

Hermetic Law and the Quaesitores

by David Woods

Ars Magica does not have a completely defined game world and each storyguide must fill the gaps between canon. Amongst these gaps are Hermetic Law and the role of the quaesitor. In order to create adventures involving quaesitores the storyguide may require more definition to their rights, duties and privileges. Similarly, if your magi run into trouble with the law you may need more definition in this area too.

The most complete source of canon information on quaesitores is found in *House of Hermes* or its older version the *Order of Hermes*. The *WGRE* has the most information on Hermetic Law and tribunal proceedings as well as precedents. This article seeks to revise and extend the material on Hermetic Law and tribunal procedure, as well as give suggestions on how quaesitores may be run.

Hermetic Law

Origins

To those with an interest in the history of law the following will appear to draw more from Germanic and Nordic traditions than Roman. This is a deliberate choice based on two out-of-game reasons; these are the traditions I have most knowledge of and the current canon appears to support this approach.

There are also in-game reasons why the Order might have derived its law from a largely Teutonic model. The Order was founded in the Rhineland and so Germanic and Nordic traditions would have been familiar to most, if not all of the founders. After the collapse of the Roman Empire much of Europe fell under the control of Germanic kings and nobles. Roman law persisted in the legal customs of indigenous Roman populations, while Germanic peoples introduced their own rules and procedures. During the time of the Order's founding Germanic traditions were widely practised in many parts of Europe. Any European who travelled would have been familiar with both systems. The society of the Order is disperse, individualistic, unusually level and lacks any executive; given these properties a Teutonic model is more apt than the Roman one. These factors would have made a Teutonic model likely.

The Oath

"I will not molest the fay, lest their vengeance catch my sodales as well."

The prosecution will have to show that a magus or covenant has endangered other magi through their actions. Obviously an attack on a third party magus is evidence for this. Without such an attack the prosecution will have to show that such an attack is likely. A valid defence might attempt to show that the faeries involved can discriminate between their known enemies and innocent magi.

Also the term 'molest' suggests that the conflict would have to be provoked by the defendant in a culpable fashion. If the magi involved did not start the conflict and acted reasonably in defence of their lives and property, it is a valid defence. For instance, hunting down local centaurs for vis would be culpable and rescuing a kidnapped apprentice would normally not be.

A.A. 1311 (A.D. 1172), Normandy Tribunal

Berenguer of Fudarus was accused by Guardinia of Merinita, of molesting the fay. Berenguer claimed in his defence that the faeries had stolen his apprentice, and therefore he had every right to take steps to return the child to his care; as the fay had stolen the apprentice then he had not 'molested' the fay. The tribunal upheld Berenguer's defence, but suggested that he had perhaps been a little heavy-handed. A motion was passed for Guardinia to receive two pawns of vis in compensation for the damage a fay raid had done to his sanctum.

The Peripheral Code

Breaches of the peripheral code are low crimes and so cannot result in a Wizard's March. They deal with matters of conduct that do not come under the Hermetic Oath, but none-the-less are conducive to the accepted social order. It might be argued that breaching these conventions endangers the Order, but this would generally be too weak a case to bring as a high crime.

Physical or magical assaults that do not threaten a magus's life or magic, breaching a contract, failure to abide by the result of a certámen, perjury at tribunal, attempting to deceive a quaesitor conducting an investigation, and failure to co-operate with a legally conducted quaesitor investigation, are all low crimes.

A victor in certámen has automatic claim of forfeit immunity to cast one spell on their opponent, immediately after the duel. However, the forfeit immunity only extends to offences that would be considered low crimes. The final strike of certámen cannot legally be used to kill, maim in a way that affects a magus's magical ability, scry or commit any other act that would amount to a high crime. This still allows for many very unpleasant final strikes, but if it could qualify as a high crime the magus is making himself liable for a Wizard's March.

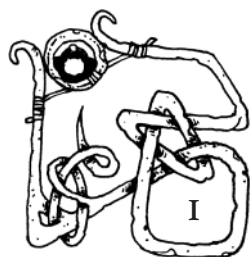
Short of a Wizard's March, there is no limit to the fine or punishment a tribunal can demand for a low crime and punishment can still be harsh.

