HEROES' PORTAL

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News from the Line Editor October 2002

Books

Niall Christie's excellent *Blood and Sand: The Levant Tribunal* started appearing in better game shops shortly before I wrote this. I think the new hardback format looks great, and this book should mark the beginning of a new period of roughly quarterly releases for **Ars Magica**. It is also the first book I have developed for the line, so let me know what you think of it.

For future releases, *The Black Monks of Glastonbury* is on schedule for a January/February release. *Sanctuary of Ice* is still making progress through editing, but I am not going to say anything more about that book until we have the final draft in hand.

Living Legends is currently in final edit, and so should be out some time around June next year. Between *Black Monks* and *Living Legends* we should see the release of *Land of Fire and Ice* by David Woods and Mark Shirley.

Land of Fire and Ice provides setting details for Iceland, and two epic saga arcs to get magi involved with that spectacular land. It also includes rules for various kinds of Icelandic hedge magician. In Iceland, the magical is closely involved in mundane life, and magicians have their own place in the social system. Meanwhile, the icy and volcanic wastes are the domain of giants, trolls, and powerful spirits. I am most of the way through the final edit of the book, so it will probably be released around March 2003. However, we don't have final, edited drafts of *Land of Fire and Ice* or *Living Legends* yet, so these are not official release dates. Indeed, *Black Monks* hasn't been officially announced yet.

Questions

Alex White emailed me with some questions for this column. As I believe this is the first time that any Line Editor has received questions for his zine column, I feel I ought to answer them.

> In the last issue of Hermes Portal you said that you'd answer questions etc.
>
> So, for HP6, I was wondering if you'd give us some information on what the thought processes are behind the possible Ars Magica 5th edition. If you've got no concrete info, then tell us, and if the decision has been made to make it 2 books, then tell us. :-)
>
> Also the status of Sanctuary of Ice and Black Monks. Additionally, I'd like to know your favourite colour and whether you have a favourite pair of socks (humour me, please?).

I've dealt with *Sanctuary of Ice* and *Black Monks*, so I suppose I should say a bit about the fifth edition. There will be a fifth edition, and most likely sooner rather than later, although it will, of course, be released after all the currently announced books, and after some others at earlier stages of development.

I have two goals for a fifth edition. The first is to fix known problems with the rules, both broken rules and the ambiguities that cause so many mailing list debates. Thus, combat will be revised and better guidance provided on the way in which magic resistance works.

The second is to make **Ars Magica** more accessible. I would like someone to be able to play the game within hours of seeing the rulebook for the first time, without any assistance from experienced players. This will require the more substantial changes. Some changes will have to be made to the rules, but most changes will be in presentation. How do you play **Ars Magica**? What makes a good magus character? What can you do with magic? And so on.

A second aspect of this is that I want the new edition to better support single session games. Roleplayers are often willing to try a single session of something new, even if they are involved in another campaign, because it gives the GM a break. A whole new saga, however, is a much harder sell. Because **Ars Magica** is such a good game, people who play a single session will, of course, want to play a saga, and so the game's fanbase will grow.

We are considering issuing ArM5 in two volumes simply because all the material needed to fulfil those two aims is unlikely to fit in a single volume at a reasonable price. While subscribers to *Hermes' Portal* might be willing to pay $60 for fifth edition, such a price point would most likely prevent us from gaining new players.

Finally, my favourite colour is midnight blue, and I don't have a favourite pair of socks.

Further questions that people would like to see answered in this column should be sent to me at:

arsmagica@dchart.demon.co.uk

with a note that you would like me to answer them here.

