing his defense.

get (other than Sense targets), and of Momentary Duration can be attempted using Divination.

In Divination, an Arcane Connection held in the hand may be interpreted as if the diviner were Touching the target (rather than at Arcane Range).

Divination may answer questions about Boundary Targets without the normal ritual requirement.

The Ease Factor for Hermetic Divination is the level of the equivalent Hermetic spell. The divination answers truly if the magus succeeds in a roll of:

**Stress Die + Characteristic + Divination + Aura + Bonuses vs. Ease Factor**

Bonuses are explained under Casual Divination and Ceremonial Divination.

## PENETRATION

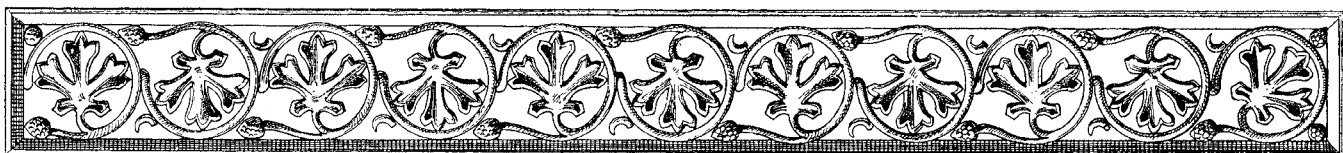
The Penetration (if needed) of a divination is:

**Divination Total + Penetration Bonus – Ease Factor**

The rules on increasing Penetration Bonus on ArM5, page 84 apply as normal.

## Ceremonial Augury Phenomena

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	IMPORTANT USES
Aeromancy	Patterns in the air	Health of nobles +3, weather +5
Alectryomancy	Eating behavior of chickens	Corpus +2, Mentem +3
Aleuromancy	Burning or cooking flour	Herbam +2, crops +5
Alomancy	Patterns in thrown salt	Aquam +1, Terram +2, weather +3
Alphitomancy	Eating barley bread	Guilt or innocence +5
Apantomancy	Chance meetings with animals	Locations and buildings +3
Ashagalomancy	Casting bones	Ghosts +3, Corpus +4
<b>Astrology</b>	<b>(requires Planetary Magic)</b>	<b>+5 +Horoscope bonus</b>
Axinomancy	Balancing a hatchet	Search for treasure +3, detect thieves +5
Belomancy	Shooting arrows in the air	Auram +1, battle +3
Botanomancy	Burning sticks carved with questions	Herbam +5
Capnomancy	Fumes from burning poppies	Imaginem +2, dreams +2, mental illness +3
Causimomancy	Behavior of objects placed in a fire	Curses and bindings +3, Ignem +2
Cephalomancy	Severing the head of a goat or donkey	Animal +5, travel +5
Ceroscopy	Patterns of wax dripped in water	Marriage +1, happiness +3
Cleidomancy	Dangling a key from the Bible	Sin +3, lying +5
Cleromancy	Casting dice or lots	Courts of justice +2, business +3, money +5
Crystalomancy	Crystal-gazing	Friends +1, enemies +2, Vim +3
<b>Dream Interpretation</b>	<b>(see Hermetic Dream Interpreter)</b>	<b>+5</b>
Geomancy	Patterns in earth	Kingdoms +2, Terram +5
Haruspicy	Entrails of sacrificed animals	Animal +4, disease +5
Hippomancy	Behavior of horses	Nobles +3, war +4
Hydromancy	Observing water	Judgments +3, Aquam +5
Lecanomancy	By bowls of fluid	Ghosts +5, spirits +3
Myomancy	Behavior of mice and rats	Battle +2, disaster +5
<b>Numerology</b>	<b>(requires Hermetic Numerology)</b>	<b>book bonus — see Chapter 11</b>
Onomancy	Comparing names	Mentem +2, Corpus +3, conflict resolution +5
Ooscopy	Burning or cooking eggs	Youth +4, children +5
Ophiomancy	Behavior of serpents	Spirits +3, sciences +4
Phyllorhodomancy	Rose bush leaves	Love +3, desire +5
Pyromancy	Observing flames	Ignem +5
Rhabdomancy	Divining rods	Hidden objects +4, things underground +5
Scapulomancy	Roasting shoulder blades	Farming +2, herds +5
Scrying	Gazing into reflective surfaces	Clairvoyance +5





## DIVINATION IN PRACTICE

The magus has two options, casual divination and ceremonial divination.

### CASUAL DIVINATION

Casual Divination takes one round, and allows the magus to observe signs in his immediate environment; for example, the flight of birds, or the exercises of the turb at practice.

**Stress Die + Perception + Divination  
+ Aura + Bonus vs. Ease Factor  
(Equivalent Spell Level)**

The storyguide may add a bonus of +0 to +3 (very rarely +4 or +5) if the omens picked are especially relevant to the subject matter; for example, the cloud patterns as an indication of weather.

(Note that this is not open-ended like Spontaneous Magic: the magus makes the Ease Factor, or fails, although you can, of course, add Confidence.)

### CEREMONIAL DIVINATION

Ceremonial Divination takes 15 minutes per 5 Ease Factors (the same as 15 minutes per magnitude), and allows the magus to include sympathetic magic and devices.

**Stress Die + Intelligence + Divination  
+ Aura + Bonuses vs. Ease Factor  
(Equivalent Spell Level)**

### DIVINATION BONUSES

A number of different bonuses can be applied to the Ceremonial or Casual Divination roll.

- **CEREMONIAL BONUS:** The ceremonial bonus is determined by the relationship between the phenomenon observed to infer the answer, and the nature of the question if the method of divination is sympathetic to the question asked. This ranges from +1 to +5.
- **HERMETIC NUMEROLOGY** (see Chapter 11: Arithmetic Magic) adds specific bonuses for the numerologist's book.
- **SYMPATHETIC MAGIC BONUS:** To find the sympathetic magic bonus,

refer to the tables on ArM5, page 84. Calculate the "multiplier" for any Arcane Connection to the subject of the divination, and for the other factors in the sympathetic connection table. The "multiplier" calculated is then added as a bonus to the Divination roll. Most of the "multipliers" also apply again to the Penetration calculation. Having a good set of sympathetic connections to a subject may yield very high penetration results. *Example: Determinata wishes to locate her shield grog, missing after a night on the town. She knows his nickname (+1), has his signature (+1), and has a lock of hair (an Arcane Connection lasting years, +3), for a total sympathetic magic bonus of +5.*

- Note that the caster can only add Daily and Nativity Horoscope bonuses if he is divining using astrology. For this reason, perhaps, astrology is a popular method among Hermetic magi.
- **MAGICAL BONUS:** The magus can make a specially enchanted device (e.g., mirror, astrolabe, silver dish for water) appropriate to his method of divination. The nature of this device commonly reflects the diviner's method (see the table of Ceremonial Augury Phenomena). The magus enchants the Mystery divinatory general Effect *Enchantment of the Scrying Device* into the device, which may be an invested device or a lesser enchanted device. Diviners often enchant their talisman for this purpose, and choose the shape and material of their talisman to allow attunements relating to divination.

The magus adds Ceremonial Bonus, sympathetic bonus, and Magic Bonus to the roll against the Ease Factor for the divination.

*Example: Numera is a Hermetic Numerologist, and has chosen a copy of Bonisagus' De Theoria Magica as her text. She has spent 8 pawns of vis to open the pages of the book for numerology, making this a lesser Numerologist's Book (see Chapter 11). She wants to learn more about a mountain that she suspects harbors a Magical region.*

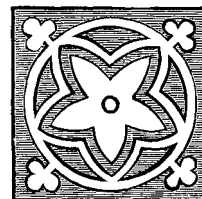
*She is engaged in Ceremonial Numerology, so gets a Ceremonial Bonus of +4 from the book.*

*She has also invested a level 35 Intellego effect in the book, so gets +4 from a Magical Bonus.*

*She has a piece of rock from the target (lasts years — bonus +3) and has drawn a picture of the mountain (symbol, +2). Her sympathetic bonus is +3+2 = 5.*

*She has Intelligence 3 Divination 7, and the laboratory aura is 5.*

*Numera's Ceremonial Divination roll is a stress die + 3 + 7 + 5 + bonuses of 5 + 4 + (3+2), or die + 29. She is ready to start asking questions about the mountain.*



## Hermetic Dream Interpreter — Major Supernatural Mystery Virtue

Hermetic Dream Interpreter is a specialized method of Hermetic Divination. It is similar to the Divine Virtue Dream Interpreter (see the *Realms of Power: The Divine*).

Hermetic Dream Interpretation permits Casual and Ceremonial Divination in a specialized manner through the interpretation of dreams. If a maga lacks other methods of divination, she may only perform divination as below. If she has the Virtue Divination, she may Initiate into Dream Interpretation as an additional method as a Minor Virtue, and vice versa.

When she learns her first method of divination, the Initiation rites enable her to learn the Supernatural Ability Divination at level 1. Specialties: particular methods of divination, particular times of day for questions, particular types of target.

(If she later Initiates additional methods as Minor Virtues, those Initiations grant no additional levels of Divination Ability, but do allow her to change her specialty if she wishes.)

## HERMETIC DREAM INTERPRETATION

Dream interpretation helps translate the confusing symbols within dreams to make clear their deeper meaning. Hermetic Dream Interpretation uses the rules for Hermetic Divination and Augury in this chapter.

This Ability has special uses, described below.

### DIVINATORY INTERPRETATION

The magus may use Dream Interpretation as Ceremonial Divination by focusing his mind through ritual preparation before going to sleep. This takes approximately half an hour of preparation, and he must sleep until he naturally wakes; he must sleep for at least as long as a waking Ceremonial Divination. If he is woken before this time, his dreams are interrupted and he learns nothing.

He may also interpret other people's dreams using this ability, by spending at least an hour discussing the symbols in the dream with the subject. He may use this discussion as both Casual and Ceremonial Divination. The magus may work more than one question into the discussion: for game purposes, simply add the time taken for each Ceremonial question (15 minutes per magnitude) to find the total time spent discussing — Casual Augury questions about the dream take only moments and need not be counted. If the magus cuts short the discussion, he might not be able to pose all the divinatory questions he wishes.

Refer to the section on Ceremonial Divination for more details, including Divination Totals, bonuses and magical enchantments that may help the dream interpreter.

## Enchantment of the Scrying Device

In(Forms) Gen

Pen +0, uses per day: as enchanted

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

The effect may be enchanted with any Hermetic Forms desired, applying them as requisites to each other (no cost for extra requisites). The Forms enchanted (main and requisites) limit the range of divinations possible with the device. Such a device adds a magical bonus of +1 per 2 magnitudes of effect (round up).

$$\text{Magical Bonus} = \text{Effect level} / 10 \\ (\text{round up})$$

The effect's uses per day limit its use as normal, but do not count toward the magical bonus.

*Example: Notarius creates an enchanted astrolabe that he uses to measure the positions of stars as he performs Ceremonial Astrology. He enchants this with Intellego Corpus (Mentem, Vim) — his three best Forms. He has Intelligence 3, Intellego 19, Corpus 17, Mentem 16, Vim 15 (the lowest Form is thus 15), Magic Theory 7, aura 5. The storyguide agrees that the astrolabe merits a Shape Bonus of +5 for Astrology. He has a Lab Total of 54. He has previously opened the astrolabe as an invested device.*

*He chooses a level 31 effect, which is enough for a +4 bonus on Ceremonial Astrology.*

*He also wishes to consult the astrolabe several times per day, so adds 5 levels for 24 uses/day. The final effect level is 36, and (Lab Total 54 – Effect level 36) = 18, so he can just invest the effect in the two seasons he has free.*

### SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

The magus may instead look for a symbolic interpretation of dreams. Roll an interpretation total:

#### Stress Die + Intelligence + Divination (Dream Interpretation)

This is purely interpretative, not divination, and is unaffected by aura and other such factors. The symbolic meaning of dreams is also notoriously vague and ambiguous. Compare the result to the Ease Factor table (ArM5, page 7) to consider how clearly you might interpret the dream.

An Average result (9+) suggests an outline of the dreamer's state. A Hard (12+) or Very Hard (15+) result suggests some or more of the reasons for the dream. Impressive or greater results may hint at underlying causes and con-

sequences. You should discuss the interpretation with your storyguide, creating a symbolic tale between you, and try work it into the story.

### DREAM CALLING

By touching another as he approaches sleep and talking to him about the subject matter, the dream interpreter can ensure that when he sleeps, he will have a dream that generally concerns a subject of the interpreter's choosing. This is a supernatural action, with an Ease Factor of 6. Penetration (if needed) is determined as normal.

#### Stress Die + Presence + Dream Interpretation + Aura vs. an Ease Factor of 6

You may interpret this dream later, as described above.

# Hermetic Spirit Magic

The summoning and binding of spirits is one of the most ancient of all magical practices, and is widely practiced within Mythic Europe. The basic principle of this school is spell binding, which allows the magus to extend spells by binding spirits into the very fabric of a magical working. The term "necromancy," used originally to mean the practice of conversing with the dead, was by the 13<sup>th</sup> century being used to describe both the evocation of spirits and rituals to call up demons, so Hermetic magi interested in this field tend to prefer to use the term "spirit magic."

Belief in magical spirits and in the spirits of the dead haunting the living, and knowledge of rites to conjure them up or banish them, form an important part of all medieval magical traditions. John of Salisbury describes staring into his fingernails as a pupil as part of a crystal-gazing experiment to see spirits bound by his teacher and William of Auvergne claims that he saw manuals of necromancy, detailing the rites for the conjuration of spirits, when he was a student at Paris. In the 13th century, the archbishop of Paris condemned "books, rolls, or booklets containing necromancy or experiments of sorcery, invocations of demons, or conjurations hazardous for souls."

The use of necromancy to cause actual corporeal harm is rare, although it can be used to cause severe, damaging discomfort. For example, a 12th-century manuscript from Reims has a spell for causing spirits to prevent someone from sleeping, eating, drinking, or doing anything else.

Necromancy was also believed to be linked to astral magic. According to Michael Scot, astrological images conjure not only the powers ruling the astral

orbits and the spirits associated with the moon, but also the damned souls present in the wind.

The necromancers invoked God, Christ, the saints, and sometimes the angels to conjure up spirits, although Arnold of Villanova and John of Frankfurt stated that spirits could not be coerced, and came voluntarily, although they claimed they had been forced to comply.

Necromancy and the summoning of spirits is clearly denounced by the Church, yet remains a ubiquitous magical practice in the 13th century, and ghost stories are universally popular. The Church is not particularly harsh in punishing those who dabble in magic; during the pontificate of Alexander III (1159-81), a priest in the diocese of Aquileia was suspended for two years for calling up a demon.

The Church and the Order look with some distrust upon those who would call on spirits. A 13th-century instruction manual for inquisitors catalogs the types of magical practices for which a person could be tried. Forbidden practices include scrying with reflecting surfaces, invocation of demons, use of magic circles, sacrifices to demons, use of human heads or other body parts to obtain love or hatred, observation of the inauspicious Egyptian days, use of charms over herbs, baptism of images, and the use of the Eucharistic host or oil in magical operations.

Dealing with demons is explicitly banned by the Code of Hermes, and those who practice spirit magic must at all times be careful to be seen not to transgress the boundaries between dealing with Magic spirits and infernalism. Hermetic spirit magic therefore often seems oddly impersonal when compared with other spirit-related magical traditions, and for good

reason: Those who would make deals with named spirits and powerful Daimons usually practice Hermetic theurgy (see Chapter 10) instead.

## Hermetic Empowerment — Minor Mystery Virtue

*There are those who see the invisible, who say they hear spirits cry in torment.*

Hermetic Empowerment allows a device to be powered by draining a spirit bound into it, thus enabling a device to create effects requiring vis, such as certain Ritual spells. There are many tales of enchanted devices with spirits bound into them, which reflect this magic (and perhaps similar magics in other traditions).

This Virtue requires the Virtue Spell Binding (see Chapter 4) as a prerequisite and builds upon the theoretical underpinnings of that Virtue. (Spell Binding is a requirement, but is not replaced by Hermetic Empowerment, and provides no Initiation benefits.)

The maga can invest effects requiring Ritual casting and vis use, subject to the following limitations:

- If the effect is a Ritual because of complexity or the use of non- or pre-Hermetic rites then the caster cannot use Empowerment to bypass those restrictions.
- If the casting of a spell to create the magical effect requires special actions beyond those of an instant-triggered device—e.g., "marching the bounds," as in *The Bountiful Feast*—then the caster cannot use Empowerment to

bypass that restriction, and cannot empower the effect.

- If an effect is a Ritual because it has Year duration or Boundary target (or similar special RDT granted by other Virtues), then the maga can use Empowerment to permit that Range or Duration.
- If an effect would be a Ritual to provide vis for a Momentary Creo spell, then the caster can use Empowerment to supply that vis and create spell results made real.
- If as a Formulaic spell the level exceeds 50, and the spell would be a Ritual only because of this, then in fact no Ritual Magic is needed to place the effect in a device (and the caster do not need Empowerment).

Invoking a spirit-powered vis-using effect takes no more time or effort on the part of the person triggering the device than any other device invested effect. This is because the spirit is performing the magic as a spirit power, not as an actual Ritual.

## ENCHANTING THE DEVICE

Instilling Ritual effects into a device is identical to instilling normal, non-Ritual effects, except that the design should note that the Mystery of Hermetic Empowerment was used to instill them. Just like a Ritual spell, the minimum level of a Ritual effect is 20, even if the final effect level calculation would make it lower (see Ritual Spells, ArM5, page 114). Using a Lab Text for a Ritual effect requires the worker to have the Virtue Hermetic Empowerment.

Once instilled, the effect remains powerless and ineffective until further steps are complete. However, once the device is powered, any normal triggering event may be used to create the Ritual effect; just as if a normal effect were invoked, apart from the greater power.

*Example: Ignavus wishes to destroy a powerful magical shield protecting a treasure belonging to rival cultists. He could cast a Disenchant Ritual to destroy the protecting shield if he could touch it and remain long enough to cast the Ritual spell, but the shield has many fierce guards, and Ignavus is*

*not brave. He decides to prepare a wand enchanted to invoke a Disenchant Ritual effect, and to send it into the rival cult's fortress carried by a brave grog who will fight through the guards and touch the wand to the shield.*

## POWERING RITUAL EFFECTS

The Virtue enables a magus to enchant Ritual effects into a device, but effects remain inactive and unusable unless there is also some spirit bound in the same device with enough Might Score remaining to power the effect.

The vis cost of the Ritual is provided by draining Might Score points equal to the vis cost of the powered effect each time the Ritual effect used. Loss of Might Score is permanent, unlike the normal use of (temporary) Might Points that a spirit uses to fuel its own powers. (If the spirit is somehow freed, it may find ways to slowly recover.)

**Might Score drained = (Ritual level/5) (round up)**

Note that this means the spirit is drained and permanently reduced by having its Might tapped, and hence spirits generally are extremely hostile to those who would perform this operation upon them. Any spirit aware of itself is tormented by loss of Might Score, and deeply resents the process; however, in the normal course of events, there is nothing a bound spirit can do about this, unless the device is broken.

The level of the Ritual effect to be powered cannot exceed twice the spirit's Might Score. If it has too little Might remaining, it cannot power this effect. Any suitable spirit in the device can power the Ritual effect — powerful devices may have several spirits bound within them.

**Might Score x 2 must equal or exceed Ritual level**

Since the spirit's Might must exceed the effect powered, the spirit's diminishing Might will fail eventually, leaving a device with a permanently bound spirit unable to act upon it. If other, lesser Ritual effects were invested in the device, the weakened spirit may be able to power some effects but not others.

*Example: Medica's Staff of Healing has Momentary healing Rituals to Heal a*

## Suitable Spirits for a Magus' Magic

In general, if a magus seeks to forge a close link to, or to draw special advantage from, a spirit, then the realm of the spirit must in some way match the magus's magic. Close links include taking a spirit as a familiar; special advantages include draining Might to power Ritual Magic.

For most magi this requires a spirit of the Magic realm, although magi with Faerie Magic can also use Faerie spirits. Those who succumb to the foul cause of diabolism may bind Infernal spirits. Perhaps magi who have links to the Divine could forge links to a Divine spirit (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*), although they may quail at the thought of draining Might from a Divine being!

*Medium Wound (CrCo 25) and to Heal an Incapacitating Wound (CrCo 35). The staff has a Might 27 spirit bound into it: healing a Medium Wound drains 5 Might Points, while healing an Incapacitating Wound drains 7 Might Points. After a battle, Medica is forced to heal two critically wounded companions, using up 14 Might: the spirit now has a Might Score of 13. The spirit can no longer power the level 35 Ritual, but can still power one use of Heal a Medium Wound, which will drain 5 Might, reducing it to Might Score 8, when it will be unable to power either Ritual.*

If the device is broken (or the binding enchantment disenchanting), any spirits bound into it are released. The released spirits are typically enraged, both by their confinement and the torment of having Might drained from them. If a magus takes advantage of the unlimited enchantment spaces in a talisman, and then should ever break his talisman, all the spirits bound into the device are released together, and the breaker of the talisman had better beware.

To contain the spirits the magus also instills one or more enchantments of *Empowering Prison of the Declining Spirit*, and then coerces a spirit into each *Empowering Prison*. Any spirit command spell can be used, or the spirit may be tricked into



## Empowering Prison of the Declining Spirit

### EMPOWERING PRISON OF THE DECLINING SPIRIT

Re(Mu)Vi(Forms), Gen, Mystery enchantment

Pen +0, uses per day as enchanted

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind

This Mystery enchantment can only be instilled by those with the Virtue Hermetic Empowerment. The enchantment has requisites of all the Forms of effects that are to be powered by this enchantment. The base level of the enchantment must equal or exceed twice the Might of the spirit that will be bound to it. Uses per day limits the number of times per day that the *Empowering Prison* can power other effects.

An *Empowering Prison* drains Might Score from the bound spirit, and can power Ritual effects in the device provided that the *Prison* has requisites of the Form and any Form requisites of

the Ritual effect. If a Ritual effect uses a Form that was not instilled as a requisite in the *Empowering Prison*, that Ritual effect cannot be powered by this *Prison*.

When the *Empowering Prison* effect is used, the current Might Score of the bound spirit must equal or exceed twice the level of the Ritual effect to be powered, or both effects fail and no Might is drained.

(General level Mystery effect, based on twice spirit's Might)

*Example: Empowering Prison of the Declining Spirit of Corpus and Mentem, Rego (Muto) Vim (Corpus, Mentem) 50, three uses per day. The base effect is level 48, with +2 levels of Effect frequency. A spirit with a Might score no more than 24 may be commanded into the device and trapped in this enchantment. Thereafter, the enchantment can drain Might from the spirit to power Ritual effects of Corpus, Mentem, or Vim.*

entering (see Spell Binding in Chapter 4). The spirit must be a disembodied spirit (for example, a magus cannot bind a living magical beast, although he can bind a ghost). Most magi must locate a spirit with Magic Might, unless they have a Virtue such as Faerie Magic that lets them tie effects to spirits of another realm.

*Empowering Prison of the Declining Spirit* is a special Mystery general enchantment that both traps a spirit and drains its Might Score to power Ritual effects in the same device. The level of the enchantment must equal or exceed twice the Might Score of any spirit to be bound into it, and the enchantment requires Form requisites for the Forms of any Ritual effects it is to power. It is possible to enchant a *Prison* that can only power some of the Ritual effects in a device, and to have other *Prisons* that can power the other Rituals.

Once a spirit is bound to an *Empowering Prison* it is trapped as long as the enchantment remains, even if its Might falls below a useful level. The spirit may be destroyed with *Perdo Vim* spells, however even this does not "empty" the *Empowering Prison* for re-use.

The spirit is limited in what it can do: It cannot resist the *Empowering Prison*, it cannot use its Might for any purpose other than to resist spells cast on it, and it cannot leave the *Prison*. Many spirits can perceive the world around them, and may be able to converse with passers-by, and attempt to bargain for their freedom. The spirit is freed if its *Empowering Prison* is disenchanted, or if the device is shattered.

## Spirit Familiar — Minor Mystery Virtue

This Virtue lets the magus ally himself with a ghost or other incorporeal spirit as a spirit familiar, using rules similar to those for binding an animal familiar. A magus may only have one familiar, be it animal or spirit — he cannot ally with a spirit if he has a familiar already. If he had, but lost, a familiar, he can later ally with a spirit as his spirit familiar.

Spirit familiar is also known as **genius umbrae** (shadowy guardian spirit) or (by those with knowledge of ancient traditions) the Greek name **parhedros**.

The Lab Total for binding a spirit familiar is the same as an animal familiar: any appropriate Technique and any appropriate Form. As with animal familiars, a Technique or Form is appropriate if it corresponds with the spirit desired as spirit familiar. The Technique of a spirit matches the Hermetic Technique of their best powers. The Form of spirits is usually obvious, as most spirits have powers with effects similar to Hermetic Forms: almost any spirit corresponds to Vim; ghosts may correspond to Mentem or Imaginem, or even Corpus; elementals correspond to their elemental Form; plant and animal spirits are often tied to living bodies, but there are some that are incorporeal, perhaps inhabiting a sacred grove.

## FINDING A SUITABLE SPIRIT

The maga needs to visit places inhabited by spirits, as, unlike animals, they are not normally found in the places of man (summoning, with its innate compulsion, is not a good way to start a relationship — the maga should go to the prospective ally and offer herself). A maga setting out on a quest to find a spirit familiar would do well to research spirits and such places before setting out.

On locating a suitable place and finding a spirit, the maga's next step is to persuade the spirit that she is a welcome ally, and not a rival or enemy, and that she has something to offer. Unintelligent spirits respond like animal candidates for familiars, and are generally positive if they are in sympathy with her magic. Intelligent, free-willed spirits are harder to ally with and may desire to retain their freedom (just as an intelligent, free-willed beast may) — they must be bargained with. Elemental spirits may welcome the freedom to move beyond their appointed place and prove willing allies; the ghosts of departed relatives are often willing to assist their descendants.

If the maga has the Faerie Magic Virtue, she might ally with a Faerie spirit. If she does, then the type of faerie also provides a correspondence — faeries of the woods, of the sky, etc.

A tiny minority of magi might consider a demon as spirit familiar, but since

this immediately afflicts them with an Infernal taint, others are likely to notice this. For those Infernally inclined, a demonic pact is usually a more certain route to power (and both routes lead to damnation). Demons can correspond to any Technique or Form. Infernalism and its realm will be dealt with in a future *Ars Magica* supplement.

Some magi claim to have allied themselves with angelic spirits. Whether they are indeed both pious and impious to have so bound one of God's servants, or whether they are deluded fools taken in by fallen angels, is not certain, nor dealt with in this book.

Eventually the maga should be able to find a spirit whose nature (Technique and Form) corresponds to her best Arts, and such a spirit will automatically be in sympathy with her magic.

### BONDING THE ALLY AS SPIRIT FAMILIAR

The spirit should accompany the magus back to the laboratory, and will

need an Aegis Token, which can be held by the magus, and an invitation to enter. He should trust his ally; however he may need to persuade his sodales in the covenant.

The following rules are similar to those for bonding with an (animal) familiar, which can be found in *ArM5*, page 104.

The magus now determines the spirit familiar bonding lab total:

**Any Technique + Any Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura Modifier**

The aura modifier is the worse of the magus's modifier and the spirit's. The spirit familiar bonding level is:

**Spirit's Might + 25**

Spirits do not have Size. The spirit familiar bonding cost is:

**1 pawn of vis per 5 levels or fraction, which must match the Technique or Form**

## Becoming Immortal with a Spirit Familiar

Mysteries elsewhere in this book show how, with great effort, a magus may become an immortal being of magic. Normally the magus risks losing his familiar in this transformation unless he includes additional raw vis in his final rites. However, a spirit familiar is already an immortal being, and will accompany its magus through the transformation with no further effort.

### THE THREE CORDS

The three cords are formed, using the same rules as for animal familiars, (*ArM5*, page 104) although Hermetic magi using spirit magic give the three cords of the spirit familiar different names, as they have additional powers:

- **THE HERMES CORD** corresponds to the golden cord, but also adds to any



## Sample Powers

### MENTAL COMMUNICATION

As in the example in ArM5.

### SHARED SENSES

As in the example in ArM5.

### LOCATION

As in the example in ArM5, except it is Intellego Mentem to find the spirit familiar (the magus may be able to substitute a different Form if it is appropriate to the spirit.)

### SPEECH

Allow the spirit to make audible sounds requires Creo Imaginem, base level 1 + 2 magnitudes to make clear sounds as directed, +1 for Touch. The duration needs to be Concentration, with the bond maintaining concentration, for a final level of 10. The maga needs to maintain the ability at sunrise and sunset, but can reactivate it once per day if she forgets.

### PHANTOM

Making a spirit visible is Muto Mentem (Imaginem requisite), base level 15, +1 for Touch. The duration needs to be Concentration, with the bond maintaining concentration. Since it is useful to end the effect and become invisible again, it is worth increasing the uses per

day: 24 uses per day adds 5 levels, for a final level of 35.

### APPARITION

Allowing the spirit familiar to manifest itself in a variety of ways requires Creo Imaginem. The spirit familiar itself is affected, so cannot use a visual Apparition at the same time as a Phantom power. Choose a base level for the number of senses, and the complexity of appearance, and whether the image moves or not. A simple Apparition power at the base guidelines provides a single narrow category ("a horse," "a man," "a boulder" — as in the examples in ArM5 Imaginem spells). By adding 1 or 2 magnitudes to the base level, the maga gains a degree of flexibility as to the apparition image. Concentration duration with the bond maintaining concentration is useful, as are a number of uses per day. (+1 magnitude, +5 levels to maintain concentration, +5 levels for 24 uses per day)

Examples include:

**Illusory object** — base 1 (simple, static), +1 for flexibility to cover any household item: level 13 for 24 uses per day.

**Illusory chill** — base 2 (simple, moves with spirit), makes anyone within the man-sized volume occupied by the spirit feel a "chill" — level 13 for 24 uses

per day. (The power does not actually lower temperature.)

### CORPOREALITY

Making a spirit solid is Muto Mentem with a Form requisite. This is usually Corpus, but may be Animal or Herbam for nature spirits. Elemental spirits can appear as a portion of their native Element, or in an appropriate human or animal shape. The bond effect is then: MuMe(Form) level 25, +1 for Touch. The duration needs to be Concentration, with the bond maintaining concentration. Since it is useful to end the effect and become incorporeal again, it is worth increasing the uses per day: 24 uses per day adds 5 levels, for a final level of 45. Many spirits value this power, and may gain an initial bias toward a maga who promises to enchant this power for them.

### INCORPOREALITY

Allowing the magus to take ghostly form requires Muto Corpus with an Auram requisite: level 30, +1 for Touch. The duration needs to be Concentration, with the bond maintaining concentration. Since it is useful to end the effect and become corporeal again, it is worth increasing the uses per day: 24 uses per day adds 5 levels, for a final level of 50.

rolls involving Enigmatic Wisdom (even if the magus lacks Enigmatic Wisdom).

- **THE ISIS CORD** corresponds to the silver cord, but also adds to Lab Totals and Casting Score involving spirits.
- **THE HEKATE CORD** corresponds to the bronze cord, but in addition, the magus can apply his Hekate Cord score to any Stamina roll (including Fatigue rolls) if his spirit familiar spends 1 point of Might. The bonuses are cumulative, so by spending 3 Might points he gains a bonus of (Hekate score) x 3. Up to 5 Might points may be spent on one roll. Likewise, he can give his spirit familiar a number of Temporary Might

points equal to his bond score by spending 1 level of Fatigue (once spent, Temporary Might points do not naturally regenerate). Might points gained this way but left unused disappear once he recovers the Fatigue level spent.

## THE BONDED SPIRIT FAMILIAR

As with a familiar, the magus and spirit familiar both gain the Minor Virtue True Friend, relating to the other half of the partnership, and the Personality Trait Loyal (partner) +3. The magus and spirit familiar are magically linked — each serves as an Arcane Connection to the

other, and neither needs to overcome the other's Magic Resistance. The spirit uses the better of its Magic Resistance or the magus's Form resistance, but neither stacks with Parma Magica; alternatively the magus may choose to use the spirit familiar's Magic Resistance but this does not stack with Parma Magica. The spirit familiar gains a score equal to the magus in any language he knows (unless the spirit knew the language better before), and can understand any language understood by its ally. It cannot learn Hermetic magic, although it can learn Magic Theory and assist in the laboratory if it has magical assistance or powers to enable it to manipulate objects in the laboratory.

The spirit retains any powers it had before the bonding.

You must determine the characteristics of the spirit: it has the three Characteristics Intelligence, Perception, and Communication. If the spirit was not intelligent before the ritual of bonding, then it is made intelligent by the bond.

In game terms, you may determine its three Characteristics as if it were a character, using the pyramid scale to purchase positive and negative scores. You have (Might/5) pyramid points to start with, rather than the 7 points of a normal character.

The initial bond grants the magus the power to understand the silent speech of his familiar, but the familiar relies on the magus's spoken words. Silent communication by the magus and giving the spirit the ability to speak to others require empowering the bond with magical effects. Those who can understand the silent speech of spirits (such as those with Second Sight) may "overhear" the basic silent speech of this spirit — enchanted bond effects permit the spirit to place words directly in the mind of the magus without being overheard.

## EMPOWERING THE BOND

The normal familiar rules apply directly to empowering the bond with a spirit familiar, including the limit that the bond powers must target the magus, spirit familiar or both.

## Inscription on the Soul — Minor Mystery Virtue

*Inscription on the Soul is a vainglorious title for an ability that encompasses the spirit only, for the immortal soul is of the Divine and beyond any influence of Magic: this is naught but a spirit talisman.*

This Virtue lets the magus enchant his spirit or body as his talisman. A magus may only have one talisman at any given time, so any previous talisman must be destroyed.

Mystery Cults teaching Inscription on the Soul often make the Sacrifice of the

previous talisman a Major Sacrifice for the Initiation Ritual. If the magus did not have a talisman beforehand, he has to make one so as to have a Sacrifice to offer.

The magus's spirit and body are opened initially with 15 pawns of vis (as if "bone and flesh" and "huge" Size in the Material and Size table), requiring a Magic Theory score of 8. The special abilities of the Verditiis Mystery do not apply to Inscription on the Soul, which has its roots in other ancient mysteries.

The vis is consumed during the Initiation ritual, and the maga must then immediately spend an undisturbed season completing the attunement as a talisman, or the vis and opening is lost and must be tried again. Once attuned as a talisman, the maga may reopen the enchantment in another season, and invest more vis to create further enchantment spaces, with no limit other than available time and the vis he may manipulate each season.

## ENCHANTMENT AND MAGICAL ATTUNEMENTS

A magus gains the usual talisman bonus of +5 to Lab Total for enchantments to his talisman, for his close connection to the talisman.

In addition, his body and spirit qualify for effect expiry as if they would expire in 70 years — the Biblical three-score-and-ten (although, in fact, they will not expire until the magus dies, and sometimes not even then). As such, the enchantment excess (Lab Total – modified effect level) is doubled, as per the table on ArM5, page 99.

One of the functions of a talisman is the attunement of Shape and Material Bonus effects for spellcasting. As with any other talisman, the magus may use Shape and Material Bonuses, and may use any item incorporated into his body. The human body and spirit only support a limited number of effects, derived directly from his own shape and substance; for example: human bone, human skull (as listed in ArM5, page 110).

Magi are rarely satisfied with such a restricted range, and so have devised means to incorporate other elements into their bodies.

## Hermetic Empowerment and Inscription on the Soul

The Mystery of Hermetic Empowerment permits spirits to be enchanted into a magical device (including a talisman), and for the device to have and trigger Ritual Magic effects. It is possible to combine Hermetic Empowerment with this Virtue: instilling the *Empowering Prison* Mystery enchantment and binding a spirit into a maga's body or spirit is so intimate and unnatural that it inflicts a Warping Point; triggering a Ritual effect is sufficiently powerful that it too inflicts a Warping Point.

## SPIRIT VS. BODY ENCHANTMENTS

Normally it makes no difference whether spirit or body is enchanted: an enchantment of either affects the other, just like the enchantments shared with a familiar.

If the difference matters, then assume the enchantment is of the spirit, unless the magus uses any Shape and Material Bonuses deriving from his physical body. If the magus uses *Blending With Substance*, this is also an enchantment of the body.

The difference between enchanting body and spirit does matter to the special rituals of the Mystery of the Living Ghost, detailed below. Magi who plan to become a Living Ghost should avoid enchanting their bodies, and remain pure and spirit-only.

## BLENDING WITH SUBSTANCE

This is an enchantment effect that permits the magus to take a small item and embed it within his flesh so as to incorporate it within his substance. Such an item can later be attuned for talisman bonuses. Not all items can be plausibly incorporated, but crystals, small objects, and some animal body parts can be. Some substances are also toxic, and the magus cannot use magic to tame the substance



## The Great or Consummate Talisman

The magus does not benefit from the Minor Virtue Great Talisman (Chapter 10), as Blending With Substance already permits him to abuse his body in this way. He does benefit from the Major Virtue Consummate Talisman and may then instill Muto Vim effects and Names of Power into himself.

If a magus wishes to Initiate Consummate Talisman, he does not need Great Talisman as a prerequisite if he has Inscription on the Soul. Consummate Talisman does not replace Inscription On The Soul in the way that it replaces Great Talisman; the Initiate gains no Ordeal bonus from having Inscription on the Soul.

The magus can accept the required Ordeal of Deleterious Circumstance, but in practice need not worry about loss of his talisman.

without losing its effectiveness — he can alter himself, although that leads to long-term warping. (Blending with Substance is similar to the Virtue Great Talisman; see Chapter 10: The Great Talisman.)

Distorting the body by incorporating foreign substances always inflicts a Warping Point on the magus. The method used is:

- Determine the highest bonus the item offers, for example a sapphire has three bonuses: +2, +2, and +3; a snake tongue has a +6 and +3 bonus.
- Total the highest bonus, and half the sum of any other bonuses, and multiply by 5 to get an effect level. (Sapphire is  $5 \times (3 + (2+2)/2) = 25$ ; snake tongue is  $5 \times (6 + 3/2) = 40$ ; round up when dividing by 2, and then multiply by 5.
- The magus must enchant a Rego Vim effect with Muto, Corpus, and (Form of item) requisites, of the level calculated above.
- If the level of the effect has level 30 or above (a "high-power" effect), then

## Vulgar Alchemy and Blending With Substance

Vulgar Alchemy (see Chapter 5: Hermetic Alchemy, Vulgar Alchemy) allows the magus to discover new Shape and Material items. However when first discovered, they only apply to Vulgar Alchemy enchantments of charged and lesser enchanted devices. To use such an item in Blending With Substance requires the magus to experiment further until he has incorporated the new item fully into Hermetic theory. (That is, when he is able to write a tractatus about the bonus item, according to the Vulgar Alchemy rules.)

the caster suffers a second separate Warping Point. He cannot negate this penalty by "designing the effect for himself," as the effect is for the item incorporated.

Once he has incorporated the item into his body, he may attune any of its bonuses. He may attune one bonus in the first season of incorporation. *Blending with Substance* ties the enchantment to his Body as well as his spirit.

### TALISMAN CONNECTION

Although the normal benefits of being connected at Range: Personal and via an Arcane Connection and sharing Magic Resistance might seem moot for body and spirit, there is a similar benefit: If the magus's spirit leaves his body by some means, then body and spirit remain connected as if at Personal Range, and both share the magus's full magic resistance.

Magic Resistance of separated body and spirit varies, but typically the active magic and active resistance (Parma Magica) leaves with the spirit, and the body is protected by Form scores only.

The body and spirit also remain Arcane Connections to one another while separated. The link to the magus' spirit, once established, cannot be severed by

any known means, other than by death or Final Twilight. The enchantments in his spirit can only be removed by Disenchantment Ritual Magic; enchantments in his Body are also destroyed if the body is physically destroyed. Removal or destruction of the effects bound into his talisman can result in Twilight, insanity, or death.