Stripping the Veils of Deceit

PeVi R: Touch D: Mom T: Ind Lv 30; Ritual

Effect: Attempts to dispel any deceptive magic that might be masking or altering the nature of a magical effect. Effects spells with a casting total less than 70 + a quality die.

New General Effect [2 times Level + quality die]: 35, Range to Touch: -5, Total Level: 30





Legend of the witches of Tortosa

by Carlos de la Cruz Morales

The legend

A long time ago, shortly after Berenguer IV reconquered Tortosa from the Moors, some witches came to the region, fleeing from a good priest.

They took up residence in the caves at Ports de Caro (Port Tortosa). Those mountains were, at that time, home only to savage beasts and evil faeries that tormented whoever tried to reach the peaks. The witches decided to live there in solitude, to perform their rituals and worship the devil.

For a long time they kept quiet, without disturbing the peace of the villages at the bottom of the mountains. Sometimes they kidnapped a girl and trained her in the arts of witchcraft, including the worship of the Evil One. No girls ever returned from the mountain; they remained with the witches, replacing them when they died.

One night, the night of Saint John, the witches invoked the devil in a great Sabbath with a great many noisy sacrifices — so loud that the sounds reached the lands at the mouth of the River Ebro. Satan himself came to Earth, and impregnated each woman in the villages around the mountain.

The children born of this night's evil work caused mayhem in the region, raping women, killing innocents and burning houses, but they could only act at night. When daylight came, they had to return to the caverns of the mountain, whose tunnels extended towards the sea, more than 20 miles away.

One day, Berenguer IV, listening to his vassals, decided to end this situation. He sent many great warriors to kill the children, but no one returned. Finally, Robert from Casa del Roig, a poor and very old smith, spoke to Berenguer IV, saying he knew where the spawn of evil slept and how to bury them alive. Berenguer IV thought he was talking with a mad man, but blessed his attempt, believing the smith was doomed.

Nobody saw Robert, the witches or the devil's children again, but a fountain appeared in the mountain that day, the Font del Caragol, that remains even today. Nobody knows how Robert achieved success. Some people say he was an angel and others say he was a sage, but the truth is that the spawn of the devil was never again seen in the lands of Tortosa.

The Tradition of the Witches of Tortosa, a Hedge Magic Tradition

Use the Cunning Folk from *Hedge Magic*, but note that the witches have the power to control the winds — witches in Aragon do not appear riding brooms, but riding whirlwinds and commanding storms. The country folk call these whirlwinds “Bultornos” and they know that witches hide inside them. The witches can use Rego Auram spells up to level 30.



Mythic Academia

by Adam Bank and Jeremiah Genest

This article introduces new rules, Knowledges, and texts studied in universities, cathedral schools, and Hermetic covenants alike. These are optional rules recommended for Sagas interested in the lore of medieval scholars.

Mythic Curriculum

Medieval universities and schools arranged their curricula not by subject but by the book; available texts determined the curriculum. Similarly, curricula varied from university to university, and rector to rector. Most universities, of course, offered a core curriculum based on the seven liberal arts (*ArM4* p. 57). After completing core studies, students underwent mentorship in medicine, law, and theology. Final examinations were grueling, and many students failed. The entire process typically lasted 3 to 6 years.

This section presents a Mythic library representing the ideal curriculum of a highly renowned and well-funded university, incorporating the Parisian curriculum circa 1200 and the additions that appeared over the next decade. Individual access for a student to these texts should be a prized rarity. Most universities only possess enough copies to teach courses using Lectio.

Additionally, most companions and magi with scholarly backgrounds have already been taught from or read most of these books. The storyguide and troupe should decide who can read these books during play for benefit.

The Art of Scholarship

Lecturing From Authorities

Authorities are unique fonts of knowledge. A lecturer can use authorities as sources for multiple seasons of teaching. When using Lectio to teach from an authority, the lecturer can teach the same group of students for a number of seasons equal to the lecturer's Lectio score.

Formal Teaching of Skills and Talents

The formal education of Mythic Europe, ideal for teaching Knowledges, makes writing or lecturing on practical matters difficult (for descriptions of the different categories of Abilities, see *ArM4*, pp 52-59). Nevertheless, manuals on crafts and social graces abound.