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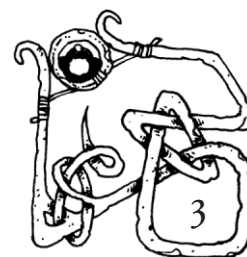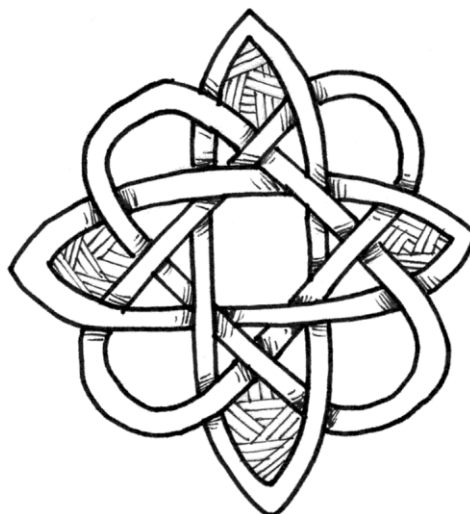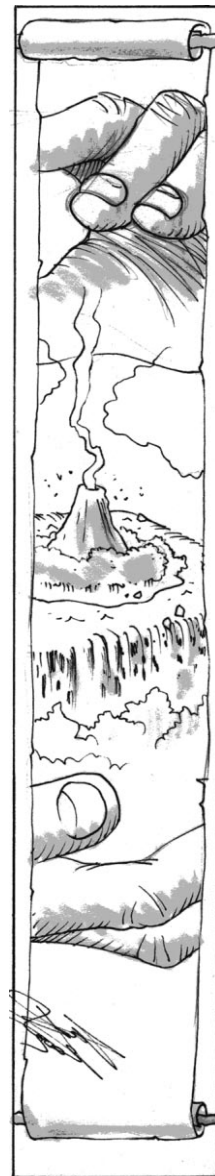
The Miraculous World

by Adam Bank and Jeremiah Genest

Lyceum for Empirical Metaphysics

The Lyceum consists of a half-dozen Bonisagus magi, each at least several decades out of apprenticeship, and the "visiting" Jerbiton or Verditius drawn to their cause.

The Lyceum, named after the legendary school founded by Aristotle, functions both as a covenant and secret society. The Lyceum covenant nestles on the Italian coast near Pisa. As a secret society, the Lyceum recruits members through the time-honored tradition of House Bonisagus — taking apprentices from other magi. In recent decades, the Lyceum visited covenants in all Tribunals, investigating possible talent for their projects.
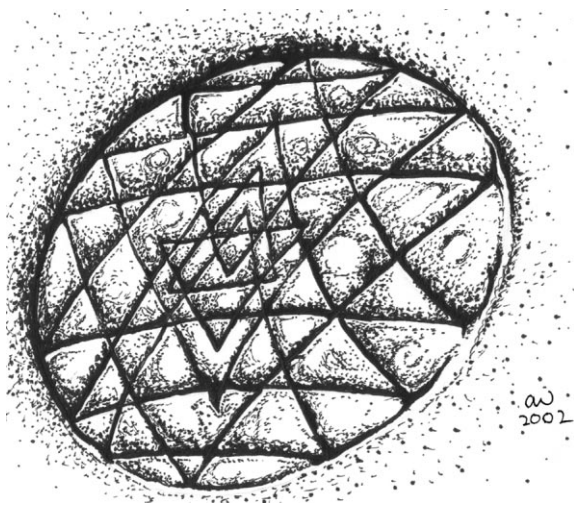
The members of the Lyceum are dedicated Aristotelians. They believe Bonisagus, a brilliant Aristotelian mind, was lead astray by the mysticism of the other Founders, especially Diedne, whose non-Aristotelian theories corrupted Hermetic magic with false species and categories. To this end, the Lyceum studies the sympathies between the Hermetic Arts and Aristotle's physics. As their ultimate goal, they hope to discover how to manipulate light with the Form of Vim. Aristotle, Ptolemy, and countless other philosophers observed that light is the force of magic and change. The Lyceum searches for a method of uniting the Order's notion of aether and vis with lux and lumen, expecting everything else to fall into place once the key breakthrough is made.

Many Bonisagus magi scoff at this notion, saying the Lyceum takes certain philosophical questions too far and abuses the privileges of their House. The first few, newly gauntleted magi to come from the Academy, however, are some of the most promising elementalists in centuries.

Virtues Taught: Hermetic Alchemy (+1), Hermetic Astrology (+1), Vulgar Alchemy (+2), Affinity with Aquam (+3), Affinity with Auram (+3), Affinity with Ignem (+3), Affinity with Vim (+3).

The Lyceum widely circulates The Miraculous World a tractatus advertising the Lyceum's theories of magic and the cosmos. Written as a lecture of a master to apprentice, The Miraculous Word purports to explain the Limits of Magic.

In the Beginning

"Tell me, pater, how did the limits of magic come into being?"

God created the universe. To doubt this turns the discussion from science and magic to the domain of theology, and that argument must await another day. What you have asked me, although you may not realize it, is how God set about the difficult task of creating the world. How did he bring forth plants and animals from the lifeless elements? How were the heavens divided into stars, orbs and intelligences? What forces and connections did He establish between the heavenly and earthly realms so that the chain of events ran smoothly? What dispositions originally given to the universe provide for all that was to follow?