## Living Ghost — Major Hermetic Mystery Virtue

This terrible and mysterious rite teaches the secret of binding a willing magus's spirit to an area (the **Haunt**) before death, and then ritually murdering him so as to allow him to become a free-willed ghost. Suicide is, of course, a mortal sin, and this rite has been suppressed and is regarded with horror by many sane magi.

Unlike many true ghosts, the Living Ghost retains his consciousness, abilities, and the ability to learn; however, some personality traits are modified or eliminated by the lack of a body (see Ghosts in *Ars Magica*, in this chapter).

Note also that one's protection under the Code of Hermes nominally ends at death; while he may retain sympathy and friendship with his sodales, all Hermetic status and legal protections are immediately lost. However Living Ghosts are very rare, and the issue has never been tested at Tribunal.

The binding and ritual murder is a form of Mystery Ordeal, discovered as part of the Initiated Virtue Living Ghost. The transformation requires a long preparation, expressed in game terms by the invention and casting of Mystery Ritual Magic spells.

### PREPARING FOR THE TRANSFORMATION

The magus must invent versions of the Mystery spells *Bind the Living Ghost* and *Transformation of the Living Ghost*. The rituals are described in terms of Hermetic

spells, but this is just to describe the process of working in the laboratory to prepare them — they are really time-consuming preparations for the coming Ordeal of death. Each magus requires his own unique versions of these spells, and only magi Initiated into the Mystery of the Living Ghost can invent or cast the spells.

#### BIND THE LIVING GHOST

Cr(Pe/Re)Me(Co) (30 + area Size)

R: Per, D: Special, T: varies, Mystery Ritual

The magus's *Bind the Living Ghost* Ritual defines his Haunt, the area his ghost is bound to, which provides a place of safety within which the ghost is immune to the call of death. This is the culmination of the Mystery, in which the magus dies, and his body crumbles away not even leaving dust — there must be nothing left to tie the magus to life, only his Haunt.

The magus must increase the design target of the spell to one of the area Targets: Circle, Room, Structure, or Boundary, and may increase the Size beyond the basic Size. (Circle Target appears to offer an easy design level, but is very risky due to the number of rolls needed to scribe a circle correctly (see ArM5, page 112: Ring) and the ease with which the scribed circle may be broken. Boundary is the favored Target.)

Note the number of levels used to increase the target size, as it is used in the design of *Transformation of the Living Ghost*.

(Base 30, + magnitudes to increase area from Individual)

*Example: Graculus is preparing to become a Living Ghost, and chooses a generous Haunt, an area about 1,000 paces across (Boundary +2 magnitudes). His Bind The Living Ghost Ritual will be level 60 (base 30 +30 to increase Size). The Haunt includes his laboratory and the tower in which he has lived and worked, and the area around it, limited by a low wall that the grogs build to his instruction.*

#### TRANSFORMATION OF THE LIVING GHOST

(Te)(Fo) Gen

R: Per, D: Special, T: Ind, Mystery Ritual

This is a unique transformation, specific to the individual magus. The spell uses his best Arts, and defines his power

as a ghost. There is a transformation limit to the Might Score he may achieve, equal to his best Technique and Form combination, including Puissant Arts, and any applicable Magical Focus; e.g., self-transformation, death, or ghosts and corpses.

#### Transformation Limit = Best Technique and Form Combination

The magus must also include levels in the spell design for the size of Haunt in his *Bind the Living Ghost* Ritual

#### Size Levels = Levels Added to Increase Target of Bind the Living Ghost

*Example: Graculus' best combination is Rego (28) Mentem (26). He has a Major Magical Focus in Necromancy (ghosts and corpses), so his maximum transformation limit is  $28 + (2 \times 26)$  or 80.*

*He chose a 1,000-pace area (Boundary +2 magnitudes) as his Haunt, which increases Bind the Living Ghost by 30 levels. He must dedicate 30 levels of his transformation limit to match the size of Haunt.*

The base level of the Ritual (before additions for Size) determines the Living Ghost's Might Score after transformation, but Might Score cannot exceed his transformation limit. In addition, the final level of the Ritual must be at least equal to the transformation limit.

#### Might Score = Ritual Spell Level – Size Levels

The Might Score is limited by the transformation limit. The Ritual spell level must equal or exceed the transformation limit.

*Example: Graculus' transformation limit is 80 so the final spell level must be at least 80: he plans a spell of exactly that level. (His ultimate limit is whatever he can devise with his Lab Total.) His Haunt requires 30 levels, so his Might Score will be  $(80 - 30) = 50$ .*

*His ritual is thus The Living Ghost, Rego Mentem 80, Pers, Mom, Boundary +2, and provides him with a Might of 50. He can expect an immortal existence as an extremely powerful spirit. Without the Magical Focus, he would have been much more limited and forced to trade Might for the size of Haunt.*

## A LIVING GHOST

To invoke the transformation, the magus casts *Transformation of the Living Ghost* to prepare the spirit to accept a Might Score, and then *Bind The Living Ghost*, which destroys the body and binds the spirit to the Haunt.

The magus only gets one chance to perform this Ordeal, as he dies whatever the result. If he succeeds, he gains Magic Might and becomes a ghost: an immortal, unaging spirit. (See Appendix A: Immortal Magi for descriptions and rules for immortals and immortal magi.)

Becoming a Living Ghost transforms the magus's spirit into something more powerful and more flexible than the ghost of a dead person. Living Ghosts, as the name implies, are akin to the free spirits that roam Mythic Europe: They are fully aware of themselves and their situation, retain full memory and form new memories normally, and may learn and change (although their immortal nature makes this difficult). A Living Ghost has no more or less reason to continue its existence than a living being and cannot be laid to rest simply by completing a task, like a many simple, dead, ghost, as it has chosen immortality by these means and retains its will and purpose. It is, however, dependent on the continued link to its Haunt.

As detailed below (Ghosts in Ars Magica), ghosts retain all their characteristics except solidity. They are insubstantial to the real world but appear solid to other ghosts and insubstantial spirits.

The magus retains a link to his talisman, and may continue to enchant and improve it. If he used Inscription on the Soul to enchantment his spirit, then those enchantments continue, and he may continue to enchant the spirit directly. Otherwise he must protect and care for the physical talisman, and hide it carefully within the Haunt.



## Ghosts in Ars Magica

*The following first appeared in Calebais: The Broken Covenant, but is repeated here as it is important to define ghosts properly.*

Many ghosts are dark, sinister souls, living tormented existences in the physical world without being able to affect it in any real way. They are often confused, sometimes violently insane, and may hate and fear the living or take pleasure in sharing their suffering. Others may be of good heart and only seek to put right what their passing made wrong, or have become ghosts because they lived too long in a magical aura. Ghosts are as individual as living beings, and each has its own distinct personality.

The appearance of ghosts can vary, from seeming completely substantial, so real that they even feel solid, to simply a luminous haze in the air with only vague similarities to the human form. Most ghosts can become invisible at will, hidden except to those possessed of Second Sight or similar abilities, but only a few can come close to a state resembling solidity; most remain translucent and rippled, like a reflection in deep water. As they spend their Might Pool, they also lose their clarity, fading away completely when exhausted.

Apart from coming to terms with their noncorporeal nature, ghosts cannot learn or change; they are trapped with the mindset and skills they when they died. They may be able to teach others some of what they knew, but the distance of the grave combined with the difficulty of maintaining their existence means that they tend to forget what they are

doing very easily. Characters studying from a ghost must start over each day of study, reintroducing themselves every time. This is frustrating for the character and for the ghost, and should be more trouble than it is worth.

Many ghosts do not realize they are dead, and refuse to believe those who say that they are. Only ghosts who accept their nature and have become used to their incorporeal forms can move through solid walls, ignore Fatigue penalties or wounds, or in any way act as if they were not living, breathing humans. For most ghosts, the physical world is as real as ever, except that people seem to play tricks on them or do not always see them. Ghosts are solid to one another, of course, and interact in all ways as if they were flesh and blood. For most ghosts, the physical world is as real as ever, except that people seem to play tricks on them or do not always see them.

Ghostly magi can also cast spells, just as they did in life. These spells are not physical and cannot affect the physical world, but they are realistic illusions. A Perdo Corpus spell might cause a flash of pain, while a Creo Aquam spell might cause a powerful chill as ghostly waters rush past. However, Imaginem, Mentem, and Vim magics still affect the living normally, as can some Animal (animal minds) and Ignem (light) effects.

Most ghosts have some sort of magical power to affect the physical world, even if it is only a mundane activity appropriate to their duties and desires in life. Ghostly magi typically have the

power to make their spells "real," affecting the living as if their spells were cast in flesh. These powers usually cost them some of their Might to activate, but they gain this back over time, and a day is typically sufficient to bring them back to full strength. If they lose all their Temporary Might Points, or are injured or killed by magic or other ghosts, they return after a day or so, as whole as before, with no memory of what happened.

Permanently destroying a ghost is extremely difficult. However, every ghost has fetters that binds it to life. When the ghost deals with the tasks it left unfinished, or address whatever circumstances prevent it from passing on, it fades away forever. This should be a very rare occurrence, worthy of more than a simple declaration; the storyguide should describe the process in detail, portraying a vivid event. A ghost leaving the confines of the mortal world is an awe-inspiring event. Treat this scene with the reverence it deserves, and make it memorable.

When they pass on, ghosts can leave raw vis behind. This vis is often as ghostly as they were, tied to a memento of the haunting, although there are magical ways to harvest this. A Muto Mentem spell with a physical requisite can make the item and the vis temporarily solid, and the vis will change with it. Rego Mentem can transport the ghostly objects, and Rego Vim can siphon the vis into some other container. Finally, even if they cannot move it, magi can always use ghostly vis simply by touching it.

## Hazards of Becoming a Living Ghost

If the magus enchanted his body, the enchantments are broken when his body is destroyed. If he had the Virtue Inscription on the Soul, and became his own talisman, he had the option to restrict himself to enchanting his spirit only. If he kept to this restriction, there is no problem in becoming a Living Ghost. If, however, he succumbed to the temptation to enchant his body as part of his talisman,

then when he destroys his body the physical part of his talisman is shattered and those intimate enchantments and attunements broken; he gains 1 Warping Point for every body- or item-linked attunement that is broken. This is one single Warping event so he must check for Twilight if he gains 2 or more points.

Entering Twilight during the process of dying means that the Moment

of the rituals will have already expired when he emerges, so when (if) he leaves Twilight, he will be dead but unbound, having failed the Ritual. If he avoids entering Twilight, then the Ritual bindings of the Mystery transform his spirit as it leaves the body and he becomes a Living Ghost.

(See also Inscription on the Soul earlier in this chapter.)

## LEARNING AND THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT

As an immortal and unaging spirit, the spirit is now resistant to change, and so also resists attempts to study and learn. As the Living Ghost of a magus, he may circumvent this limit by enchanting his talisman as in Appendix A: Immortal Magi.

## FAMILIARS AND THE LIVING GHOST

If a magus have a spirit familiar, then it automatically stays with him, and requires no extra vis to do so, as it is already a free spirit.

Otherwise, his familiar faces a choice when he chooses the path of death: it may remain in life and lose the magus, or join him in living death by sharing the Ritual ordeal, provided the magus expends additional pawns of raw vis equal to the Familiar Bond Score/5 (round up). (The Mystery allows for this — see also Appendix A: Immortal Magi, Becoming Immortal with a Familiar.)

## THE HAUNT

A Living Ghost depends on the continued existence of its Haunt; if the Haunt ceases to exist, the spirit is unbound and loses its integrity, becoming a normal ghost and eventually fading away. It is unwise therefore to use a Circle target unless the caster is very certain of its permanence — any break destroys its effectiveness.

A Room or Structure can be damaged and even fall into ruin, and yet remain as a Haunt; but if it is demolished and the site cleared, it ceases to exist. This is the reason why ghosts are so often seen during renovation and especially demolition work on old buildings; any changes made threaten their continued existence. It is also why one does not hear of ghosts apparently “walking in the air” on the upper stories of no-longer-existing buildings; when the building goes, so does the spirit. Ghosts do however often regard the environment as it was in their time,



and show a fondness for walking through doors or gazing out of windows that have been subsequently bricked up! Despite this they are fully aware of the changes; it's just that old habits die hard.

A Boundary is the most stable and long-lasting choice of Target. If the boundary of the place changes, the place may change but does not cease to exist; it may shift, contract, expand, or even merge with other places, but in most cases it takes extreme destruction to make a bounded area cease to exist. The ghost

conventionally follows the floor level and environment of the new boundary, although it can, of course, pass insubstantially through walls.

## MAGIC AND THE LIVING GHOST

Once the magus becomes a Living Ghost he has a Magic Might score as determined by the Ritual spell. He can spend and regain Might points like a normal ghost, including:



## Possess the Living Host

ReCo 30

R: Touch, D: Moon, T: Ind

Allows a ghost to enter and take complete control of a body. While in control of the body, the possessing spirit may use the body's senses. The spell does not control the mind of the possessed body, nor provide access to the skills or memories of the host, and if the possessing spirit is distracted and fails to direct the body, the living mind may attempt to control the body. The possessing spirit may use Mentem magics to read the host's memories.

When the spell ends, the host will remember all that has happened, unless Perdo Mentem magics are used to erase memories.

A very similar spell, *Possess the Deceased Host*, allows the ghostly magus to possess a corpse and animate that. *Charm Against Putrefaction*, CrCo 10, is also recommended.

- **GHOSTLY BODY**, 0 points, constant, Mentem: a Living Ghost is aware that he is a ghost, and can turn invisible at will, pass through walls, ignore physical attacks and fatigue or wound penalties, and otherwise take advantage of the spirit form.
- **GHOSTLY MAGIC**, 1 or more points, by Initiative, by spell: a Living Ghost can make a spell he casts affect the physical world, by spending 1 point of Temporary Might per magnitude of the effect.
- **GHOSTLY VIS**, 1 or more points (special), by Initiative, by spell: the Living Ghost can permanently expend points of Might Score, with each point equivalent to one pawn of raw vis.

As ghosts, they still have Fatigue levels even though they may ignore Fatigue penalties. Spellcasting, and spellcasting Virtues may still require expenditure of

Fatigue and inflict Wounds, and Living Ghosts may be rendered unconscious (which causes the ghost to fade away until consciousness returns). Loss of all Might points also makes the ghost fade away temporarily.

## MANIPULATING THE WORLD AS A GHOST

Insubstantial beings cannot directly handle substantial objects, which hinders work in the laboratory and elsewhere. Magi preparing to become Living Ghosts typically prepare with spells and enchantments that help a ghost affect the world. Ghosts can use magic such as Rego Terram to move objects, or Rego Corpus to animate a body as a vehicle for the spirit. If the Living Ghost uses a Rego spell that allows willed control over a body, he may possess the body and use its senses too while the spell lasts.

They may also prepare enchanted devices that function at mental command (and so can be triggered without expenditure of Might).

The ghost can leave his Haunt if *possessing* a body. However, if the possession spell ends, or the ghost is otherwise forced from the body while outside the Haunt, he "dies" and becomes a non-living ghost. It may be difficult for outsiders to tell a non-living ghost from a Living Ghost, but he is now fixed and can no longer learn, and has a rigid, locked personality. (See above for descriptions of ghosts.)

The Living Ghost can work in a laboratory, provided he can manipulate objects in the lab (via spells or devices), and can use vis normally if in contact with it. In particular, he can invest further enchantments into his talisman.

Some magi are content to live out the years in their laboratory, discouraging any intervention from the outside world. Others find the urge to move around from their confines to be too much, and succumb to the temptation to bind their spirit into various corpses, and have been perhaps the source of various tales of "living dead" monsters.

Magi are also advised that Church exorcism of a possessed body can be frighteningly effective.

## RE-ENCHANTING THE SPIRIT

The expenditure of Might Score to take the place of vis is powerful and useful, but leaves the ghost reduced in strength. However, it is possible to restore (or even increase) Might Score. To do so, the Living Ghost opens additional spaces in her talisman, but leaves them unused. Then she recasts her *Transformation of the Living Ghost* Ritual spell, and the unused spaces are used up, and converted to Might Score (capped by the *Transformation* ritual design).

*Example: Graculus Defunctus found himself in a sticky situation, and used 15 points of Might Score as vis, reducing his Might Score from 50 to 35. His Haunt is a Boundary+2 magnitudes (4,000 paces across), so his Transformation of the Living Ghost Ritual provides him with a maximum Might Score of (level - 30) points. Fortunately, he prepared a powerful level 80 ritual before he died, so he can restore his Might to a maximum of 50.*

*He has a store of vis in the laboratory: he spends a season and opens another 12 spaces (12 pawns of vis) in his talisman (his spirit, as he has Inscription on the Soul), and then repeats his Transformation of the Living Ghost ritual, spending another 16 pawns of vis. His Might is restored to 35+12 = 47, still less than his maximum Might of 50. The 12 spaces in his talisman should be noted as used — they cannot now be instilled with effects (although Graculus can still open more spaces).*

The magus can also create an improved *Transformation of the Living Ghost* ritual, if he can devise one and remember it — although it will take a considerable effort to keep such a powerful Ritual using the methods of binding it into his talisman.

The magus may then open more spaces and cast the improved Ritual to increase his Might Score above the original level. His Might Score is still limited by his best Technique and Form combination.

# Hermetic Theurgy

Name magic, or theurgy, is the magical school that deals with the names of spirits, and how to invoke names in magic. Such practices are actively pagan, and would be subject to obvious persecution were the Church to discover them, so such practices are performed in secret, and the cults that teach name magic are necessarily among the more secretive Mystery Cults.

The belief in the magical power of names is a very ancient one, as is the belief that knowing a person's or entity's true name gives a magus power over it. The idea that magical names of power and secret signs and symbols (or *synthemata*) could be used to conjure beings, or to allow safe progression past the magical guardians of the afterlife, was very important in Gnostic thought and its influence is still felt in the magical thinking of the 13th century.

Regarding the invocation of spirits or angels, this appears in the case of Aldebert, a heretical preacher in north-

ern France in the 740s, who composed a prayer to the angels Uriel, Raguel, Tubuel, Michael, Adinus, Tubuas, Sabaoc, and Simiel. These latter appear Gnostic — Sabaoc obviously deriving from Sabaoth. In addition to this, Simiel was identified with Samael, Satan.

High magic was greatly in vogue during the reign of Louis the Pious in the ninth century, when every lord had an astrologer, and in the tenth, when Gerbert of Aurillac, who studied in Spain, was suspected of being a magician after his elevation to the papal see as Sylvester II. In the Church canons collected by Dionysus Exiguus, revised by Pope Hadrian I (772-795) and incorporated into Carolingian law, the use of the names of angels other than those mentioned in Scripture is explicitly banned.

The material in most grimoires is largely drawn from Greek and Egyptian magical texts dating from c. 100-400 AD. The greatest grimoire, the Key of

Solomon, may date to the first century AD., when a book of incantations for summoning demons attributed to Solomon existed, although the text may not have been identical; it is the key grimoire in the middle ages.

Such practices continue throughout the period, and the knowledge of Gnostic magical philosophies still persists at a time when the Graeco-Roman Mystery Cults are long forgotten.

The Hermetic understanding of the magical law of names derives heavily from the Gnostic cults that flourished in the first four centuries of the Christian era. Many of these cults dealt with the accession of the soul through the magical underworlds after death, and the correct names and titles of the spirits that could be encountered there. Initiates learned long lists of these names that would expedite their progress.

Yet these names did not just provide protection after death; as a name was

## Daimons

Daimons are ancient, named, individual spirits: the spirits of heroes and of ancient pagan deities, or the powerful spirits of sacred groves. Unlike simpler spirits, a Daimon can manifest in several places simultaneously, projecting only an Aspect of itself.

Magi do not summon or bind the Daimon itself: the pact spell below summons an Aspect of the Daimon. It is difficult to effectively threaten a spirit that sends no more than an Aspect, as the spirit can discard the Aspect at any time with no real loss to itself. Even if the summoner magically binds the Aspect, it

will just fade away to nothingness if the Daimon wishes. (See also Theurgic Spirit Familiar, The Daimonic Aspect.)

Summoning Daimons is typically difficult, and based on remnants of non-Hermetic magic. It involves long invocations, typically in praise of the spirit to be summoned, and invoking and imploring other spirits, and as such the Church would frown most heavily on it. St. Augustine, in *The City of God*, distinguishes between *dulia*, or praise and honor accorded to a man or power in accordance with their proper dignity, such as the veneration due to a saint, and

*latría*, praise and honor that should only be accorded to God. Magi who deal with spirits and adjure them by name are often accused of surpassing *dulia*, and straying into worship of these Daimons — a terrible sin.

A magus must know something of a Daimon in order to create a spell to summon it (see Appendix E: Mysterious Beings for sample Daimons), or have a Lab Text for the Invocation. Unlike spell spirits, only specific Daimons exist, and lab work alone is not enough to invent a spell.

## Name of Power Spell

NAME OF POWER (X)

MuVi Gen

R: Special (Per), D: Special, T: Special (Individual)

Learning this spell embodies the maga's special understanding of a single aspect of the magic of one of the great powers.

This knowledge provides a bonus to other magical activities, with a scope and bonus similar to those found in the Shape and Material Bonus table. A specific name spell provides one bonus only (even if the example in the Shape and Material Bonus table has several factors). A maga may invent multiple spells for a given name, to allow different scopes or multiple bonuses.

The scope and bonus values possible for a power should be agreed with the troupe, and should be consistent with the mythological nature of the power whose name is invoked.

The level of spell is five times the desired bonus. Range, Duration, and Target are fixed.

(General level)

power, they allowed the Daimons to be conjured, and gave influence and the power to command them in this life.

This Mystery School differs from that of Hermetic spirit magic, for spirit magic deals with relatively minor unnamed (to the knowledge of men) spirits, which it uses simply as a power to allow the sustenance and empowering of the magi's magic. Name magic instead deals with the making of deals and bargains with potent magical entities.

## Names of Power — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

The maga may invoke names of the great powers (angels, planets, pagan gods, faerie lords, and such) in her magic, even if she cannot summon and bind them directly. Hermetic magi can learn to use

## Synthemata

The ancients described synthemata as "divine names," which cannot, in fact, be true, as the pagan spirits are not part of the Divine realm; being pagan spirits they are Faerie or Magical beings. However, synthemata do exist, and Hermetic magi understand them as signs, symbols, or passwords that link the magician to the spirit. Many theurgic spells include these magical words in the formula of incantation, they are required as part of the formula, but do not bring special benefit to most magi.

Some magi have the ability to work the correct synthematas into their magic as an intense and powerful channel to a spirit, so that they may command them through this channel. Virtues to work such magic are described in Hermetic Synthemata and Synthemata Magic.

the names of the great powers as meta-magic — Muto Vim acting on other spells. Most great powers have many names, each applying to different Aspects of magic, and a maga can learn each of them separately.

All uses of Names of Power require that the maga speak the names out loud in a firm (or loud) voice, so that the powers' attention is drawn to her. She may not use quiet or silent casting combined with Names of Power.

In game terms, a Name of Power is learned as a Muto Vim spell that provides a magical bonus equal to the Name's spell magnitude. Once learned, the Name of Power may be used in other specific magical methods, requiring other Mystery Virtues — it is no use on its own; however, with those Virtues, Names of Power are of great value.

## HERMETIC THEURGY AND NAMES OF POWER

If a maga is inventing a Hermetic theurgy (see the Hermetic Theurgy Virtue, below) *Invoke* spell in the laboratory, and knows a Name of Power whose scope matches either the Invocation pro-

## Spirits and Realms

As mentioned in Chapter 8: Spirit Magic, some relations with spirits require the magus to share types of magic with the spirit. All magi can work with spirits with Magic Might. Faerie Magic allows the magus close links to Faerie spirits, invoked to cast spells, or as a Faerie spirit familiar. Diabolic practices let the magus work with Infernal spirits, and Divine magic (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*) may let him form links to Divine spirits.

cess itself, or the effect the summoned spirit produces, then she can work the Name of Power into the *Invoke* spell.

Add the Name of Power bonus to the Lab Total for inventing this spell, and also to the Casting Score when casting this spell. The total value of all Names of Power combined in a spell cannot exceed her Magic Theory when she invents the spell.

If she designs Names of Power into an *Invoke* spell, then in order to cast the spell she must speak the names out loud in a firm voice (and cannot use quiet or silent casting), although this takes no longer than normal casting of the *Invoke* spell.

**Theurgic Name Bonus = Total Name  
of Power Bonuses, Limited by Magic  
Theory**

**Add Theurgic Name Bonus to Theurgic  
Lab Total**

**Add Theurgic Name Bonus to Theurgic  
Casting Score**

When using Names of Power in Hermetic theurgy, a maga does not cast them as actual spells.

If a maga writes a Lab Text for an *Invoke* spell that includes Names of Power, they are part of the formula for



## Gnosticism and Theurgy

Those who practice the magical beliefs of Gnosticism are concerned with the magic of synthemata, and the school associated with learning these true names and using these names and pursuing a magical religion, is also known as Hermetic theurgy. The Divine aura's interference with magic has led to many radical ideas among the Order's theurgists, and some believe the Divine aura to be the product of the Demiurge, God's intermediary, but different schools of theurgy see the Demiurge in different roles.

Most monotheistic theurgists believe in one, good Demiurge. For them, the Divine aura is a product of mortals living lives without the spiritual rites of theurgy. By living lives devoted more to bodily needs than spiritual, mortals wrap their surroundings in the Demiurge's terrestrial influence. Monotheistic theurgists pray to the Demiurge and even to the pagan gods in much the same way as medieval Christians pray to saints, and see these beings as heralds or intermediaries between humanity and God.

Some monotheistic theurgists believe in various Gnostic principles. For them, the Demiurge is an evil spirit blocking the path to the true god. The Demiurge creates Divine and Infernal auras to thwart humanity's attempts at true salvation, which is attained not by conventional religious means but by

magical mastery of secret knowledge and hidden rites.

Many pagan polytheists, on the other hand, simply see the Divine as one power amongst many that has risen to dominance. For them, the Divine auras are nothing more than the flexing might of a powerful god named Jehovah, who has become so powerful that he has claimed to be the only true god. Such polytheists are fond of citing the opening verses of Psalm 82 and other early traditions that seem to imply the Jewish and Christian god as merely the most potent of the deities, but not the only deity.

The idea of attaining salvation by practicing rites and magical secrets takes many forms, but one of the most common is the psychopompic tradition, where the emphasis is on the process that follows bodily death. There are believed to be a number of realms through which the soul must traverse, and there one faces a succession of spiritual guardians who block the way. By knowing the right secrets, passwords, and signs, one can command the attention of these guardians and gain passage so that the soul may continue its ascent to its final reward. The magician uses his life to gain the knowledge of spiritual beings, secret signs or passwords to influence them (synthemata), and other potent spiritual knowledge to prepare for this post-mortem ascent;

initiation into a series of secrets is central to these practices.

Hermetic theorists who subscribe to these beliefs differ wildly in their theologies, but many believe that by attaining the correct magical knowledge one can escape the judgment of God and Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory, and on death that the soul of the Initiate travels instead to the realm of Magic, which is where the guardians await. Others accept that the final path will be through the Divine realm, or even the Infernal, but believe the magical secrets learned, rather than morality or the sacraments of the Church, will be the ultimate influence on the destination of the Initiate's soul.

Finally, and most intriguingly, there are those seek the greatest secret of all, that of apotheosis. They wish to transcend mortality and become as gods, just as many heroes in classical myth were able to eventually cast off their flesh and become deities. Whether this is actually possible, or just a terrible snare of the Devil to lure souls to damnation, is a matter of considerable dispute, but rumors persist that magicians have, in fact, accomplished this, and by being worshiped and venerated, and through the rigorous pursuit of their own way, have finally, after demanding rites, been able to ascend to godhood. If it can be done, few have achieved it, and they are not sharing the secret.

the spell but convey no special benefit to other magi when learning or casting the spell. Many *Invoke* spells that have been handed down contain Names as part of the Invocation.

### INVOCATION MAGIC AND NAMES OF POWER

Invocation Magic (see the Invocation Magic Virtue, below) lets a magus use Names of Power as meta-magic spells to add to his Casting Score for another spell. To do so, choose and cast one or more Name of Power spells in sequence (taking normal casting time for each) immediately

before beginning to cast the boosted spell. The Invocation Magic bonus is limited by the magus's Magic Theory score.

**Invocation Magic Bonus = Total of Name of Power Spell Bonuses, Limited by Magic Theory**

The caster may apply the bonus to the Casting Score of any spell (Spontaneous, Formulaic, or Ritual) that matches the scope of the Names used. (Since the meta-magic affects the magus's Casting Score, not the cast spell, it can be combined with Spontaneous Magic.)

Invocation Magic requires the magus to cast Names of Power as spells, using a

firm or loud voice so that the powers hear his call. (The caster cannot use quiet or silent casting for Names of Power.)

A magus can combine Invocation Magic bonuses with theurgic spellcasting and consummate talisman effects.

### CONSUMMATE TALISMAN AND NAMES OF POWER

The Consummate Talisman Virtue (see Chapter 10: The Great Talisman, Consummate Talisman) lets a magus instill meta-magic effects in his talisman, and have the talisman affect his own spellcasting. He may instill known Names



## Spell Spirits

Most spell spirits have limited intelligence, just a spark of magic: They are not usually great conversationalists. While in attendance on one who has *Invoked* them, they can be seen by those who can see invisible spirits (e.g., with Second Sight). Others can attack the spirit, or attempt to force it to submit to their will. The spirit resists others with its Might, and spells or powers that try to command or subvert the spirit must also exceed the level of the *Invoke* spell that commands it.

In game terms, the laboratory spell design work allows the magus to choose an arbitrary spell and invent a spell to

summon a spirit to match it, rather than finding a spirit and determining what spell it can cast. It is not clear whether the spirit knew the spell beforehand, or the magus's spell research in some way taught the spirit. (Since the spirit's power directly reflects Hermetic magic in both strengths and weaknesses, some argue that the theurgist must teach the spirit; however, theurgists deny this, and claim that they simply summon spirits.)

If the magus has links to other realms, such as the Virtue Faerie Magic, then he may invent spells to summon spirits of those realms; otherwise the spirit will have Magic Might.

of Power and have the effects boost his Casting Score. The actual name, spoken out loud, is a required trigger for such an effect.

To benefit from Name of Power effects, the magus chooses one or more Name effects instilled in his talisman, casts the spell in a firm or loud voice and includes the triggering names in the spellcasting. He may apply a Name of Power effect to the Casting Score of any spell (Spontaneous, Formulaic, or Ritual) that matches the scope of the Name of Power. Add the total bonus of triggered effects to the caster's Casting Score, limited by his Magic Theory score.

**Talisman Name of Power Bonus = Total of Name of Power Effect Bonuses, Limited by Magic Theory**

A magus can combine talisman name magic bonuses with theurgic spellcasting and Invocation Magic.

## Invocation Magic — Major Mystery Virtue

The magus knows how to work Names of Power into the casting of other spells. This Virtue requires the Virtue Names of Power as a prerequisite.

If the magus knows a Name of Power that governs the area of the spell he

wishes to cast, then he may cast the Name of Power as a Muto Vim spell, targeting himself. The spell adds its bonus to his Casting Score for one other spellcasting, begun immediately after he finishes uttering the Names of Power.

A magus can utter (cast) several Names of Power in sequence, and they add to a maximum bonus from all names equal to his Magic Theory score.

**Invocation Magic Bonus = Total of Name of Power Spell Bonuses, Limited by Magic Theory**

It takes the normal spellcasting time to invoke each Name of Power preceding the main spell, so the overall casting may take several rounds. To invoke a Name of Power in this manner, the caster must use a firm (or loud) voice: otherwise he will not attract the attention of the names. If he uses Loud Voice, or Exaggerated Gestures, the normal +1 bonus is doubled (only for casting the Name of Power itself).

The magus can boost his casting score for any spell (Spontaneous, Formulaic, or Ritual) that matches the scope of the Name of Power, as the spell twists his own magic.

If the magus botches while working Invocation Magic, the consequences can be dire — the Muto Vim botch targets his magic, and may have any conceivable effect (ArM5, page 159), including drawing hostile attention from the power

invoked, affecting the magus's Magic Resistance or Casting Score, or (for really bad botches) his Gift itself. The severity (number of botch zeroes) determines what is affected and how badly. Botch effects are separate from any Warping Points or Twilight effects.

## Hermetic Theurgy — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

This Virtue teaches a magus how to invent spells that form a pact with a spirit. Each *Invoke* spell relates to a specific, named spirit: indeed, a magus can invent two spells identical in all respects other than the name of the specific spirit summoned. If a magus invents his own spell from a theurgic Lab Text, then his spell invokes the same spirit as the original; a Lab Text he writes also summons that same spirit. (This may cause conflicts if two magi summon the same spirit.)

The base level of all *Invoke* spells is the Might of the spirit called; the base level is usually all that is needed to summon the spirit. The Range, Duration and Target of an *Invoke* spell govern the Invocation only, not any spell or effect performed by the spirit. The Target is the individual spirit, which has no size.

An *Invoke* spell cannot be instilled as a device effect, even if the device can speak, since the magus must first seal a pact with the spirit, and devices cannot have such a pact.

*Invoke the Spirit of (spell)* and *Invoke the Spirit of (Form)* call specific spirits to perform spellcasting for the magus. He summons the spirit and instructs it as to the casting required, which takes extra time but allows him to vary the spell (in the manner of Flexible Formulaic Magic). The spirit casts the spell as a power, so no die roll is involved and the spirit cannot botch the spell. There are many minor spirits in Mythic Europe, and the laboratory work to invent the spell is enough to discover the name of a spirit that suits the magus's need.

Like most beings, a spirit can only be in one place at a time, which may cause

problems for rival theurgists who have shared a grimoire. However, a magus may summon several spirits intended to invoke the same spell power.

*Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)* calls a specific Daimon, an intelligent, powerful spirit, that will send one of its Aspects to attend the summoner. Daimons may know many things, and usually perform some favored service for their summoner, or the summoner can bargain for other services.

## INVENTING THEURGIC SPELLS IN THE LABORATORY

All theurgic spells are researched using a modified Lab Total:

**Technique + Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura + (Realm) Lore + Bonuses**

If the magus knows Names of Power governing Invocation or the magic of the invoked spirit, he may add their bonuses to his Lab Total and Casting Score, to a limit of his Magic Theory score. If a magus works Names of Power into his Lab Total, they become a fixed part of the spell design, and he must utter them out loud, in a firm voice — so that the names' attention is gained — as he casts the Invocation spell. Those around him may react to the Names even if they do not react to the Invocation spell itself.

## INVOKE THE SPIRIT OF (SPELL)

INVOKE THE SPIRIT OF (SPELL)

(Te)(Fo) Gen

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery spell

The base level is the Might of the spirit summoned. The magus can add levels to increase Penetration, and can extend Duration to have the spirit wait to be instructed.

This generic spell represents a pact with a single named spirit that can perform the equivalent of a single Hermetic Formulaic (non-Ritual) spell as a spell-like spirit power. The spirit can vary the spell when cast, as if it had Flexible Formulaic Magic, but must be instructed to cast the

spell (which takes time). The spirit creates the spell effect as a power (no die roll), so it cannot botch.

A magus do not need to know the name of the spirit before he starts — his laboratory research guides him through the spirits to find one that answers his call. Once the research is complete, the name is fixed, and only this spirit will answer this Invocation spell. If a Lab Text is used, the Lab Text determines the named spirit. The name of the spell spirit serves as an indefinite duration Arcane Connection allowing the magus to summon the spirit and to use sympathetic magic on it (ArM5, page 84).

*Invoke* spells are Mystery magic and use the Arts of the spell the magus wishes the spirit to cast, unlike other normal summoning magics. If the spell-like power the magus desires has requisites, the *Invoke* spell has the same requisites. The magus does not need to know the normal Hermetic spell to invent a spell to summon a spirit that will invoke the spell for him (nor is a Lab Text for the other spell of any assistance, although a Lab Text for an *Invoke* spell can be used).

The Might of the spirit must equal or exceed the level of the spell-like power, and spirit Might determines the base level of the *Invoke* spell. The magus may extend the Duration of the *Invoke* spell, and this determines how long the spirit will wait for instruction — Momentary Duration requires that the caster immediately instruct the spirit.

Penetration for the spirit is determined like an enchanted device effect: it has a base of zero (that is, Might – Spell level), but when devising the *Invoke* spell the magus may increase Penetration like a device effect: each *Invoke* spell level added gives a +2 Penetration bonus.

*Invoke* Arts are the Arts of the spell-like power of the Spirit

**Spirit Might must equal or exceed level of spell-like power**

**Base level of *Invoke* spell equals Spirit Might**

**Penetration Bonus = 2 x added levels of *Invoke* spell**

The first time the spirit is called, it resists and the magus must overcome its Magic Resistance. Once successfully summoned, the magus seals the pact and the spirit will answer his call in future without resistance, and cooperate willingly with his instructions.

When a magus casts an *Invoke* spell, the invisible spirit appears next to him. He may then instruct it to perform its spell-like power: this takes an extra round (or two if he has the Slow Caster Flaw), but he may also instruct it to vary the power, as if the spirit had the Virtue Flexible Formulaic Magic (it may increase or decrease one only of Range, Duration, and Target by one step, within the limits of Formulaic (non-Ritual) magic). Casting success and Penetration are determined according to the increased or decreased spell level.

The spirit will cast the spell once, then depart until next summoned. The spirit uses its own (Might + aura modifiers) as the Casting Score; it succeeds so long as the Casting Total is at least (adjusted spell level –10). If the magus summoned the spirit in advance, it still takes time to instruct it to perform, and the spirit's Casting Score is adjusted by the aura when it evokes the final effect.

**Spirit's Casting Score = Spirit's Might + Aura Modifier**

**Formulaic Casting Total = Casting Score (no die roll)**

**Adjusted Spell Level = Level of Spell-Like Power, possibly adjusted by one magnitude step**

**Spellcasting Succeeds if Casting Total is at least (adjusted spell level –10)**

**Penetration Total = Spirit's Casting Total – Spell Level + *Invoke* Spell's Penetration Bonus**

Note that no die roll is needed for the spirit — it just performs the spell as instructed.

The players should substitute their own name for the spirit, not using (spell).

*Example: Gunnar of Ex Miscellanea wishes to be able to summon a spirit that can cast the level*

20 spell Pilum of Fire for him. He does some research, and discovers that the spirit Akkala (the name of a place in Finland, the storyguide lacked inspiration) is a spirit that has the power to confer that spell effect. Akkala has a Might of 20, the same as the spell (the minimum needed).

Gunnar recognizes that taking time to summon Akkala and then instruct him may take longer than he can afford, so he decides to make this a Sun duration summons: once summoned Akkala will remain until sunset (or sunrise), or until instructed to cast Pilum of Fire.

Gunnar's spell is Invoke the Spirit Akkala for a Day, CrIg 30, R: Arcane, D: Sun, T: Ind. When he has invented the spell, he performs it in his laboratory. Akkala agrees to serve in future. Gunnar may now Invoke Akkala at the start of a day, then later ask Akkala to use his Might of 20 to inflict a Pilum of Fire on an indicated target.

When instructed to cast Pilum of Fire, Akkala can be instructed to increase Range to Sight, or reduce it to Touch, or create a blast that will burn on for two minutes (Diameter). If Gunnar and Akkala are in a level 4 Faerie aura, which adds 2 to the Casting Score of a Magical spirit, Akkala's Casting Total is 22. Boosting the spell to Sight range adds 5 levels, so Akkala's Casting Total exceeds level – 10. If, say, the spell's Penetration Total is 22 (Casting Total) – 25 (modified spell level), or a total of –3 successful if the building targeted has no Magic Resistance.

If Gunnar survives an encounter requiring such firepower, he may summon Akkala again, also to remain until sunset.