In addition to Knowledges and Arts, texts can be written on Skills and Talents of all types. When determining the Quality of a Skill text, however, divide the usual total by 2, and divide by 4 when determining the Quality of a Talent text. While such texts can be used in Lectio sessions with no further penalty, Skills and Talents cannot be made the subject of Disputatio sessions.

To learn from a text on a Skill or Talent, you must already have the Ability at level 1, or you lack the requisite background.

More Merinita Mysteries

by Scott D. Orr

When David Chart's "Merinita Mysteries" were published in *Hermes Portal*, I complained that although they are innovative and solve the major problems with Faerie Magic, they also strip Faerie Magic of a lot of its flavor, especially for beginning characters. The object of the following additions is to bring back a little of the flavor of the *WGRE* rules while building on David's rules, yet avoiding the complexity of the *WGRE* rules.

Faerie Animus (+1 Virtue)

To faeries, many inanimate objects contain life, and many animals and plants are not only alive but sentient. Indeed, faeries are themselves the living spirits of all those things that have life in them, even in the mortal realm. Understanding of Faerie Animus allows a maga to tap into this faerie affinity with life-containing objects.

This Virtue allows the Arcane Knowledge Faerie Magic to act as an Affinity for spells that evoke or alter the living spirits of animals, plants, and most inanimate objects. For example, a maga would get a bonus to invent or cast a spell to talk with animals, or to grant intelligence to a plant, or to allow a piece of earth to move of its own accord. Typically, such spells use either Intellego or Muto, but Creo, Rego, and even Perdo effects are possible. This Affinity applies to any Hermetic spells that produces the effects in question, and all spells invented using the Virtue are standard Hermetic spells, usable by any Hermetic maga, though they typically have quirky side effects (as should any spell invented by a practitioner of Faerie Magic!). Note that many of these spells will in effect create minor, temporary faeries. In a powerful faerie regio or Arcadia, such a spell could have unpredictable consequences...

The Mystery extends only to spells that operate directly on the living spirits of objects. For example, a maga using this Mystery could grant animus to a table so that it could walk about the room, or could even control its movements once it had been so animated (indirectly, by controlling its spirit), but would not be able to make the table bigger or smaller, or to move the table directly (that is, not under the table's own power). This Mystery encompasses some Rego effects, but not others: if the spell works by controlling the spirit of an object, the Affinity applies; if the spell moves an object's limbs or parts directly, the Affinity does not apply (where the nature of the effect is unclear, the Storyguide or troupe must decide) — obviously, where different versions of a given spell exist, a maga who knows the Mystery will almost always seek to learn a version that acts upon the object's spirit.

Faerie Animus also allows the maga to take a Faerie Familiar (see *WGRE*, pp. 88-93).

Holy Animals!

by Mike Sloothaak

Medieval lore reserves an important space for animals and their role in faith. Let me provide just an example:

In this woodland, the story continues, he [St. Giles] was nourished for a while by the milk of a hind (in this case, a young doe). Now a local king named Flavius was out hunting one day, sighted this deer, and pursued it. The hind sought safety with St. Giles, and the hunting dogs mysteriously stopped barking and turned around some distance away from the cave. The same thing happened the next day. On the third day, the puzzled king took a bishop along to advise him. Now a hunter in the party shot an arrow at random through the trees that [hit something within] the cavern. When the hunting party broke through, they found Giles seated, the live deer between his knees, and his own hand pierced by the arrow. The king and bishop at once expressed their regrets and promised to summon a doctor, but St. Giles simply asked to be left alone.

Rev. Robert F. McNamara,

www.stthomasirondequoit.com/SaintsAlive/



Binding a holy animal familiar? Certainly the short answer is "no" in the sense that the holy animal is sent by God to succor humans of faith, and thus any "binding" is done by and with God, not by the action of a human. That doesn't mean there isn't room for a holy magus (or other character of great faith) to have a similar, "familiar-like" relationship with an animal, if the players would enjoy it. This article give some suggestions for how to develop such a relationship.