Ex Nihilo

The creation of the universe ex nihilo, the creation of all things from nothing, lasted six days. Everything created during those blessed days shares one obvious commonality — they exist. Whatever thing, whether man or beast, mind or matter, shares some property that sets it apart from nothing, what we call being. Before we examine objects created in those the six days, therefore, we must understand being as being, or how God created existence itself. For this, we turn to the metaphysics of Aristotle.

Matter

Matter is the formless raw material of the universe.

Since nothing exists prior to creation, matter must come into being ex nihilo. Alternatively, eternal matter (the hyle) somehow exists apart from God and cooperated with Him in the creation of the universe. Along with the overwhelming majority of authorities on the subject, we reject this notion. How can something exist before it is created? The very words are absurd.

Form

Form is the outline and design of what something (namely matter) will become.

In the beginning God brought form to the universe. Forms possess the capacity to shape matter, but until form is introduced to matter, form belongs to nothing, rather than being. Creation ex nihilo, therefore, is the process by which the form of the universe transferred from the mind of God to the realm of being.

Matter and Form

God brought forth the universe threefold, as matter, substantial form, and accidents. Matter underlies the universe and serves as a passive medium for the ordering activity of forms. Substantial forms transform undefined matter into particular things through the process of information. Accidents give (or, more
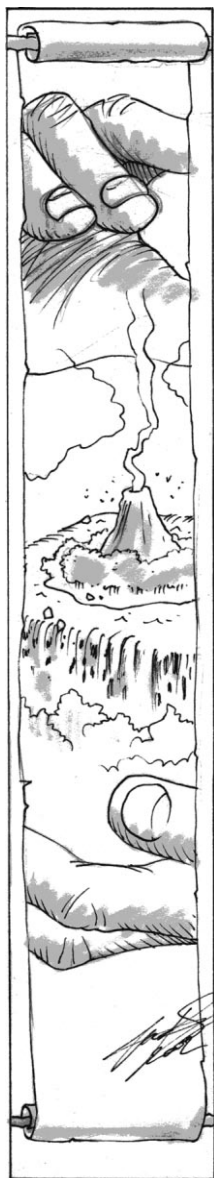
properly, "inform") particular things their particular characteristics.

For example, a magus' canine familiar may possess the accidents of fat or thin, golden or dun, distemperate or vibrant, but it still possesses the substantial form that permits anyone to identify it as a dog. While the stout mastiff shares little accidental likeness with the courtly pug, both these furry objects are informed with the substantial forms that make up "dogness."

Matter, it may surprise you to know, cannot be perceived, or even known. Perception and knowledge of the human mind is limited to accidents, the particulars of life. Substantial form can only be indirectly experienced or understood through philosophy and magic. Magic lifts the cloud of accidents and reveals the truth underneath.

Amorphous Morass
Pe Im 30
R: Per D: Conc T: Sight
Requisite: Quartz (+1)

As long as the caster concentrates, the accidents of all objects within sight are separated from their substantial form. The result is a giant amorphous zone of incomprehensible sensory experience. The chaos assaults all five senses. Nothing makes sense, even the victim's own thoughts and screams. Each round, everyone within the zone (including the caster) must make Sta + Concentration roll of 12+ or fall into a conniption and lose a Fatigue level. If the caster fails this roll, the spell ends. If the ypu use a Rego casting requisite, however, you are not affected yourself.

This spell is often used to torment members of secret societies during initiation ordeals.

In Principio

To understand creation, we must first attempt the understanding of the Creator, and the state of in principio — the state of inception. We must try to see into the mind of God when He chose to create the universe.

The Creative Act

God in His omnipotence could have created the universe as whatever or in any way He desired. Because all possibilities were open to Him, He could have created a million worlds, leaving us to forever wonder whether our world had any importance at all. He could have created a universe devoid of natural law, operated by Divine will alone. Happily, as the philosophers have shown, He did not.

Though omnipotent, God does not deny the natural order. Creation should not be thought of as an instantaneous, all-powerful act, but the product of a rational, chosen, willful course of action. In principio, God chose the things that inhabit the universe, plucked them from the infinite possibilities available to Him. In His wisdom He knew not to create one infinite world, or many finite worlds, but one, best finite world.

He populated the world with beings and things, for this was the best course of action. He created the world in six days, in a series of orderly steps, because this was best. He established the laws and order of nature because this was best. Of course, God and his agents can, and occasionally do, transcend the natural order and suspend those laws. But these exceptions prove the rule: miracles, by their nature and definition, are so rare as to be beyond the scope of mortal learning.