Example: Gunnar also decides that he would like to have more Penetration in his spirit's spells, and works again in the laboratory to find another spirit of Pilum of Fire. (He now knows a similar spell — to summon Akkala — for a +7 bonus.) He searches for a new spirit to answer this call (as it is his habit to keep Akkala in attendance each day). He creates an Invoke the Spirit Nissila spell, with basic Might 20, Momentary Duration and 15 levels added for Penetration — an impressive +30 bonus.

Gunnar finds himself faced with an angry hedge wizard in town (Divine aura 3). He uses his new spell (losing fatigue, as he only just manages the Invocation spell). Nissila has a Casting Total of 20 – (3x3) or 11, which is just enough. The Pilum of Fire Penetration Total is 11 – 20 + 30 = +23. Gunnar is thankful for this new Invoke spell!

## INVOKE THE SPIRIT OF (FORM)

### INVOKE THE SPIRIT OF (FORM)

(Te)(Fo) Gen

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery spell

The base level is the Might of the spirit summoned, and the inventor can extend Duration to have the spirit wait to be instructed.

This generic spell represents a pact with a single named spirit, that can perform effects as if casting Spontaneous Magic. The Invoke spell itself is a Formulaic spell, which the magus may be able to cast without fatigue; the spirit then creates the spell effect as a power (no die roll), so cannot botch.

The Invoke spell is a Mystery secret and uses the Arts of the magic the magus wishes the spirit to cast, unlike other summoning spells. A magus may create an Invoke spell with specific requisites to summon a spirit for an Art combination with requisites, however, he requires a specific spirit and Invoke spell for each combination he desires; e.g., a Muto Corpus (Animal) spirit can only produce MuCo(An) effects, and not MuCo or MuAn effects — he needs separate spirits for each.

The magus does not need to know the name of the spirit before he starts — his laboratory research guides him through the spirits to find one that answers his call. Once the research is complete, the name is fixed, and only this spirit will answer this Invocation spell. If a Lab Text is used, the Lab Text determines the named spirit. The name of the spell spirit serves as an indefinite duration Arcane Connection allowing a magus to summon the spirit and to use sympathetic magic on it (ArM5, page 84).

The first time the spirit is called, it will resist and the caster must overcome its Magic Resistance. Once successfully summoned, the magus seals the pact and the spirit will answer his call in future without resistance, and cooperate willingly with his instructions.

When a magus casts an Invoke spell, the invisible spirit appears next to him. He may then instruct it to perform its spell-like power: this takes an extra round (or two if he has the Slow Caster Flaw).

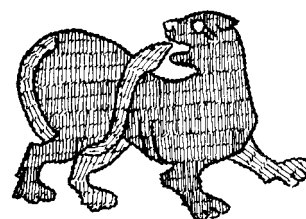
The spirit will cast one spell, then depart until next summoned. The spirit uses its own (Might + aura modifiers) as its Casting Score and divides by 2 to determine Casting Total. If the magus summoned the spirit in advance, it still takes time to instruct it to perform, and the spirit's Casting Score is adjusted by the aura when it evokes the final effect.

**Spirit's Casting Score = Spirit's Might + Aura Modifier**

**Casting Total = Casting Score/2 (round up) (no die roll)**

**Penetration Total = Spirit's Casting Total – Spell Level**

Note that no die roll is needed for the spirit — it just performs the spell as instructed.



## INVOKE THE PACT OF (DAIMON)

### INVOKE THE PACT OF (DAIMON)

ReVi Gen

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery Ritual

The base level is the Might of the Daimon, but should be increased in order to summon the Daimon.

This spell represents the formation of a pact with a powerful named Daimon. The Ritual nature of the spell conveys part of the vis spent as a gift to the Daimon. Daimons are difficult to summon, but with this spell a maga can call the Daimon repeatedly until it hears her call and sends an Aspect of itself to answer her. This does not command the Daimon, but most will perform a specific service when summoned. (See Appendix E: Mysterious Beings for examples of Daimon spirits and typical services.) Many Daimons will perform unusual services, beyond simple spell-casting, and often beyond the limits of

Hermetic magic. Most will at least listen to the maga, and consider bargaining for further services.

The part of the Daimon that a maga sees before her when she creates such a pact is not the whole of such a powerful spirit, but just a part, or Aspect, sent to answer her call. A maga cannot bind an Aspect — it will just fade away, discarded by the parent spirit; she can only bind the Daimon itself if she can find the core spirit in the realm where it resides.

A maga may (should!) invent the Ritual at a level greater than the Daimon's Might. When she casts the ritual, she must overcome the Daimon's Magic Resistance for it to hear her call. If she succeeds, she accumulates points equal to (spell level – Daimon Might).

**Daimon Summoning Points = Spell Level – Daimon's Might**

When the maga has accumulated points equal to its Might, the spirit sends an Aspect to answer her call. A maga can re-invent a spell to summon the same Daimon, with a higher spell level (and a similar spell bonus to invent the new spell). A spell of twice the Daimon's Might can summon the Daimon in one casting, if the maga can overcome Magic Resistance.

**Summoning Success: Accumulated Summoning Points = Daimon's Might**

It is possible to cast *Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)* without the Virtue Hermetic Theurgy, but the magus is limited as follows:

- He cannot create his own *Invoke* spell from scratch, but must have a Lab Text for the spell (or a teacher)
- In order to accumulate Summoning Points between castings, he needs Hermetic Theurgy. Without Hermetic Theurgy, a magus may cast the spell, but the spirit will only attend the magus if the single casting is powerful enough to summon it. (It is common, but not mandatory, for non-theurgist magi to cast this ritual in a group, with the aid of *Wizard's Communion*.)

## The Daimonic Aspect

Daimons and similar unique powerful spirits have a special power of creating an Aspect. The Aspect is a fraction of the whole spirit sent into the mortal world to interact temporarily with others, while the core of the spirit remains in its place of power, such as the Hall of Heroes.

Each Aspect is like an independent spirit that can be created or allowed to lapse in an instant. Each starts without wounds, and with its own pool of Might points (Daimons are untiring spirits, and do not have fatigue levels). The Daimon may have powers that are limited in uses per day (for example, an ascended magus's talisman enchantments), and each Aspect counts these separately. An Aspect does not recover wounds or Might points used while on Earth, rather it is eventually dispelled and later replaced by another Aspect.

There is no fixed limit to the endurance of an Aspect, but they only remain while they are conscious and have Might remaining.

An Aspect is normally a disembodied spirit, but can create a earthly, bodily form at will. While disembodied they are like ghosts (see Chapter 8: Hermetic Spirit Magic: Ghosts in *Ars Magica*). While embodied they can suffer wounds but are untiring; if this body is slain, the Aspect returns to its parent Daimon.

There are limits to this: An Aspect cannot be summoned into a place where there is already an aspect of the same Daimon, nor where there has been an Aspect in the past day. A Daimon's Aspect, conjured elsewhere and moving through the world, will not willingly enter a place where there is or has been another Aspect within a day. The size of "place" that prevents an Aspect is not well defined, but is at least several miles across: this is in part to keep stories simple by avoiding "collisions." This also prevents an Aspect from leaving and returning within a day.

In addition, no permanent changes can be made to any Aspect, as they never last. The most that can be done is to seal a pact with the Daimon to provide an Aspect to attend the magus; this is what a Daimon bound as theurgic spirit familiar provides.

If the Daimon is encountered in its place of power, outside the world, then this is its one true form, and no Aspect of it may appear in that place – except when returning to the place to merge with the true spirit. Daimons frequently encounter other Daimons and spirits in their true places, but almost never encounter mortals. It may even be that the Hall of Heroes is beyond the Lunar Sphere, which might explain why magi cannot find it.

## Theurgic Spirit Familiar — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

This is essentially identical to the Virtue Spirit Familiar described in Chapter 8: Spirit Magic, except insofar as Theurgic Spirit Familiar is part of the school of name magic rather than spirit magic. Also, if powerful enough, a maga may seek to ally with a Daimon spirit as her familiar.

If a maga binds a Daimon, she only binds a single Aspect of the Daimon, not the entire spirit — others may still summon Aspects of the Daimon, and the

greater part of the spirit will not usually inform her of this (as it does not concern its relationship with her). Her Daimon Aspect does retain the ability to manifest in more than one place, and it can use this in cooperation with the maga. Note that, while a single Aspect attends the maga, her bond is with the Daimon itself, and the attending Aspect may be reunited with the Daimon, which sends another Aspect to fulfil the bond.

## FINDING AND BINDING A DAIMON

A magus who seeks a Daimon familiar must research a likely Daimon, deter-



## Immortal Magi as Familiars

The Mystery Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes transforms a magus into an immortal Daimon spirit. It would then be possible for a living magus, perhaps a follower of the cult that assisted in the ascendancy of the Daimonic magus, to ally an Aspect of the Daimonic magus as his own spirit familiar.

This would be an interesting way to draw an ascended immortal into stories in an on-going saga.

mine its abilities as they are understood by magi (including determining whether they are in sympathy with his magic), learn as much as he can of its name, history, past life (if any), its beliefs and habits — and whether it is likely to respond well to the suggestion of bonding itself to a magus. (As a rule of thumb, if the (Technique + Form) proposed for the bond is less than 2 x Might, it is likely to reject the magus as not worthy.) (Consult Appendix C: Mysterious Beings for examples of Daimon powers and characteristics.)

If the magus judges it a good match, then he may invent a version of the *Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)* ritual to summon this Daimon, and offer himself to it as ally. (Noting that use of Hermetic synthemata to compel attendance will not generate a favorable opinion.) Unlike the lesser spirits, summoning a Daimon is an acceptable means to initiate contact — indeed, essentially the only means.

If the magus has judged the Daimon well, and impresses it, then it may agree to join him; if he misjudges, annoys, or irritates it, it may take affront at his suggestion and even attack; or if generous, it may decline his offer but consider the normal pact service for the magus.

If it agrees, then the magus must begin by sacrificing a number of pawns of vis to the Daimon equal to its Might/5 (round up) and it will then accompany him to his laboratory, if he is not already there.

## Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes — Major Hermetic Mystery Virtue

This Virtue teaches a Mystery path enabling the magus to ascend to the Hall of Heroes and join the pagan gods; a process known as apotheosis. The Virtue requires the Hermetic Theurgy Virtue as a prerequisite.

It is favored as a path to immortality by pagan-oriented name magic Mystery Cults, and by the Gnostic Philosophers of Rome. Apotheosis was a common motif in Greco-Roman legend, and Simon Magus, father of Gnosticism, professed to believe he had attained godhood.

This is in some ways perhaps the hardest method of reaching immortality, as it cannot be followed by the lone magus, but requires co-operative effort. By means of this Virtue, a hierarch may devise two ritual spells to enable his ascension to the heavens, or at least to the remnant pagan pantheon (or, as the cruder, secular Hermetics might say, into the pages of the Daimonic bestiary). These two ritual spells are non-Hermetic Mystery Rituals — for game mechanic purposes they are designed and cast as spells, but they are non-Hermetic magic.

The spells are designed specifically for one magus, so no Warping is inflicted for a high-level effect.

The Initiated hierarch gains the knowledge to devise the ritual for his own ascension, but cannot cast it himself — rather he requires a group of celebrants (cultists) who provide the magical energy to the hierarch to allow for his apotheosis through their faithful devotion and worship.

### ASCENDANT FORM OF THE INTENDANT HIERARCH

(Te)(Fo) Gen

R: Per, D: Sun (Special), T: Ind, Mystery Ritual

This is specified and researched as a Ritual spell, but is really a rite of the Mystery.

The hierarch constructs a prototype ascendant form for himself, embodying

## The Hall of Heroes

Little is known by mortals of the Hall of Heroes. In Christian times, most people, including magi, would deny that any such thing remained at all. (Many Hermetic magi prefer to stress the secular nature of their learning, and describe Daimonic spirits as “just part of the spirit bestiary.”) Nevertheless, Daimonic spirits appear to exist, and there are significant numbers of them, even just counting those known to Hermetic magi. Pagan magi claim that the pantheon of gods still exists, if mostly cut off, with access to and by worshippers today confined to the sacred groves, which often exist in magical regions.

The new spiritual magus may encounter other Daimonic spirits; some may prove to be allies if approached favorably, others may be hostile (or part of enemy groupings in the Hall of Heroes). Spiritual allies may guide the new magus, or even assist him. They may perhaps be bargained with for assistance, as all the remnants of the old pantheons desire the “worship,” observance, prayers, and offerings of mortals.

all that is best in his magic. The hierarch temporarily takes on an aura of power and perfection. While the ritual effect lasts, the hierarch's followers cast *Transformation of the Ascendant Hierarch*, in the hope that their hierarch will make progress to perfection. During the ritual's effect, all of the hierarch's abilities (except his future Magic Might) are manifest in their strongest form, although the hierarch is carried away by his own immanent glory and cannot usefully act other than to accept ritual offerings.

The Mystery rite requires the intendant hierarch prove himself and his celebrants' worth: the celebrants must prove their worth by overcoming the intendant hierarch's Magic Resistance with their own Ritual spell. No short-cuts are permitted, so the magus must have performed his full Parma Magica, and manifest (not suppress) his full Magic Resistance.



## Familiars and the Ascendant Magus

If a magus has a spirit familiar, then it automatically stays with him, and requires no extra vis to do so, as it is already a free spirit.

Otherwise, the familiar faces a choice when its master ascends: it may remain in life and lose him, or join him in ascendancy by sharing the ritual Ordeal, provided additional pawns of raw vis equal to the Familiar Bond Score/5 (round up) are expended in the Ritual. (The mystery allows for this — see also Appendix A: Immortal Magi, Becoming Immortal with a Familiar.)

Ascended heroes with companion familiar spirits form some of the famous heroic pairs in the Hall of Heroes.

The Technique and Form of this Ritual are the hierarchy's best Arts, and the level of the Ritual must equal or exceed their total, and a minimum level of 40. When the whole process is complete, the ascended hierarchy will have a Might of (this Ritual's level/2).

Once begun, the ascendant form continues until the *Transformation of the Ascendant Hierarchy* has been performed, after which either the magus ascends as a Daimon, or both spells end. The *Transformation Ritual* must be completed before sunrise or sunset.

(Special Mystery)

### TRANSFORMATION OF THE ASCENDANT HIERARCH

CrVi Gen

R: Voice, D: Diam, T: Ind, Mystery Ordeal Ritual

*Transformation of the Ascendant Hierarchy* is cast on a magus who has already cast *Ascendant Form of the Intendant Hierarchy* upon himself. The level of this ritual must exceed that of the *Ascendant Form* ritual, and the caster must overcome the target's Magic Resistance (which cannot be suppressed — see that spell description). (It is normal for a group of celebrants to use *Wizard's Communion* to aid their Penetration).

The target (the hierarchy) is tested by the ritual, and appears wreathed in lambent flame and golden nimbus for the duration of the spell. He is also subject to intense agony as the spell courses through his body, but he must endure this in order to ascend. The hierarchy makes a Stamina roll against an Ease Factor of 9, or passes out (although he still benefits from the ritual unless he botches the Stamina roll). When the *Transformation* spell ends, the *Ascendant Form* ends too.

(Special Mystery)

Given the constraints of the rituals, it is likely that the hierarchy will work with a group of magi in the laboratory so that a celebrant invents (and learns) the *Transformation Ritual* and can cast it on the hierarchy. The hierarchy invents his own *Ascendant Form Ritual* (but may accept the celebrants' assistance in the laboratory).

The cultists can then cast the *Transformation* as a group, relying on spells such as *Wizard's Communion* to boost their Penetration and overcome the Magic Resistance of their ascendant hierarchy.

## THE CUMULATIVE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

If the *Transformation Ritual* overcomes the hierarchy's Magic Resistance, accumulate transformation points equal to *Transformation* spell level – *Ascendant Form* level. The base total of points needed is the level of the *Ascendant Form* spell. In addition, points are needed to perfect any failings the hierarchy suffers from:

- Count the pyramid point cost of any negative characteristics the hierarchy has and multiply by three (ignore positive characteristics).
- Add five times Decrepitude score.
- Total the number of Virtues (Major Virtue = 3 points, Minor Virtue = 1 point); total the number of Flaws (Major Flaw = 3 points, Minor Flaw = 1 point). If Virtues equal or exceed Flaws, the magus is satisfactory but gains no bonus; if Flaws exceed Virtues, then additional Transformation points are needed, equal to five times total Flaw points.

Count Major Flaws and Virtues as 3 point each, Minor as 1 point each.

Flaws are Excessive if Flaws Exceed Virtues.

**Transformation Needed** = *Ascendant Form Level* + 3 x cost of Negative Characteristics + 5 x Decrepitude + 5 x Flaw Points if Excessive

**Transformation Points** = *Transformation Level* – *Ascendant Form Spell Level*

When accumulated points equal the total needed, the ritual cycle is complete, and the hierarchy ascends, becoming a being of pure Might — a Daimon.

*Example: Gloria has been selected by her cult as a perfect maga, and the cult desires to see her ascend to godhood, to join the Hall of Heroes. She has best scores of Rego 34 and Animal 32, and devises a level 66 Ascendant Form ritual for herself. She and her followers work together to devise a Creo Vim 75 Transformation ritual, working as a group so that Servus (her most senior follower) invents the spell for himself with the assistance of the others.*

*Gloria has suffered a number of aging failures and has 16 aging points (Decrepitude 2), and has Qik -1, Str -2, Per -1. (Her other Characteristics are positive or zero.). She began her career with an equal balance of Virtues and Flaws, but has gained four Minor Virtues and Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes (a Major Virtue); and suffered two Minor Ordeal Flaws, and two Twilight-driven Minor Flaws.*

*She needs a transformation total of 66 (her Ascendant Form level) + 3 x (1+1+3) (pyramid cost of negative characteristics -1, -1, -2) + 5 x 2 (decrepitude 2) = 91.*

*She has 17 Virtue points (10+4+3) and only 14 Flaws (10+2+2): her Virtue exceeds her Flaws, so there is no effect.*

*The total transformation needs 91 points, Her followers grant her 75 – 66 = 9 points each time they succeed in their ritual, so it will take 11 ritual ceremonies to perfect her form.*

## ASCENSION

The magus becomes a pure, perfected, unchanging immortal, divorced and cut off from the mundane world. The new spirit may be seen in the heavens as



a *nova stella*, or new star. When he first ascends, he shines brightly, to announce his presence to the world, but over time his brilliance may fade to reflect his relative status among the other heroes. It is said that the greatest heroes and gods from the time of myths ascended to form entire constellations, but no new constellations have arisen in known time.

Such ascended spirits form some of the heroes in the Daimonic bestiary: It is now possible to summon the magus.

The magus's talisman, if he has one, becomes a part of his immortal being, a source of power from which he can invoke effects — just as he could in life. (This is true whether the talisman is a normal object, or his spirit or body — see Chapter 8: Hermetic Spirit Magic, Inscription on the Soul and Spirit vs. Body Enchantments.)

The magus's mortal body is left behind as a useless empty shell. Any enchantments still on the body are dispelled and any remnant vis is consumed by the ascending spirit. The body remains an Arcane Connection to the Daimon spirit. Most cultists take some small portion, such as a bone, as a relic to use when

## Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)

The normal Daimonic summoning spell is more of a contractual bargain than initially appears, as the Daimon gains spiritual strength that can be used for learning, and in return a summoned Daimon performs an agreed-upon service. This may explain why Daimons are generally agreeable when summoned, in contrast to other summoned beings, who generally resent the summons.

A player-character Daimonic magus may be summoned by an *Invoke Pact* spell devised for his spirit. This provides

him with the pact benefits in return for his providing a magical service, just as with a normal Daimon spirit. Players may well find that gaming out such services provides a new and different story theme for the troupe.

The Daimon gains a benefit equal to the *Invocation* spell level/5 (round up) — this is the same as the vis cost of the *Invocation* Ritual spell. The spirit gains the benefit when the *Invocation* points total equals his Might, and he is called to appear.

summoning their Daimonic leader; but they often destroy the larger part of the body lest it fall into enemy hands.

## THE DAIMONIC MAGUS

As a Daimon, a magus has the Daimonic power to manifest Aspects in multiple locations simultaneously (see The Daimonic Aspect).

The Daimonic magus is immune to aging and Warping. He has the immortal benefit of resistance to, and undoing of change (see Appendix A: Immortal Magi). However, the Daimonic magus has surrendered all earthly ties, including laboratory use, and cannot use the talisman enchantments of Appendix A to study and improve. This might seem to mean that the Daimon magus cannot learn as he cannot change, but players should not





despair for their favorite characters, for the cultist magi left behind may perform rituals to aid the spirit, granting further powers and abilities.

A Daimon is an untiring spirit, with no Fatigue levels. (In this, it is similar to a faerie.) Mundane activities that might tire a mortal being do not tire a Daimon. For magical activities that call for the expenditure of Fatigue, the Daimon expends 5 Might for each Fatigue level normally expended. This includes casting Spontaneous Magic, Formulaic spells where Casting Total is below spell level, Ritual spells, and Virtues like Life-Boost and Life-Linked Spontaneous Magic.

If the loss of Might to replace Fatigue takes an Aspect to 0 Might or below, it fades away and returns to the parent Daimon. (The spell succeeds or not according to the normal rules for Fatigue loss; in most cases the effect is produced and then the magus loses Fatigue or Might.)

## LEARNING AND IMPROVING AS A DAIMONIC SPIRIT

Daimon Points provide a ways for cults to help their favored spirits grow. The player of the Daimonic spirit may accumulate Daimon Points for her character, and use these points as below. She may save and accumulate points until needed.

The Daimonic pact spell *Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)* grants spiritual strength, expressed in game terms as:

**Daimon Points = (spell level) / 5**

Daimon Points may be spent as follows:

- **STUDY:** 1 Daimon Point can be used to "fix" a study experience point, so that it is not lost. This takes place in a second season, the season after the season of study. If not fixed, excess study points are lost at the end of the second season.
- 1 Daimon Point can be used to "fix" a magnitude of spell learned so that it is not lost. This takes place in a second season, the season after the

season the spell was learned. If not fully fixed, the spell is lost at the end of the second season.

- **INCREASE MIGHT:** 5 Daimon Points can be used to increase Might Score by 1 point.
- **INCREASE CHARACTERISTIC:** 10 times the character purchase cost of a Characteristic increases a Characteristic by 1 point. (Improving negative characteristics take as many points as they gave originally, so to increase a -3 Quickness to -2 takes (3 x 10) or 30 points.) There is no practical limit to the characteristics of Daimons, other than the enthusiasm of their followers.
- **LEARN FROM OTHER SPIRITS:** Daimon Points can be bargained and traded with allied Daimonic spirits: typically a spirit will teach a spell or spell-like power to another in return for Daimon Points. Half the points are lost in the transfer, so the teacher charges (spell magnitude) Daimon Points, and but this costs the pupil twice (spell magnitude). The teaching takes a season, taught as a spell, and the magus spirit must then spend a second season to "fix" the spell (as above).

Clearly Daimons need to accumulate a number of ritual summons benefits before embarking on some of these processes.

(Note that disembodied "pagan gods" are not normally found studying by turning the pages of books in libraries, or slaving over grimoires and glassware in a laboratory — they have other calls on their time. Learning by practice, or teaching from other spirits is the normal method, if such can be considered normal.)

## Hermetic Synthemata — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

There are many meanings and powers attributed to the name of a being. The ancients attribute special names, symbols, signs, and passwords they called synthe-

mata to each mystical being or power. Hermetic magi with this Virtue have learned how to use synthemata as a key to overwhelm Magic Resistance. Any being with a Might score has synthemata.

Synthemata are especially useful in summoning Daimons, as the Daimon summoning spells must exceed the Might of the spirit to accumulate binding points, but must also overcome Magic Resistance. Synthemata let the magus do this (although the Daimon will be ill-disposed toward him if he does).

A synthemata formula is unique to one being, and increases Penetration so that the magus with this spell may inflict any spell he desires upon his victim. The victim, in turn, is made aware if the spell is cast in its presence, so merely casting the spell acts as a lever to demand cooperation.

### SYNTHEMATA OF (X)

MuVi Gen

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery

The spell is unique to one named being, and the spell level must equal or exceed its Might. The synthemata spell affects the caster so that the caster adds the synthemata level to the Penetration Total of any spell cast (or begun) immediately after the synthemata spell.

(Base named being's Might)

Momentary Duration works for a spell cast immediately after the synthemata spell, but magi often research a spell with extended Duration, allowing a delayed or multiple casting.

### THE LASTING SYNTHEMATA OF (X)

MuVi Gen

R: Per, D: Diameter, T: Ind, Mystery

The spell is unique to one named being, and the (spell level - 5) must equal or exceed its Might. The synthemata spell affects the caster so that the caster adds the synthemata (level - 5) to the Penetration Total of any spell cast (or begun) after the synthemata, until the end of the synthemata spell.

Diameter duration synthemata are especially popular, as the synthemata can be used several times without concentration. In addition, while the synthemata spell is in effect, the being is aware of

the spell and its threat, and usually very much inclined to negotiate if the caster allows it to.

(Base named being's Magic Resistance, +1 Diameter)

## RESEARCHING SYNTHEMATA

Synthemata are very difficult to research, and most easily learned from Lab Texts.

The base level of the spell must equal or exceed the Might of the target being; if a magus does not know its Might, then he must guess. In addition, the magus uses (Realm) Lore instead of Magic Theory in his Lab Total for this research.

$$\text{Lab Total} = \text{Muto} + \text{Vim} + \text{Intelligence} + (\text{Realm}) \text{ Lore} + \text{Aura} + \text{Bonuses}$$

A magus may use sympathetic magic factors to add to the Lab Total. Calculate the "multiplier" (as on ArM5, page 84) that would be given by the Arcane Connection, secret name, Horoscope, etc. and add this value as a bonus to the Lab Total.

Unfortunately, many powerful beings have means to hide their synthemata from magi (known as **name hiding**) that are reflected in an adjustment to the spell design difficulty (although not the level of the actual spell produced). The magus devises the spell as normal, subtracting spell level and accumulating points to reach the spell level when the spell is complete. However, name hiding is subtracted from the normal points per season:

$$\text{Spell Points Accumulated} = (\text{Lab Total} - \text{Spell Level} - \text{Name Hiding})$$

The value of name hiding varies, but if a spirit hides its name, the name hiding is usually around (Might/2) points.

$$\text{Typical Name Hiding} = (\text{Might} / 2)$$

Curiously, some beings have a negative name hiding. Middle- and low-rank demons are rumored to make their names especially easy to discover, as commanding them into unspeakable acts is exactly what they desire.

Each season, the magus accumulates the adjusted points total. When he believes he has enough points to have



completed the spell, he may try it. Or he may continue to accumulate points until he feels more confident that the spell will work — little annoys a summoned being more than a failed attempt at inflicting synthemata on it (only inflicting real synthemata, but then they have no power over the caster). Note that a magus will know when he *ought* to have completed the spell with no hiding.

The completed spell, when it works, boosts the magus's Penetration against the named target being by the spell's base level. This ensures that even Spontaneous Magic spells should penetrate the being's Magic Resistance. If the magus casts synthemata in the presence of the being, it effectively

inflicts a 0-level full-Penetration effect on the being which, as it penetrates, informs them that his has its synthemata.

## GRIMOIRES

Clearly the spell design process is long and uncertain. For this reason, magi place great value upon grimoires (Lab Texts for synthemata spells).

## REVEALING SYNTHEMATA

Most spirits do not know their own synthemata, either through ignorance or through choice. The result of this is that a magus cannot normally expect to command a spirit to reveal its own synthemata. However, powerful spirits may have spirits that they themselves command, and they often do so by knowing the synthemata of those spirits. If a magus successfully commands a powerful spirit, it might reveal one or more of those synthemata.

If a spirit reveals synthemata to a magus, the magus may ignore name hiding when researching those synthemata in the laboratory, thus making the process much faster and removing the uncertainty.

As a guideline, assume a powerful spirit may know synthemata of other spirits whose Might Scores add up to no more than its own Might, and no individual higher than its own Might/2. Especially powerful spirits know synthemata of spirits who in turn know those of lesser spirits.

## Synthemata Magia — Major Supernatural Mystery Ability

This is a non-Hermetic method, the predecessor of Hermetic Synthemata research, but still of considerable value to Hermetic magi. The Hermetic method

is slow, but very powerful, while the non-Hermetic method is much weaker, but might let a magus intuit synthemata at a glance.

The Virtue uses the (Realm) Lore Abilities.

## INTUIT SYNTHEMATA

If the magus is in the presence of a being or spirit with a Might Score, then even a brief interaction with the being may let him intuit the synthemata. If the being lacks a Might Score, then the magus cannot use this talent against it. He intuits synthemata if he succeeds at a roll of Perception + (Realm) Lore against an Ease Factor of the being's Might + name hiding. For intuit synthemata, both the magus's roll and the Ease Factor are adjusted according to the local aura:

**Stress Die + Perception + (Realm) Lore + Magus's Aura Modifier vs. Might + Spirit's Aura Modifier + Name Hiding**

If the magus fails this roll, he cannot intuit the spirit's synthemata. He may not try again until his abilities improve — that is, his (Per + (Realm) Lore + any Virtue bonuses) increases to a higher score.

If you botch the roll, the spirit is immediately made aware of his attempt, and is likely to be hostile. If you roll more than one zero in the botch roll, the magus inadvertently creates a temporary channel

to the spirit that it may use to bypass the magus's Magic Resistance.

If the magus succeeds, he has deduced a magical synthemata. He cannot teach this intuited synthemata — it is a unique link between him, his magic, and the being whose synthemata it is.

Learning the synthemata grants the magus (and only the magus) access to a Muto Vim guideline to boost Casting Score against the named being:

### MUTO VIM

**General:** Add spell level to the caster's Casting Score for spells cast while this spell lasts. Momentary duration is sufficient to affect spells cast in the next round.

The magus may cast synthemata as a spontaneous spell, or invent a Formulaic spell. Unlike Hermetic Synthemata, there are no special laboratory requirements: there is no minimum level, Magic Theory is used (not Realm Lore), and name hiding is ignored (as he already knows the name). Lab Texts for such a spell are no use to others — they embody the unique, personal link that the magus gained above.

### THE HEDGE LORD'S SYNTHEMATA OF (X) MuVi Gen

R: Per, D: Diam, T: Ind

The spell adds its (level-5) to the caster's Casting Score against the named being for two minutes.

(Unique guideline, +1 Diam)

## RESEARCHING SYNTHEMATA

A magus may also try to research the synthemata of a being he has previously encountered in person. He can do so even if he failed to intuit its synthemata.

By fasting and invocation, over the course of an entire season, the magus attempt to research the synthemata. He learns the synthemata on a success in a roll of Perception + (Realm) Lore + aura modifier against an Ease Factor of the being's Might + name hiding (no aura modifier):

**Stress Die + Perception + (Realm) Lore + Aura Modifier + Bonuses vs. Might + Name Hiding**

If the magus has a sympathetic or Arcane Connection to the being, he may use this in a similar manner to those with Hermetic synthemata: calculate the "multiplier" as in ArM5, page 84, and add the score as a bonus to the synthemata research roll.

Failing this roll does not prevent future attempts. Botching the roll may still attract the attention of the being, but hopefully the covenant's *Aegis of the Hearth* can ward out the offended spirit.

## Chapter Ten

# The Great Talisman

Many cults teach magi how to improve their talismans. This lore is not tied to any specific Mystery School. A talisman is an intensely personal item, and the Knights of the Holy Stone (see Chapter 14) often choose a heraldically charged shield as their personal talismans. Other traditions may also have a uniform style of talisman.

13th-century magic is filled with enchanted devices, amulets and, in possibly the most famous case of all, the Brass Head, which was built by the learned divine Albertus Magnus, and later rumored to be smashed by his pupil Thomas Aquinas, who went on to become the greatest theologian of the medieval Church.

The term "talisman" is often used to refer to a small image or amulet that is carried and believed to invoke magical powers, but the Order uses the term in the sense of the Arabic magicians who craft items that are expressions of a magical

power or force. Such a personal talisman is a direct expression of the magus's individual Gift; an intimate reflection of the magical core of his being.

The attunement bonuses illustrate another important theme in medieval magic. Such bonuses rely upon intrinsic properties of the materials used to craft the talisman, which are hidden or occult.



An occult property of an item is one that cannot be explained by the *complexio*, or elemental composition, of an item, but is nonetheless a very real property — such as the ability of lead to create effective wards, or the ability of crystals to influence water.

### Great Talisman — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

A magus with a great talisman attunes the Shape and Material Bonuses of his talisman more easily than others, and may add additional components to an existing talisman.

A magus with a great talisman is much closer to his talisman than other magi; so close that merely by using his talisman in regular magical life he may open

### Standard Talisman

When a maga first creates her talisman, she must take an item prepared for enchantment (ArM5, page 97) by herself, and then attune it as her talisman. Once attuned she can increase the enchantment spaces, and each time she reopens it for enchantment or instills an effect she can also open the talisman to one magical attunement based on the Shape and Material Bonuses available in the item (ArM5, page 98).

Although a maga may attune an item with instilled effects (instilled by herself), she cannot add components to an existing device, even a talisman. To

allow the most talisman attunements, she should create and open a compound item with as many components as her Magic Theory score permits. A compound item can be prepared either with the sum of the pawns of vis for each component, or with the vis required by the highest single component. Magi have a seasonal laboratory limit of handling pawns of vis equal to twice their Magic Theory score, so most will open their talisman with the "single highest component" option.

Example: Dolorosa wishes to make a talisman in the form of a staff. She has

a Magic Theory of 6, so she can use 12 pawns of vis and open a staff with five additional components. She chooses a wooden staff shod in iron, with a quartz crystal bound on top, set with an amethyst and an agate, and with a golden coin depicting a crown. The stones each require 12 pawns of vis, the coin 10, staff 8, and the iron shoe 5; the highest single component cost is the cost of one of the semi-precious stones, or 12 pawns, which Dolorosa can just manage. Her talisman has 11 Material Bonuses and 10 Shape Bonuses that she can attune in later seasons.



## Inscription on the Soul and Talisman Virtues

A magus with Inscription on the Soul (see Chapter 8: Spirit Magic, Inscription on the Soul) and Great Talisman can open magical attunements in his body or spirit while performing other activities. However, to incorporate components into his body he must use the methods of Blending With Substance even with Great Talisman.

A magus may use Inscription on the Soul (instead of Great Talisman) as a prerequisite to Initiate the Virtue Consummate Talisman.

an attunement bonus over the course of a season, as if working on his talisman — even when he does no work on the talisman in the laboratory, or works on other tasks. He can still only open one attunement per season, even if he reopens or invests an effect in his talisman.

When a magus reopens his great talisman to increase enchantment spaces, he may also craft in one or more new components, although the total number of components is still limited by his Magic Theory score. The method of working new components into a great talisman is part of the enchantment process (similar to that of Verditius magi forging items from raw materials), and no Craft roll is required. The season's opened attunement may be chosen from the Shape and Material Bonuses of the existing talisman, or from the new components.

## Consummate Talisman — Major Hermetic Mystery Virtue

The magus may enchant Muto Vim effects, with Personal Range, into his talisman, and may use them on himself when he casts Formulaic spells.

In addition, he may enchant Names of Power (see Chapter 9) into his talisman, and have the device invoke these for him as he casts spells, even Spontaneous spells. When he invokes Names of Power, he is still limited to a maximum bonus of his Magic Theory, but need not spend extra time to invoke the names. He does still need to speak the Names aloud, firmly, as a required trigger for the Name of Power effect, but this can be incorporated into spellcasting, although it does not permit silent or quiet casting. The magic of the device carries the spoken word to the attention of the powers.

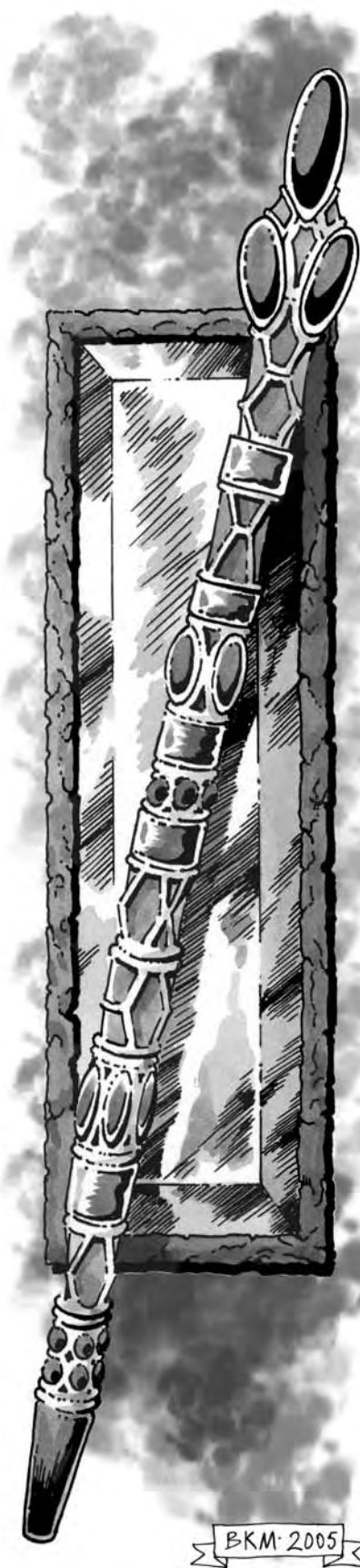
This is one of very few ways to bypass the limitation that Muto Vim effects in a device may only affect other effects in the same device: the consummate talisman may affect the magus's spellcasting.

The side-effect of this is that the magus must put so much of himself into his talisman that he gains the Flaw Deleterious Circumstances (when not touching talisman) (magic totals halved).

This counts as an Minor Ordeal for Initiating the Consummate Talisman. If he already has similar Deleterious Circumstances, he may subject himself further and instead suffer the Major Ordeal Flaw Necessary Condition: must wield talisman (or else magic fails).

Gaining this new Flaw counts as a prior Ordeal for subsequent Initiations.

If he already has his talisman as a Necessary Condition or Restriction, then he may still count that as an Ordeal for this Initiation, and need no further Flaw. If he already has these Flaws, he gains the Initiation Script bonus for an Ordeal, but it will not become a prior Ordeal for subsequent Initiations.



# Arithmetic Magic

From the time of Pythagoras onward, the magic of numbers has fascinated men. In this chapter are uncovered the secrets of Hermetic Arithmetic, the magical application by Hermetic scholars of the principles of Euclid that comprise Hermetic Geometry, and the potent marvels of Hermetic Architecture, that allow great magical structures to be erected. In the 13th century, there is a fascination with magic number squares, and the influence of Jewish numerological systems like gematria led to a number of gentile variants. However, the outstanding breakthroughs in this area in this century were not Hermetic, but rather in the work of architects who, using only simple, non-magical tools, created the great gothic cathedrals, masterpieces of the Dominion.

Numbers fascinate many magi, and insights into the mystery of numbers lead to Divination (Numerology). Numbers also form the basic of many puzzles, codes and ciphers — these are not Mysteries, just mysterious to those without the key!

Artes Liberales (arithmetic), often abbreviated to Arithmetic, is a key Ability for magical Numerology; Artes Liberales (geometry) for Geometry and Architecture.

## Hermetic Numerology — Minor Mystery Virtue

In Numerology, the magus sees correspondences between the number and form of elements in all things, even those seemingly unconnected. These correspondences are governed by the magus's

understanding of Arithmetic — that is, Artes Liberales (arithmetic).

Hermetic Numerology permits the magus to devise small spell-like formulae called Rotes, and to enchant a Numerologist's Book to gain a book bonus. Rotes are mental exercises, are cast without a die roll, and benefit as if the magus had the Mastery special abilities of Quiet Casting and Still Casting. The Numerologist's book bonus adds to Numerology and to Hermetic Geometry and Hermetic Architecture.

Hermetic Numerology is also a prerequisite Virtue for Divination (Numerology) (see Chapter 7: Divination and Augury).