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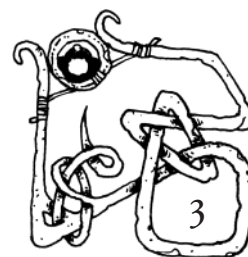
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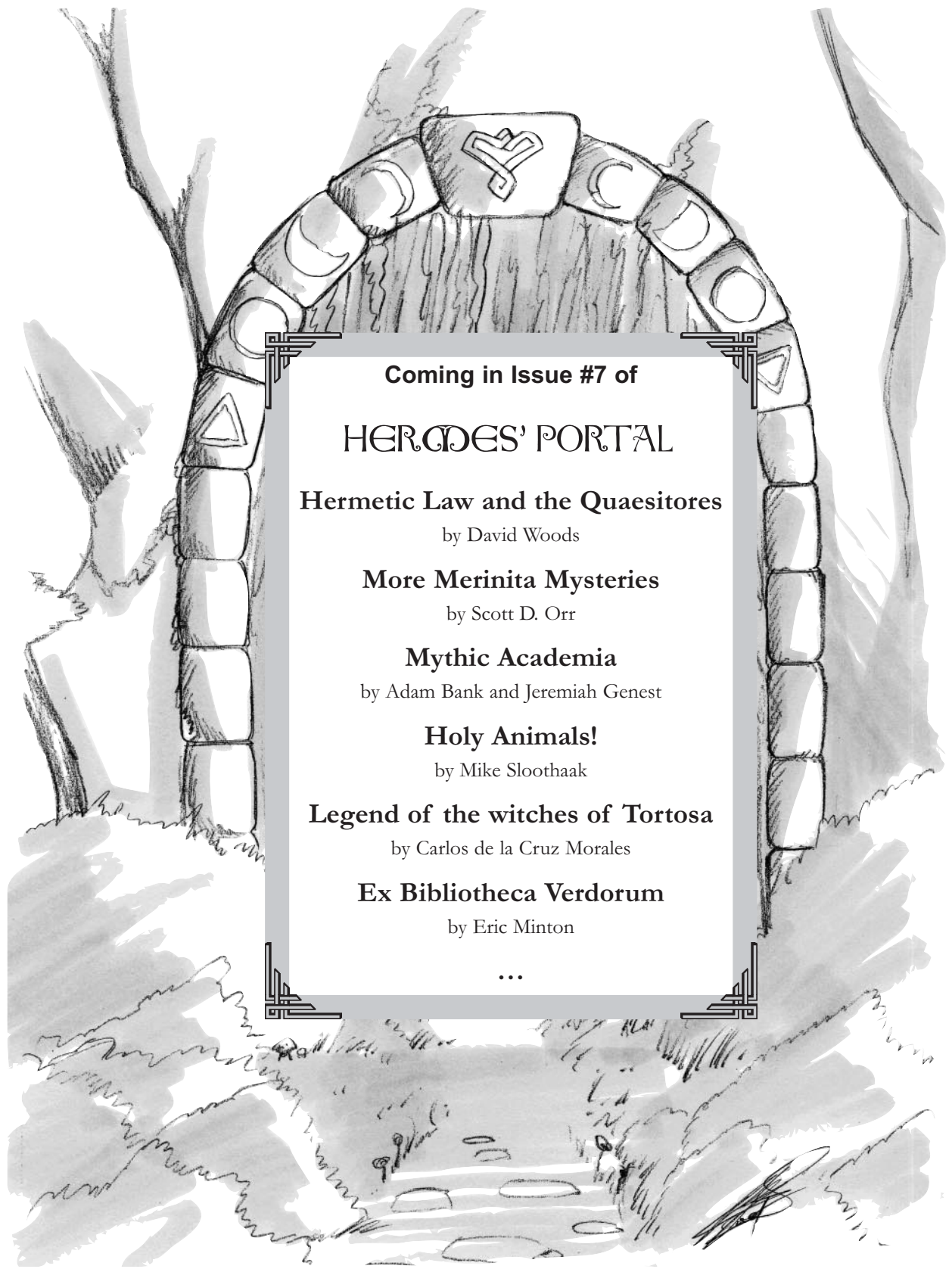
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