Why the Limits Exist

What does this tell us? Magic, even the great spells of the Order, is not miraculous. Magic can be worked by a precious few Gifted mortal minds. It follows that magic is natural, and obeys the laws and order of God. A magic spell, like any natural process, can only act on the combination of matter and form, not on matter or form by itself.

For this reason alone, the limits of magic exist.

Rational Creatures

"Heavens refer not so much to the visible firmament as the empyrean, which is immediately filled with angels."
Walafrid Strabo, *Glossa Ordinaria*

Between God, who exists neither as matter nor form, and the creatures of the Earth, who live both as matter and form, dwell beings existing only of form. They are the creature rationales, incorporeal entities created by God solely for their incredible capacity of thought. They are the angels, demons, and movers of the planets, called the intelligences.

Because they exist only as forms, the rational creatures were not created during the first six days, but before them. They existed prior to matter, as forms or ideas in the mind of God. While the earth and all its occupants transferred from the mind of God to creation ex nihilo, the angels, demons, and intelligences have always remained in principii. In other words, the rational creatures existed "in the beginning" whilst the universe awaited creation during the first week.

The Limit of the Divine

These are but illustrations to bolster a central point: all those things that remain in principii cannot be affected by magic. Magic, as a natural force, can only influence material created ex nihilo, those things which were created during the first six days.

Angels and most aspects of the Divine made manifest on Earth are immune from magic. Demons, fortunately, chose to corrupt themselves with matter, allowing magic some defense against them. But as to their purpose in the universe, as the source of falsity, demons remain in principii, making demonic deception as immune as angelic intervention.

The Limit of the Soul

The human soul takes on its purest form before birth and regains it after death. In the state of pre-life and afterlife, souls exist free from any matter. The soul, in other words, is the substantial form of the
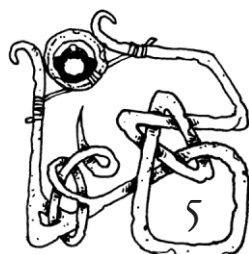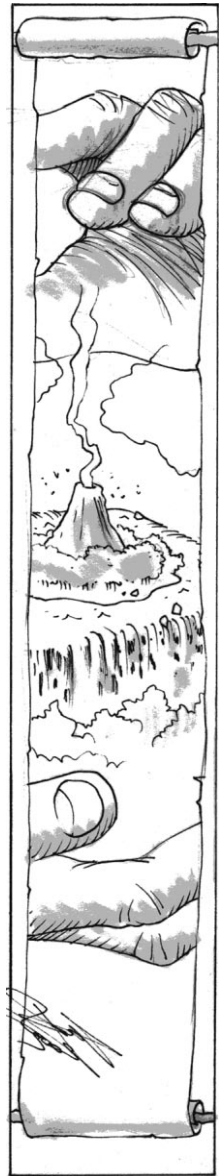
material object we call a human body. Magic, as I have shown, can only affect things that exist both as matter and form. Thus, magic cannot create or recreate life, or affect a soul that has returned to God by proper unction and burial.

The Limit of Essential Nature

I also posit that substantial form itself, even when impressed upon matter, remains in principii. Accidents are dependent upon matter, but substantial form began in the mind of God. If so, magic cannot affect substantial form in any way. The soul, for example, can be removed from the body with magic, as any warrior among us would readily attest, but magic cannot affect the makeup of the soul itself.

Here I equate the Christian notion of in principii with the ancient notion of Platonic Forms. The Hermetic essential natures, the Platonic forms, the Aristotelian substantial forms, and the in principii ideas of God are one and the same when understanding the limits of magic. All four notions concern the unchangeable forces that bring order to the constantly changing material world. Magic, which relies on the natural laws of change to influence the mortal world, cannot affect the immortal and changeless.

From the idea of creation, we now move to the process of creation itself.

The First Day

God's first act on the first day? "Let there be light."

Lux

Light, the first manifestation of Divine fiat, enjoys special importance in the universe. Light originates in the heavens and is visible on earth. Light has many obvious and crucial functions in the world. Its presence and absence provides the ultimate instrument of time, the dividing day from night. It is also the instrument of vision, humanity's most noble sense. Through vision we have contact with not only earthbound objects but also the remoteness of the heavens, themselves illuminated by light.