## THE NUMEROLOGIST'S BOOK

The Numerologist derives great meaning from the patterns of words and letters in texts. To achieve this takes a great deal of study, and there are many interpretations promoted by hedge magic traditions (for example, Gematria in *Realms of Power: The Divine*). There are many ways in which Hermetic magi seek to incorporate texts into their magic.

The Numerologist should choose a great work as the basis of her study: many magi choose either the Bible or Bonisagus' *De Theoria Magica* (the Authority on Magic Theory). To aid her magic, the Numerologist may enchant her book and attune it to Numerological magic, and gain a book bonus.

As detailed below, the magus may create either a lesser Numerologist's Book with a book bonus of +4, or a greater Numerologist's Book with a double book bonus of +8. The book bonus is limited

by the magus's score in Artes Liberales (arithmetic).

**Lesser Numerologist's Book Opened with 8 Pawns of vis**

**Lesser Book Bonus is +4**

**Greater Numerologist's Book Opened with 16 Pawns of vis**

**Greater Book Bonus is +8**

Consulting the Numerologist's Book provides a bonus to Numerological activities:

- If the magus performs Divination (Numerology) (see Chapter 7: Divination and Augury), and consulted as part of the Ceremonial Divination, the magus adds the book bonus as a ceremonial bonus.
- If the book is consulted while working in the Laboratory, the book bonus can be added to Lab Totals for Numerology, including Rotes, and to Lab Totals for Hermetic Geometry and Hermetic Architecture.
- If the book is consulted before invoking a Rote (taking an extra round to look in the book), the book bonus is added to the Rote Casting Score.

The bonus is based on the numerical principle of insight in numbers — that opening the book, seemingly at random, and inspecting the relationships between words on the open pages provides a connection to numbers (and objects) in the environment. The magical attunement of the Numerologist's Book helps the magus to quickly open the book

## Magical Books

A normal medieval book has wooden boards making up the covers (in turn, usually covered in leather), and parchment or vellum (leather) pages. An average medieval book is "large" sized for enchantment (about the size of a shield). To open just the parchment or just the wooden covers takes 8 pawns of vis (and requires a Magic Theory of 4). It is also possible to open the whole book as a compound device, including both the wooden boards of the cover and the parchment pages, requiring 16 pawns of vis (and a Magic Theory of 8).

Both methods of opening provide the "book" Shape Bonus; opening the parchment provides a Material Bonus for parchment (also leather or animal hide), while opening the cover boards provides a Material Bonus for wood.

(It is also possible to include gems and metal binding, to make a particularly large compound device, if the magus can handle the vis requirements.) (See also Chapter 10: The Great Talisman, for more ways to improve a device attuned as a talisman).

### NEW SHAPE AND MATERIAL BONUSES:

**Book:** +2 Intellego, +3 Divination, +4 Numerology

If investing Numerological effects into a lesser or greater Numerologist's Book, the magus may benefit from both the Shape and Material Bonus, and from the special Numerologist's book bonus.

## Creating the Numerologist's Book

If a magus knows Hermetic Numerology, and opens his chosen text as an enchanted book, then he may attune it as a Numerologist's Book at the same time as opening it. The process of attunement is relatively short and simple, and adds just a seven-day distraction to the laboratory work. Only the magus who opened and attuned the book may gain the book bonus. The book bonus is limited by the magus's score in Artes Liberales (arithmetic).

The lesser Numerologist's Book is created by opening the parchment

pages: it takes 8 pawns to open the parchment for enchantment (and requires a Magic Theory of 4). The lesser Numerologist's Book provides a +4 book bonus.

The greater Numerologist's Book is created by opening the whole book as a compound device, including the wooden boards of the cover, requiring 16 pawns of vis (and a Magic Theory of 8); see ArM5, page 97. The greater Numerologist's Book provides a doubled book bonus of +8.

to significant pages, almost as if the book opens itself for him.

Many Numerologists also attune the book as their talisman. (As a talisman, the book can be reopened for enchantment, which allows the magus to improve a Lesser Book to a Greater Book.)

Consulting the book advises and assists the magus, provided that the Numerologist consults its pages for insight throughout the activity (Rote-casting or laboratory work). Consulting the book when casting Rotes takes an extra round of casting time to select and examine

pages of the book, and the magus must carry the book with him. The magus may create more than one enchanted book, but only benefits from one consulting book at a time.

The Numerologist's Book may also be invested with normal enchanted effects. In this case the Shape and Material Bonuses for enchantment apply separately from the Numerological bonuses, and can be combined if appropriate.

If the magus knows Hermetic Divination (Numerology), it is possible to also invest the Numerologist's Book

with *Enchantment of the Scrying Device*. The Numerologist performing Ceremonial Divination then gets both a Ceremonial bonus and a Magical bonus; see Chapter 7: Divination and Augury — Ceremonial Divination).

## ROTES

By studying arithmetic and preparing formulae that are memorized "by rote," the maga may invent small spells called Rotes.

Rotes are similar in action to the non-Fatiguing Spontaneous casting of spells (where the Casting Total = Casting Score/5), and no die roll is made to invoke Rotes. Rotes are more powerful than non-Fatiguing Spontaneous Magic (Casting Total = Casting Score/2) but limited to similar levels (Lab Total/5).

As an arithmetic formula, a Rote is largely a mental exercise and benefits as though the maga had the Mastery special abilities of Quiet Casting and Still Casting for the Rote. As this is a numerological activity, the maga gains a book bonus if she has a Numerologist's Book to consult before invoking a Rote.

In addition to any book bonus, the maga gains a bonus to her Rote Lab Total equal to Artes Liberales (arithmetic), limited by Magic Theory.

**Rote Lab Total = Technique + Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Arithmetic + Book Bonus + Aura Modifier**

The design of a Rote has a level limited to the maga's Rote Lab Total/5 (round up),

**Maximum Rote Level = (Rote Lab Total) / 5**

and may be invoked without die roll or fatigue to produce the supernatural effect specified:

**Rote Casting Score = Stamina + Technique + Form + Arithmetic + Book Bonus + Aura Modifier**

**Rote Casting Total = Casting Score / 2, rounded up.**

Penetration is calculated as for any other spell:

$$\text{Penetration Total} = \text{Casting Total} - \text{Spell Level} + \text{Penetration Bonus}$$

If the Casting Total equals or exceeds the level of the Rote, then the Rote is invoked. Otherwise there is no effect.

Rotes are invented by the usual spell design process of accumulating (Lab Total – spell level) points to exceed spell level. Given the low level of Rotes, this is more easily expressed as inventing a Rote if Lab Total points equal to twice Rote level are assigned. If the maga has a Lab Text for a Rote, she invents it if she assigns Lab Total points equal to Rote level. Given the low level of Rotes, the maga can expect to invent several Rotes (of the same Technique and Form) in a single season.

When a maga invents a Rote, she may write a Lab Text for the Rote, but only one with Hermetic Numerology can make use of it, and only as a Rote.

*Example: Numera has a Creo Ignem Rote Lab Total of Intelligence +3 + Creo 14 + Ignem 12 + Magic Theory 6 + Arithmetic 6 + lesser book bonus 4 + Lab aura 5 = 50. She can devise Rotes with a maximum level of  $(50/5) = 10$ . She can invent two level 10 Rotes (20 points each) and a level 5 Rote (10 points). If she has Lab Texts for some Rotes, she could use as many as five level 10 Rote Lab Texts in one season (10 Lab points each from a Lab Text). She could mix inventing new Rotes with inventing Rotes from Rote Lab Texts.*

*Example: Numera has a Lab Text for a Rote to ignite flammable matter (CrIg 10, Voice, Mom, Ind: GL 4 +2 Voice), another Lab Text for a Rote to create daylight (CrIg 10, Touch, Conc, Ind: GL 4 +1 Touch, +1 Conc), and one to keep a person warm (CrIg 5, Touch, Sun, Ind: GL 2 +1 Touch, +2 Sun).*

*She wants to invent a new Rote to make an object red-hot (CrIg 10, Touch, Mom, Ind: CrIg 5 +1 Touch). This is  $10 + 10 + 5 + (2 \times 10) = 45$  levels, which she can achieve in a single season.*

*Later, prowling around a church in the dark, she desires a light, and considers casting her daylight Rote: her casting Score is Stamina +1 + Creo 14 + Ignem 12 + Arithmetic 6 + aura  $(-3 \times 4) = 21$ . Casting Score/2 = 11, which is enough to make the Rote work. She pauses to consider the size and shape of the church, the number of her companions and her*

*and their equipment, and invokes her formula: a light glows in her hand. (If she had brought her (large, heavy) book with her, she could take an extra round to look in the book and add her book bonus to her Casting Score.)*

*If she were to try Spontaneous Magic instead of Rotes, her non-Fatiguing Casting Total in the church would be  $(\text{Stamina} + 1 + \text{Creo } 14 + \text{Ignem } 12 + \text{aura } [-3 \times 4]) / 5 = 3$ , her Fatiguing Spontaneous spell total would be  $(15 + \text{stress die}) / 2$ , which has an average of 11, but requires her to speak in a firm voice, fatigues her, and risks four extra botch dice. Numera is glad that she prepared her Rotes.*

It is possible to Master Rotes and benefit from other special abilities, and add the Mastery level to the Casting Score, but few magi bother. (The mental exercise benefits do not provide actual Spell Mastery levels.)

## NUMEROLOGIST'S SPELLS

Numerologists have a great interest in numbers, and like to count things. The following spells do not require Numerology: Indeed, Numerologists have been encountered trying to interest other magi in these spells.

Intellego spells do need to penetrate Magic Resistance, and counting spells miss out those who resist the spell. Counting magi is technically the high crime of "spying on your sodales using magic," but no-one has yet pressed the issue.

### NUMBERING THE FLOCK

InAn 20

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Sight

The Numerologist instantly knows the number of animals she can see, and how many of each kind.

The pattern of such numbers is considered to be far more significant than the details of the numbers. Numerologists often use this spell in connection with Casual Augury (Numerology) to interpret the numbers.

(Base 4, +4 Sight Sense)

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GROUP

InCo 10

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group

The Numerologist instantly divines the number of people in a group. The

## New Spell Guidelines

### INTELLEGO (FORM)

**Level 2:** Count the number of individuals in the spell Target (a visible property determined just by looking at the target).

**Level 3:** Count the number of individuals in the spell Target, divided into apparent categories.

**Level 4:** Sort the individuals in the spell Target into categories and count them.

spell allows any restriction within the parameters that define a standard Group Target; for example, "How many one-legged men are in the crowd?"

Numerologists claim to be able to gain insight from such numbers.

(Base 2, +2 Voice, +2 Group)

### NUMBERING THE HOST

InCo 15

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Sight

The Numerologist knows the number of people he can see, and may distinguish them by appearance: men and women, old or young(-looking), and so on.

(Base 3, +4 Sight sense)

## Hermetic Geometry — Minor Mystery Virtue

The ancients, in the form of the philosopher-wizard Euclid, recorded principles of geometry that form the fundament or base from which magi study the matter. The five postulates of particular importance are:

- that a straight line may be drawn from any point to any other point (thus all points are linked),
- that a straight line may be produced to any length (and thus lines are unbounded links between points),
- that given any point as a center, a circle of any radius may be inscribed (and thus there is sympathy between points and circles),



## Drawing a Perfect Shape

The standard Ring and Circle Targets are not particularly strict about the shape drawn: so long as it is closed and continuous, and the magus successfully traces the line while casting the spell, even rough approximations to a circle count as Circle Targets.

Hermetic Geometry grants bonuses (see Ceremonial Figures) for regular shapes, and the new Target Arcane Circle and Duration Arcane Ring require a perfect circle or ring.

A perfect shape is drawn without deviation or irregularity. This is very hard if attempted freehand, and easy if using tools. Drawing a perfect shape succeeds with a roll of

**Die Roll + Dexterity + Profession:**  
Scribe vs. an Ease Factor of 15 if  
drawn freehand,

**Die Roll + Dexterity + Profession:**  
Scribe vs. an Ease Factor of 6 if drawn  
with the aid of posts and string.

Drawing freehand, or drawing a circle using a prepared center post and string, takes no extra time over that required to trace the line for spellcasting. Placing and positioning extra posts for triangles, squares etc., typically takes at least two minutes. In any case only one Scribe roll is needed to check the quality of the line. If the Scribe roll fails, the magus knows and may choose to start again; if he is stressed and botch, he fails to notice the error until it is too late (and the spell may botch). If the magus has plenty of time and no distractions, this can be a simple die roll.

Magi are often tempted to cheat, scribing the shape magically (*Scribe the Perfect Circle*) and then simply tracing over the scribed line.

Spells with Circle or Ring Target require the magus to trace the shape moving no more quickly than ten paces per round, and make Intelligence + Concentration rolls of 6+ every round. Tracing the shape for spellcasting is required even if the shape is already drawn.

- that any two right angles are equal (and being equal are connected sympathetically),
- that given a line and a point that is not on the line, there is exactly one line through the given point that does not intersect the first line (and thus this second line is special and connected to the first).

These postulates provide sympathetic magic via Geometry.

Calculations within this Mystery use Artes Liberales (geometry).

Hermetic Geometry grants the following benefits.

### BONUS FOR CIRCLES, RINGS, AND LINES

When casting any spell that involves tracing a circle or line, including standard Circle and Ring spells, and the new Line and Circle forms of Hermetic Geometry,

the magus gains a bonus of +3 to his Casting Score.

### CEREMONIAL FIGURES

When casting any spell involving a regular geometric figure — circle or line, but also regularly formed Room and Structure targets — the magus may use Ceremonial Casting (even for Formulaic spells) and include complex Geometric and Numerological correspondences to gain a bonus of +3 to the Casting Score (cumulative with the bonus for circular or linear figures, if that applies — A room has a regular geometric form, if, for example, it has circular or rectangular (right-angled) shape; a structure is regular if its rooms are regular and are gathered into a regular form: a cathedral is regular, but most farms are not.

No additional time is required above the 15 minutes per magnitude of spell for Ceremonial Casting. However, the magus

must be able to draw and trace symbols on a cleared, smooth surface at least two paces across, and inscribe geometric shapes in accordance with the numbers. For spells up to sixth magnitude, shapes of circle (1, 2), triangle (3), square (4), pentagon (5), and hexagon (6) are inscribed, together with numbers and formulae at the points and center of the inscribed shapes.

For spells of higher magnitude, the magus requires additional components, one per additional magnitude. Typical components include:

- candles
- incense
- powders (minerals, metals) sprinkled along the lines of the figure
- purified water sprinkled along the lines of the figure
- oils sprinkled along the lines of the figure

The magus's player is encouraged to be inventive in preparing her list.

### NEW RANGE AND TARGETS

#### NEW RANGE: LINE

Equivalent to Sight.

*A straight line may be produced from any point (the magus) to any other point (calculated by the magus), and may be produced to any length.*

The advantage of Line Range is that it extends as far as Sight but does not require that the magus can see the target. However, he must be able to sense it in some other fashion: Hermetic magic cannot in general affect an unsensed target. For instance, the magus may hear someone talking on the other side of a wall.

To successfully target a spell at Line range, the magus must accurately calculate the location of the distant point where the spell will take effect, succeeding in an Intelligence + Artes Liberales (geometry) roll against an Ease Factor equal to the Distance Level (see insert). This is a non-magical exercise in Geometry, and requires scribing lines and circles on the ground or similar surface. This takes one whole round for each 3 points of Ease Factor or part thereof.

Ease Factor = Distance Level (minimum 9)

Die Roll + Intelligence + Artes  
Liberales (Arithmetic) vs. Ease Factor

Time Taken = (Ease Factor / 3) Rounds  
(round up)

If the magus can directly see the target point, then he may cast a Line spell as if it were a Sight spell, with no calculations needed.

If the magus fails the roll but does not botch, then the target point is a distance away from the desired point by an amount equal to the Ease Factor multiplied by the shortfall, in a direction chosen by the storyguide, or by rolling a die. If the roll botches, then the spell cast botches too.

*Example: Lineus knows Centrus is ten paces away, directly beyond a wall. Ten paces has a Distance Level of 1 — the Ease Factor for the calculation is therefore 9 (minimum Ease), and takes 3 rounds to calculate and scribe a design on the ground. Lineus has Intelligence 3, Artes Liberales 5, and rolls 4: he easily makes the roll. The spell*

## Distance Level

Treat the length of the line in paces as if points to purchase a score in an Ability. Thus a distance of 200 paces has a Distance Level of 8 (between 180 and 225).

DISTANCE LEVEL	DISTANCE IN PACES	DISTANCE LEVEL	DISTANCE IN PACES
1	5	11	330
2	15	12	390
3	30	13	455
4	50	14	525
5	75	15	600
6	105	16	680
7	140	17	765
8	180	18	855
9	225	19	950
10	275	20	1,050

is cast, and accurately targets the point indicated. Unfortunately, Lineus is not as perceptive as he is clever, and is unaware that while he was calculat-

ing Centrus crept round the wall and is about to tap him on the shoulder while Lineus stands wondering why his spell failed.



## New Spell Guidelines

Rego Terram (Hermetic Geometry)

**Level 2:** Reshape dirt so that it take on a more perfect shape (Creo requisite). This reshaping is no more than a team of workmen could achieve with expert guidance. The perfection refers to geometric perfection; adjusting lines to be straight, loops into perfect circles, and near-rectangles into perfect right angles.

**Level 2:** Reshape dirt so that it take on an imperfect shape (Perdo requisite). Right angles bend, straight lines wobble, and circles kink. Irregular shapes are not affected.

**Level 3:** Substantially reshape dirt so that it takes on a perfect shape (Creo requisite). The reshaping is what workmen could achieve with magical assistance, but the result must be able to sustain itself or the spell must maintain the perfection magically. The perfection refers to geometric perfection; adjusting lines to be straight, loops into perfect circles, and near rectangles into perfect right angles.

### NEW TARGET: ARCANES CIRCLE

Equivalent to Part.

*Since all circles are connected by sympathetic magic, by scribing one circle the magus may connect to another circle elsewhere.*

The benefit of this new Target is that a maga may cast a spell with Circle Target, but need not be able to reach the target to trace the circle in-place. Instead, by tracing a circle she can reach, she may affect the remote circle too.

The spell creates a circle of magic about the target point. The magical circle may be seen with magical senses such as Second Sight (as an invisible thing, Ease Factor 9), or detected by Intellego Vim.

The disadvantage is that the spell is broken if either of the two circles is broken. (Anyone who can sense the magical circle can break it as if it were a real line.)

The line traced must be a perfect circle (as opposed to the standard Circle Target). The magical circle is exactly the same size as the scribed circle, but locat-

ed about the target point. Large circles require both Dexterity and Concentration rolls for each round of tracing or drawing (ArM5, page 112).

The location of the center point of the Arcane Circle is calculated just like a Line Range — indeed, if the Range is Line or Duration Arcane Ring, only one calculation is needed.

### NEW DURATION: ARCANES RING

Equivalent to Moon.

*Since all circles are connected by sympathetic magic, then by scribing one circle the magus may connect to another circle elsewhere.*

The benefit of this new Duration is that a maga may cast a spell with Ring Duration, but need not be able to reach the target to trace the ring in-place. Instead, by tracing a circle she can reach, she may affect the remote circle too.

The spell creates a circle of magic about the target point. The magic circle may be seen with magical senses such as Second Sight (as an invisible thing, Ease Factor 9), or detected by Intellego Vim.

The disadvantage is that the spell is broken if either of the two circles is broken. (Anyone who can sense the magical circle can break it as if it were a real line.)

The line traced must be a perfect circle. The magical circle is exactly the same size as the scribed circle, but located about the target point. Large circles require both Dexterity and Concentration rolls for each round of tracing or drawing (ArM5, page 112).

The location of the center point of the Arcane Ring is calculated just like a Line Range — indeed, if the Range is Line or Target Arcane Circle, only one calculation is needed.

(Arcane Ring is equivalent to Ring+1 magnitude)

## GEOMETER'S SPELLS

Geometers have some favored spells, and some new spell guidelines to draw upon.

### SCRIBE THE PERFECT CIRCLE

Re(Cr)Te 4

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

The spell scribes a mathematically perfect shape on the ground. Most commonly this is a circle, but any perfect, regular shape can be scribed: triangle, square, pentagon, hexagon, etc.

A magus wishing to scribe a perfect circle for a circle spell may trace the circle drawn by this spell.

(Base: 2, +1 stone, +1 Touch)

### PERFECTION OF THE WELL-DESIGNED CHAMBER

Re(Cr)Te(He) 20

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Structure

An irregular building is reshaped so that a single room in a building becomes perfectly regular. The spell fails unless this can be accommodated by small adjustments to the rest of the building.

A room so perfected counts for the Ceremonial bonus options of Hermetic Geometry. The magical perfection is momentary, and then slowly fades as the building structure decays naturally over time; for Ceremonial purposes most buildings remain perfected for a day or so before they settle slightly and lapse.

The specified room becomes regular: right-angled with straight sides, or perfectly circular (most real buildings are not particularly straight). If this is not possible because the room is highly irregular, then the spell fails. If there is any doubt, a Perception + Artes Liberales (geometry) roll against an Ease Factor of 12 or higher resolves the issue. (Difficulty depends upon the irregularities that need perfecting, however, if the Ease Factor would be less than 12 (Hard) the spell will perfect the target without guidance.)

The Structure Target is needed to effect small adjustments to neighboring parts of the building to fit around the new room. (If they were not included in the spell, the structure would fall apart as the room pulled away from the rest.) The remainder of the building need not be regular — indeed may be decidedly imperfect given medieval building practices.

(Base 2, +1 stone, +1 Touch, +3 Structure, +1 Herbam req.)

### THE PERFECTED STRUCTURE

Re(Cr)Te(He) 20



## Extended Material and Size Table

SIZE	DESCRIPTION	SIZE MULTIPLIER	WOOD (x2)	SOFT STONE (x3)	HARD STONE (x4)
tiny		1	—	—	—
small		2	—	—	—
medium		3	—	—	—
large		4	—	—	—
huge	small room (3 paces by 3 paces) = Ind x 10	5	10	15	20
huge x 10	Room = Ind x 100	6	12	18	24
huge x 100	Structure = huge room (30 paces by 30 paces) = Ind x 1,000	7	14	21	28
huge x 1,000	Boundary = Structure x 10 = immense room (100 paces by 100 paces)	8	16	24	32
huge x 10,000	Boundary x 10 = Structure x 100	9	18	27	36
huge x 100,000	Boundary x 100 = Structure x 1,000	10	20	30	40

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Structure

An entire building is reshaped to be perfect, if this can be accommodated by small adjustments to the whole and to the rooms within. Both the exterior and the rooms within become regular: right-angled and with straight sides, or perfectly circular. Irregularities in workmanship are easily perfected, but the building is not redesigned.

Normal medieval building design often prevents this spell from working: most medieval buildings have irregular extensions and out-buildings requiring redesign to count as regular — although demolition of the extensions is an easy corrective option. If the whole structure cannot be perfected, the magus can usually perfect individual rooms using *Perfection of the Well-Designed Chamber*.

A building so perfected counts for the Ceremonial bonus options of Hermetic Geometry. It is also stronger and more stable against tremors and storms, and has a pleasing air to those beholding it, or living and working within. The magical perfection is momentary, and then slowly fades as the building structure decays naturally over time; for Ceremonial purposes most buildings remain perfected for a day or so before they settle slightly and lapse.

If there is doubt about the limits of perfection, a Perception + Artes Liberales

(geometry) roll against an Ease Factor of 12 or higher resolves the issue. (Difficulty depends upon the irregularities that need perfecting, however, if the Ease Factor would be less than 12 (Hard) the spell will perfect the target without guidance.)

The Mystery of Hermetic Architecture teaches how to enchant this effect into a building so that the enchantment sustains the perfection indefinitely.

(Base 2, +1 stone, +1 Touch, +3 Structure, +1 Herbam req.)

## Hermetic Architecture — Minor Mystery Virtue

Hermetic Architecture concerns itself with the construction of large-scale enchantments: of rooms, buildings, or even stone circles. It also deals with the creation of permanent paths and gateways.

One problem that faces many Hermetic enchanters is the problem of fitting the enchanted device into their laboratories. If the device is exceptionally large (a sailing ship) or immovable (a sacred grove), then the magus may be faced with attempting to create a laboratory around the device. At times, even this may not be possible.

The Mystery of Sacred Architecture teaches a number of disciplines, one of which is the placement of several enchanted devices within a larger context, in a particular and necessary pattern, so that the separate devices may be united to work as one, as though the larger whole were enchanted instead.

The Material and Size tables (ArM5, page 97) are extended to determine the amount of enchantment that is required. The Extended Material and Size Table, above, covers giant objects, single large rooms, groves or glades, or a single compact complex "structure."

Determine the material of the large structure to be enchanted: typically this is wood, earth (soft stone), or hard stone. It is very rare for architectural constructs in Mythic Europe to be made from anything other than these substances.

Multiply Material cost times the Size multiplier of the structure to be enchanted; for example, to enchant a wizard's tower of ten floors, 10 paces by 10 paces (Size 7), in hard stone is (material 4) = 28 points.

## COMPOUND COMPONENT DEVICES

Next the magus identifies some other substance, in a convenient size, that has



## Seasonal Vis Limits and Very Large Structures

Since a magus is limited to twice Magic Theory pawns of vis in a single season in the laboratory, the largest structures may seem too large to open.

However, the magus intending to apply Hermetic Architecture himself need not open the component devices for enchantment — he can attempt to persuade another magus to do so. The Mysteries of Verditius reduce the vis requirement by the magus's Craft Score; Celestial Magic also reduces vis requirement (by the Laboratory Horoscope

score); and Philosophic Alchemy may be used to pre-fill an object with opened spaces, again reducing the spaces a magus need open.

A team involving an alchemist with Philosophic Alchemy preparing objects with opened enchantment spaces, handing over to a Verditius maga with Celestial Magic to open the device, and then to a magus with Hermetic Architecture, could together enchant some of the largest structures known.

a Material times Size multiplier equal to that calculated for the desired structure. (If a single component does not provide a perfect match, a compound device can be invested instead: see ArM5, page 97.)

Finally, the magus requires a number of identical items equal to the structure's Size multiplier, which will be placed into the structure in a particular pattern calculated to invoke resonances in the structure and so link the devices. Typically these are placed at the imagined points of an inscribed geometric shape, but some allowances must be made for the actual shape of the structure. This requires a Geometry roll:

**Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Geometry) vs. an Ease Factor of 6 + Size Multiplier**

Failing the roll means the magus needs to recompute the locations for the devices and ensure the structure is modified to accommodate them. This takes between one day (reposition posts in a field) and one month (carve niches in a building and fill in the previous ones). The magus can usually employ masons or laborers to perform the craft work. If the Geometry roll botches, then the error is not noticed until too late, and some disaster befalls.

In some cases — for example, a portal that transports people — several of the components may be combined into one physical object (such as a pair of pillars on either side), often simply using Muto or Rego Terram to shape the already

invested components. This option relies on harmony and symmetry to work.

*Example: Continuing the example of the stone tower, the tower can be enchanted by creating seven identical compound devices made of silver (staff-sized) with a tiny stone in each. The calculation requires a roll of Intelligence + Artes Liberales (geometry) against an Ease Factor of 13.*

### INVESTING THE EFFECTS

The component devices are each opened and invested with the effects desired for the overall structure they are to enchant, using the normal rules for laboratory enchantment, with the following exceptions:

- The magus may use Material Bonuses from the component materials, and Shape Bonuses from both the shape of the component devices and the intended architectural structure (even though this is not present during the enchantment).
- Effects may be invested assuming their target is either the architectural structure as a whole, or the component devices (but this requires a Group target), or both. This includes Personal Range effects that target the device itself (they can target the combined group of devices as "self," or the structure). Each effect must specify which target is intended.
- The magus may ignore the limit that Boundary Targets require ritual spells and cannot be invested in devices, providing that the Boundary affected

is the actual structure being enchanted by the components. The range of such effects may be Personal (affects the structure itself) or Touch (affecting those within the Boundary).

### COMPLETING AND BINDING THE ENCHANTMENT

To link the finished component devices together, the magus places them in the locations he has devised, and casts a Mystery ritual. (This is formulated as a spell for calculations and vis consumption, but is actually a rite of the Mystery, to finalize enchanted items prepared according to the Mystery):

#### BIND THE MYSTICAL STRUCTURE

ReVi Gen

R: Arcane, D: Special, T: Group, Mystery Ritual

The base level of the ritual must equal or exceed 5 + level of the highest component device effect levels. Arcane Connection Range is required for the spell effect, even if the magus can touch all of the devices to be combined: in casting the ritual, he touches one of the emplaced devices and establish a connection between them.

The base effect provides for a Group Target — the minimum that can include multiple components. However, extra levels of *Bind* ritual spell are needed to match the size of the architectural structure that is to be enchanted if it exceeds Group size.

(Create a conduit for spells up to (level + 5 magnitudes), +4 Arcane, +2 Group)

*Example: To bind a level 50 enchantment into a tower (Structure-sized), the seven component invested devices must be bound together with a Bind the Mystical Structure ritual of at least level 60 (ReVi 60, R: Arcane, D: Special, T: Group: GL (50+5), +1 magnitude for increased Size from Group to Structure).*

### BREAKING THE DEVICE

Each component device must have a special place, such as a niche, made for it.

## Sample Enchanted Structures

### THE PERFECTED TOWER

Re(Cr)/Te(He) 34

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: always on, T: Structure, Mystery enchantment

This enchantment effect combines the Mystery of Hermetic Geometry applied to perfect the regularity of a stone tower (or other building), with Hermetic Architecture so that the structure can be enchanted without fitting into the magus's laboratory.

A basic structure has a Size of 7, so seven component devices are needed, with 28 spaces in each (Size 7 x 4 for hard stone). The magus fashions seven small wooden yokes (Size 2 x 2 for wood) and seven silver staves (Size 4 x 6 for silver), attaches the yokes to the staves and opens them for enchantment.

The investment process benefits from shape bonuses of: yoke +5 enhance strength of wearer (in this case: the tower), staff +4 control things at a distance, and room +6 affect everything within at once. Although the staves are not rooms, they are part of a Hermetic Architecture project to enchant a struc-

ture, so the shape of the final project is allowed too. The Shape Bonuses amount to +15, limited by the magus's Magic Theory (which must be at least 14 to open the devices for investment with 28 pawns of vis).

When the devices are finished, their correct placement is determined by a roll of Intelligence + Geometry against an Ease Factor of 13 (6 + Size 7), and the enchantment sealed by casting a *Bind the Mystical Structure* ritual of at least level 44 (base level 34 + 5, +1 magnitude for size increased from Group to Structure).

The perfection of the tower is maintained continuously, and the natural decay and imperfections of wood and stone are prevented. The tower counts as a perfected entity for Hermetic Geometry, gains extra strength, and is more pleasant to live and work in.

### TRAJAN'S ARENA

CrMe 25

Pen +0, unlimited uses, device maintains concentration

R: Touch, D: Conc, T: Ind, Mystery enchantment

Trajan of Tytalus wishes, for his amusement, to construct an arena that makes any combatants within it fight in a berserk rage:

(Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +5 levels maintain concentration, +10 levels unlimited uses)

The arena effect is triggered (once per round) on anyone who starts to fight, and continues on each while they continue to fight. If someone manages to stop fighting, the effect ends for him.

An arena is roughly a standard Boundary, 100 paces across. This is enchantment Size 8, and soft earth (x2), so has 16 spaces. The whole can be enchanted by preparing eight stone pillars.

When the eight pillars are ready, placing the components correctly with the proper carved symbols and such requires a roll of Intelligence + Geometry vs. an Ease Factor of 14 (6 + Size 8). The stone pillars can then be bound together with a *Bind the Mystical Structure* Ritual of at least level 40 (base spell level 25 + 5, +2 magnitudes for increased size from Group to Boundary).

The binding ritual permits the devices to be safely removed from the places provided for them, although the architectural effect ceases while any are missing. So long as the devices and their holding places are all intact, they may be returned to their places, reactivating the architectural effect.

If the *Bind the Mystical Structure* ritual is designed with a Muto requisite, then the binding places briefly soften and meld with the enchanting devices, so that they form a united whole and cannot later be separated without breakage. For this to be work, the invested effects must not rely on any Shape Bonuses in the component devices.

### INVESTIGATING THE STRUCTURE

It is possible to investigate the component devices in a normal Hermetic laboratory. However, since full investiga-

tion would need the whole structure and only components are present, the magus's investigative Lab Total is halved.

Further, many such enchantments rely on the Mysteries of Hermetic Architecture or Hermetic Geometry, and these are opaque to those who do not comprehend the Mystery — they may understand that it is partly Hermetic, and the Technique, Form, and Level, but little more can be deduced.

### BOOSTING MAGICAL AURAS

One of the greatest properties of *Hermetic Architecture* is the ability to manipulate magical auras and regiones, something normally beyond the ability of Hermetic magic. The following guidelines

can only be used by those initiated in the use of Hermetic Architecture.

### ENCHANTMENTS TO MANIPULATE AURAS AND REGIONES

#### INCREASE OF THE ROOM'S MODEST AURA

CrVi 84

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: always on, T: Room, Mystery enchantment

Increases the Magical aura in a room by +1, to a maximum aura level of 5.

(Base 55, +1 Touch, +2 Room, +14 levels always on)

A standard Room is Size 6, and a tower



## New Aura Magic Guidelines

The following guidelines can only be used in structural enchantments (not spells) of the Mystery Hermetic Architecture.

### CREO VIM

**Level 35:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 1

**Level 40:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 2

**Level 45:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 3

**Level 50:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 4

**Level 55:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 5

**Level 60:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 6

**Level 65:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 7

**Level 70:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 8

**Level 75:** Increase the level of a Magical aura by +1 to a maximum of 9 — greatest increase possible

### MUTO VIM

**Level 4:** Double or halve the linear size of a Magical aura. (That is, double or halve the diameter of a circular

aura. Areas may be changed by a factor of four, volumes by a factor of eight.) To increase beyond double adds 1 magnitude per additional doubling, and requires a Creo requisite. To decrease beyond half, adds 1 magnitude per additional halving, and requires a Perdo requisite. If the regio shrinks below one pace across, it may "pinch off" — this can be used to close a regio by shrinking just the "interface" between levels (+1 magnitude to restrict shrinking).

**Level 4:** Double or halve the size of a Magical regio (Terram requisite). To increase beyond double adds 1 magnitude per additional doubling, and requires a Creo requisite. To decrease beyond half, adds 1 magnitude per additional halving, and requires a Perdo requisite.

### REGO VIM

**Level 15:** Create a connection between two levels of a single Magical regio. (Muto requisite). To connect between regio levels usually requires Arcane Range and an Arcane Connection for each regio level.

the Mystical Structure ritual of at least level 114 (base level 99 + 5, +2 for increased size from Group to Boundary).

### ENCHANTMENT OF THE MAGNIFIED REGIO

MuVi(Te) 39

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: always on, T: Boundary, Mystery enchantment

Increases the size of a Magical regio, doubling its size to a maximum of 200 paces across.

(Base 4, +1 Touch, +4 Boundary, +14 levels always on)

*Example: Alyssa has discovered a small magical regio, in which she plans to perform some mystery rites in privacy. The problem is, it is only 30 paces across — too small to work comfortably on her rites, which require more space. She therefore decides to expand the size of the regio magically.*

A standard Boundary is enchantment Size 8, multiplied by earth (x2) = 16 spaces, and requires eight component devices such as staff-sized stone pillars (4x4). To place the pillars correctly requires an Intelligence + Geometry roll vs. an Ease Factor of 14 (6 + Size 8). To finalize the enchantment, she needs to cast a Bind the Mystical Boundary ritual of at least level 54 (base level 39 + 5, +2 for increased size from Group to Boundary).

Alyssa therefore carves and sets up four of the stone pillars placed around the perimeter of the original boundary of the Regio, and four more placed just next to them. She casts her Bind the Mystical Structure rite, then carries the second set of pillars to the new larger perimeter where they are set in place, doubling the size of her regio to a comfortable 60 paces across.

### CLOSED PRIVACY OF THE ENCHANTED REGIO

Mu(Pe)Vi(Te) 79

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: always on, T: Boundary, Mystery enchantment

If a regio has an open boundary, so that any who see through may step into the regio, but the inhabitants desire to close this off, they may do so.

This enchantment shrinks the interface of a regio (rather than the whole regio) until it falls below one pace across, when it pinches off and detaches from the adjacent regio level. (To shrink only the interface between levels adds 1 magnitude (equivalent to a Part Target) on top of the

is made of hard stone (x4), requiring 24 pawns of vis. To enchant the magus's own laboratory is straightforward — he can enchant it in-place and need only enchant the room itself, once. (Although this does not require the structural aspects of Hermetic Architecture, aura manipulation enchantments still require the Virtue.)

To enchant a room other than the magus's laboratory requires the structural aspects of Hermetic Architecture, preparing six devices each with 24 enchantment spaces, such as staff-sized silver wands (6x4). When the six staves are ready, placing the six components correctly with the proper carved symbols and such, requires an Intelligence + Artes Liberales (geometry) roll with an Ease Factor of (6 + Size 6) = 12. Finalizing the enchantment of the placed staves requires a Bind the Mystical Structure ritual of level 89, Arcane, Momentary, Room. (base level 84+5).

### BOUNTIFUL BOUNDARY'S SPLENDID AURA

CrVi 99

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: always on, T: Boundary, Mystery enchantment

Increases the Magical aura in a standard Boundary by +1, to a maximum aura level of 6.

(Base 60, +1 Touch, +4 Boundary, +14 levels always on)

A standard Boundary is Size 8, multiplied by earth (x2), requiring 16 spaces, and as an architectural enchantment needs eight components, such as staff-sized stone pillars (Size 4 x hard stone 4).

*Example: Julia of Jerbiton wishes to increase her covenant's aura, so she prepares and enchants her stone columns. To place the eight pillars correctly requires an Intelligence + Geometry roll against an Ease Factor of 14 (6 + Size 8). To finalize the enchantment, she needs to cast a Bind*





normal Size of the Target.) Any pre-existing gates remain active. There is no longer a path that can be walked between the two levels, nor can anyone see between regions by any of the normal means — to cross from an adjacent regio level now requires an Arcane Connection and a transportation spell.

The base level enchantment to halve the size of a regio is 4, but for extra shrinking, the magus also needs a Perdo requisite and increased magnitude. To shrink a 100-pace diameter to below one pace, requires seven steps (halving seven times, divides by 128), so the base effect is level 35.

(Base 35, +1 Touch, +4 Boundary, +1 to affect the interface only, +14 levels always on)

*Example: Julia of Jerbiton and her sodales wish to make their covenant's regio into a secret*

*place, so she prepares and enchants the required eight stone columns (the regio is Size 8, soft earth). To place the pillars correctly requires an Intelligence + Geometry roll vs. an Ease Factor of 14 (6 + Size 8). To finalize the enchantment, she needs to cast a Bind the Mystical Structure ritual of at least level 94 (base level 79 + 5, +2 for increased size from Group to Boundary).*

#### CONJUNCTION OF THE MYSTIC VEILS

Re(Mu)Vi 45

Pen +0, unlimited uses

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery enchantment

This enchantment creates a magical connection between two levels of a single magical regio, which opens when a password is spoken, allowing one to step through a doorway and emerge in the other level.

This effect relies on the Mystery of Hermetic Architecture, and cannot be

enchanted as a single device: it requires four devices, usually combined in pairs to make two tall pillars (so one may walk between the two).

A single gateway allows travel in one direction only; to make a gate bidirectional, the caster needs two gates (eight component devices).

If created as a single set, one *Bind the Mystical Structure* ritual will serve for all the component devices of a bidirectional pair of gates.

(Base 15, +4 Arcane, +10 levels unlimited uses)

Placing the pillars correctly, with the correct carved symbols and such, requires an Intelligence + Artes Liberales (geometry) roll against an Ease Factor of 11 (6 + Size 5). A *Bind the Mystical Structure* ritual finalizes the enchantment, to make the gate(s) function.