Light, as Aristotle showed, is neither fire nor matter. Light is a quality of a light source. The Sun, for example, has the quality of being round. It also has the quality of producing light. In other words, light is the Aristotelian form of a luminous body. In Hermetic terms, the substance of light is the essential nature of a luminous body, known to us all as lux.

Light, the one aspect of all creation that is common to both the superior and inferior regions, acts as a bond to draw the two together. Scripture equates light with the Word of God. It comes as no surprise, then, that an entire science devotes itself to the study of light. I speak of the science of perspective.

Lumen

Perspective studies the lines or rays of light, not as geometrical constructs, but as natural entities. Rays of light are divided into three categories: direct, reflected and refracted.

Direct light radiates in straight lines from a luminous source through an intervening medium. The physical process of illumination occurs as follows: at first, light resides only in its source as lux. The common medium of radiation is air. Lux sends out multiples of itself, called lumena, that propagate through the air. Lumen passes through a medium without affecting it. Likewise, lumen does not otherwise alter the objects it illuminates.

Reflected radiation bounces at an angle from a mirror or some other hard surface. Refracted radiation is the bending of light as it passes through media of varying densities. This explains the behavior of the light of celestial bodies as it passes through the spheres of Fire and Air.

Rain of Lumen

Mu Ig 30
R: Per D: Conc T: Sight
Requisite: Rego
Focus: Dollop of honey (+2)

As long as the caster concentrates, all light within sight is imbued with impetus and strikes all objects (except the caster himself) with physical force. If the spell is cast in full daylight, the lumen pummels for +10 damage a round. If the spell is cast during twilight or its equivalent (such as under a heavily overcast sky), the light strikes for only +5 damage per round. Light radiating from a weak artificial source such as a torch or candle only does +1 damage per round. The relentless jabbing (since light travels in straight rays) is extremely distracting regardless of its intensity, causing from -3 to -9 penalties on all rolls.

Light and Ignem

Light existed in principii, as Augustine says. Thus, light should be immune to magic. But then what is the Art of Ignem?

Light existed in principii, but only as form, or lux. It had yet to multiply and illuminate as lumen, so there was darkness over the abyss before the Word. Darkness possesses neither matter nor form. Darkness is not a thing to be manipulated by magic or physical toil; it is the absence of things. On the first day, by God's command, lumena separated day from night, and filled the darkness with light.

It follows that Ignem must govern lumen, but be powerless over lux, a claim born out by examination. Since lux fills matter to make it visible, controlling lux would allow the control of illusion. Ignem, as we all know, cannot be used to create illusions. Lumen, on the other hand, is merely the radiation of light, not the generation of it. Thus Ignem is not only the Art of heat and the element of Fire, but also of lumen, albeit not lux.

Imáginem creates illusions, not by the manipulation of lumen but through the manipulation of other accidents impressed into the air and other media without connection or reference to any substantial form in the same medium. Imáginem governs the Aristotelian secondary qualities, which I shall discuss during Day Four, their proper place.

Empyrean

On the first day, God created the Empyrean, house of the purest light, the unmoving dwelling place of the angels and the Throne of God. The Empyrean lies beyond the sphere of fixed stars (created on the second day), the outer boundary of the world.

Of course, "dwelling place" should not imply that an angel occupies physical space in the Empyrean. Angels, being rational creatures, possess no matter (unless they manifest to perform miracles), and thus have no physical dimension. Consequently, an infinite number of angels fill the space of the Empyrean, as they could the head of a pin.

The Second Day

On the second day, God created the firmament and the Earth, together called the cosmos. The Empyrean is both part of the cosmos and beyond it, created in the same instant as light itself, its unmoving perfection surpassing even the timeless beauty of the starry and planetary spheres.

Cosmogony

The cosmos is a great sphere, with the heavens above and the Earth at the center. The cosmos is finite, and likewise had a discrete beginning in time. These two initial truths are unquestionable, although what followed leads to uncertainty and debate.

Many theologians hold that God limited His creative activity to the moment of creation. In other words, after the six first days, the natural laws directed the course of things, not divine fiat. The experience of the Order of Hermes confirms this claim, save in those rare and unfortunate occasions when the Heavenly Host makes its displeasure known.

The cosmic sphere divides into two distinct regions, composed and functioning under opposing materials and principles of circularity and linearity. Circles, possessing neither beginning nor end, are timeless and unchanging. Lines, beginning at one point and ceasing at another, are transient and fluctuating. Below the Moon lies the terrestrial region, formed out of the four elements. It is the place of generation and corruption, birth and death, transience and linearity. The Moon and realms above make up the celestial region, the place of circular motion, perfect and eternal.