# The Mysteries of Dreams

*This Mystery School deals with dreams and their substance, giving the magus the power to control or even enter dreams, and to become part of the stuff of dreams. While the nature of dreams remains mysterious, even to Hermetic magi, this mystery is surprisingly powerful and the nightmares of those who cross its adherents are memorable indeed.*

In the 13th century, a fierce academic debate rages within the Church about the true nature of dreams, building upon centuries of learned inquiry. While dream interpretation is still popular, attempts to enter and control dreams are far less common. In medieval Novgorod, however, there was a peasant tradition of visiting others in dreams, and of attempting to control one's dreaming.

Dreams have long been seen as omens, and the interpretation and understanding of them, and the role of dreams in prognostication and divination, are dealt with in Chapter 7: Divination and Augury. Hermetic understanding now states that dreams result from the effect of the humors on the mind and body. Experimentation has shown that dreams are intimately linked to the Form of Mentem, which is to the Imaginem of the dream substance as the brain is to the mind, or the heart to the emotions. That is, the capacity to dream is a function of Mentem and Mentem magics allow entrance to or control of dreams, yet their substance is of Imaginem — not physical species of sensation, but instead essence or nous; an idealized form of a species.

Dreams are therefore linked to all supernatural realms as they are not, like mundane existence, limited by time or physical boundaries; like the realms they are transcendent — beyond time, space, and the logic of creation. (This has led some heretical thinkers to claim that all

creation is a dream in the mind of God) The close association between the realms and dreams is clearly apparent in many miraculous visions: dreams of the dead, in which ghosts manifest through dreams, dreams sent by God, the chaotic dream realms associated with fairies and deceptive dreams sent by demons to mislead the unwary.



Dreams are probably the closest most ordinary folk in Mythic Europe get to experiencing magic and The Gift.

The process of controlling or directing one's dreams, called lucid dreaming, has roots in antiquity. A number of systems for dream incubation certainly existed in ancient Rome and were mentioned by St. John Chrysostom as late as the fourth century, who himself heeded dreams of divine origin, but denounced those who attempted to work magic through dreams.

The Eastern Church holds that people are not responsible for their dreams, but should feel appropriate shame for sinful or unworthy dreams. This is quite different from Jewish rabbinical interpretations, where sinful acts in dreams may actually be portents and are of no moral consequence. The Western Church

is also familiar with these dream magics; a Gnostic papyrus containing a spell entitled *Agathocles' Recipe for Sending a Dream* shows that the heretical opponents of the early Church experimented with these ideas, but with, it would seem, very limited success.

## Dream Magic — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

The Hermetic mystery of dream magic originates from a Baltic folk tradition that was brilliantly synthesized into Hermetic theory by Raisa of Novgorod in the early tenth century.

### SPIRITUAL DREAM TRAVEL

Mystery spells can change a dream to include an aware spirit, as though one's spirit travels into the dream leaving the body and possessions behind. Within the dream, all seems real, but all is in fact illusion: dream logic and dream time apply. A magus can use spiritual travel to enter his own dreams.

While traveling in a dream, the traveler's bodies lie in a trance, as if sleeping dreamlessly (and recovers as if sleeping). Physical disturbances to a traveler's body, such as being shaken or yelled at, require Concentration rolls (as to maintain a spell; see ArM5, page 82), and if failed, the traveler wakes from the trance, pulled out of the dream. Otherwise, the dream ends when the dreamer wakes, and any traveler in that dream is forced out. (It is

## The Stuff of Dreams

Dreams are qualitatively different from other mental states; while desire, sadness, or madness are clearly related to the humors as direct expressions of Mentem, the content of dreams is always the stuff of sensation, and therefore Imaginem. Hence to create, enter, or change a dream from outside one uses Mentem, but to enact changes within the dream one uses Imaginem.

possible to leave dream through portals, to places such as the imagination.)

While traveling in dream, a magus has an Arcane Connection to his body — he may leave the dream by “waking” and therefore returning to his body. The Arcane Connection also lets him use real-world vis in spells, consuming the vis permanently just as if a spell were cast in the waking world. A dream traveler can also find and use dream vis, but this lacks substance beyond dream.

It is also possible to enter bodily into a dream, but that is a Mystery of the greater dream grimoire.

Those intending to travel into dream also make use of standard Mentem spells affecting dreams or dreamers.

## THE SPIRITUAL TRAVELER

The traveling spirit has the full spell-casting abilities and magic resistance of the traveler’s mind — in the case of a spiritual magus, his five Techniques, Imaginem Form (other Forms are ignored for a spiritual traveler, as detailed in the insert), and his Parma Magica.

His Virtues and Flaws apply as normal (subject to interpretation if necessary). Some otherwise irremediable Flaws, such as missing limbs, are easily remedied with a quick Imaginem illusion.

Magical equipment other than a talisman is not available to the spirit traveler, but a dream copy of his talisman accompanies a traveler. The real talisman remains with the body.

The body left behind is without spellcasting abilities or conscious resistance. This means that the body is pro-

## Magic in Dream

Spirit travelers find magic in dreams both strange and powerful, and governed by the Hermetic Form of Imaginem.

**Form:** A spirit traveler in a dream casts a spell of any Form as an Imaginem spell. Spontaneous Imaginem magic can produce any effect: Use the guidelines for the Form that would apply in the real world, but use the magus’s score in Imaginem ignoring other Forms. If a spirit-form magus knows a Formulaic spell of another Form, he casts it using his Imaginem score while within dreams.

For example, *Creo Ignem* 10 “creates a fire doing +15 damage,” so *Creo Imaginem* 10 can create dream fire causing +15 dream damage; *Rego Corpus* 25 “transports the target instantly up to one league,” so *Rego Imaginem* 25 can transport a dream inhabitant or a dream traveler up to one league. A *Muto Corpus (Animal)* spell becomes *Muto Imaginem* — the Animal requisite also becomes Imaginem and is ignored.

**DURATION:** The Duration of spells cast in dreams is based on dream time, not the passage of time in the waking world.

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** Form-based Magic Resistance uses the Imaginem Form exclusively (and the magus’s Parma Magica).

**DREAM RITUALS:** Ritual Magic affecting the dream world can be cast spontaneously, without the magus know-

ing a formal Ritual spell, using the rules for Ceremonial Magic.

Momentary Ritual effects within dreams create objects that are real within the dream, but lost when the dreamer wakes, or (if affecting the dream traveler) on returning to the waking world.

Dream Rituals require dream vis. Dream vis can be found and collected in the dream world, and used freely — it all appears to have the Form of Imaginem.

**Real-World Vis:** Real-world vis can only be used for known (non-Spontaneous) Rituals, and in this case the duration is determined by real-world time, not dream time. Real-world duration can make dream effects persist across and between dreams, lapsing while the dreamer wakes, then resuming when she starts to dream again. Momentary Rituals cast using real-world vis become real, and last indefinitely across dreams (subject to change, like any other thing).

Rituals using real-world vis can use the real-world spell’s Technique and Form vis, or substitute Imaginem vis.

**Aura:** The aura for magic worked inside a dream is all illusory, and is whatever the current setting demands, so a dream cathedral has a Divine aura, a dream world hell-pit is Infernal, and a dream world covenant is Magical.

The aura around the traveler’s body is not relevant once inside dream.

tected by its Form scores, but the Parma Magica protection “travels” with the spirit. A magus preparing for dream travel may choose to extend his Parma Magica to cover his body and spirit as separate entities (using the rules in *ArM5*, page 66), reducing his effective Parma score by 3.

## DREAM MAGIC SPELLS

This Mystery deals with the substance of dream, giving the magus the power to enter into dreams, becoming part of the stuff of dreams. Once in a dream, the traveler may move and interact with the dream world around her. If the dream comes to an

end, any spiritual traveler in the dream is evicted and wakes up in the real world.

Dream Magic allows the following new duration and target to be employed in spells.

### NEW DURATION: DREAM

The spell functions for the length of an actual dream of a sleeping individual. The spell ends if the dream ends, or the sleeper awakens. The dream can be natural or sustained magically.

It is possible to bypass the waking end of a dream in various ways, such as passing through a portal into the imagination.

Dream Duration is equivalent to Concentration.

## Dream Vis

Dreams of all things can be found, including dreams of raw vis (even if the dreamer has no idea what the substance is). A traveler in a dream can use dream vis like normal vis, except that it can have no effect whatsoever outside dreams. It is quite easy for magi to find dream vis in dreams. Dream vis is nearly always *Imaginem vis* (the general Form of all within dream).

To have any effect beyond a dream, including persistence between dreams and moving dream objects into the real world, real-world vis is needed. To use real-world vis within a dream, it must either be on the body of a traveler (linked by Arcane Connection), or brought in by a physical traveler (see *The Greater Dream Grimoire*).

### NEW TARGET: DREAM

This new Target, Dream, allows travel into the dream of a sleeping individual. The sleep may be magically induced, as long as dreaming is possible. Dream only applies to *Mentem* spells.

Dream Target is equivalent to Individual. Size does not matter (as is normal for *Mentem* spells), but also Dream is fixed as an actual dream of one sleeper — it is not possible to work dream magic on several dreams or dreamers together. (Dream spells exist to merge several travelers into one dream.)

### THE LUCID DREAMER

Mu(In)Me 20

R: Per, D: Dream, T: Dream, Mystery

The magus lies down to sleep and casts this spell, slipping easily into dreaming sleep — except that his conscious spirit appears in the dream and may move and interact freely. He may wake any time he wishes (and may settle again for normal sleep, if he so desires).

The spiritual traveler appears in the dream with his clothes, a dream copy of his talisman (if any), and dream vis equivalent to any vis left on his body. Using this dream vis has no effect on the real-world vis left behind; however, the

## New Spell Guidelines

### MUTO MENTEM (DREAM, MYSTERY)

The Range of these spells is the greater of the range to the dreamer or the bodies of those whose spirits are to enter dream.

**Level 15:** Change the dream of the caster to include the caster's own spirit (*Intellego* requisite).

**Level 20:** Change the dream of another to include the caster's spirit (*Intellego* requisite).

**Level 25:** Change a person's dream to include another's spirit (*Intellego* requisite).

**Level 30:** Change a person's dream to include a group (up to ten) of spirits (*Intellego* requisite). The number of spirits included is multiplied by 10 for each magnitude added to the guideline.

traveler may use that real-world vis via the Arcane Connection to his body.

(Base: 15, +1 Dream duration)

### THE PATH TO LEMNOS

Mu(In)Me 30

R: Touch, D: Dream, T: Dream, Mystery

The magus touches a dreaming sleeper, and the target dream changes to include the caster's spirit; the caster slips into a trance while in the dream.

The spiritual traveler appears in the dream with his clothes, a dream copy of his talisman (if any), and dream vis equivalent to any vis left on his body. The magus has an Arcane Connection to his own body, and may use this to leave dream before the spell ends.

(Base: 20, +1 Touch, +1 Dream duration)

### THE ROAD TO LEMNOS

Mu(In)Me 40

R: Touch, D: Dream, T: Dream, Mystery

The magus touches a dreaming sleeper (or the magus, as in *The Lucid Dreamer*), and the target dream changes to include the spirits of a touched group of travel-

ers (possibly including the caster). The travelers' bodies lie in a trance while in the dream.

The spiritual travelers appear in the dream with their clothes, a dream copy of their talisman (if any) and dream vis equivalent to any vis left on their bodies. The travelers have Arcane Connections to their own bodies, and may use these to leave the dream before the spell ends.

(Base: 30, +1 Touch, +1 Dream duration)

*Example: Metrodorus, an elderly dream magus, seeks answers to recent puzzles. He wishes to search within his dreams, and to bring his raven familiar with him, so casts The Road To Lemnos, so that both may enter the dream. He appears at the beginning of his dream, with his staff and raven, on an empty plain*

## TIME AND TRAVEL

Navigation in a dream is associative rather than geographical. Dreamers find places by entering similar places: an entire peasant village, for example, can be found by walking through a single hut. A similar process can lead to objects: a key may lead to a door, through which in turn the dreamer may enter a completely different region (and the door may disappear behind him as it closes). Magically created items (even illusions) are quite real within dream, and can be used to aid navigation by association.

*Example: Metrodorus seeks to brew a better longevity potion. Deciding that his youth before apprenticeship, over a century before, holds the key to his new design, he decides to seek his long-forgotten childhood innocence in a dream. Unfortunately, the dream devolves into a twisted series of visions of past Tribunals and past sodales. Suddenly he remembers the sound of a stream outside his parents' but where he used to fish, and he resolves to cast a spell to create a stream, then follow it back until he arrives at the but in the dream.*

Time, too, is no longer linear and fixed — a dreamer may skip time, rolling up long periods to pass in an instant, or make a brief moment seem like days (or longer). Travelers who part and reunite in a dream may find that each group has taken a different time to reach the juncture. Almost any change is possible

in dreams, and most physical laws can be broken. Also, time in dreams bears little relation to time in the waking world — years may seem to pass in a dream, while only a few moments pass in the real world.

Spiritual travelers in dreams do not actually sleep, either: if they lie down as if to sleep, time passes around them in an instant, and they wake at some new time. If they forget to sleep, they suffer no ill effects. This is akin to the '...and some years pass...' effects of dream time. They cannot have a dream within a dream.

Permanent change may appear possible within the dream (indeed it is within the bounds of dream logic, which permits any change, including undoing permanence), but all is lost when the travelers leave the dream and return to the waking world (or when the dreamer wakes).

If the storyguide portrays the chaotic shuffling they have experienced in their own dreams, and allows players to invoke the same for their own deliberate movements, then dream adventures can be greatly enhanced. Travel by dream logic is also similar to travel in Arcadia, and ideas may be taken from tales of Faerie.

## ENCOUNTERS IN DREAM

Almost anything can be found in dreams, and the ability to create things with Imaginem magics and make them solid (see below for Magic in Dream) makes finding things especially easy.

It is possible to encounter dreams of animals, fantastical beasts, or even of real people. Dream-people are people as perceived by the dreamer (not the traveler). They know only what the dreamer dreams them as knowing, which may differ from what the dreamer would think about them if he was awake. (In either case, it is in truth limited above all to what the *dreamer* knows.)

Dream-people created by spells cast by travelers know what the spellcaster intends them to know (again limited by what the caster knows).

Dream logic also means that a magus may check in his pockets and may "find something there." A "found something" may be almost any common object. The

magus can look for other things and find them in pouches, packs, or even just lying around. The storyguide rules on this, but modest quantities of common things may be found, although frequent checking is likely to turn up something dreadful instead. Things found like this are particularly impermanent, and disappear if the magus ceases to pay attention to them. After all, it is all a dream.

Conveniently for magi, most magi consider vis to be a common object such as might be in a magus's pouches. A magus may hope to find a modest amount of dream vis if he checks for it. Large quantities of dream vis or uncommon objects require actual quests to find them.

## THE DREAMER IN CONTROL (LUCID DREAMING)

When someone dreams, she may dream of herself, or of others. The dreamer may feel she is participating in the dream, or witnessing it from a distance — even watching herself "from the outside."

Dream travelers choose their own path and may move through the dream to places the dreamer is scarcely aware of, and may avoid the areas the dreamer is creating. (Whether the dream travelers create or explore these far corners is moot.)

As perceived and explored by dream travelers, the dreamer may be present as an inhabitant of the dream (or not), and this dreamer-figure has a variable link to the dreamer in life. In some dreams, the dreamer-figure may be flat and unresponsive, as the dreamer watches from outside; in others the dreamer may believe she is "there" and the figure is alert and lifelike.

In game terms, if the dreamer is focused on herself, treat her as an alert traveler; if she is watching herself remotely, treat her as a dream inhabitant — part of the landscape of figures.

The dreamer may be able to switch her attention and participate fully, even if she had been viewing remotely. If the dreamer realizes what is happening, she may be able to take control and reshape the dream — this is difficult to control and largely random, but may have major effects on the dream.

To notice dream travelers as figures in a dream, and be aware of oddities in their actions, the dreamer must succeed on a roll of Perception + Awareness against an Ease Factor of 9.

To try to reshape the dream, the dreamer must succeed on a roll of Intelligence against an Ease Factor of 9. The dreamer gains bonuses to this roll if she can work magic relating to dreams:

- +3 if the dreamer is a magus (or of similar power)
- +3 if the dreamer has Dream Magic
- +3 if the dreamer has Hermetic Dream Interpreter (see Chapter 7: Divination and Augury)
- +1 per other supernatural ability relating to illusions or dreams in general (maximum +3)

If she succeeds, she may arbitrarily reshape the dream.

If it is necessary to judge the actual extent of the change, treat the rolled total as the *magnitude* of a dream spell as if cast by a spiritual dream traveler, although much of the magnitude is used to make the change affect an area of the dream landscape. (This can produce enormous changes to the dream landscape, but this is normal in dreams.) Travelers with Magic Resistance typically resist, but find the landscape around them to have changed.

A dreamer with Dream Magic may use real dream spells if she is aware of the situation.

**To Become Aware of Travelers: Stress Die + Perception + Awareness vs. an Ease Factor of 9**

**To Reshape a Dream: Stress Die + Intelligence + Bonuses vs. an Ease Factor of 9**

**Dream Shaping Magnitude = Rolled Total**

If the dreamer does not become intelligently aware of travelers, but the travelers remain in the vicinity of the dreamer-figure, the storyguide may feel it appropriate for the dreamer to change the dream unconsciously. The storyguide



may make an arbitrary change, or roll to reshape the dream as above.

## TIME AND EXPERIENCE IN DREAM

Travelers may learn information in dream travel, by interpreting what they see, by prying into hidden corners of the dream where shadows of the mind appear, or by encountering other beings in the dream.

However, the passage of time is illusory and they do not gain real experience (that is, they do not gain game points for Arts and Abilities). Laboratory work is also impossible in the shifting conditions of dreams, so magi may not invent spells (from texts or from a teacher), nor perform enchantments. Spells are a matter of illusion in this dreaming world, and are governed by *Imaginem*.

## SPELL BOTCHES IN DREAM

Travelers may cast spells in dream, and if stressed may botch their spells. Spell botches typically produce effects in that area of dream similar to a nightmare, which may make the area quite unpleasant for both travelers and inhabitants, and for the dreamer whose dream is affected.

A sufficiently bad nightmare may shock the dreamer into wakefulness.

A magus botching a spell accumulates real Warping points and must check for Twilight as normal. If he is thrown into Twilight, his spirit is thrown into real Twilight, and the duration is measured in real-world time, not dream time.

While in Twilight, the magus is effectively not in the dream (his real-world body remains entranced). When the Twilight ends, he returns to the dream if possible. If the dream has ended, he returns to his body and wakes.

## FATIGUE AND WOUNDS

Spirits in dreams do not experience Fatigue, and ignore all Fatigue loss (and penalties). They may eat and drink dream food, but they do not need to, and suffer no ill-effects if they do not. Likewise, they believe they need to breathe, but if they



find themselves immersed in dream water, they find that it is all an illusion again.

Wounds may be taken, but are not real, although the shock and pain is real. If a traveler is wounded, he must succeed in a roll of

### Stress Die + Stamina + Modifiers vs. an Ease Factor of Total Wound Penalty

If he fails the roll, he wakes from the shock, and is thrown out of the dream into the normal physical world. An Incapacitating wound has an Ease Factor of 9, and leaves the traveler Incapacitated even if he is not thrown out of dream. If

he overcomes the shock, the Wound and its Wound Penalty accumulate during the combat, making subsequent Wound shocks harder to overcome. Apply penalties from previous wounds to the Stamina roll, as well as the benefits and penalties of Virtues and Flaws relating to pain and wounds, and also strong and weak will. If the traveler survives the encounter, it is easy to recover from the wounds once sufficient dream time has passed. If the traveler wakes, it was only a dream.

*Example: The dream maga Morphea is exploring the dreams of a local worthy, seeking out a demon. On entering dream she uses Phantasm of the Human Form to create some shield grogs and sets off. She soon finds the demon, which appears and attacks her.*

*Her phantom grogs (quite solid in the dream) take the brunt of the attack, while she casts spells past them. However, the demon hurls several of its spines past the grogs to strike Morphea. She suffers two Medium wounds, and must make two Stamina rolls against an Ease Factor of 3 for the first wound, and 6 for the second. Fortunately she has Stamina +2 and Strong Will (+3 to Will rolls), and adds this as a bonus to her rolls to stay in dream. She rolls  $7+5 = 12$  for the first wound, and  $5+5 = 10$  for the second, so she remains in the dream.*

*Her attacks are quite effective and the demon is slain. Morphea takes stock of her situation, and decides not to continue immediately, but to recuperate. "Some time later" she has fully recovered from her wounds, and sets off again. (Nothing significant happens in this time — it is just an exercise in dream time and logic. The dreamer whose dream she is in may vaguely recall this period, but lack any details. No time passes in the real world.)*

As a spirit in a dream, the spiritual traveler is also vulnerable to magics that attack spirits from the Mentem and Vim guidelines. (Spiritual travelers perceive these as *Imaginem* spells). If the attacker uses Might reduction spells, similar to *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, the spiritual traveler should use his *Imaginem* score instead of Might. His *Imaginem* score is not actu-

ally lost beyond the duration of the spells, but if his Imaginem "Might" is reduced to zero, he is forced into the waking world.

If he is beyond connection to the waking world, he may be destroyed like any other spirit.

*Example: Morphea has now realized that she faces a diabolist dream traveler, and has tracked him down in the dreamer's memory palace. She chases him from room to room, until they come face to face.*

Morphea has Stamina +2, Perdo +20, Imaginem +20, Parma Magica 3, Penetration 3, she knows a level 10 Demon's Eternal Oblivion that she hopes will work in this situation. The diabolist magus has the same abilities and a similar level 10 Dreamer's Eternal Oblivion spell. The dreamer has a memory palace with a level 2 Magical aura.

The diabolist wins the initiative contest, and casts his spell: roll 9 + (Stamina 2 + Perdo 20 + Imaginem 20) + aura 2 = 53, and Penetration is 53 - 10 + Penetration 3 = 46. This easily beats Morphea's Magic Resistance (Imaginem 20 + (5 x Parma 3) + aura 2) = 37. Morphea cries out as the spell drains her Imaginem score by 10.

Morphea now casts her spell, matching her reduced Imaginem score of 10 to cast the Perdo Vim spell. Since this is dream, the storyguide agrees with Morphea's player that the Demon's Eternal Oblivion spell working through Imaginem can affect a diabolist magus. She casts her spell, and her player rolls 7 + (2+20+10) + 2 = 41, Penetration = 41 - 10 + 3 = 34, which does not quite match the diabolist's Magic Resistance. Cackling with glee he casts another Oblivion spell, for which the roll is 1+1+10, casting total 40+42+2=84. Now cackling manically, he watches as Morphea is struck down.

Losing another 10 Imaginem points reduces her to 0, and she is forced out of the dream. She wakes with a start, covered in a cold sweat, crying out loud. (Her real-world Imaginem score is unaffected, as a quick Spontaneous spell verifies.)

## AGING IN DREAM

A spiritual traveler in dream ages, or not, depending on the time she perceives as passing, and whether she chooses to obey that time. Spiritual dream travelers may remain unaging if they wish. They may use spells to make themselves younger or older — it is all a matter of appearance in dream.

While the spirit is in a dream, the body is subject to all normal effects, including aging. It is possible for the body to be wounded, age, or even die while in the spirit is in a dream, and for the spirit to remain in the dream. If a spiritual traveler returns from a dream and find his body has died, then his spirit passes into death when he leaves the dream.

It is possible for a traveler to achieve a form of evanescent immortality in a dream, if she never returns to the waking world. (Normally she would wake when her dreamer wakes, but if she has left an individual dream through some portal, she may remain.)

## The Greater Dream Grimoire — Minor Mystery Virtue

This Virtue requires the Dream Magic Virtue. It teaches how to enter physically into another's dream, and how to extract real items from dream into the waking world, giving them substance. Few are ever taught this dangerous magic.

Traveling physically into dreams is like crossing into a Regio, unlike spiritual travel. A portal is created in the dream that permits the traveler to cross out again.

With physical travel, the traveler is subject to real and permanent effects and threats that will affect him even after returning to the waking world. On the other hand, he finds it easy to retrieve objects hidden in the dream, and has a solidity greater than dream constructs.

If travelers encounter each other in a dream, each perceives the encounter in his own way: in particular if a physical traveler encounters a spiritual traveler, then the physical traveler sees the other as "real" and endowed with normal Forms — any magic cast by the other is perceived in the categories of its "proper" Forms. A spiritual traveler encountering a physical traveler perceives her as the stuff of dreams, and all she does is a matter of illusion (and Imaginem).

*Example: Metrodorus, a greater dream mage, enters the dream of Somnius, where he encounters*

*Morphea, a spiritual traveler. Both started in the same room in the magi's tower, and agreed to meet at a recognizable landmark. Metrodorus has tramped for several hours to get here, and is somewhat foot-sore and bothered.*

*Morphea arrives walking through the air, on dream steps, having taken no time at all. Metrodorus takes undue exception to Morphea's unreasonably cheerful entrance, in the light of his own peevish state, and he casts a Rego Corpus spell to bring Morphea to the ground (he casts this as normal). Morphea attempts to resist the spell, but uses her Imaginem Form to do so, as all is illusion to her. She succeeds, and decides that Metrodorus is not entering into the spirit of things, so casts a Muto Imaginem "grow ass's ears" spell at Metrodorus. Metrodorus resists her spell with his Corpus Form score, as to him this is a MuCo(An) spell.*

## TIME, TRAVEL, AND OBJECTS

Physical travelers are subject to normal time and movement in their immediate environment, as they are, in fact, awake throughout the whole experience. The dream world is solid and substantial to them in all ways.

Dream time does not leap forward around them, and they must walk, ride, or travel magically through the dream world. They have no ability to "find" objects on their person.

Dream navigation does apply, and travelers may attempt to follow connections to move between places.

They can apply dream logic to the landscape and dream inhabitants around them, but dream logic does not apply to the actual physical travelers, or to physical objects brought into dream. They can resist the arbitrary changes of the dream world. If the dreamer notices a physical traveler, she can affect the landscape around the traveler, but not the traveler himself.

When they return to the real world, usually the time as elapsed for the travelers corresponds to real elapsed time. Sometimes, as with travel to faerie places, the time may be longer or shorter than the real world.

If the dreamer wakes, her dream ceases to exist. Physical travelers in that dream are expelled from the dream, reappearing

where they left the real world; real-world objects vanish and reappear when the sleeper begins to dream again.

It is possible to hide real objects in dream. Physical travelers who find such objects may easily retrieve them, just by carrying them; spiritual travelers need spells and real-world vis to do so.

## LIFE AND LIMB

Physical travelers are subject to all the normal effects on their bodies: They suffer Fatigue and Wounds, and require normal nourishment and sustenance. They also need sleep, odd though this may seem. Consuming dream-food is like consuming food created by magic but without vis — it appears to be nourishing but lacks any real long-term nourishment.

Given the passage of time around them, physical travelers may recover Fatigue and heal Wounds, at the same rates as the normal world. They also age normally.

## SPELLCASTING

Physical travelers cast spells as normal, responding to the Forms of dream as if they had normal Hermetic Forms. (Storyguide consultation may be required to agree upon Forms for some dream elements.)

Physical travelers can cast spells described as “cast in the real world to affect dreams” even while in dream, as they are still real-world people. This can make them much more powerful than spiritual travelers.

The aura of dream locations is determined as for spiritual travelers, according to the dream-world environment.

## VIS AND PHYSICAL TRAVELERS

All travelers to dream may use any vis as if it were real. However true reality is confined to real-world vis brought in by physical travelers. If real-world vis is used, it is gone forever, just as if used in the real world.

Any spell effects brought on by or sustained by dream vis disappear on the return to the waking world. If the traveler moves from one dreamer's dream to another's, then dream spells are unaffected by that move.

Note that Momentary Creo ritual spells have real effects in the dream, and also the spell magic stops immediately, so real healing (over time) is possible, even if wounds have been healed by dream vis.

*Example: Morpheus uses a Moon Duration spell to physically enter a dream. While there she suffers a Light Wound. She patches herself up with a Creo Imaginem healing spell, using some dream vis she found lying around. This makes her appear healed within the dream — but since the magic has gone away, her body continues to heal underneath the glamour. After a week within the dream, she makes a recovery roll, and the Light Wound is truly gone.*

## SPELLS OF THE GREATER DREAM GRIMOIRE

The greater dream grimoire permits physical travel into dream targets, and transporting real objects into or out of dream. Range of these spells is the greater of the range to the dream target, or to the people or objects affected.



## NEW GUIDELINES

### CREO (FORM)

**Level 15, Mystery ritual:** Give an object encountered in dream substance so that it can exist in the real world. This must be cast in a dream by a physical traveler as a Momentary Ritual, using real-world vis. Size is as normal for the Form. Form is the Form of the object in the real world, but only physical travelers see the dream world as having Form other than Imaginem). If the object given substance is enchanted, add the sum of all levels of enchantment to the required level, and add requisites of Vim, and any Arts used in the enchantments. If this is not done, the object will be mundane when extracted. (Requisites Muto, Mentem)

Note that no-one has ever successfully given living substance to a dream-person, as Hermetic magic cannot create a soul, although beasts have been made real.

### SUBSTANCE OVER FORM

Cr(Mu)/Te(Me) 20

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery Ritual

This spell can only be cast in a dream by a physical traveler and the caster must use real-world vis for the ritual. The target object may appear unchanged for now, but it has a reality that extends beyond dream, so that if a physical traveler leaves a dream bearing the object, it travels with him and appears in the real world. If the spell is cast without real-world vis, the object vanishes as it is brought into the real world.

(Base 15, +1 Touch)

### REGO CORPUS

**Level 35, Mystery:** Send the caster into a dream. The caster passes through a portal that remains in the dream until she returns. (Requisites Mentem, Muto) The traveler is ejected back into the real world when a dream she is in ceases.

**Level 40, Mystery:** Send the body of another into a person's dream.



(Requisites Mentem, Muto) Similar spells exist for Animal and Herbam (for living plants and animals).

**Level 45, Mystery:** Send the bodies of a group of people into a person's dream. (Requisites Mentem, Muto) Similar spells exist for Animal and Herbam (for living plants and animals).

#### THE MORPHEAN GATE

Re(Mu)Co(Me) 40

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Dream, Mystery

The caster is transported bodily through a portal from the real world into a dream. He is transported with all his belongings and equipment, just as if transported by a Rego Corpus spell. He remains there until the dream he is in ends, he leaves by the portal he entered through, or he finds some means to escape by using a spell.

At the place in dream where he entered, a dream portal is created by the act of his entrance. The portal can only be affected by spells exceeding the level of the *Morphean Gate* ritual. (Paranoid magi have been known to devise more powerful versions of the spell to protect their exit portal.)

Any physical traveler in this dream may leave through the portal, stepping out to emerge by the body of the dreamer. The portal remains as long as the dream persists. It is possible to encounter the portals of other travelers, and to leave through their portals.

(Base 35, +1 Touch)

#### CREO IMAGINEM

**Level 15, Mystery ritual:** Give a dream object, of Size -7 or smaller, substance so that it can exist in the real world.

**Level 20, Mystery ritual:** Give a dream object, of Size -5 or smaller, substance so that it can exist in the real world.

**Level 25, Mystery ritual:** Give a dream object, of Size -3 or smaller, substance so that it can exist in the real world.

**Level 30, Mystery ritual:** Give a dream object, of Size -1 or smaller, substance so that it can exist in the real world.

**Level 35, Mystery ritual:** Give a dream object, of Size +1 or smaller, substance so that it can exist in the real world.

Creo Imaginem spells to give substance to an object must be cast in a dream by a spiritual traveler as a Momentary Ritual, using real-world vis (either on the traveler's real-world body, or brought in by a physical traveler). The magus can use Creo, Imaginem, or vis of the Form of the real-world object. Dream vis does not suffice, as it cannot sustain objects outside of dream. Target size modifiers apply to all the "give substance" guidelines, along with a Muto requisite. No Form requisites are required for spiritual dream travelers.

If the object given substance is enchanted, add the sum of all levels of enchantment to the required level, and add requisites of Vim and any Arts used in the enchantments. If this is not done, the object is mundane when extracted.

Note that no-one has ever successfully given living substance to a dream-person, as Hermetic magic cannot create a soul. Beasts have been made real.

#### THE ONEIROPOMP'S TREASURE

CrIm 30

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind, Mystery Ritual



A small object (up to Size -3 — the size of a baby or a cat), is given real substance, and appears in the real world. The spell can only be used by a spiritual traveler; since he is in dream, the spell can in fact be a spontaneous ritual — but it must use real-world vis, either on the caster's body, accessible through the Arcane Connection from dreamer to body, or brought in by a physical traveler.

The real-world vis must be either Creo or Imaginem vis, or the Form of the real-world object created. The caster's score in the real-world Form determines the number of pawns of Form vis his body can use, limited in this ritual by his score in Imaginem as if a requisite on the real-world Form.

A copy of the object given substance appears by the side of the entranced body of the magus casting this ritual.

(Base 25, +1 Touch)

#### REGO TERRAM

**Level 15, Mystery:** Send an inanimate object, including any enchantments, through a portal into dream. The spell must have enough range for the caster to encompass both the dreamer and the object. The object ceases to exist in the dream if the dreamer wakes, but reappears in the dream when the dreamer returns to sleep. (Requisite: Mentem, Muto; requisites for the Form(s) of object transferred, Vim requisite if the object is magical. The spell level must at least equal the level of the strongest enchantment in the object.)

The spell level needs to be increased if the real-world object is greater than normal size for its Form. For example, a boat is a Group of Herbam items: roughly ten cubic paces of wood and linen. This adds 2 magnitudes to a spell needed to send a boat into a dream.

#### GIFT OF THE ONEIROPOMP

Re(Mu)Te(Me) 15

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Dream, Mystery

Sends a non-magical stone or metal object through a portal into a dream. The caster must be touching both object and dreamer. The caster can designate where in the dream the object appears, if



such a place has been prepared magically — otherwise the object must be searched for in dream.

The caster may use cast this spell while awake to send objects into his own dream, provided he lies down to sleep directly after casting the spell.

## The Dream Landscape

There are natural portals from dreams to the imagination and memory of the dreamer. These portals are rare and hidden, but some magi claim to know spells to help find them. Memory and imagination both have portals to each other, and back to dream, and the return portals are usually much easier to find than the dream portals.

Physical travelers entering dreams also leave portals that lead back to the places they entered from.

Any travelers in dreams — spiritual traveler, physical traveler, demon, or faerie — may pass through dream portals if they can find them.

## THE MIND'S IMAGINATION

In the imagination, one finds past dreams and strange combinations of memories and dreams. Imagination is a land very similar to dream, and the rules given for dream (time, travel, etc.) may be applied here too. However, the imagination persists beyond sleep, into waking time, so a traveler who finds a portal into imagination may remain inside the mind of a waking person, rather than being expelled when the dreamer wakes.

Possessing spirits, such as ghosts, demons, and even faeries, may take up residence in the imagination, from where they may affect the dreams and memories, and even the waking behavior of the possessed person. A traveler in a dream entering the imagination may encounter these spirits (Imaginem beings for spiritual travelers, Corpus, Animal or other forms for physical travelers) — they may be bargained with, or defeated here, and if defeated, the possession ends. A possessing spirit may have taken advantage of dream logic to construct fortifications for itself, which may make it very dif-

ficult for real-world exorcists to exorcise the spirit.

## THE MIND'S MEMORY

In the memory, a traveler can find all of a person's memories. A normal person has a memory that is disorganized and without structure. The memories appear as objects or persons, but in isolation from each other. Travel between memories may be sequential, following the path that laid them down, or random is if shuffling through the papers piled on a table.

A person who has the Art of Memory Virtue, and has constructed a memory palace, has a physical palace that a traveler from dream may enter. He may move through this palace, and discover the memory loci and the objects within the loci, and read the memories within. He is akin to a burglar in a regular palace.

It is possible for a traveler to move memories around while he is invading a dreamer's memory. This may make it hard for the dreamer to recall things, or the



traveler may retrieve lost memories and place them where they are easy to find.

It is also possible to use dream magic to strengthen memories or even make memories solid. A solid memory can be removed (stolen) into the real world. A memory made solid and then removed is lost from the dreamer's mind.

## THE DREAMSCAPE

It is rumored that there are portals to other places than imagination and memory, and even to a dreamscape or dreamland that extends beyond and between dreams.

Spells of the greater dream grimoire might be able to create portals to the dreamscape, and even create portals from the dreamscape into the dreams of others encountered there.

It is said that the shared dreamscape may include the dream-persons of real people dreaming, who may travel to the dreamscape unawares; some dream magi claim that they can open portals to the dreams of those dreamers.

Physical travelers and real-world objects (and vis) are unable to cross portals into this dreamscape, but spiritual travelers may leave the current dream and enter the wider realm of the dreamscape. Here dream travelers may gather and meet, and perhaps share dream creations.

Since this is a dream landscape, all the normal rules about things in dream apply, except that there is no direct path back to the waking world, so wounds and real-world disturbances do not force travelers out of the dreamscape. The entranced body cannot be woken while its spirit is in the dreamscape, and the traveler's mind is unaware of any changes to his body — indeed his body may be killed or die naturally and he would not know until he left the dreamscape and then left the dream for the waking world.

Wounds, even incapacitating wounds, can be healed given dream-time out of combat, and if a traveler's dream body is killed by dream-wounds his body vanishes and he temporarily lose consciousness, but he can form another dream-body with dream magic (Imaginem).

However, a traveler's spirit can be destroyed by dream Mentem and Might attack spells — and lacking an escape to the real world, would actually die. (The body would remain locked in a mindless trance, indistinguishable from that left by the spirit traveling normally.) This is one of the few ways to kill a magus in dreams.

## DREAMSCAPE — DREAM OR REALITY?

Some would say of the dreamscape that it is all an extended dream. No physical form has ever crossed from a dream into the dreamscape, and no-one has ever taken real-world vis through; likewise the normal Arcane Connection to the entranced body of the spirit traveler is lost while in the dreamscape. Thus, no permanent change can be made real in the dreamscape, although dream forms and dream vis suffice for almost all purposes.

If one opens a portal from the dreamscape to dream, the traveler can take no real-world vis, and so cannot make any real changes to the remote dream. Does that remote dream actually exist — or is it in fact a dream of a dream? Dream magi claim it is real, but it may not be so. Some even claim to have arranged rendezvoused with other dream travelers equipped with real-world vis on the body of the remote dreamer.

## The Volshebnii Mechtateli

*In dreams begin responsibilities. Be they decadent dreamers or utopian idealists, the dream witches have sinister reputation, as befits a cult that truly possesses the power of nightmares.*

## The History of the Volshebnii Mechtateli

Dreams hold a particular fascination for those who live in northern climes;

the long nights and the great vault of the heavens above the forests of one region of the Novgorod Tribunal gave birth to one of the most peculiar dream theorists of all time, Raisa of Ex Miscellanea. She was an imaginative child, given to flights of fancy. As an apprentice, she traveled many times with her parens to a small village in the Baltic area, where the locals practiced dream magics unknown to the Order. Her mistress was so driven to distraction by her inability to concentrate she almost gave up teaching her many times, but The Gift was so strong in her that she relented, and continued to teach the exasperating girl.

Raisa's natural aptitude with Imaginem was immense, and her Gauntlet is still whispered of among those who study the Art. It was held before the entire Tribunal, and she was able to pass easily — and then reveal she had not done so, but merely convinced everyone she had completed the task set. From that time onward people did not mock her as much — a new maga able to cast such magics in the powerful Aegis of the Tribunal was clearly deserving of respect.

The pain of the taunting she had endured in her childhood stayed with Raisa though. Withdrawing often into her lab, yet never producing any enchantments and rarely writing books, her covenant mates dismissed her as a waste of magical resources. Apart from casting enchantments to hide the covenant from mortal eyes, and her very occasional and sadly incomprehensible writings on Mentem and Imaginem, she seemed to have little to offer. She became withdrawn, rarely bothering with meetings, and almost uninterested in the news that the others avidly sought from Redcap visits. Apart from three visits to the Baltic village that had fascinated her as a child, she seemed introverted to the point of insanity.