Aether

The Moon and the celestial bodies above spin on perfect spheres of aether, called quintessence, the "fifth element." Aether, also called the "water above" in Genesis, is aqueous, crystalline, fluidic, totally transparent, and unchanging.

We now possess the vocabulary to explain the mechanics of the cosmos in Hermetic terms.

Radiant Vis

Vis is to aether as lumen is to lux.

Aether is the substantial form of vis, the essential nature of the Art of Vim. It resides, incorruptible and unreachable, in the celestial realm. As Ptolemy explained, power emanates from the aether and permeates the terrestrial realm. This power directs the motion of Fire and Air, and in turn the motion of all else, Earth and Water, plant and animal.

This power is known to the Order as radiant vis.

Ambient Matter

The terrestrial region consists of formless mass, known to the Order as ambient matter. The radiant vis coaxes the ambient matter into motion. That is to say, the radiant vis informs the ambient matter, giving shape and design to the world.

Raw Vis

Most objects, being flawed and far from their ideal forms, disperse and corrupt the radiant vis, allowing the vis to propagate through informed matter. A precious few material objects, however, approach their substantial form and reflect God's in principii idea of them. These treasured items become reservoirs for radiant vis in its pure form, known as raw vis, the closest approximation to aether that can exist in the terrestrial realm.

Limit of the Lunar Sphere

We can now derive the limit of the lunar sphere. Magic, as I established, manipulates the laws of nature. The laws of nature govern the mortal portion


Upper Air: The Cosmology of Robert Grosseteste

For the life and times of Robert Grosseteste, a great man of letters who will reach his prime (and be elected Bishop of Lincoln) early in a typical Ars Magica Saga, see *Heirs to Merlin*.

Light is the cornerstone of Master Robert's cosmology. The cosmos began when God created a dimensionless point of matter and light, the "first form" or "corporeal form." The point of light instantaneously diffused itself into a great sphere, drawing matter with it, resulting in the corporeal cosmos. Subsequent radiation (from the outermost limit of the cosmos back toward the center) and differentiation gave rise to celestial spheres and the characteristic features of the sublunary region.

The theme of microcosm and macrocosm also dominates his cosmology. Humanity represents the pinnacle of God's creative activity, mirroring the divine nature and the structure of the cosmos. In his early writings Master Robert toys with the Greek notion of a World Soul overseeing the terrestrial regions, but he rejects it in his later works.

Master Robert, along with theorists who retain a platonic tradition, disagrees with the notion of a fifth Element in the celestial regions. The heavens are not made of a separate Element, but finer quantities of earthly elements Air and Fire in an ultimately rarefied (minimally dense) state impossible to replicate in the mortal regions.

Those magi seeking to break the limit of the lunar sphere take great interest in his and similar theories. If the same elements exist in the celestial realm as the terrestrial, surely terrestrial magic can affect them? Though even here one must deal with the issue of incorruptibility.
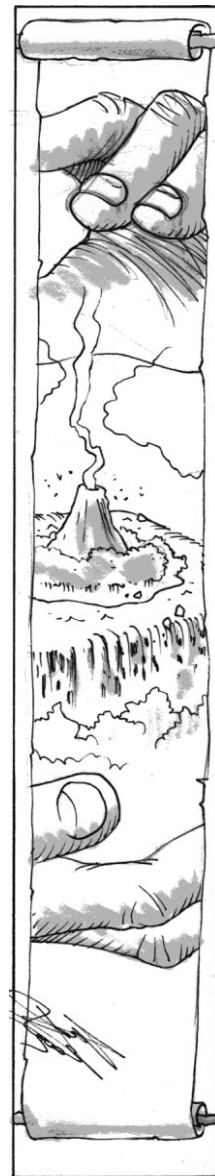
of the cosmos. The lunar sphere and the realms above, however, belong to the immortal portion of the cosmos, and operate under different laws.

Magic helps us understand, predict, and take advantage of the celestial realm's control over the terrestrial, but magic has no jurisdiction in the heavens themselves.

The Heavens

Before entering the cosmos, let us pause just outside it: what, if anything, exists there? All agree that no material substance is found outside the cosmos. The cosmos, by definition, contains all matter God created. Could the cosmos float in an empty void? Aristotle proved the impossibility of vacuum, and thus all right-thinking people agree that nothing, not even vacuum, exists outside the cosmos.

As we enter the cosmos, we first encounter the celestial spheres. How many of these exist? What is their nature? What are their functions?

Each of the seven planets is placed on concentric spheres in the following order, from innermost to outer: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Beyond them lies the primum mobile, the sphere of the fixed stars, the Houses of the Zodiac.

Each sphere nestles in perfect contact with one another — otherwise between them would be empty space, an impossibility. Likewise, no gaps or interstices occur in the individual spheres themselves. All rotate, frictionless, in proper directions and precise, preordained velocities. The planets are small spherical regions of greater density and lucidity in the transparent aether. Astronomers have determined that 55 spheres exist in all, including the counter-turners, which absorb the excess motion of the larger spheres.

> **Fedoso's Ball**
>
> A white, crystalline, mostly opaque sphere about the size of a clenched fist. A band of gold wraps around its equator, with the following inscribed in elegant Latin: "This is the Globe of Firmament which Fedosso Found Whilst Hiding From the Handmaids." The inscription refers to a scene from the Travels of Fedoso (*Houses of Hermes* page 32), when Fedoso hides in the Sun Queen's wardrobe. While in the wardrobe, Fedoso opens a chest and finds the entire Universe, in the shape of a crystal ball, trapped in a glass bottle.
>
> The globe feels heavier than it looks. When rolled across a surface, it will wobble and weave a strange trajectory. If held up to the light, shadows of rapid, spinning movement can be seen within. If held to the ear, the globe emits the sweet sound of all eight notes being chimed at once.
>
> The globe has been tossed aside by many frustrated examiners, only to be found by another magus. It seems completely impervious to magic; no spell cast at it has ever worked, including Intéllego spells, preventing anyone from even discovering what makes it so resistant to magic.

Our model of the cosmos still cannot provide for the elliptical wanderings of the planets. Ptolemy showed how epicycles and deferens, wheels within celestial wheels, account for the planets' eccentricities. Each planetary sphere, therefore, must be thick enough to house epicyclical spheres without creating any gaps between the spheres.

The Intelligences

How do the planets move? Who turns the spheres?

Aristotle called them Unmoved Movers. Each sphere has its own Unmoved Mover, the object of that sphere's desire, whose perfection the sphere seeks to imitate by rotating in eternal, uniform circular motion. In the terms of metaphysics, the Unmoved Movers are final, rather than efficient, causes. Everyone recognizes the ultimate or "prime" Unmoved Mover, the entity which inspires the stars themselves to move, to be God Himself.

The identities of the other Unmoved Movers, however, remain in debate. Many astrologers and members of our Order call them the planetary deities of Plato's Timaeus, last true vestige of the gods of old. Christian theologians, members of the Order among them, call the Unmoved Movers the intelligences, angels who never take on material bodies or descend below the lunar sphere. Those who argue against the existence of aether itself seek to explain the turning of the spheres in terms of the physics of motion.

The Third Day

We enter into the terrestrial region by descending beneath the lunar sphere. Here lie the four elements,
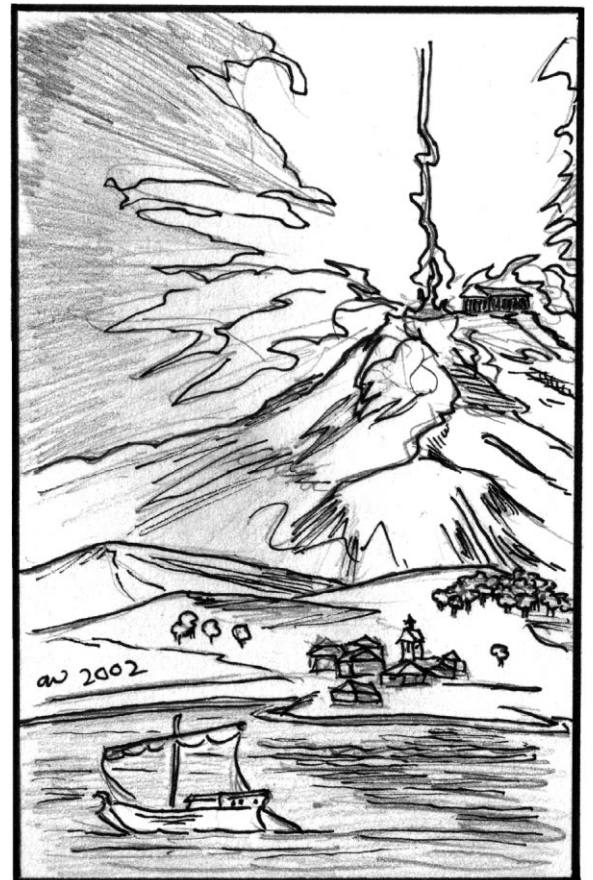
arranged in concentric spheres, each in its proper place: first Fire, then Air, followed by Water, and finally Earth and the center. The light elements, Fire and Air, naturally ascend and disperse while the heavy elements, Water and Earth, naturally descend and coalesce.