Yet one day when the covenant was attacked by a potent faerie drake that had long slumbered in the forest nearby, it was she who came to the rescue. The creature could only be defeated, it was said, by the tears of a rhinoceros — which are hard to find indeed in the forests of Novgorod. Yet emerging from her lab, Raisa had just such an item —

and said, when asked, that she had found it within dreams. Recalling odd visions, and peculiar sensations in their dreams, her covenant mates suddenly realized that somehow Raisa had found a way to make the stuff of dreams real. From that day, Raisa's tradition, the Volshebnii Mechtateli, has been accorded much respect. The name is derived from the Russian for "Magical Dreamers," Raisa's grasp of Latin was mediocre at best, and her incomprehensible ramblings led to the term being misunderstood as the name of the cult, rather than as a description of the magic it taught.

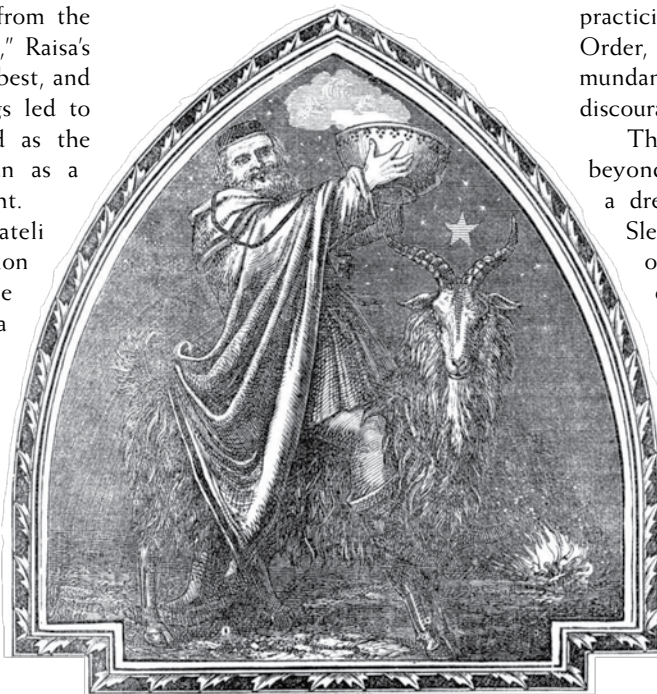
The Volshebnii Mechtateli are an example of the application of Hermetic theory by a single genius to an idea inspired by a hedge magic tradition.

## The Volshebnii Mechtateli Today

While the majority of the Order chooses to live in covenants, there are always those who participate little in the communal life of the magi, or who choose to live entirely on their own, being known as *eremites*. While this is the stereotype of insular and solitary dream magi, many others are outgoing, filled with life and highly sociable — yet have secret inner lives that are beyond the imagination of their sodales. In fact, the Volshebnii Mechtateli are highly sociable, but many of their meetings, their discussions, and the strangest of their rites are conducted far from the waking world, in the lands of dream.

Living geographically across the Tribunals of the Order, in dreams they meet, feast, and attempt to outdo each other in creating new and fantastic forms and places and beings of pure fancy. The Vermilion Temple of Wistful Sighs, their sacred place, has no mirror on Earth; made of emeralds, it floats above lemon clouds hanging over an azure sea never rippled by wave or tide. Within its countless halls, many secrets are spoken, and many strange desires made real, yet travelers there rarely speak of what they learned

— for who can be sure what was real, and what was not? Sensual delights and exotic passions abound there, and terrible fears and nightmare beings stalk the hallways, ready to rend apart the spirit of those unwary folk who stumble upon its mysteries and defile it by their presence.



While an Initiate may invite guests into the Outer Chambers of the Courtyard (known as the Slumbering) to proceed further without Initiation is to defile the Mystery, and the penalty is a thousand deaths, enacted nightly in dream; the first time as the dreamer is torn apart by his own personal nightmare, and every night thereafter for one thousand nights, by which time the victim has long since been lost to madness.

The cult deals in both whimsy and terror, in aesthetics and in corruption. As mirrors of mortal desires, dreams are places terrible beyond despair, yet beautiful beyond words. The power to shape dreams is a form of mental invasion that no sane person would wish to allow, and in the early 11th century a number of leading members of the Volshebnii Mechtateli were Marched when it became clear that they were attempting to shape the dreams, and hence the aspirations, of several magi in the Order. The dream

witches, as they are commonly known by non-members, are feared and hated perhaps more than any other Hermetic group, and while Durenmar has many texts related to dream magics, they are forbidden to almost all, deliberately lost in that covenant's archives. Learning the magics is not illegal; only a magus practicing them on his sodales in the Order, or using them to interfere with mundanes. But the practice is definitely discouraged.

The Vermilion Temple persists beyond all dreams, and some say it is a dream in the mind of an Eternal Sleeper, whose identity is known only to the lords and ladies of the cult. Perhaps within the Temple's inner sanctum lie clues that would establish the dreamer's existence and identity, or even allow him to be awakened and return once more to the world. Many have speculated as to the Eternal Dreamer's identity, and rumor suggests a dreaming old one, the sleeping king under the hill, or even Tylalus the Founder forever ensorcelled in an enchanted sleep. The truth is no doubt as strange and startling as our wildest dreams and fancies.

## Structure of the Volshebnii Mechtateli

The Volshebnii Mechtateli did not start out as a Mystery Cult, but rather as a series of magical breakthroughs. Soon dreamers began to aspire to change the world, and as is the way of dreamers, their utopian vision began to change to the stuff of nightmare. A small group of Volshebnii Mechtateli enthusiasts began to play with the dreams of the great and the mighty, both within the Order and within the world. They knew no boundary but imagination and no morality beyond desire, and who in a dream can truly be hurt?

When the reaction came it was rapid and brutal. There were probably less than ten dream Initiates in the Order at

that time, and six perished in a series of Marches that saw incurable madness and death by sleep deprivation befall three of the magi who dared oppose them. If terror can strike a powerful magus in his dreams, where is there to run to? When the Sharp Awakening (as the cult call this period) ended, all the known dream magi were dead. Yet a few lived on, now hiding their interests, and unwilling to ever show their powers in public. Time passed, the Order fell back into slumber, and today dream witches are a bogeyman used to scare apprentices.

Yet the Volshebnii Mechtateli lived on in dreams, and one young maga from Loch Leglean, Agnes of Tremere, saw the terrible misery dreams had inflicted. She decided to refound the group, not as an informal association who would teach their Hermetic specialty to anyone, but as a Mystery open only to those whose dreams were beautiful, and whose hopes were pure. Taking as the motto of the reformed cult "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," she envisioned the Volshebnii Mechtateli as serving the

Order, and following an agenda that would allow the flowering of a new age of beauty and peace.

Dreams change swiftly, and while the motto remains, idealists rarely live bounded by rules.

The cult has almost no hierarchy or structure. It acknowledges only two degrees — the Lords (and Ladies) of The Passions, who know the Minor Virtue Dream Magic, and the Monarchs of the Veiled Court, who maintain the sacred dream of the Vermilion Temple, and may enter its innermost chambers, The Sanctuary of Lost Dreams. Initiation is offered in dream only to those who have proven an aptitude in Imaginem and Mentem as a specialty that far exceeds the norm, and usually to relatively newly Gauntleted magi, for the weight of years crushes the dreams of those who live too long in this vale of tears. Individual magi are Initiated by a single individual, and never know the real identities of the others they meet while in the realms of dreams. Although not part of a formal degree, an Initiate may persuade his elder to teach

## The Death of A Thousand Nightmares

This is a truly horrible fate. The unwary or unwise intruder who stumbles upon the Vermilion Temple is attacked by a creature that in some way embodies his own worst and most terrible nightmare. Because it is his personal nemesis, there is no escape for those who are not Initiates of the school of dream magic, although Imaginem magics can be used by Initiates who choose to intervene on behalf of the afflicted magi.

him the Virtues Potent Magic (dream) or Magical Focus (dream), or an Aptitude or Affinity in Imaginem or Mentem. Many are brought into this secret in the final years of their apprenticeship, and those who react with horror are often brutally killed before they can divulge the secret, and while they have no legal rights within the Order.



## Chapter Thirteen

# Mercurian Magic

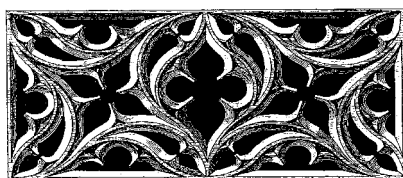
The Order of Hermes was born out of the memory of the Roman Cult of Mercury. Much of that knowledge was lost forever, yet fragments were to survive to the era of Bonisagus and the Founders, including certain elements incorporated into the design of well-known rituals of the Order of Hermes, such as *Aegis of the Hearth* and especially *Wizard's Communion*.

By far the best known remnant of that tradition is the magical technique represented by the Virtue Mercurian Magic (ArM5, page 45). It is widely known in the Order, and while not all who are interested in the magic of the parent tradition possess this Virtue, it is the root of the Mercurian tradition and the part that is generally accepted as authentic. Beyond that, and what can be reconstructed by analyzing the fragments of non-Hermetic magic incorporated by Bonisagus and others and found within certain non-standard spells, all is uncertain. Within various Houses traditions remain that relate to Mercurian practices, and, in particular, within House Mercere groups that draw upon the heritage are known to exist, as outlined in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*. In addition, there is a Mystery Cult, The Neo-Mercurians, who seek to reinvent the tradition anew.

## Mercurian Groups in the Order

There are now several groups within the Order that claim to practice Mercurian rites, and many who possess the Virtue Mercurian Magic yet who are unaffiliated with any of these groups. The best known of these groups is the exoteric Cult of

Mercury, which is comprised mainly of members of House Flambeau and some magi of House Mercere, and which is described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*. Furthermore, some members of House Guernicus also have a strong interest in Mercurian magic. Another group, the Neo-Mercurians, is a Mystery Cult, who practice what they believe to be a reconstruction of authentic Mercurian magic.



## THE CULT OF MERCURY

This is a group founded by Priamitus, the apprentice of Mercere, who came to see it as his duty to become a priest of the Cult of Mercury, and recreate the ancient priesthood within the new Order of Hermes. Mercere is seen by the cultists today as Mercury reborn, and they worship him as the greatest manifestation of their Mercurian heritage. Many cultists believe that when they die they will ascend through the Magic realm to join him. A pagan group, the Cult of Mercury does not practice Initiation and the Mystery tradition, but rather gladly teaches its beliefs to all who wish to adopt its Mediterranean nature-worship.

There is another group of Mercurians active in 1220 that constitutes an authentic Mystery tradition that teaches only Initiates its secret rites. Known as the Neo-Mercurians, it curiously blends claims to have reconstructed authentic Mercurian rites with a dedication to applying them to the insights of the Hermetic system.

## The Neo-Mercurians

No one alive in 1220 can claim a full understanding of the ancient rituals of the Cult of Mercury, and while the Cult of Mercury expresses one Mercurian tradition, there is also a distinct and rival group in the form of the Neo-Mercurians, a Mystery group.

As long as the Order has existed there have been those who have looked back to the magics that came before, and marveled at what fable tells. Some see in the system of Bonisagus a new dawn, and a turn of some cosmic cycle of history, but they are rare; almost all Initiates seek to learn the wisdom of the past. The immediate past of the magical tradition, before the anarchy of the Dark Ages that the Founders ended, was the ancient Cult of Mercury.

The Neo-Mercurians seek to redevelop what they believe to be the ancient Cult of Mercury; what they see as the foundation of Hermetic magic. The cult is far from unified in its Mystery, and varies from Tribunal to Tribunal; in Rome, Provencal, Levant, and Thebes, it recruits often from within the modern Cult of Mercury, yet elsewhere members are distinct and often hostile to their co-religionists, having no patience with the Cult of Mercury, which they castigate as a pale shadow of the real Mercurian tradition. The cultists have developed a number of Initiation Rituals designed to develop Mercurian characteristics in their Initiates, and research Vim magics to assist with Ritual and group-ceremonial magic.

As a group of theorists, they are further divided into those who sincerely worship the gods, and Mercury as patron, and those who see the pagan gods only as potent magical spirits to bargain with, whose power can be utilized by paying them praise, and whose altars form little more than a reserve of magical power to be tapped.

The Neo-Mercurians proudly assert that their magic is authentic and freed from the innovations of Priamitus; yet they equally proudly assert that their magic is adapted to work within the theoretical insights of Bonisagus. They admit it is a recreation of the ancient cult, but also insist that all the true magical secrets were lost, and assert that the modern Cult of Mercury and that tradition represented by the Virtue Mercurian Magic are debased forms of the true power and spirit of Mercurian magic that only their lovingly reconstructed magics truly represent.

In the same way, they seek out the ancient temples of antiquity and the lost magical glades that still exist in hidden regiones, and attempt to restore them to full splendor. Neo-Mercurians generally attempt to practice their rites within the boundaries of the ancient Mercurian temples, or temples of associated deities. It is believed by them that Wotan was the Germanic form of Mercury, and Odin the Norse. In Celtic lands he was praised as Lugh. Greece knew him as Hermes, and in Egypt, temples once dedicated to Thoth provide the preferred location for the practice of his rites.

Research and investigation of ancient sites and the planting of new congregations is a major concern and aim of the Neo-Mercurians.

The Neo-Mercurians have no system of degrees or ranks at local level, beyond a very simple three-fold division:

- **THE MESSENGERS OF MERCURY:** UnGifted servants who perform vital tasks of running messages and gathering information, and assisting in the discovery, excavation, and restoration of lost temples. Senior Messengers possess lesser enchanted devices that allow them access to temples hidden in magical regiones.

## Mercury

The Roman deity Mercury, often represented as a youth wearing winged sandals, was primarily associated with trade, profit, and commerce, but also looked after travelers, roads, and thieves. The Latin words *mercator* and *merx* ("merchant") are related to Mercury. His main festival, Mercuralia, was celebrated on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Greeks knew him as Hermes, and his symbol is the Caduceus, or a winged staff with entwined serpents.

- **THE CONGREGATION:** Rank-and-file Initiates who work to recover lost secrets of ancient temples, uncover and research ancient magics, and serve the Priests while learning the mysteries of the Neo-Mercurians.
- **THE PRIESTS:** A single Priest is responsible for the care of each temple, and for organizing the rites of the yearly Festival of Mercuralia on May 15<sup>th</sup>, when the Priest sprinkles the Congregations' hands with enchanted water as was done in ancient times.

They organize loosely in congregations based at a temple, served by one officiating Priest. Initiation is based on aptitude and the Priest decides in which order the Initiate learns the Mystery Virtues. Despite this lack of local organization, the Neo-Mercurian Cult maintains temples across Mythic Europe, or so it is whispered, and it is rumored to have an excellent network of communications, and a hierarchy of Priests, all looking to a secret temple somewhere within the ruins of old Rome, outside the modern city boundaries. Only those who have contributed greatly to the recovery of the ancient secrets and risen to the rank of Priest know the truth.

The members preserve, as far as possible, imperial Roman dress, customs, and traditions, and are fond of using Classical Latin, as opposed to more modern forms of the language (although they are mutually intelligible), and seek out even the non-magical Roman authors whose works still circulate within the Order.

## The Cult of Heroes

As described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, the Cult of Heroes is a small non-Mystery group comprised of worshipers in the Cult of Mercury. They believe the great heroes of antiquity still walk the Earth. Heracles, Arthur, Beowulf, Gilgamesh — they say these legendary figures and others like them were descended from the gods, and the cult members believe that they can be born again. The Children of Hermes (see Chapter 14: Mystery Cults) is another group of mystery cultists who subscribe to this idea and believe that their leader is actually Hermes, the Greek form of the god Mercury, reborn.

The Virtues the cult teaches or Initiates are described below. Storyguides may select those that they feel are most in line with their particular vision of how the Neo-Mercurians would have recreated the magics of the Mercurians; it is not necessary to use all of them if this is not desired.

- All Initiates are required to possess (or to spend a year at the Temple learning through Initiation and study) the Virtue Mercurian Magic (ArM5, page 46).
- The Neo-Mercurians teach by Initiation the Virtue Performance Magic, for Neo-Mercurian Magic (an Organization Lore ability): while performing the ceremonies and rites of the cult, Initiates gain the benefits of Performance Magic.
- It teaches by Initiation the Virtue Hermetic Theurgy, to call ancient pagan gods to attend cult members in sacred groves, where the Priests of Mercury hope to strike bargains with the ancient gods.
- It lauds the Divinatory abilities of the ancient Romans, as reported in the available texts, so members seek to learn Divination and Augury — choosing to Initiate methods that are believed to be the most "Roman," such as alectryomancy (or divination by throwing grain to a hen in a circle

inscribed on the floor and seeing where it goes).

- It teaches a number of Mastery special abilities (first mentioned in *House of Hermes: True Lineages*), as detailed in their own section below. These require no Initiation, just insight or teaching by a magus with that special ability.
- It Initiates the Virtue of Withstand Magic, the better to bear the cost of casting Ritual spells.
- It Initiates the Virtue Hermetic Sacrifice, which allows the power of the ancient altars to be tapped.
- It teaches in one season Road Magic: new Ranges and Targets. A maga with Mercurian Magic can learn these by teaching; or the maga may be Initiated into it, as with a Minor Virtue.

## NEO-MERCURIAN ROAD MAGIC: NEW RANGES AND TARGETS

Since they believe that the ancient Cult of Mercury had a magical responsibility for the Roman roads, the Neo-Mercurians have developed new Ranges and Targets for Formulaic and Ritual spells, but not Spontaneous Magic — the Neo-Mercurians have no gift for teaching Spontaneous Magic. Road and Road Network are an expanded part of the Virtue Mercurian Magic.

A maga who has Mercurian Magic can be taught to use Road Magic in one season by one who knows the magic, with no additional Virtues. (Starting characters whose parents has Mercurian Magic may be assumed to have learned Road Magic with the consent of the rest of the troupe.)

It would be possible for a magus who doesn't have Mercurian Magic to be Initiated into Road Magic as a Minor Virtue — but only if he self-Initiated, or could find someone to prepared to Initiate him.

### NEW RANGE: ROAD

A maga may target anyone or anything on the same road or path as her, provided she can sense him somehow. A Road is defined exactly as in the Faerie Magic Virtue (ArM5, page 92). (For purposes

of spell level calculation, Road is the same level as Voice.)

### NEW RANGE: ROAD NETWORK

A maga may cast spells that reach anyone or anything on a road or path connected by an unbroken series of roads or paths to her, provided she can sense him somehow.

Bridges and fords break a road network. Roads also terminate in yards and such, but in general they do form an extensive connected network. (For purposes of spell level calculation, Road Network is the same level as Arcane Connection, and requires ritual magic.)

### NEW TARGET: ROAD

The road and anyone or anything on it. The size of a Road is normally measured in lengths: a standard Road size is 100 paces long; it may be any width up to ten paces wide (wider roads require an increased Size or reduced length, but narrow paths do not reduce the Size). (For purposes of spell level calculation, Road is the same level as Room.)

### NEW TARGET: ROAD NETWORK

A road network and anyone or anything on it. (Connection as in Range Road Network). A standard Road Network is 10,000 paces long; it may be any width up to ten paces wide (wider roads require an increased Size or reduced length, but narrow paths do not reduce the Size). (For purposes of spell level calculation, Road Network is the same level as Boundary, and requires ritual magic.)

## NEW SPELLS AND ENCHANTMENTS

The Neo-Mercurians find many of their sacred groves confined to regiones in these days of the encroaching Dominion. So that all members of the cult, including the unGifted, may approach the sacred place when on cult purposes, cult members have created a number of devices that let one touch, pray, and be granted sight of the path into the regio (and so cross over and enter the regio).

To overcome the difficulty of setting up a Hermetic laboratory in each grove

(to enchant a feature of the grove itself), the key is typically a small item, an actual wooden or stone key, that is fashioned elsewhere and brought to the grove. There it is embedded within an appropriate existing item: a large tree, boulder, stone pillar, or such, which protects it and hides it from prying eyes.

### KEY TO THE MYSTIC VEIL

InVi 30

Pen +0, 24 uses per day

R: Touch, D: Conc, T: Vision

This enchantment instills an effect granting sight across a regio boundary.

A key to a grove is typically activated by touching the item (or, if it is embedded in a pillar, the pillar) and uttering a designated prayer. The cultist may then see the regio boundary while she concentrates, and so may step through into a hidden regio, and the grove proper.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +4 Vision, +5 levels for 24 uses)

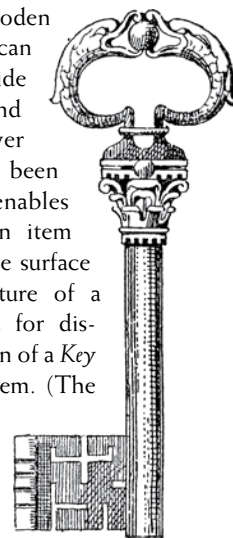
Some magi prefer to go further and create a Voice range effect, triggered by the supplicant's spoken prayer — if the words reach the device, so does the effect reach the supplicant. Such a device can be very effectively hidden from prying eyes, while having a profound effect on those triggering the device.

### HIDING THE MYSTIC KEY

MuTe(He) 15

R: Touch, D: Conc, T: Part

This spell lets the caster soften a rock, pillar, menhir, tree, or other stone or wooden object so that he can mold a cavity, hide a small item, and then close it over as if it had never been changed. This enables him to embed an item under, but near the surface of, a natural feature of a grove — favored for disguising the location of a Key to the Mystic Veil item. (The cultist touches the pillar or tree just above the hiding place.)



## Cult of Mercury and Neo-Mercurian Spell Mastery Special Abilities

Mercurian magicians excel in Formulaic and Ritual Magic, and have developed an extensive range of Mastery Abilities. These Mastery Abilities were originally described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, but for convenience they are repeated here.

These Mastery Abilities can be learned by any magus who studies with another who knows the ability — if a magus has studied with a maga who knows a particular special Mastery Ability, then any time the magus earns a level in Spell Mastery, he may opt to choose that special ability instead of those in ArM5.

Most magi in the True Lineages prefer to share this specialized knowledge only with their apprentices, although their methods may be written down in books that anyone can read, and it is not impossible for a master to decide to teach a student with very similar goals and loyalties. However, most remain cult secrets, with the exception of Ceremonial Casting (detailed in Chapter 4: Curious Common Magics).

Characters who take Mastered Spells during character creation and who have access to these abilities during apprenticeship may spend their mastery points on them if they wish. They are known by both worshippers of the Cult of Mercury and members of the Neo-Mercurians.

### ADAPTIVE CASTING

This special ability may only be taken for General spells. The magus may use his mastery score and all the special abilities associated with this spell whenever he casts the same spell at a different level.

### CEREMONIAL CASTING

The maga may use ceremonial methods when casting this spell, increasing the casting time and adding her Artes Liberales and Philosophiae to her total. This cannot be taken for Ritual spells, which always require Ceremonial Casting.

### DISGUISED CASTING

When casting this spell, the magus may suppress or alter his sigil, to hide his identity or make the spell appear to have been cast by someone else. Since this actually changes his sigil, it is impossible for others to recognize the magus from it, although magi might be able to recognize that a fake sigil is not genuine. When the caster mimics the sigil of another magus, he may add his Spell Mastery score to the roll that determines how difficult it is to recognize.

### LAB MASTERY

The maga understands the theory of this spell so perfectly that she may add her spell mastery score to her Lab Total when designing effects that are similar to it (see Similar Spells, ArM5, page 101). This is in addition to the standard similar spell bonus.

### LEARN FROM MISTAKES

The first time in a session that the magus botches a roll for this spell or fails it by exactly 1 point, he gains 5 experience points toward mastery of this spell. The roll must come up naturally in the course of the story.

### STALWART CASTING

This spell is less exhausting for the maga. If it is a Ritual, she loses normal Fatigue instead of long-term Fatigue when casting it, and half as many Fatigue levels, rounded up (but always at least 1). If it is formulaic, she never loses Fatigue levels because of a low casting total, even if the spell doesn't succeed.

(Base 3, +1 Conc, +1 Part, +1 stone, +1 for requisite to change wood as well as stone)

## Hermetic Sacrifice — Minor Hermetic Mystery Virtue

The magus knows how to make sacrificial offerings on an altar dedicated to

pagan deities. The sacrifice takes the place of (some of) the vis needed for Ritual spells to summon the deity, cast via the altar. The deity must consider the sacrifice pleasing — at the very least, the beast must be pure and unblemished.

A pure and satisfactory sacrifice substitutes for between one and six pawns of vis, depending on the nature of the animal. As a rule, the rarer, more noble, and harder to obtain the animal, the more vis it substitutes for. Thus, an unblemished lamb is worth one pawn,

while a pure lion is worth the full six. Magically created or altered beasts are not acceptable (and would in any case be a waste of vis).

Mercurian magi have worked long to resurrect the ancient sacrificial rites of the ancients, and this is as close as they have come yet.

Note that sacrifice implies cooperation by the summoned spirit, so magics that force the spirit (such as True Names) sour the relationship, and spoil the altar for future use.



# Mystery Cults

This chapter outlines several more Mystery Cults that serve as examples of the range of interests and different forms of organization one finds hidden within the Order of Hermes, and that cover the new Virtues available in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*. More cults can be found in chapters that deal with a particular subject; The Green Cockerel, for example, can be found in Chapter 5: Hermetic Alchemy.

As explained in Chapter 3: Storyguiding the Mysteries, not all of these cults will come into play in every saga; indeed it is highly probable that only one or two will ever be important and have player magi join them, while maybe another one or two will be mentioned in passing in a story. As they are Mystery Cults, this is not a problem; very few in the Order of Hermes have heard of them, and to have even heard a rumor of a particular cult's existence usually requires success in a roll of:

### Communication + Order of Hermes Lore vs. an Ease Factor of 15

The cults are given little more than brief outlines here, and the true secrets and powers of the organizations, if they exist at all, are left to the individual storyguide and troupe. Sample Initiation Scripts are specified and it is hoped that the examples provided within these pages, together with the rules in Chapter 2, will provide a sound basis for the storyguide when it comes to developing her own esoteric mystery traditions.

The cults provided cover a wide range of interests; from reconstructed rites of classical antiquity to groups of like-minded scholars working on a particular

aspect of magic. Storyguides should feel free to design Mystery Cults that serve a specific function in their saga, and that will appeal to the players' sensibilities — these cults are intended as examples of what is possible, not limits on the storyguide's imagination.

The cults presented are designed to fit in any Tribunal, but details of their size and influence are very sketchy. It is unlikely that any single cult has more than a hundred members, and all are far, far weaker in influence and power than even the smallest of the 12 Houses of the Order. While they may feel generic and lacking in local detail, that was the aim here: They are examples and are designed to fit with ease into most sagas, although some will be out of place in any one troupe's saga. The storyguide should pick and choose which, if any, are to be featured in her saga.

Many of the cults provide an Initiatory schedule of degrees and Virtues conferred, but not all. Some cults reconstruct Initiations by recovering lost knowledge, and therefore each Initiate tends to follow a path dictated by his own aspirations and interests, and the strange magics he translated from the peculiar clay tablet he found in the ruins of the Sumerian city he explored last story.

Even where a system of degrees of Initiation exists, it is exemplary, not prescriptive. No cult is forced to follow this pattern exactly, and individuals may be granted different Virtues at Initiation to reflect their particular skills and weaknesses, or their role in the cult. In the event that an Initiate already possesses a Virtue that would be conferred at the next Initiation, the Mystagogue invariably finds or attempts to create a new

Initiation Script to confer an alternative Virtue upon that magus. Most Mystery Cults have Initiation Scripts for at least a few alternative Virtues, and for each commonly Initiated Virtue they possess a small library of Scripts, outlining different methods of Initiation at varying levels to allow for charismatic, or less gifted, Mystagogues.

## The Legion of Mithras

*Heroic defenders of the Order, and heirs to an ancient magical tradition, the Legion of Mithras recruits from among the most loyal members of the Order, although its enemies whisper of secret schemes.*

## The History of the Legion of Mithras

The Legion of Mithras is one of the most public of the Esoteric Mysteries, and it is likely that most in the Order of Hermes have heard at least rumors of this organization.

Mithras was a pagan deity, a redeemer god whose mysteries are reputed to have been celebrated on December 25th, and who many in the Order see as presaging in pagan antiquity the truths of Christianity. Just as the Lord, by his ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection, fulfilled the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, adherents of the Legion also believe

his work of salvation and ministry were foreshadowed by many of the Mystery Cults, which were prevalent in the Roman Empire at the time of the ministry of the Apostles. Legionnaires see the original mysteries of Mithras as just such dim presages of the light that was to come. Known as the doctrine of foreshadowing, in this way the renewed practice of pagan rites of the old magic is justified to those who are concerned about celebrating an avowedly pagan practice. In reality, however, religion has little to do with a Mystery Cult that celebrates both personal virtue and excellence, through severe dedication to truth and unfailingly loyalty to the Order of Hermes.

While the original Cult of Mithras was avowedly a pagan mystery, the modern Legion's mysteries reflect a more pragmatic approach. Within the Order there is a grouping of those magi who are called upon from time to time to serve the Quaesitores in their protection of the Code, magi known as Hoplites. These Hoplites may be called upon to March renegade magi, to assist in protecting Quaesitors on their official business, and to confront hostile magical creatures or enemies from outside the Order, or to perform any other duty that is required of them. It was a group of such magi, all of whom had acted with great diligence as Hoplites on many occasions, who first established the Legion of Mithras as a fraternal organization. Today not all Legionnaires are Hoplites, and many Hoplites are not members of the Legion of Mithras, but Hoplites have been traditionally well represented in the Legion's ranks.

One of the early theorists of the new society was Joachim of Jerbiton, who in the course of his research not only discovered the doctrinal ideas that legitimized, in the cult's eyes, the use of a pagan mystery (and also legitimized the whole Order's use of Mercurian rites, and the basis of the Order in pagan magics, as being foreshadowing of the later Christian Truth), but also wrote extensively on the role of the original Mithraic cult in the Legions of Rome, where it was a cult favored by soldiers serving in the imperial armies.

The modern Legion of Mithras knows very little about the ancient mystery,

but avidly seeks such wisdom. Joachim claimed to have found an Initiatory manual that revealed many truths, including the Christianized rites of Mithras, devoid of any possible suspicion of infernalism. This book provides the basis of the modern Legion of Mithras, and is kept under lock and key in the secret Great Temple of the Order, where it may be accessed only by the current Father of the Legion.

## The Legion Today

Today's Legion maintains its role as an association of those who have served and are devoted to the protection of the Order of Hermes, although even those who have rarely performed Hoplite duties (as part of that group or on their own initiative) are welcomed if their loyalty, bravery, and honesty are matters of public repute. Outstanding moral qualities are required by the Legion; whereas Christianity accepts that all men are sinners, the Legion's pagan roots emphasize extraordinary moral virtue rather than penitence, exuberant and heroic living over humble confession of guilt. This stress on great virtue leads to a tendency toward pride, overconfidence, and a rather black-and-white view of morality, with little patience for those who would indulge in morally ambiguous or deceptive behavior. The Legionnaires are not fools; they don disguise, and hide their purpose from those they are investigating or seeking to confront if such is required to fulfill their role, but they do their utmost to protect the innocent, and do nothing to hurt the Order they love, honor, and serve.

Some whisper that this loyalty to the Order and idea of virtue can lead to Legionnaires who have no compunction about committing terrible atrocities or employing dubious means against known enemies and their associates, arguing that whatever is done to protect the security of the Order is justified, but perhaps those are merely the empty words of their enemies.

While traditionally the ancient cult was restricted to men, the new form of the mystery takes into account the words of St. Paul in Galatians 3:28, that there

is "neither male nor female in Christ," and therefore the Legion accepts both male and female Initiates. Candidates for Initiation are chosen on account of demonstrating what is referred to as "heroic virtue," that is the bravery, honesty, diligence, and loyalty one would expect of a truly noble person worthy of upholding a mighty task and honor. They must demonstrate they are able to withstand temptation, and that they will stand alongside their brethren in battle, obeying orders without question, yet always honoring their sacred duty to the Code and the Order. It is a rare Legionnaire who has not managed to gain a Reputation as "Devoted to the Order" or similar. Gaining such a reputation is the surest way to come to the Legion's attention and to be approached by recruiters.

The degrees of the Legion are referred to as ranks, and are derived from the ancient cult. A quasi-military command structure is enforced; lower ranks unquestioningly respond to the commands of higher Initiates. The system of secret signs and passes is well known within the cult, and all members are aware of the identity of the Legionnaires of the rank immediately above theirs, although they are not aware of the names of those higher in the chain of command. Temple functions maintain anonymity, with all symbolically garbed and masked, both mundanely and magically. It is rumored that Magvillus has a list of all members of the Legion, and chooses its Hoplites from this list in preference to all others, but Legionnaires are taught not to reveal their membership in the cult to Quaesitors, and there are many outside the Legion who wonder if the Legion's claims of a close affiliation with the Quaesitores have any basis in fact. The truth is that no one except the Father of the Legion and the Primus of House Guernicus really know, and neither is speaking on this matter. Whether the Quaesitores as a group support or distrust the Legion, there are certainly Quaesitors within the structure of the Legion. As with most Mystery Cults, much is uncertain and up to the individual storyguide to decide what suits his saga.

The size and scope of the Legion is also widely disputed. It is generally felt that the Legion is large, powerful, and

## Structure of the Legion



well ordered and has spread throughout every Tribunal, but because of the rank system, secrecy, and the Tribunal-based structure no one below the rank of Heliadromus can say for certain. Only very high-ranking members are invited to attend meetings at the Great Temple, the exact location of which is a closely guarded secret, but which legend places in a cavern somewhere in the Tribunal of the Greater Alps. Whether it is a potent and well-organized force of devoted Hoplites, or a small and informal association of mystae, no one can be certain. It could well be that the exact power and influence of the Legion varies from Tribunal to Tribunal; only the storyguide knows for sure. Whatever the truth, the Legion is talked about a great deal, and serves as a basis for many legends and rumors in the Order.

The rites of Mithras are practiced in underground temples, sited in strong Magic auras. The temples usually feature a great deal of Roman-style decoration: mosaics, statuary, and columns, all with strong military motifs. The celebrations traditionally held on December 25th were moved by Constantine to the more appropriate date of the summer equinox, so that members could attend church if they so wished.

The temples are staffed by loyal grogs, or Auxiliaries, who are extremely disciplined and well-trained in the arts of combat, and who are often called upon to support members on missions. The Auxiliary Legion is open to faithful grogs and companions, and its ranks reflect the Legion's structure, but it is independently commanded. A maga on Legion business may meet with a group of mercenaries on the road, who apparently decide to throw in their lot with the maga — and only the Initiate knows that they are Auxiliaries from the temple, as they do much to hide their affiliation, seemingly paying scant attention to the maga they serve. When the business at hand is completed, they depart as quietly as they came.

The Legion is divided by ranks equivalent to the degrees of other Mystery Cults. Here follow the official titles and roles of the various ranks, together with their symbolic emblem and planet, which determines the colors of robes and accoutrements carried during ceremonies.

### FIRST RANK: RAVENS

Raven of Mithras is the first rank of Initiates. Ravens are chosen from those who demonstrate the required ideal of heroic virtue. The actual ceremony of Initiation is simple, and yet requires an Ordeal, the swearing of a magical oath that sears into the Initiates' being a new minor personality flaw: Dutybound (Legion of Mithras). They are then taught a series of secret words and phrases, and are given a cup containing a broth of bitter herbs, as a symbol of their new duties. From now on they may be called upon at any time

by higher-ranking Initiates, should a crisis threaten the Order. Their role is to carry messages, and act as the eyes and ears of the Legion, watching for signs of corruption and gathering vital information. They are taught the Virtue Strong-Willed by a process of training that lasts for an entire season, as they learn of the duty of the Legion to serve tirelessly and without complaint.

A small item in orange is usually used to adorn the maga's everyday dress, as a sign of her new commitment.

### SECOND RANK: BRIDES

The second rank of the Legion is the Bride of Mithras. The Brides are called upon to actively organize the Ravens, and to assign reconnaissance and information-gathering missions. The Initiation of Brides usually involves an Initiation Script calling for a Quest to investigate some minor matter of possible concern, and to assess if there is a risk to the Order as a whole. If the Initiate shows appropriate restraint and judgment, and comes to a reasonable conclusion, he attains this rank. Brides are symbolically married to the Order, and must show the dutiful loyalty that a wife shows to her husband. Initiates are often taught by a season of careful tuition under the Lions (high-ranking Initiates who reside at the temple) the Virtue Clear Thinker, driven home by strange magical rites.

Brides usually adopt an item of green clothing as a secret sign of their rank. The symbol of this rank is a lamp, representing the light of truth which must be brought to bear on the enemies of the Order.

### THIRD RANK: SOLDIERS

The Soldiers of Mithras are the heroic champions of the Legion. They are the majority of members, and most never progress beyond this degree of Initiation, or indeed desire to. The Initiation Script almost always calls for a Quest to find and defeat a terrible enemy of the Order, be it a powerful hedge magician, a ravening monster, or a sinister conspiracy. No specific enemy is indicated, but rather the



## The Truth About Mithraism

The tiny handful of Hermetic scholars who have investigated the matter have little doubt that the roots of the original Mithraic cult were in Zoroastrianism and an astrological mystery. However, the adherents of the Zoroastrian Mysteries (detailed in *Realms of Power: The Divine*) are largely indifferent to the Legion. Mithraism has also been linked to Sol Invictus, but the magi of Sol Invictus and the Legion have little in common today.

prospective Soldier is told of the requirement and left to fulfill it. Some have saved the lives of a Quaesitor; others have assisted a parens in slaying her Marched filius, while others have discovered corruption and been instrumental in bringing justice to bear. The feat must be heroic, and while the assistance of their sodales and the Legion does not discount the value of the act, it must be primarily instituted by, led by, and feature most significantly the prospective Initiate. Once such a story has been enacted, the Initiate is called to the temple again, and undertakes a third season of training, in the course of which he is taught one of the mystical Virtues of the warrior; the Virtue Reserves of Strength or Enduring Constitution.

Presented with a lance as a symbol that they have defeated the dragon of iniquity, a blood red cloak is favored by Soldiers, although others adopt the symbol of Mars or a bull, the sign of Mithras, as an emblem of their affinity with the Legion.

### FOURTH RANK: LIONS (CAPTAIN)

Very few members of the Legion aspire to the rank of Captain, as the Lions are also known, for the mortality rate and price of service is high. Those who have undoubtedly proven their loyalty to the Legion and the Order learn that the Legion has secrets preserved from the ancient Cult of Mithras. Those who then inquire as to the nature of these secrets,

## A Typical Raven Initiation Script

Mystagogues who Initiate aspirants into the Ravens are normally Lions, have gained a Legion of Mithras Lore of at least 6, and usually have a Presence of +1 or higher. They will have been Initiated themselves into the Strong-Willed Virtue, and so with the -3 reduction in target level for the first Initiation after a Minor Ordeal, the Target Level is 12 and an Initiation Script that grants a bonus of +5 is typically employed.

The usual Script has two components: a Quest that must be played through, and a seasonal activity (Sacrifice) undertaken under the Auxiliaries at the temple. The Initiate must complete a lengthy journey, traditionally seeking out and delivering a message to a loyal Legionnaire who is currently deeply immersed in combating the enemies of the Order, and facing whatever perils this throws at him. If he is captured or leads the enemy to the Legionnaire, he is expected to commit suicide if he cannot escape or effect an immediate

rescue, rather than betray the secrets of the Legion to the enemy. (+3 Quest)

The Initiate must then dedicate a season to working with the cult on exercises designed to improve his will, enduring harsh conditions and privation, and resisting temptation in the name of duty, which grants exposure in Legion of Mithras Lore and a +1 bonus to the Script. There is a +1 bonus for sympathetic appropriateness, for a total of a +5 Initiation Script.

More arduous Scripts are sometimes employed by less charismatic or lower-ranking Mystagogues with less knowledge of Legion of Mithras Lore, requiring greater efforts on the part of the Initiate. The cult has many varied Scripts at various levels for this Initiation, but rarely uses less than a +5 Script even if the Mystagogue is very capable, as it desires that the Initiate prove his worth. If Strong-Willed is already possessed, another Virtue (such as Self-Confident) is Initiated instead, generally using a similar Script.

and show discretion yet perseverance in doing so, are tested for suitability for admission to the higher degrees. The requirement here is wisdom; candidates who can demonstrate unfailing good judgment are invited, but they must first prove their worth.

The Initiation Script always requires Quests, including one in which the Initiate commands a number of Soldiers and associated Auxiliaries on a mission of vital importance. The Virtue Inscription on the Soul is taught, but the mundane power of the position in the Legion outstrips the benefits of this secret.

Lions are also taught the secrets of how the Cult of Mithras presaged Christianity, and learn many of the mysteries of antiquity. The symbol of this rank is a spade; the Lion symbolically dies to her old life, and is reborn as a servant of the Order, yet in that servitude gains strength. Deep blue is the color favored by the Lions, who often wear a golden lion badge as a symbol of their authority.

The Lions are required to spend seven years living at the temple, serving as Initiators and developing the strength of the Legion in their Tribunal (and gaining a +5 bonus to their next Initiation Total, despite the normal limit on the bonus of +1 for time spent serving a Mystery Cult, as seven years is exceptional service). While they maintain their affiliation to their home covenants, and may spend one season a year there fulfilling their duties, they are primarily now involved in deeper mysteries. Many Lions, however, delight in Initiating their covenant mates, and in leading them into heroic adventures in service of the Legion.

### FIFTH RANK: PERSIAN

This is the highest rank to which player characters are likely to aspire. The origin of the title is lost in the mists of time but is sometimes given as Perseus. Robed in silver, and wearing the sign of Taurus, the Persian is almost always



the senior member of the Legion in the Tribunal, and acts as a general. He carries a symbolic sickle made of silver, and the Initiation to this rank usually calls for the sacrifice of the magus's existing talisman, so he can enchant the sickle as a replacement. The Persian is always Initiated into the mystery of spirit familiars, and fully understands many secrets that cannot be made plain here, but are left to the story-guide's devising. The Persian has considerable influence over the members of the Legion, and is invited to the inner rites of the Legion held at the Great Temple, where he will meet those of the sixth rank, both the seven members of the rank of Heliodromus, clad in golden robes, and the Father, clad entirely in Black, who some whisper has long since left this world and remains only as a Living Ghost, forever chained to the temple by duty that extends far beyond death.

## The Philosophers of Rome

*Once upon a time, I, by my power, turning air into water, and water again into blood, and solidifying it into flesh, formed a new human creature — a boy — and produced a much nobler work than God the Creator. For He created a man from the earth, but I from air — a far more difficult matter, and again I unmade him and restored him into air, but not until I had placed his picture and image in my bedchamber, as a proof and memorial of my work.*

— Simon Magus, from the *Clementine Recognitions*

## The History of the Philosophers

This highly secretive group, explicitly non-Christian, is perhaps one of the most deeply hidden Mystery Cults within the Order of Hermes. It claims descent from the arch-heresiarch Simon Magus,

who is well known within the Church for his confrontation with the Apostles, depicted in the Bible (Acts 8:9-24). This passage recounts how he attempted to purchase the Holy Spirit, believing it to be a magical secret. Renowned as the father of Gnosticism and false doctrines, Church tradition places him later in Rome where he founded a cult that worshiped him as a god, as attested by St. Justin.

Two versions of his death are told by the Church Fathers. Hippolytus of Rome, in his book *Philosophumena*, tells how Simon Magus, having been rebuked again by St. Peter, went home to his native Samaria, and having boasted of his ability to survive death and be resurrected was buried in a grave from which he never emerged despite his claims.

The apocryphal Acts of St. Peter, however, tells a different story, and one perhaps better known and often depicted in Church art and in sermons. Simon was once again confronted by the Apostles, at the court of Emperor Nero. Nero was impressed by Simon's abilities and suggested a competition between Simon Magus and the Apostles Peter and Paul, to be conducted in the Forum in full view of all the leading citizens of Rome, who would decide whose doctrines were correct. Simon Magus called upon spirits that carried him up into the air, allowing him to levitate high above the crowded Forum to the astonishment and delight of the emperor and the citizens. Peter and Paul refused to participate in this vulgar contest, and instead simply prayed to God, and Simon suddenly fell screaming from the air, and was horribly injured as he crashed to the stones of the Via Sacra just outside the Forum. He died of his injuries shortly thereafter, and the spot where he fell is now a church dedicated to the two holy saints, Peter and Paul. Travelers to Rome can visit the church to this day, and many pious members of the Order of Hermes do so as a reminder of the terrible price of hubris.

However, most sources concede that Simon Magus was not a diabolist, or allied to the Infernal realm, but a magician. A sincere seeker of magical power, his beliefs (which are discussed and refuted in the *Pseudo-Clementines*) revolved around a complicated set of philosophical prin-

ciples he believed to be the path to magical power, and ultimately to apotheosis, or deification. Nonetheless, from his mistaken doctrines, the Church argues, stemmed all subsequent Gnosticism, and hence most heresy. It took the Church many centuries to refute his errors, and to stamp out these beliefs, but ultimately the Church triumphed, and Gnosticism was seemingly destroyed.

Yet among magicians, there were many who saw in Gnosticism much that they perceived as true. Was it possible, they mused, to step outside of creation by magic, and to become as the pagan gods of old, an immortal magical deity? Were not the heroes of old able to achieve transcendence, and by apotheosis and knowledge of secret names and awesome magical secrets finally able to become Daimons themselves?

While most believe this secret was lost in the Golden Age, and that Daimons are not truly the spirit or genius of those who lived, but rather magical reflections of their achievements, others remain equally convinced that it is possible to ascend, and become immortal magical heroes. To express such thoughts openly is to invite trial for heresy if the Church hears, and few are so bold in their thinking, so reckless in their ambition, so full of pride. Those few who are often find themselves approached by the group that goes by the innocuous name The Philosophers of Rome.

## The Philosophers Today

There are two competing strains in Gnostic thought: the Ascetic, which seeks spiritual purity through mortification of the flesh; and the Sensual, which seeks power and glory, and to achieve immortality through living life to the fullest, especially by enjoying the praise and worship of others, and gratification of the flesh. The Philosophers of Rome are definitely of the latter school, and their reckless pursuit of wine, women (and/or men), and song are a peculiar manifestation of the desire for immortality. The aim of the cult is clear: immortality through achievement of apotheosis.

sis, becoming a god by ascension to the Hall of Heroes. Some whisper that those who achieve this goal are seen in the heavens as a new star, or *nova stella*, but others deride this as legend. Whether it has been, or even can be, achieved is a matter of dispute.

The group has a peculiarly paradoxical lifestyle. On the one hand, members engage in rigorous study of ancient theological texts denouncing Gnosticism, to learn from what is condemned the secrets they wish to pursue. (Gnostic manuscripts themselves are treasured but rare; it is often easier to reconstruct from their opponents' denunciation what the correct paths are.) In stark contrast to this scholarly emphasis, they also embrace a passionate love of earthy pleasures and the sins of the flesh. If challenged on their libertine ways, they tend to remark that Scripture teaches there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents than 99 good men, and therefore by repeatedly sinning and repenting they raise themselves in the eyes of God. Such theological cynicism and absurdities are beloved of these deeply heretical cultists, whose only real interest in studies within the Church is to learn the secrets of those whose magical beliefs and practices the Church suppressed.

The licentiousness, depravity, and carnal passions in which these magi indulge are in fact not a mere distraction from the pursuit of the Philosophers' cult, but an important part of their celebration of their own personalities and egos; by pursuing their own desires and creating a legend around themselves and their exploits, and attracting confused worshippers and devotees, they hope to transcend

## Typical Initiation Script for Philosophers of Rome

The Philosophers' unique mixture of sensual gratification and scholarly and spiritual concerns leads to very odd Initiation Scripts. The cult tends to attract Initiates with high Presence (which is useful, as self-Initiation after researches in ancient crumbling papyri and devising your own experimental Scripts is common in this cult) and a (Mystery Cult) Lore of at least 6. The Script bonus is usually about +6 for this Initiation.

A typical Initiation Script for Hermetic Synthemata (usually the first Initiation taught to new Philosophers) is based on an ancient Gnostic papyrus codex recovered from the sands near Alexandria. It has been heavily modified by successive generations of Mystagogues, but still involves the chanting of one thousand and one names

of power under a full moon (sympathetic bonus +1), and for the Initiate to be robed in a costly white gown, wearing a golden crown, and barefoot. An expensive incense with rare Middle Eastern herbs must be prepared; the total cost and difficulty in making the arrangements to acquire these things is significant (mundane Sacrifice wealth +1). At least a season must be spent studying with the Mystagogue, to master the basis of Synthemata, the "grammar," of how these potent symbolic expression of the entities' natures are constructed (+3 bonus for Mystagogue sacrificing time). The Mystagogue must be handsomely rewarded, both materially and by the Initiate's labor, requiring a further season of work at the Mystagogue's behest (Initiate sacrifices time +1).

the flesh by accepting, embracing, and in some sense fulfilling it, allowing them eventually to pass on to greater glory in the next world, prepared for deification by embracing absolutely their humanity in this one. The cultivation of incredible pride and absolute self-confidence are important parts of their path, and while it is said that Alexander the Great had to be reminded he was not a god, it is the honest desire of Philosophers that their friends remind them that they are as gods daily.

While overconfidence, pride, and an incredible zest for life may seem highly unattractive virtues, they are perhaps not uncommon attributes among Hermetic

magi, who already stand far above the mundane crowd in power. Members of the Philosophers believe that their Gift renders them at least potentially immortal and capable of deification. Other magi have in the past wondered if they themselves are entirely human, and the Philosophers see themselves as something more and greater. Oddly, they are often charismatic and popular people, and their bizarre beliefs do not often result in the kind of resentment one might expect. Mere licentiousness and excess alone are not however a path to magical power — without the magical and mystical teachings of the cult, they are merely a high road to damnation.



## The Structure of the Philosophers of Rome

The Philosophers of Rome form loosely structured congregations of like-minded scholars, and sometimes attract Initiates who act as worshipers, both magical and mundane. Ultimately they hope to use these congregations to provide the necessary power for ascension, although that remains a theoretical ambition for most Philosophers, who tend to succumb to their dissipated lifestyles or accidental death long before they could hope to reach that goal.

All Initiates who are tutored by an existing cult Mystagogue are first taught the secret of the Virtue True Naming, and usually then the mystery of Hermetic Evocation, but ruthless ambition and great promise are needed for the masters of the cult to teach any other Virtues.

The Philosophers have a loose system of passwords and secret signs by which they can identify each other, but many are quite solitary in their pursuits, and often the signs are little more than slipping references to avowedly pagan or Gnostic philosophers into a seemingly innocuous conversation. There is no set system of degrees or order in which Virtues are acquired; often the Initiate must discover them himself, working hard to acquire fragments of ancient texts and then study the magical secrets to acquire Philosophers of Rome Lore, before inventing his own Initiation Scripts and serving as his own Mystagogue. Some members of the Philosophers have very little formal contact with the cult after they are introduced to the teachings by an existing member.

The congregations of the Philosophers do teach their secrets. But the egotistical and self-centered nature of the cult means that Initiates are even then not taught often. However, the ruthless, dissipated, and extremely egotistical member of the cult who gets on well with the others will be Initiated into all the Virtues of the school of hermetic theurgy, and eventually can hope to learn the secret of ascension to the Hall of Heroes, although no known Initiation Scripts for this rite exist; if it has been achieved the new god destroyed the

text to obscure the path. Therefore the Initiate who seeks ascension must devise his own experimental Initiation Script — becoming a god is no easy matter.

The final secret requires a considerable number of magi to support the Initiate's ascension, and aspirants often try to build a powerful network of Gifted cultists who serve to assist and perform whatever duties are required, magical or physical, in the hope of small rewards and magical blessings, or out of misplaced loyalty and devotion. Such devotion remains important even after a successful ascension; only by continued calling upon the new Daimon can it hope to grow and become more powerful, and the Aspect that is summoned can reward and assist those who helped it achieve immortality.

## The Children of Hermes

*A magical messianic cult led by a charismatic leader believed to be a living god that is causing outrage and dismay across the Order with its extraordinary claims. Could they be true?*

### The History of The Children of Hermes

Most Mystery Cults profess to embody the wisdom of the ancients, yet few do so as literally as the leader of this small yet increasingly active cult that challenges in every way the normal idea of what a Mystery Cult is and how it behaves. Whereas many Mystery Cult members seek to hide from view and to guard their secrets, the Children of Hermes like to bask in their rapidly increasing notoriety within the Order of Hermes. Most Mystery Cults are extremely selective about who they choose to divulge their secrets to and Initiate; the proselytizing and evangelical fervor of the Children of Hermes make them something quite exceptional. Some have gone as far as to suggest it is not a Mystery

Cult at all; certainly none of the other cults wish to be associated with it, leading perhaps in no small way to the Children's paranoid obsession with the conspiracy that they believe controls and enslaves the majority of the Order of Hermes.

Facts are rare where the Children are concerned, but opinions are not. Their leader is known today as Hermes the Blessed One, and the advent of the cult can comfortably be dated to the last years of the 12th century, about 30 years ago. While the original identity and House affiliation of the magus now known as Hermes is lost, and a subject of bitter dispute, it is known that the revelation that began the cult convinced him that he had ascended to immortality. The cult's critics are quick to denounce this as nothing more than a result of a terrible Twilight episode in an already confused and highly warped magus. While his origin and the facts underlying the episode remain confused, very few outside of the Children accept his claim to have achieved apotheosis.

Today he appears as a tanned male of approximately 21 years of age, of incredible beauty. His charisma is undeniable — he is blessed with a mythic Presence — and his disciples, both male and female, often appear to be madly in love with him, venerating him as a living god, and serving with a slavish devotion.

The cult first came to the attention of the Quaesitores during a visit of the Blessed One to the Hibernian Tribunal, where he made a number of prophecies of the imminent collapse of the Order of Hermes and its control by secret societies. An attempt was made to bring him to trial, yet somehow he convinced the Tribunal of his innocence, and one of the young Quaesitors, Erin, left with him, and today serves at the right hand of the Blessed One as one of his most loyal disciples.

While most cults are rooted in a long and dark history of magical tradition, the Children hold that the Blessed One is none other than Hermes Trismegistus reborn. Among his disciples, he is also believed to have been in previous lives Pythagoras, Simon Magus, Alexander the Great, and a host of other powerful and mythic figures. And he is said to be able to help his followers recall their past

lives — his closest associate and consort, Cleopatra, was apparently the Egyptian queen of that name in a previous life.

Outside of the Inner Circle little is really known of the actual theology or beliefs of the Blessed One, as his teachings are held sacred, but the Quaesitores are sure that he has on occasion made comments that arrogate to himself a messianic role that would have him executed for heresy of the darkest hue should the Church ever catch up with him. While for many this would be a very useful solution to a thorn in the side of the Order, the Blessed One's doctrines dictate that only the Gifted may participate in his system of salvation, and he makes no attempt to proselytize even among the grogs and companions of the Order, who (it is rumored) he has claimed possess the souls of dogs and pigs respectively, reborn in them by metempsychosis.

## The Children of Hermes Today

While many claims circulate as to the exact teachings and belief of the Blessed One, it is clear that he believes that he must reform the Order, and that a conspiracy of Mystery Cults currently controls almost every covenant. Two of his followers were recently Marched for crimes committed while raiding the covenant of Duresca in the Iberian Tribunal, which Hermetic folklore has long placed as the center of a conspiracy by House Guernicus to control the Order in ages past. Members of the cult often hint darkly of such matters, and suggest that the Sundering of House Tremere was not as effective as the Order chooses to believe, or even that House Diedne may have been entirely innocent of any wrong-doing but destroyed for trying to expose the terrible truth of the Secret Masters. Such allegations generally prove impossible to prove, as witnesses refuse to testify, and those investigating the magus come away after a full and frank personal interview with the belief there may be some truth in his teachings, and that he is in every respect an admirable and useful member of the Order of Hermes.

The exact extent or spread of the Children of Hermes is not known, and rumors currently place the Blessed One as residing in a fortified covenant high on a Carpathian mountain, as a permanent guest at Durenmar, or — perhaps most likely — in a covenant based on a ship endlessly traveling the seas, moving from one Tribunal jurisdiction to another before the Quaesitores can take action against him.



## Structure of the Children of Hermes

The Children are an example of a modern cult, founded by an intensely charismatic leader, who claims to have ascended to godhood. How widely they are known is a matter for individual storyguides, but the beliefs of a dark conspiracy, imminent catastrophe, and a magical salvation for the (Gifted) elect by a reborn Hermes are attractive to some disenfranchised by the Order, especially younger magi. There are probably no more than 30 members of the cult spread throughout Mythic Europe, with the Inner Circle comprising the Blessed One, Cleopatra, Erin, and four other magi.

The actual system of Initiation of the Children is highly unusual. Members of the Inner Circle claim Hermes knows all mysteries, and is familiar with all schools, having created them all. Missionaries are sent out to recruit new members. On accepting the truth of the Blessed One's claims, the maga is taught Children of Hermes Lore for a season, and is then Initiated into a Mystery Virtue, and given with a copy of the Initiation Script. She then becomes liable for the yearly dues that are paid in two or more pawns of vis, sent via Redcap to a different location each year. She is now encouraged to Initiate more magi into the Children, and serves as a local Guardian of the Faith, collecting the same vis tax from each of their new recruits, who in turn are required to recruit more magi, and gather their dues. Large quantities of vis have for some years been collected and passed on to the secret headquarters of the cult; the purpose of this is unknown. The process is not always one way; sometimes long-serving members of the Children, or even seeming random youngsters are presented with a huge amount of vis; perhaps two rooks (20 pawns). Such seemingly random gifts are said to serve the Blessed One's goals, but no one truly understands, except the Inner Circle and they remain silent on the issue.

New Initiation Scripts are sometimes passed around the cult, and those who provide an Initiation Script and the magical traditions of another cult by teaching the Lore of that cult to a missionary are often feted and rewarded for their loyalty and service to the Children, and may even survive the retribution of those they have betrayed.

Books, apprentices, and other resources are also occasionally asked for by the Blessed One's messengers, and rare is the member of the cult who fails to make a "love offering" of this sort. There are rumors of great rites celebrated in secret with Wizard's Communion that lend power to the Blessed One, but little is known to outsiders.

The teachings of the Blessed One are known to be a highly complex magical system of theology that may well have Gnostic or Eastern roots, and that is highly syncretistic, combined with a simple



## Sample Initiation Script for the Children of Hermes

There is no single method or preferred series of Initiations used by the Children of Hermes, so Scripts vary wildly. It is believed by the Children that the Blessed One mystically influences the Mystagogue's choice, so that choice is always correct for that candidate; any Initiate is always taught the mystery it is right for him to know.

One example Script was once an Initiation used by a small Mystery Cult of witches, and teaches the Major Supernatural Virtue Augury and Divination based on the form of ophiomancy; that is answering questions based on the movements of the sacred snakes in the grove. A typical Mystagogue of the cult is not especially charismatic, so Presence 0 can be assumed, and his Children of Hermes Lore may be as low as 7, so the Initiation Script is designed to give a +14 bonus. It is assumed that the Mystagogue knows the Virtue in question. The Initiate must be quite advanced in cult lore and possess a score of 6 to be Initiated into a Major Virtue.

The first part of the Initiation Script is a Quest to find a sacred grove where the sacred serpents dwell, and to befriend them (+3). Then the Initiate must spend an additional season studying the serpents (+1), while offering costly sacrifices that must be ritually burned on a pyre of cedar, yew, and sandalwood (+1). Finally there is the Ordeal that marks the culmination of the ritual and involves a complex and weird magical ritual that as a by-product bestows the Major Flaw Study Requirement (+9).

system of moral philosophy emphasizing fraternity, love, devotion to the cult, and personal freedom. Accepting all magical truths as expressions of the Greater Truth of the Blessed One, missionaries use the analogy of the Order of Hermes; each House represents a facet of a greater

truth, the Order as a whole. Such is their view of the Mysteries; all Mysteries are ultimately to them but fragmented expressions of their own magical and theurgical belief system. Once a fragment of another cult's lore is learned, the Children are able to draw upon it and incorporate it into their own teachings, by assimilating it into the system espoused by the Blessed One, a process always conducted by the Inner Circle. The group therefore has a large and extremely varied selection of Initiation Scripts, which have been modified and experimented with to render them part of its own lore, via a process not known to any other group.

## The Mystic Fraternity of Samos

*The wisdom of Pythagoras is known throughout the Order, and beyond. The Fraternity of Samos preserves what it holds to be his mystical, musical, and mathematical legacy, and, almost uniquely among Mystery Cults, members openly and proudly admit their membership — but never their secrets.*

## The History of the Fraternity of Samos

A native of the Ionian island of Samos, Pythagoras (circa 560-450 BC) trained in Egypt and became a master mystic/theoretician in Babylon, famous home of magical secrets. Pythagoras returned to Samos to found a school, the Semicircle. He lived in a cave outside the city, where he delved into the mysteries and researched the conundrums of mathematics. Gaining few followers in his native country, he moved to Croton, established a renowned school of philosophy and religion, and began his cult, called the Society. The members of the Society, comprised equally of women and men, dedicated themselves to the pursuit

of numerology, purification, friendship, honesty, loyalty, and secrecy. Pythagoras reputedly lived for well over 100 years, before meeting a tragic end at the house of Milo, one of his disciples.

There are various accounts of what led to this disaster, but what is clear is that Pythagoras refused to accept a rich young man as a disciple, as he felt he lacked the necessary moral qualities for Initiation. The offended man gathered his friends and formed a raiding party that attacked the Pythagoreans, slaying many. Pythagoras himself possibly died in the house of Milo, although some say that he survived through the heroic sacrifice of his adepts, and died very soon afterward of grief.

The Pythagorean system, with its emphasis on mathematics, harmony, geometry, and astronomy, is well known, but the Initiatory secrets that doubtless allowed the full beauty of his system to be understood were lost in the centuries that followed his death. Forms of Pythagorean knowledge remained, however, both in academia and in the Mystery Cults. It was inevitable that someone would eventually attempt to merge the Pythagorean mysteries with Hermetic theory, and the Fraternity of Samos claims that Bonisagus himself was a Pythagorean of the highest degree.

Whatever the truth, the Fraternity of Samos is among the most respectable of the Mystery Cults, both for the moral excellence of its members and for the immense body of learning that it is believed to have preserved, although how far the rites mirror those of antiquity and of Pythagoras himself is open to dispute. Very popular with magi of House Jerbiton, the cult was organized in the early tenth century by Anaximander of Thebes, and it is believed to be based on his Hermetic researches into Pythagorean number theory and Euclidean geometry, and their adaptation to Hermetic magic.

## The Fraternity of Samos Today

The Fraternity of Samos is perhaps misnamed, for while Samos was the birthplace of Pythagoras, the cult does not

currently maintain a temple (or as they are known in the Fraternity, a School) on that island. Appealing mainly to those with an interest in mundane scholarship and music, and greatly appreciated by magi of House Jerbiton, the Fraternity is likewise not a brotherhood in the strictest sense, for strict equality of men and women is practiced. Asceticism, combined with academic study and an exhausting curriculum of at least six, and some claim 12, Initiations, prevent many magi from being tempted to explore the mysteries of the cult, but it is rumored there are a sizable number of Initiates who adopted the Pythagorean belief system and seek to master philosophy and mathematics as the first stage in the path that will eventually lead them to magical immortality.

There is no real need for secrecy or the cultic framework, for today the Fraternity has few known enemies, and even the Flaw: Cabal Legacy merely represents constant badgering by would-be Initiates and resentful candidates who were refused, although Pythagoras' death demonstrates just how dangerous that can be. Yet the traditional Initiatory system is rigidly adhered to, and the cult has not forgotten the lesson of the House of Milo. While candidates can probably find where to apply fairly easily, as Pythagoreans do not hide their existence the way most Mystery Cultists do, the requirements for membership are extremely stringent and require excellence in a number of mundane abilities as well as proven moral character and discretion. Those who speak openly of cult secrets or, worse still, teach them, can expect to receive as brutal and swift a response as from any other cult, and to on death find their spirit reborn as a green bean — or so it is said. (Pythagoreans do not eat green beans, as they may contain the souls of the dead.)

A large number of Akousmatics (Outer Order Initiates) proudly display their affiliation in Pythagorean symbols worn on their robes, marking them as part of an intellectual and moral elite. The most important sign known of the Akousmatics is that of the pentagram, that used by the Mathematikoi (the Inner Order), gained only by the most dedicated, is the triangle, the most perfect of shapes.

## Beliefs of the Fraternity

At its deepest level, reality is mathematical in nature.

Philosophy can be used for spiritual purification.

The soul can rise to union with the divine.

Certain symbols have a mystical significance.

All brothers and sisters of the fraternity should observe strict loyalty and secrecy, and bear responsibility for one another.

We are reborn many times by the process of metempsychosis, or transmigration, in lower forms, such as animals, or as humans, and that eventually one can aspire to ascend beyond mortality and become a magical immortal.

## Structure of the Fraternity of Samos

The Pythagorean Fraternity follows a strict system of Initiation and hierarchy, and is an archetypal Mystery Cult in terms of its degrees of Initiation. It is said that mastery of the complete system, or syllabus, of Initiation takes a minimum of 33 years, but that 84 is the usual figure.

The Fraternity does not follow the exact Initiatory system laid down by the early Pythagoreans, but a variant thereof; the incorporation of the rites into Hermetic theory is justified in that the Initiates had already studied the older mysteries of Pythagoras in previous lives. There is far more emphasis on tests of mundane ability than in most Mystery Cults — it is required that the prospective probationer can pass examinations in philosophiae and artes liberales, which can be represented by having attained a score of 3 in both those abilities. Also required is some ability with a musical instrument as well as theoretical knowledge of music, represented by a score of 1 in Music. These requirements are in addition to the usual Initiation Script and Organization Lore requirements for a first Initiation,

## Sample Initiation Script for the Fraternity of Samos

The first degree of the Outer Order deals with the principles of mathematics, and Initiates the Virtue Hermetic Numerology. The average Pythagorean Mystagogue may be reasonably charismatic, with a Presence of +1 not being unusual, and very learned in Fraternity of Samos Lore, with that ability at 7. Initiation Scripts with a bonus of +7 are very common, but many variations exist.

Having already proven her ability with Artes Liberales, Mathematics and the other cult Abilities, (+1 special bonus), the Initiate may spend a season studying with the Mystagogue at a School learning the secrets of number magic and the Pythagorean system (+3) before taking a Minor Ordeal Vow to follow the Sacred Precepts of Pythagoras (+3) for a total Initiation Script bonus of +7. Scripts used by Mystagogues with lower Presence or Fraternity of Samos Lore typically add a Quest.

and confer a +1 bonus to the Initiation Script employed.

There are two Orders of the Fraternity: the Outer Order, or Akousmatics, and the Inner Order, or Mathematikoi. Initiates must pass through the Akousmatics before admission to the Mathematikoi. The three degrees of the Akousmatics that must be passed through by all members of the Fraternity are, in order:

### MATHEMATICUS

The first degree of the Fraternity of Samos is that of the Mathematicus. In the original system of Pythagoras it required the development of great skill in mathematics and geometry. Knowledge of mathematics is seen as the basis on which all other knowledge is based, and in the Hermetic system the aspirant is expected to have the skill to demon-



strate his knowledge of these principles through tests of his artes liberales, which means possessing at least a score of 3 in Artes Liberales (Mathematics) as outlined above. Initiation Scripts usually call for sacrifices of time, to be spent writing books on mundane knowledges, or Quests to seek out and demonstrate wisdom and learning. Initiates are taught the secret of the Virtue Hermetic Numerology.

## THEORETICUS

The second degree of Initiation into the Fraternity requires the beginnings of the application of the principles learned in the first degree. Initiates now are required to pass a test in geometry, as they previously proved their knowledge of mathematics, which means possessing at least a score of 4 in Artes Liberales (Geometry).

They are also tested thoroughly in their ability in Hermetic Numerology, both by being required to create a Numerologist's Book, and to apply and demonstrate skill with Rotes while undergoing a journey to a destination set by the Fraternity. Other Initiation Scripts may be used, but this is typical. The Initiate learns the principles of the Virtue Hermetic Geometry.

## ELECTUS

The third degree of the Fraternity teaches the application of the principles and understanding of the teachings to the mysteries of the planets. While mundane astrology falls under the auspices of the ability Artes Liberales, the Initiate now learns the esoteric principles underlying that art, and is therefore capable of working them into his magic, gaining the Virtue Planetary Magic. The Initiation

Scripts for this degree should always involve considerable astrological symbolism, and the need to draw up a correct natal chart for the Initiate, which is held by the Initiators.

The Initiators also take a lock of hair, which is fixed as a permanent Arcane Connection, and record the Initiate's birth name and signature. Together with the Nativity Horoscope, these provide one who uses these items with a bonus of eight times Penetration score when casting spells against the Initiate. This is similar to the various Flaws relating to Flawed Parma Magica and Limited Magic Resistance, and constitutes an Ordeal for Initiation.

## THE INNER ORDER: MATHEMATIKOI

Next the Initiate enters the Inner Order, the Mathematikoi, and wears robes of black or white, demonstrating her knowledge of the philosophical system, worldly renunciation and spiritual purity. She must abstain from the eating of meat, and that of green beans, which Pythagoras believed to have the potential to act as the recipient for the metempsychosis of souls. In the Languedoc Tribunal the robes have the unfortunate problem that it makes the maga appear to an uninitiated eye much like one of the perfecti of the Cathars, and marking her as a possible heretic.

Members of the Mathematikoi must possess the mundane ability Teaching at a score of at least 2, and are responsible for imparting their knowledge to new Initiates. They must also, by Pythagorean tradition, dwell with other members of the Fraternity, but the requirement is interpreted loosely, and the normal process is to induct a suitable candidate into the Mystery from within one's own covenant, hence honoring the requirement without a need to travel and relocate. Another duty is the requirement to feed and house visiting Initiates, for as long as required, offering generous and unstinting hospitality. A covenant where an Inner Order member dwells becomes a School, and is publicly known, a focus for interested magi seeking Initiation and current members of the Akousmatics seeking further knowledge or teaching.

There is also a requirement that members of the Mathematikoi should train as many apprentices as possible, and training an apprentice may well be a suitable Sacrifice for some of the higher degrees' Initiation Scripts, conferring a +6 bonus for the 15 seasons sacrificed. A sound theoretical knowledge of Magic Theory, Philosophiae, and Teaching, represented by very high scores in those areas, grants one additional favor and respect within the Fraternity.

### TERTIUS, OR 3=4

The Initiate now has left behind earthly concerns, and prepares to deal with her understanding of metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls. Three, the name of this fourth degree, represented by the perfect Pythagorean triangle, is the first real number according to Pythagorean Lore, for the numbers one and two represent the super-mundane spheres of existence, into which the Initiate plans to ascend. The Initiate learns the secret of the application of the geometrical solids to the elements; earth particles are cubic, fire is tetrahedral, water is icosahedral, and air octahedral. Vim, as magic or spirit, is a dodecahedron, a 12-sided form, the most difficult and mysterious of the five geometric forms. Based upon these principles the Virtue Hermetic Architecture is now Initiated. Yet some have claimed to meet those of this Rank with the Virtue Great Talisman, and others with the Virtue Performance Magic (Sorcerous Music).

### SECUNDUS, OR 2=5

The fifth degree, confusingly called The Second, shows how, based upon the principles already outlined, the Initiate comes to a true understanding that surpasses all normal human ability. It is rumored that some Initiates learn the mystery of the Virtue Inscription on the Soul, and it is also possible that the Virtue Hermetic Theurgy is taught at this level, or the Virtue Theurgic Spirit Familiar. Perhaps Scripts exist for all three and a choice is made, or possibly all three are

taught in a series of Initiations at this degree. Outsiders are not party to such secrets.

### PYTHAGOREAN, OR TRUE INITIATE

The final degree of the Pythagorean Initiation is said to require a vow of silence that must not be broken for five years, rendering spellcasting difficult; this counts as a Major Ordeal for Initiation Script purposes. A strenuous series of Initiatory Quests and Sacrifices is required as the final mysteries are approached. Some say that Pythagoreans are taught the Virtue Potent Magic (Artes Liberales and Philosophiae), a focus that covers these two abilities, or the secret of the Virtue Names of Power, while others say that it teaches the final liberation from the chains of being and metempsychosis, and ascendancy to immortality, as reflected by the Virtue Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes.

A few non-Initiates have speculated that, based on the principle of the triad and three as the most perfect of all numbers, each of the above claims is true, and the Pythagorean truly passes through 12 Initiations to master all the Mysteries of their syllabus, but none can say for sure.

## The Disciples of the Worm

*Necromancy is rarely considered to be a noble profession, and the ancient grave robbers of the Disciples of the Worm have a sinister reputation. Yet the secrets they have learned and the magics they wield are perhaps some consolation.*

### History of the Disciples of the Worm

Early in the tenth century the magus Titus Herennius Vespillo of Rome was renowned throughout the Order for his knowledge of necromantic rituals.

Associated with the notorious Flambeau Julius of the Oder, he spent some 14 years in a series of campaigns that devastated the hedge magicians of the Greater Alps, Rome, and Transylvania, as the grim pair sought out potential rivals to the Order and offered them the choice of joining or dying. Many joined the Order, but many others perished.

Death was not the final indignity however: After they had perished in a fiery blast, Vespillo would take their charred corpses, and summon their spirits, to carry out detailed interrogations as to their known associates and plans against the Order. Those spirits who refused to cooperate were to suffer terrible agonies from his new magics, and to be forever bound in magical prisons of his devising.

Some say that it was during this campaign, during which the pair often killed first and questioned later, that the idea struck Vespillo that the same method used to ensnare ghosts might somehow been applied to magical spirits and the older dead. Others say that he came across the secret in a tiny village nestled high in a hidden pass in the Alps, where for centuries a sinister cult had bound spirits to their will, and his breakthrough came from adapting their rites to the Hermetic system rather than original thought. Whatever the truth, Vespillo was to pioneer a great deal of what magi now know as Hermetic spirit magic.

There can be little doubt that Vespillo was a changed magus after his great realization. As the ancient magics of those who would not join the Order were lost forever, he increasingly began to seek out the tombs of the wizards of antiquity, disturbing their rest to question them about their long-forgotten magical secrets. He used spells to access the long-buried streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum; he explored Etruscan burial shafts; and finally he led a group of magi deep within the catacombs of Rome, kicking aside early Christian remains as useless to him, passionately searching for the tombs of the Mercurian priesthood.

When he emerged from the catacombs, he was alone. The other magi, including Julius, had perished within, and Vespillo stated calmly that their spirits were now laid to rest. Rumors circulated,



but he refused to say exactly what had transpired or what he had found deep beneath the city of Rome.

Within a year, however, he had founded a new brotherhood, the Disciples of the Worm. His highly secretive group had discovered one of the most potent magical secrets of all: the ability to bind a spirit to power a spell, so that its duration could be extended indefinitely. Dedicated to the pursuit of ancient magical secrets, and surrounded by spirits that they bound to their wills, the disciples began to travel throughout Mythic Europe seeking the tombs of ancient wizards. Many perished at the hands of grim grave guardians or deadly exotic magics, while others were driven insane by terrible insights from beyond the grave, but slowly the cult gained power and influence.

The Disciples of the Worm have been accused repeatedly of infernalism or practicing demonology. Somehow the cult members who were investigated have always managed to prove their innocence, or have died during the investigation. The most famous example of this was that of Bellephon of Prague, devoured alive by maggots while being questioned by the Quaesitors in 1034.

## The Disciples of the Worm Today

Very little is known in the Order of this most secretive of Mystery Cults, and it is almost universally abhorred. Rumors of breaches of the Code, of dead magi bound as spirit familiars, and of obscene rites and even human sacrifice abound, yet it seems clear that in fact the Worm cult merely seeks magical knowledge and power by an unusual, and some would say unsavory, method. No one is going to admit to membership, however, and while there are rumors that the secrets of the Disciples have saved the Order many times, and that they are an altruistic group dedicated to protecting magi and serving the Code occasionally surface, no one really believes them.

Today there are far fewer undiscovered pagan burials, and the cult has moved slightly more toward application

## Example Initiation Script for the Disciples

The Disciples of the Worm can possess Presence as much as any other magi, but as their reputation is perhaps a little dark it's assumed that a Mystagogue with Presence 0 is the best available to aspiring new Initiates. The Mystagogue will normally possess a Worm Lore of at least 6; a +9 Script is commonly employed to Initiate second degree disciples into the Mysteries of spell binding.

The Initiate must spend a season working for the cult first, transcribing copies of Lab Texts on the creation of enchanted devices (+1). She is then taken to an ancient catacomb, and must

survive a test of her endurance by entering the ancient tombs and spending a period there, surviving whatever terrors come at them and trying to locate an item concealed by the Mystagogue (+3). There follows a season of being taught by the Mystagogue the actual secrets of Hermetic Evocation (+3); the talent is only awakened at the end of the season when she, dressed in a shroud, must enter a tomb with the Mystagogue and there make lavish offerings to the spirits, (+1), and undergo the terrifying rite (sympathetic bonus +1), for a total of +9.

of its unrivaled knowledge of summoning, controlling, and binding spirits into its magics, and away from the magical interrogation and torture of the dead in the hope of learning their secrets, although both practices continue. Very occasionally a Disciple will meet with high-ranking mystae from other cults to trade secrets or favors, and the usual contact for such deals is the only known member of the Worm cult, the necromancer Pertinax of Tytalus, who travels throughout Mythic Europe leaving nightmares and shaken magi wherever he stays. A less-than-ideal dinner guest, he is said to take delight in whispering some of the more macabre secrets of the grave to any freshly Gauntleted magi he encounters, although he never betrays cult rites.

## Structure of The Disciples of the Worm

The Disciples of the Worm is a grim group, and its Initiation rites do nothing to help its image. Members are traditionally robed in shrouds, and all cult rites are celebrated in ancient tombs, usually on the eve of All Hallows — October 31st. Yet the aims of the cult are lofty: the preservation of ancient magics, and the final understanding of death and its mysteries.

Initiates are divided into seven degrees, each of which teaches a new Virtue to the aspirant on her successful completion of

the Initiation Scripts, which are among the most nerve-shattering and terrifying in the Mystery Cults. Organized into cells of three members living within a geographical district, but not necessarily from the same covenant, only one member knows the name of one senior member from the cell above in the hierarchy.

The degrees reflect the grim fascination of the cult:

- The first degree teaches the Supernatural Ability Second Sight. This is extremely useful in the work of the cult. The lowest-ranking members of the cult, they are privy to few, if any, secrets of the cult.
- Second Degree Initiates learn the Minor Virtue Spell Binding, a powerful rite that allows minor magical spirits or ancient ghosts to be bound into spells to sustain them.
- The third degree is a difficult one to reach; the Initiation Script always demands the Initiate must enter an undesecrated pagan tomb and force the spirit within to reveal a magical secret unknown to the cult. Many perish in this task. For those who succeed, the reward is the Virtue Hermetic Empowerment.
- The fourth degree teaches some of the ancient magics the cult has learned, as represented by the Virtue Inscription on the Soul.
- The fifth degree Initiates the Minor Virtue Potent Magic: Ghosts. Such

Initiates now are told of the cult's secret repository of magical texts, and suitable candidates are taught the true aims of the cult. Unsuitable candidates never attain this rank.

- The sixth degree teaches the Initiate how to properly coerce, bind, and intimidate the spirits of the dead, and teaches the binding of a spirit familiar.
- The seventh degree teaches the Major Virtue Living Ghost. On being ritually killed and bound to one of the cult's sacred places, one attains the seventh degree; his magic is now forever available to the cult, which is keen to keep its members long beyond this life.

## The Knights of the Green Stone

*Magical questing troubadours, seeking a stone that fell from Heaven. Poets, Lovers, and Chivalrous Warriors, they seek the ultimate secrets of Creation, not the Holy Grail.*

### History of the Knights of the Green Stone

Within the Rhine the minnesingers are the great knightly poets, lovers, and troubadours of the chivalric tradition. The name derives from Minnesang, meaning lyric poem, and in the 12th and 13th centuries the minor German nobles began a tradition of writing these poems to married ladies of higher rank, expressing their passionate love and bemoaning the lady's cruel rejection. Highly formalized as part of the tradition of the Courts of Love, the minnesingers also praised war, tournaments, valor, and the perfect manners of the gentle knight, well-versed in the arts of etiquette. Yet they were no mere minstrels, but rather heroic knights who lived by the principles they extolled

as they sang their poems to the courts of Germany, accompanied by a lyre or harp they played as they sang.

Within the group of over 300 noble minnesingers, there exists a small Mystery Cult of Hermetic magi who add their magical power to the undoubted talents possessed by all minnesingers. The Knights of the Green Stone extol the virtues of chivalry, love (a mystery beyond Hermetic magic!), and heroism, and embody these virtues in their quest for the Stone of Creation, a mysterious rock said to have fallen from Heaven before time began. Some say it is the key to eternal life, while others whisper that it was a great gem set in the brow of Lucifer, and sent flying to Earth by a blow of Michael's sword as Lucifer was dealt the terrible blow that sent him tumbling from Heaven. Others claim the stone was later carved into the Holy Grail, and only when it is found will Jerusalem finally be forever secure in the hands of the Christians, and the heathens forever defeated. Some legends claim that as a stone from beyond the Lunar Sphere, it is the source of magics that are beyond understanding, and that could reshape Creation to the desires of its wielder.

Magic stones and the peculiar magic properties of stones that fall from Heaven are not unknown to the Order of Hermes or medieval society, such as the one that bestowed invincibility in combat which Hubert de Burgh was supposed to have stolen from the royal treasury. The classic text for the magical use of such gems is the 11th century *Lapidary* of Bishop Marbode of Rennes. Although there was some skepticism over some of the claims, such lapidaries were defended by Gervase of Tilbury, and authorship of one was even ascribed to King Alfonso the Wise of Castile and Leon.

The Knights of the Green Stone were founded at the Wartburgskrieg, or

Tourney of Poets, in the first years of the 13th century, when the minnesingers competed at a German court for favor and honor (see the *Ars Magica* supplement *Guardians of the Forests*). One competitor, Gunnar von Falster, a knight of Danish origin, was also a member of House Tylalus and a great lover of challenge, romance, and epic adventure. Recognizing other magi among the throng, he told the strange story he had heard from a beautiful maiden in an enchanted castle deep within a regio in the forests of East Prussia. She had told him of the Green Stone, and charged him to found a company of magician knights of the highest noble virtue who would undertake this adventure.

The story was soon confirmed by strange omens, weird apparitions, and a misshapen dwarf who came among the gathering of magi that night, leading a unicorn on a halter made entirely of emeralds, and who said that what was spoken was true.

That very night the Cult of the Knights of the Green Stone was born, and despite the requirement that Initiates should live as knights errant, whatever their real background, practice the graces of Etiquette, Music, and Charm, and incorporate themselves into noble society, many magi of House Jerbiton and House Tylalus in particular find the challenge and mystery irresistible. Swearing vows of chivalry and romance, they set out upon the epic quest. It is said that deep within the Rhine Tribunal in a forest the Knights maintain a castle where their secrets are hoarded, and Initiations conferred, yet no outsider knows the truth of this.



## Example Initiation Script for the Green Stone

The first Virtue taught is Free Expression, and the Mystagogue is usually at least a Squire with Green Stone Lore 4 or higher, and a positive Presence. This Initiation Script confers a +7 bonus; it contains a Minor Ordeal that lowers the target level for this Initiation to 12. The new Initiate for the Knights always faces the same challenge as part of the Initiation Script: using Parzival as her guide, she must find the castle of the Knights, and journey there to arrive and present herself for Initiation on the feast of Pentecost (+3). She swears oaths to maintain the rules of the Order, and behave chivalrously,

courteously, and bravely. This is the Minor Ordeal, which creates the flaw Dutybound (+3), and the Initiate then must accept the great mundane cost of outfitting herself in the garb of a noble knight, which grants a +1 bonus for the sacrifice.

Some Initiates have to learn spells that allow them to magically render a horse docile and unafraid of their Gift, but traditionally the Knights appeal mostly to Gentle Gifted magi.

It is also a requirement of the Initiation that the new page should study the ability Music to a score of at least 1.

## The Knights of the Green Stone Today

Less than 20 years old, the Mystery Cult is still in expanding, and many say there are signs the quest is soon to be completed, while others believe that the goal may be years off. The Knights have recently turned their attention to the Baltic shoreline, following rumors of the Green Stone, while others have journeyed deep into the Levant, and some quest in places as remote as Loch Leglean, Hibernia, and Iberia. Wherever the quest takes them, strange magical creatures and weird omens appear from time to time, guiding them toward resolution of the mystery.

The cult recruits largely from those who have become fascinated by the minnesinger Wulfram Von Eschenbach's epic poem *Parzival*, which is said to contain a coded allegory about the Knights and their quest, and even symbolic direction to find their Grail Castle, the cult headquarters. Outwardly a story of Sir Percival's quest for the Holy Grail, it is rumored that Gunnar Von Falster composed the epic himself as an allegory to promote his cult, then "handed it on" to Wulfram Von Eschenbach using magic. The truth or otherwise of this claim is open to dispute, but there can be little doubt that the mystical brotherhood is very serious about their quest, and skilled

in the use of Performance Magic: Music, or, as they call it, Sorcerous Poetry. The magi knights also practice a strange tradition: Almost all choose their shields to act as their talismans, and believe that in some magical sense their heraldry dictates what role they will play in the completion of the Great Adventure.

## Structure of the Knights of the Green Stone

All of the Knights of the Green Stone are first and foremost magi of the Order of Hermes, and despite their epic adventures and wanderings, most still spend most of each year at their home covenants learning magic and working on projects like any other magus, yet dreaming of their next chance to participate in the glorious quest. Surprisingly, women are admitted as full members, but they are expected to don arms and armor and pass themselves as men while upon the quest — among the unGifted folk at least.

While taking on the role of knights, there is no need to swear a vow of fealty to a mundane noble; indeed the taking of such a lord is expressly forbidden. The cult maintains a headquarters, referred to as the Castle of the Grail, probably within the Rhine Tribunal, although others have placed it elsewhere, leading some interested outsiders to speculate that it may

be in a regio with several entrances that move across Mythic Europe, facilitating easy access to the remote wildernesses and eastern cities where much of the quest seems to be undertaken. The cult knows, but is not saying.

The Knights divides its Initiates into three degrees, each of which offers up to three Initiations. Members may choose to take more Initiations at the same degree after their first, or progress directly to the next degree, forsaking the other powers on offer. All members play the role of knights, and having adopted that status in public may be considered to possess that Minor Status Virtue for free, but the benefits thereof, a horse and armor, must be provided by the magi. No Initiation is required for this Virtue, as really the magi remains a Hermetic magus merely acting out a role.

### PAGE

New Initiates, who are Initiated into the mysteries of the Virtue Free Expression, and then after composing several poems, may be Initiated again into Performance Magic: Music. The third Virtue taught is the ancient secret Virtue Art of Memory.

### SQUIRE

The middle rank of the Cult of the Knights of the Green Stone, the Squires are expected to play an important supporting role in equipping and accompanying the third degree Knights on the quest. The Virtues Vulgar Alchemy, Hermetic Numerology, and Consummate Talisman can be conferred at this degree.

### KNIGHT

The heroic leaders of the quest, who meet regularly on the feast of Pentecost to discuss progress and new revelations. They learn the Virtues Planetary Magic, Major Magical Focus: Gemstones or Potent Magic: Gemstones, and Hermetic True Names as they pursue the mystery of the elusive Stone.

# Immortal Magi

The only truly immortal magi are those who have transformed themselves to become beings of one of the supernatural realms, in the process ceasing to be human.

This appendix provides common rules for immortal magi, especially the three paths described in this book. This book only covers those who join the Magic realm — other realms are possible through other methods of immortality.

A being of one of the realms has a Might score — having a Might score marks him as being part of that realm but does not of itself make him immortal. (see ArM5, page 182). A being with a Might score is subject to Warding spells, including *Aegis of the Hearth*, and may choose to resist spells with their Might Score or with (Form + [5xParma Magica]), but the effects do not combine.

An immortal ceases to make Aging rolls — he truly does not age — and is beyond the effects of Warping and Twilight. He does not need to eat, drink, or breathe, although he may do so if he wishes. (It is, for example, hard to talk if he forgets to breathe.) Depending on the kind of immortal, he may be slain (if he has a body) or destroyed (if his spirit is destroyed magically; e.g., by *Perdo Vim*).

An immortal also sacrifices change for everlasting continuity, and in consequence has a natural tendency to revert to stasis. This is generally a benefit: The effects of spells imposed on the magus fade once the spell is no longer maintained, mental changes fade, and wounds heal — even potentially lethal wounds or severed limbs. The immortal does keep a memory of events, but cannot study without magical reinforcement.

However, if an immortal desires to change, then magic can do what nature resists. An immortal magus may make learning permanent by binding knowledge into his talisman, if he has one.

## Immortal Beings and Permanent Change

Immortal beings resist change, and have a natural tendency to return to their basic immortal selves. Those who are recently transformed often wish to continue their studies, and thus seek ways to reinforce their learning so that it does not fade away.

A Hermetic maga who transforms into an immortal magical being (via the Great Elixir) or into a ghost (the Living Ghost) and retains her talisman may bind her learning into her talisman and so retain the knowledge. A magus who has Inscription on the Soul can continue to invest such effects into his spirit talisman. This requires a laboratory to work in. (Ascended Daimon magi have their own ways to improve through the efforts of their cults on Earth. See Chapter 10: Hermetic Theurgy, Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes, Learning and Improving as a Daimonic Spirit.)

All of these effects are bound into the magus's talisman and, like talisman attunements, are only available when the magus is touching the talisman. They are lost if the device is lost or broken. Legends of items of great power associated with fabulous spirits and enchanters may have arisen from tales of magi who have followed this or similar paths.

Acquiring new Virtues or Flaws (such as Initiation grants to mortals) may be possible, but is sufficiently difficult to be beyond the compass of this book — you should negotiate with your storyguide for an acceptable series of quests and rituals. (Note that Ordeals cannot be used for Initiation of immortal beings, as Flaws are as difficult for them to acquire as Virtues!)

## LEARNING ARTS OR ABILITIES

After an immortal magus studies and gains experience points, whether in Arts or Abilities, his unchanging nature asserts itself and the change fades over the course of the next season as the spirit “repairs” itself. The magus can prevent this by spending the next season creating an enchanted effect to bind the experience into his talisman. This needs already opened spaces before the enchantment starts, so the magus is advised to prepare before study begins.

An immortal should be especially careful not to lose the device, as it contains part of his life.

The immortal transformation informs the magus how to perform these rites — once a magus is immortal, it seems obvious, but mortal magi lack the insight, which comes from the Mysteries.

## BINDING THE IMMORTAL MEMORY

CrMe Gen  
Pen +0, constant effect  
R: Per, D: Always on, T: Ind, Mystery enchantment

This enchantment binds a learned study period into the magus's talisman, so that the magus retains the benefits of



## Becoming Immortal with a Familiar

A mortal magus's familiar will not die of old age as long as the magus is alive, and only suffers ill effects from aging when the magus does; the familiar ages along with the magus, generally dying a few days before or some weeks after the magus (ArM5, page 105).

As the paths to immortality variously involve dying, removing from the world, or transforming into an alchemical being, these changes would normally sever the link to the familiar, and leave it to die. However, the existing bond to the familiar allows the magus to draw it along his chosen path

to join the magus in his immortal state: ghostly, Daimonic, or as an alchemical magical beast.

In game terms, the magus must add extra raw vis to his transformation rite, equal to their Familiar Bond Score/5 (round up). If this is done, the familiar transforms along with her magus, otherwise she remains as a mortal beast, severed from the new immortal, and will die soon.

A magus with a spirit familiar benefits, as his familiar is already an immortal disembodied spirit: no extra vis is needed to transform a spirit familiar.

study. If the talisman is destroyed, any study bound into it is lost. The Effect level needed is  $10 \times \text{XP}$  to be retained. The effect must be completed in one season or all new experience points will be lost to the repair effect. If the full effect cannot be invested in a single season, a lesser enchantment can be used to retain some XP, losing the remainder.

(Mystery Guideline level)

*Example: A maga studies a tractatus with Quality 10 for a season. The next season, she instills another Binding the Immortal Memory effect into her talisman. She has a Creo Mentem lab total of 90, and can invest a level 45 effect in one season. This is enough to permanently bind 4 XP (a level 40 effect), but she will lose the remaining 6 XP.*

### LEARNING SPELLS

When an immortal magus learns a spell then, again, the natural tendency of the immortal spirit is to repair itself over the next season, so the spell fades from memory unless prevented. The magus can bind the knowledge of a spell by creating an enchantment in his talisman. This requires already opened spaces in the talisman.

#### THE IMMORTAL'S GRIMOIRE

ReVi Gen

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Per, D: Always on, T: Ind, Mystery enchantment

This invested enchantment enables the magus's talisman to hold the knowledge to cast a spell. The effect cannot be triggered as a normal device effect, but is always on, as a "memory."

Once complete, the magus may cast the spell as normal.

The invested effect level must equal the level of spell to be retained. The effect must be completed in one season or the spell knowledge is lost. The magus gets a similar spell bonus for this enchantment, regardless of the spell's Technique and Form — he is in effect enchanting the spell.

(Mystery Guideline level)

The advantage of instilling *The Immortal's Grimoire* is that by casting the spell normally the magus uses his full Casting Total, gets full Penetration (Casting Total – Spell level + Penetration Bonus), and has unlimited uses per day. A device effect has zero Penetration and one use per day, unless extra levels are invested. A magus who can instill *The Immortal's Grimoire* in one season can expect to cast the spell far more effectively than an equivalent effect instilled in a single season.

### BINDING HIGH-LEVEL SPELLS

If the magus cannot invest *The Immortal's Grimoire* effect into his talisman in one season, then he may undertake a particularly laborious process instead.

The magus may invest the spell, even a Ritual spell, as a normal effect into his talisman. A Ritual cannot be cast from the talisman, but that is not the point; the point is a to provide a foundation for *The Immortal's Grimoire*. The magus may create the invested effect over multiple seasons, but must accept that he loses the incompletely fixed spell each time he does so. After each season of enchantment, he must return to the source of the spell and relearn it, alternating a season of spell-learning and a season of investment, until the bound spell effect is completed. (Creating an ordinary invested effect without knowing an equivalent spell is still possible, but does not provide a key to create *The Immortal's Grimoire* and let the magus cast the spell normally.)

Because this process relies on learning and relearning a spell, the magus must ensure that the spell has been reinvented as a perfect match, with no unintended variations. He must succeed in a roll of Intelligence + Magic Theory against an Ease Factor of 6 + the magnitude of the spell. To bind a spell as an effect over multiple seasons, the magus must relearn the spell after each season of enchantment.

To match each partial spell-binding, roll a stress die + Intelligence + Magic Theory vs. (6 + Magnitude of Spell). If this roll is failed, the relearned spell does not match the partial enchantment, but the magus notices and abandons the second season. He may continue the cycle, taking up from relearning the spell.

If the roll is botched, the magus fails to notice the mismatch and ruins the investment, and may risk his talisman. For each botch zero rolled, roll on the Modified Effect or Side Effect tables of the Extraordinary Results chart in ArM5, page 109 and apply the alteration to an existing effect in the talisman. Roll to determine the effect, or decide in consultation with the storyguide. If the magus was experimenting, add the Risk Modifier to the number of botch dice; if such an experiment botches, then roll on the Disaster table as well as the Modified or Side Effect tables.

Once the Effect has been invested, the magus may invest the *Immortal's Grimoire* Effect over a number of seasons.

## Immortal and Unchanging

The unchanging nature of the immortal means that while temporary changes are possible, they fade unless bound by magic. If a change is caused by a magical effect with a duration longer than Momentary, recovery or fading does not begin until the effect expires.

As a guideline, once the cause ends, no unbound, temporary change lasts beyond a season — after a season all trace will have faded. If a whole season passes, then simply assume that wounds and scars fade completely — no die roll is needed.

### Any Temporary, Unbound Change will Fade Completely over a Season.

An immortal with a body may be wounded, and if the wound is deep enough (beyond Incapacitated), he can die. If he is wounded but does not die, then his wounds will always heal. In game terms, if you need to monitor wounds over a short period, then make a Recovery Roll for every wound once per week (regardless of severity), and no wound worsens — a wound can only remain stable or improve. Since the immortal cannot get drastically worse, the normal stress roll becomes a simple roll.

If a whole season passes, just assume that all wounds fade completely; this includes regenerating crushed or severed limbs. (Recovery from wounds is detailed on ArM5, page 179, and summarized below.)

**Recovery Total: Simple Die + Stamina + Medic's Chirurgy or Medicine Score + Magical Aid**

**Roll to Recover from Incapacity at Sunrise and Sunset: If the Recovery Roll is 9+, all Incapacitating Wounds Improve to Heavy Wounds, other-**

**wise the Immortal Remains Stable but Incapacitated.**

**Roll to Recover from Light, Medium, and Heavy Wounds Once per Week:**

**Improve if Recovery Total is 10+ (Light Wounds), 12+ (Medium Wounds), 15+ (Heavy Wounds), Otherwise an Immortal's Wound is Stable (+3 Bonus to Future Rolls)**

A ghost may be wounded by other ghosts, but its wounds disappear within a day (see Chapter 8: Hermetic Spirit Magic, Ghosts in *Ars Magica*). An Aspect of a Daimon may be wounded if it takes bodily form, but can be discarded at will — the Daimon cannot be killed by bodily wounds to an Aspect.

Mental changes, such as those inflicted by spells or powers, recover similarly. Other spells can be compared across guidelines, or an approximation can be used. If the speed of recovery matters,

compare the effect with wound-causing magics, rate the loss on the wound scale, and make recovery rolls as above.

If a whole season passes, assume all trace fades without rolling.

### Recover from Mental Changes as a Comparable Physical Wound.

See the accompanying table.

Might damage, such as from *Perdo Vim* magics equivalent to *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, only results in temporary Might loss if the spirit is not utterly destroyed — full Might recovers by the next day.

The sacrifice or drain of Might Score caused by Mystery rites or rituals is a permanent loss, although methods exist to improve Might Score. For example, a Living Ghost may sacrifice Might Score points to replace vis in spells, but may increase his Might Score later by repeating his *Transformation of the Living Ghost* ritual.

SPELL	GL	HEAL AS...	PERDO CORPUS EFFECT	PERDO MENTEM EFFECT
3		Light Wound		Remove minor detail of memory.
4		Light Wound		Remove important detail of memory. Diminish mental capability.
5		Light Wound	Inflict Light Wound.	
10		Medium Wound		Remove minor memory. Reduce all mental capabilities.
15		Medium Wound	Cripple a limb.	
15		Heavy Wound	Destroy minor sense.	Remove a major memory, or all emotions. Drive insane.
20		Heavy Wound	Destroy a major sense.	
20		Incapacitating	Incapacitating Wound. Destroy or sever a limb.	
25		Incapacitating		Leave a mindless husk.
30		Dead	Kill a person.	

# Conversion

The following notes discuss converting characters from Fourth Edition's *The Mysteries* to *The Mysteries Revised Edition*.

## General Conversion

Follow the guidelines in ArM5, on page 223, on converting characters. Use your judgment to re-balance points spent on Virtues, but note that *The Mysteries Revised Edition* places much more emphasis on stories paying for Initiations rather than Flaw points, and so converted characters will be much more Flawed than comparable *The Mysteries Revised Edition* characters. When converting, you may wish to drop some of the extra Flaws acquired as Ordeals for Fourth Edition *The Mysteries*.

## ABILITIES

Outer Mysteries are no longer "Magical Affinity" Abilities. You may place experience from removed Abilities into (Mystery Cult) Lore, Magic Theory, or similar Abilities. Some new Virtues use (Realm) Lores, so you may wish to spread points into those Abilities.

## NON-MYSTAE VIRTUES AND FLAWS

Cabal Legacy is retained, Sorcerous Music becomes Performance Magic (Music), Sacred Architecture becomes Hermetic Architecture. Mastery Virtues are replaced by Mastery special abilities; see ArM5, page 87. Magi with these Virtues should add the relevant Mastery special ability to all Formulaic spells they

know, adding one Mastery Level for each Ability added. Many lineages and cults refer to Virtues and Flaws from Fourth Edition supplements, and you should simply pick the closest ArM5 equivalent.

## MAGICAL METHODS

Ceremonial Magic can be found on ArM5, page 83; sympathetic magic can be found on ArM5, page 84.

## Mystae Magics

*The Mysteries Revised Edition* divides Mystery magics into informal schools rather than formal mystae magics. You should look at the style of character as well as the names of the Virtues.

## ALCHEMY

Hermetic Alchemy, Vulgar Alchemy, and Philosophic Alchemy have direct equivalents. You may wish to include Potent Magic or Magical Focus for Muto Terram (Minor). A magus with The Elixir should replace this with the Virtues Lesser Elixir and Great Elixir together.

## ASTROLOGY

Replace Hermetic Astrology with Planetary Magic, and keep Celestial Magic. Hermetic Inception has no equivalent. Astral Magic is most nearly equivalent to Periapts, but is very different. Divinatory aspects are covered by Divination (Astrology).

## MAGICAL IMAGINATION

Magical Imagination is replaced by the Ability Art of Memory (that requires no Virtue) and either the Virtue Potent Magic (Dream) or Minor Magical Focus (Dream). Oneiromancy becomes Dream Magic and Greater Dream Magic. Dream Interpreter becomes Hermetic Dream Interpreter — a variant of Hermetic Divination.

Augury is replaced by Hermetic Divination, a separate Mystery Magic; multiple Divination methods share one Divination Ability. Inscription on the Soul is now part of spirit magic.

## THEURGY

Hermetic theurgy and thaumaturgy become Hermetic theurgy. Thaumaturgists may wish to add Hermetic synthemata or ascendancy. Parhedros is a variant name of spirit familiar (spirit magic). Ars Notoria has no equivalent, however Names of Power and Invocation Magic call upon the powers.

## New Schools and Mysteries

Spirit magic is new, gathering magics for non-Daimon spirits. Potent Magic and Potent spells are new; Mystery Cults often favor these specialist magics, as magi may only have one Magical Focus. Numerology and Geometry are new, and work together with Architecture to form the school of Arithmetic.

## Appendix C

# Daimons

Magi who pursue the study of the Mysteries often deal with strange and powerful magical beings. The section that follows provides examples of the kinds of Daimons, potent magical creatures that the mystae may call upon or encounter in the course of their rites.

Daimonic spirits are powerful and unique beings, and the storyguide should craft them to allow for the telling of interesting stories. The following examples may act as useful models for designing your own Daimonic entities.

Daimons and some spirits and ghosts usually manifest physically. If they are taken to wound level Banished, they are dismissed and it may be many years before they return to Earth; Daimons are never killed or incapacitated by physical combat.

A Daimon also does not respond in person — it sends an Aspect of its spirit. The Aspect behaves as an independent earthly spirit while it is active, but when its reason for existence ends, it is absorbed back into the Daimon, residing among the stars, so the Daimon knows what all its Aspects have done. However, binding or destroying an Aspect has no effect on the Daimon itself. The ability of Daimons to create multiple Aspects in different places permits more than one magus to enter into a pact with a single Daimon. Other spirits in general lack the ability to create multiple Aspects.

Hermetic Theurgists often enter into pacts with Daimons, conjuring them as described in Chapter 9: Hermetic Theurgy, and bargaining for a service by using the rite and making a gift of vis that is part of the *Invoke the Pact of (Daimon)*. Daimons are usually happy to have an Aspect summoned, as this increas-

es their power as described in Chapter 9: Hermetic Theurgy, Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes, Learning and Improving as a Daimonic Spirit.

The service provided by the Aspect and sealed by the pact varies by the specific Daimon invoked. All Daimons have powers, which are the most commonly invoked service. For example, a maga who is suffering from a terrible non-Hermetic curse laid upon her, and is unable to find a way to remove it by magic, may invoke the pact of Hipta, one of whose powers is the removal of curses, and ask her to perform this service. A theurgist involved in a terrible magical conflict might call upon the ancient Albanian deity Gydrytkom, a giant who can swallow spells, and use this to protect himself from the ritual being cast against him.

Daimons can serve in many other ways. Chnoubis the Serpent is often invoked to spy on one's enemies, while Lasa Vegoia is well-known for her capacity to teach theurgy by her powers.

Many Daimons have mundane abilities, and these can be used to provide answers to questions or to reveal ancient secrets, or the synthemata and secrets of other lesser Daimons. For example, the Welsh bard Aneurin, now an ascended Daimon, can be conjured to describe many of the ancient ways of the Stonehenge Tribunal with his excellent Area Lore skill. Magi will undoubtedly be creative in how they summon and use these mighty spirits to further their plans, and the storyguide should consider creating a number of new Daimons who can be summoned to provide odd services that reflect their traditional areas of knowledge and the secrets of whose pacts can be learned in moldering grimoires.

## Sample Daimons

Here are game statistics for a few sample Daimons. Storyguides may design others using their knowledge of mythology and the needs of their sagas that may offer similarly useful powers or knowledge to those who wish to enter into pacts with them.

### Chnoubis the Serpent

**Magic Might:** 30 (Mentem)

**Characteristics:** Int +3, Per +6, Pre 0, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik +5

**Size:** -1

**Personality Traits:** Curious +4, Diplomatic +3, Proud +2, Noble +1

**Combat:**

**Bite:** Init +5, Attack +8, Defense +8, Damage +5\*

\* On being bitten the victim must make a Fatigue roll against an Ease Factor of 9 or lose a Fatigue level each round until he has succeeded for three consecutive rounds or fallen unconscious. While suffering these effects, the victim is unable to tell a lie (penetration 25, Mentem), and is eager to talk to anyone present about anything on his mind, talking to himself if necessary. Once the victim falls unconscious no further Fatigue is lost, but he awakens with a terrible headache and must make a Stamina stress roll (plus Art of Memory if he has that Ability) at an Ease Factor of 6 to recall what transpired.



**Soak:** +9

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (5-9), -5 (10-14), Banished (15+)

**Powers:**

*Augury*, varies, Init +5, Mentem: By using this power Chnoubis is able to perform auguries as the Virtue Divination and Augury, with each Might Point allowing 10 levels of success.

*Aura of Rightful Authority*, 4 points, Init +5, Mentem: Equivalent to the ReMe20 Hermetic spell.

*Discorporation*, varies, 1 point, Init +7, Mentem: Becomes a discorporate spirit that can move as fast as lightning and is only visible to Intellego Vim magics or Second Sight. He sneaks up on victims invisibly and bites them, then listens to their secrets as the toxin takes effect.

**Vis:** On being banished his scales remain, containing three pawns of Intellego and two of Mentem vis.

**Appearance:** Chnoubis is a lion-headed serpent called upon for his abilities to scry and ferret out secrets. He claims to be a native of the Nile, but theurgists across Europe can successfully summon him. True to his appearance, Chnoubis is a powerful fighter, but is much more interested in the power of words.

## Gydryty-kom the Giant

**Magic Might:** 40 (Auram)

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre 0, Com -2, Str +8, Sta +6, Dex +3, Qik +3

**Size:** +3

**Personality Traits:** Hates Being Interrupted +4, Determined +3, Protective +2

**Combat:**

Brawl: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +10, Damage +8

**Soak:** +20

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Banished (25+)

**Powers:**

*Auram Magic*, varies, Init +3, Auram: May perform effects equivalent to any Auram magic at a cost of 1 point per magnitude, or for spells involving hail, 1 point per three magnitudes. Can perform Auram Ritual spells as is they

were Formulaic spells; no extra time or vis is required.

*Swallow Spells*, 5 points, Init +3, Vim: Can swallow any magical spell or effect with a level of 50 or less, completely dispelling it.

**Vis:** When he is banished, his tongue remains. It contains eight pawns of Auram vis.

**Appearance:** The master of hail, Gydryty-kom is a giant who can stretch his mouth from the ground to the clouds. He swallows storms and lightning, but grows angry when summoned because it interrupts his eternal battle with a Daimonic snake of fog that threatens to swallow the world. Gydryty-kom was once highly regarded in the lands of the Albanians, but his power has faded thanks to Christianity.

## Hipta the Nurse

**Magic Might:** 15 (Animal)

**Characteristics:** Int +3, Per +1, Pre +3, Com +2, Str varies, Sta varies, Dex varies, Qik varies

**Size:** Varies from -5 to +2

**Personality Traits:** Calm +4, Protective +2

**Combat:**

Varies with form

**Soak:** Varies

**Wound Penalties:** Varies by form. Substitute Banished for Incapacitated.

**Powers:**

*Shapechange*, 1 point, Init +5, Animal: May change form into any natural or fantastic beast from Size -5 to +2. The change is instantaneous, and she can always speak in any form.

*Dispel*, varies, Init +5, Vim: May perform any Perdo Vim spell at will, at a cost of 1 Might point per magnitude. Hipta counts as familiar with all styles of magic for this purpose, and has a Penetration Ability of 30, making invoking her a common way to end malevolent curses.

**Vis:** Leaves three pawns of Animal vis, in the form of a white feather, when banished.

**Appearance:** The nurse of Dionysus, Hipta is a powerful shapechanger who

favors the form of a lovely dove. Her name and spells to summon her can be found in the several ancient texts. She is invoked for forgiveness from curses and magical harm.

## Lasa Vegoia the Matron

**Magic Might:** 30 (Aquam)

**Characteristics:** Int +5, Per +3, Pre +5, Com +2, Str -1, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +3

**Size:** 0

**Personality Traits:** Secretive +4, Confident +3, Matronly +2

**Combat:**

Brawl: Init +3, Attack 0, Defense +3, Damage -1

**Soak:** +2

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-20), Incapacitated (21-25)

**Abilities:** Art of Memory 10, Augury 20, Magic Lore 10, Teaching 12

**Powers:**

*Primal Theurge*, varies, Init +3, Vim: Can perform any spell from the tradition of Hermetic theurgy at the cost of 1 Might point per magnitude. Spells that involve the form Aquam cost only 1 point per 3 magnitudes.

*Teach Theurgy*, varies, Init +3, Mentem: Can teach any Hermetic theurgy spell at the cost of 1 Might point per magnitude; she teaches it then departs, but the student must spend the season committing it to memory.

*Teach Augury and Divination*, 5 points, Init -10, Mentem: the successful summoning and creating of a pact by the would-be Initiate of Divination and Augury as part of an Initiation Script grants a bonus of +5 for the purposes of that Script.

**Vis:** Leaves six pawns of Intellego vis in her gown, which remains when she is banished.

**Appearance:** A powerful nymph and great spirit of water, Lasa Vegoia taught the Etruscans secrets of theurgy and divination. She is a matron spirit of augury, and is usually invoked by those desiring to learn magical secrets related to divination or theurgy.

## Portunes, Spirit of Safe Harbor

**Magic Might:** 25 (Auram)

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +3, Pre 0, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

**Size:** n/a

**Personality Traits:** Watchful +3

**Combat:**

None. Vanishes if attacked. Can only be harmed by Perdo Vim spells.

**Soak:** n/a (never materializes)

**Wound Penalties:** n/a

**Powers:**

*Safe Harbor*, 12 points, Init 0, Auram: Guarantees calm weather in the harbor of a port for an entire season, and resists with a Magic Resistance of 60 all spells that would disrupt this.

*Opening Enchanted Locks*, 8 points, Init 0, Vim: Portunes can dispel any magical lock with a level of less than 40 with this power.

**Vis:** None

**Appearance:** A spirit charged with ports and harbors, the Greeks called him Palaemon and Melicertes. His purview also covers keys, locks, and domestic animals. In Rome he was worshipped as a god, with a temple located near the Forum Boarium. His feast, the Portunalia, is observed on August 17th. The rite to summon him involves throwing keys into a fire. When summoned, he appears either as a ghostly serpent or the shadowy vision of a bearded man in a leather apron, but he never takes on a solid physical form.

## Honos

**Magic Might:** 30 (Corpus)

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +3, Sta +5, Dex +4, Qik +4

**Size:** 0

**Personality Traits:** Honorable +6, Authoritarian +3, Disciplined +3

**Combat:**

Long Spear: Init +7, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +10

**Soak:** +14 (silver cuirass)

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-20), Incapacitated (21-25)

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Great Weapon (long spear) 6, Leadership 6, Teaching (leadership) 3

**Powers:**

*Instill Leadership*, 5 points, Init +4, Mentem: With a touch of his long spear, Honos can teach 17XP in the ability Leadership, to a maximum of ability score 6. The Theurgist receives the insights immediately, but must then devote a season to study and reflecting upon them to gain the increase.

*Centurions' Feast*, 30 points, Init +4, Corpus: Produces a magical feast sufficient to feed 100 people. All who partake of the feast who possess the Flaw Dutybound are instantly cured of any Light and Medium Wounds, and gain +10 on their next recovery checks. The food lasts for one hour, then dissipates, but the effects are permanent.

**Vis:** Leaves six pawns of Corpus vis in his armor when banished.

**Appearance:** Honos is a Roman Daimon of morality and military honor, with several temples built in his name. Honos appears as a young warrior in ancient armor, carrying a lance and a cornucopia ("horn of plenty"). Honos's temples in Rome have been destroyed or blanketed by the Dominion, although the Legion of Mithras is rumored to know the location of one surviving shrine where he can be invoked.

## Pukis, Dragon of the Hearth

**Magic Might:** 10 (Ignem)

**Characteristics:** Int -1, Per +3, Pre 0, Com 0, Str -1, Sta +4, Dex +3, Qik +6

**Size:** -2

**Personality Traits:** Loyal +3, Mischievous +3, Fickle +2

**Combat:**

Bite: Init +5, Attack +6, Defense +9, Damage +3\*

Lashing Tail: Init +6, Attack +10, Defense +13, Damage +0\*

\* Although small, Pukis is long and thin. It can engage two opponents without penalty, attacking one with its jaws and the other with its quick tail. It is also burning hot, and can ignite easily flammable materials on touch.

**Soak:** +8 (leathery hide)

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Banished (10+)

**Powers:**

*Invisibility*, 3 points, Init +6, Imaginem: Pukis can turn itself completely invisible and inaudible, for as long as it chooses or until it touches a person or animal.

*Mischievous Flame*, 2 points, Init +6, Ignem: With a glance, Pukis can set anything slightly flammable aflame.

*Sneak Thief*, 5 points, Init +6, Terram: By touching any object weighing less than three pounds, Pukis can instantly teleport the object to the dragon's home so that it appears at the edge of its master's hearth.

*Sacred Fire*, 0 points, Init +6, Ignem: As long as Pukis lives in a particular hearth, and the fire is kept hot year round, the ashes from the fire can be collected for 1 pawn of Ignem per season.

**Vis:** two pawns of Ignem vis, one of Rego  
**Appearance:** First summoned by Baltic wizards, this Daimon takes the form of a small dragon of fire that dwells in the hearth or a fireplace. It enjoys napping amongst burning logs and coals, coiling its long snake-like body beneath the flames to conceal its presence. It leaves gifts for the master of the household, possibly stolen from somewhere else, and attacks strangers if they act destructively. If it is treated poorly, it causes mischief before departing.

The magus Andrilikes, a theurgist of the Novgorod tribunal, wrote a Hermetic ritual for summoning this lesser Daimon to his sanctum. He has given copies of *Daimonic Adjuration of Pukis* to several of his friends.

## Aneirin the Bard

**Magic Might:** 15 (Corpus)

**Characteristics:** Int +3, Per +3, Pre +2,  
Com +4, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a,  
Qik n/a

**Size:** n/a

**Personality Traits:** Careful +3, Observant  
+2

**Combat:**  
n/a

**Soak:** n/a (never materializes)

**Wound Penalties:** n/a

**Abilities:** Magic Lore 8, Music 12,  
Stonehenge Tribunal Lore 10,  
Teaching 5

**Powers:**

*Disincorporate*, 0 points, Vim: Aneirin never physically manifests, save as a shadow and a melodic voice. He can only be harmed with magic.

*Names of Power*, 0 points: Aneirin knows many names of minor spirits and can teach them as a result of a pact.

**Vis:** If his spirit is somehow bottled rather than banished, two pawns of Imaginem vis remain.

One of the five great Welsh poets believed by the Order to have left Daimons behind after their death (the other four being Taliesin, Talhaearn Tad Awen, Blwchbardd, and Cian). Famous for a single poem, *Y Gododdin*, Aneirin praises his fellows among the war band of Mynyddawg Mwynfawr (Mynyddawg the Wealthy) of Caereidyn (near Edinburgh), an army 300 strong sent on a doomed mission to recapture an old Roman stronghold from the Saxons. His tomb lies somewhere in the

Cambrian Mountains. His spirit wanders across the entire mountain range, helping those who further his ideals and punishing those who go against them, but he is most powerful within his own tomb.

## Dietrich von Bern

**Magic Might:** 35 (Rego)

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per +3, Pre +5,  
Com +3, Str +5, Sta +5, Dex +5,  
Qik +3

**Size:** +2

**Personality Traits:** Proud +3, Barbarous  
+2, Crafty +2

**Combat:**

Great Sword: Init +5, Attack +19, Defense  
+17, Damage +15\*

\*Dietrich's sword has been dipped in dragon's blood. No magical spell of a level 40 or lower can deflect, harm, or control it. After being hit, the dragon's blood burns, causing an extra +5 damage per round (armor does not soak) unless an alchemist, herbalist, or healer can cure the wound.

**Soak:** +22 (full chain mail drenched in dragon's blood)

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5  
(15-21), Banished (22+)

**Abilities:** Athletics 6, Great Weapon 10,  
Intrigue 6, Leadership 8

**Powers:**

*Sacred Kingship*, 10 points, Init +3, Vim:  
By laying hands on another character, Dietrich can permanently increase the character's Perception, Presence, or Communication by 1 point. He can only do this once per person, and

only to a maximum of +3. Increasing Presence this way is a very useful aid to the aspiring Mystagogue.

**Vis:** Seven pawns of Rego vis.

A hero in German poetry and song, Dietrich was the boy-king of Bern after the fall of Rome. During his reign, several great Nibelungen heroes (including Siegfried himself) were loyal members of his court. When his uncle Ermenrik, German ruler of Rome, conquered Bern, Dietrich fled to the court of Attila the Hun, where he went on many adventures and became one of the greatest warriors in history. He returned after his uncle died, retook Bern and captured Rome. He died in a quest for revenge against a friend who betrayed him, and was buried in an ornate tomb in the Lessini Mountains, where the Alps cross over into Italy. His tomb is a treasure trove of weapons and armor, enchanted by being dipped in the blood of a great dragon Dietrich slew.

When anyone enters the tomb, however, the Daimon of Dietrich animates his hulking corpse. If the intruder comes seeking wisdom and proves herself worthy, he will dispense kingly advice. If she comes seeking power, she faces one of the greatest warriors on Earth, even in death.

Another legend propagated by the Church says Dietrich, a heretic suspected of Arianism, was thrown into the volcanic Mount Etna.

The legend of Dietrich appears in *Das Heldenbuch* ("The Book of Heroes") a collection of German romances published in the early 13th century, organizing the tales of the Ostrogoths and Franconians into two epic cycles.