The Terrestrial Spheres

The elements continuously transmute one into another through the influence of the vis radiating from the aether within stars and planets. Thus, for example, water is transformed into air in the process we know as evaporation. Conversely, air can be transformed into water to produce rain. The forms involved in this process are called the primary qualities, which I shall discuss after first describing the contents of the entire world.

Spheres of Fire and Air

The fiery and aerial spheres house the grandest phenomena of meteorology, including comets, shooting stars, rainbows, lightning and thunder. Rainbows, it has long been known, appear in the sphere of Air when sunlight reflects from the droplets of water in a cloud.

A comet is the burning of hot and dry exhalations that ascend from the Earth into the sphere of Fire. That means comets are not only sublunary, but also begin their lives on the Earth, making them obvious targets of Ignem magic. I have heard rumors of rituals that can send comets up, but many magi will be relieved to note that I have not heard of any spell that can bring a comet down.

Fiery Calamity

Cr Ig 75 ritual

R: Near D: Spec. T: Spec.

This ritual must be performed on a volcano, hot spring, or similar area producing hot gasses from the depths of the Earth. Once complete, the air fills with a roaring, searing vapor, causing everything in the area (the volcano, spring, mud flat, etc) to take +25 in scalding damage. The inferno of steam only lasts one round as the exhalation soars into the sky.

Upon the next sunset, and for the next week, the exhalation burns as a bright comet in the sky, often with two or three tails, visible across the known world and perhaps beyond.

In addition to whatever wonder or hysteria the comet inspires in the populace, the comet wrecks havoc with any astrological magic attempted that week, anywhere in the world. Any benefits from an inception are lost if calculated before the comet appeared, even if the incepted spell were to take place long after the comet disappears.

All rolls involving astrological magic, Hermetic or otherwise, have a negative penalty equal to the penetration total of the ritual/5, and suffer double the normal botches.

Several archmages are said to be hard at work inventing a version of this spell with Rego and Auram requisites to turn the spell into a terrific weapon.

Meteors and other celestial phenomena also fall into sphere of Fire. While Aristotle and his successors would place the Milky Way here, there is some debate amongst astrologers to the validity of this view.

Sphere of Earth

At the center of everything is the sphere of the Earth upon whose surface mortal life unfolds. The ancients determined the Earth to be a sphere with a circumference of about 252,000 stades, or 28,968 miles, an estimate we accept as fact. The terrestrial land mass divides into the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, with the Holy Land in the center, and surrounded by sea.

How do the continents protrude out from the sphere of Water that surrounds the Earth, so we may live upon them? The Earth could be slightly off center, thereby causing its sphere to extend out through the sphere of Water. This would require some permanent celestial power forever pushing the earth to one side. The earth could, on the other hand, be more triangular than a perfect sphere.

Perhaps, as Plato suggested, the Earth is porous, drawing in water to expose some land, or, as Aristotle suggested, evaporation removes enough water to allow the Earth to peek through. Most enticingly, perhaps the waters that would otherwise cover the continents are stored somewhere on the globe, piled high by divine or magical forces that have already failed once in history at the time of the Deluge.
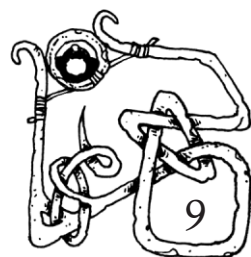
The terrestrial globe is divided into five climatic zones or climes: two frigid zones around the poles (the Arctic and Antarctic), two temperate zones adjacent to the two frigid zones, and one torrid zone straddling the equator. The torrid zone, according to some geographers, divides into distinct rings around a great equatorial ocean.

Most believe the torrid zone to be uninhabitable due to its extreme heat. For whatever reason, no one has yet to report crossing this region. The existence of the antipodeans, the upside-down walking inhabitants of the southern temperate clime, remains a mystery.

Properties of Matter

Terrestrial combinations of matter and form are called substances. If the substance in question is a "natural object" (as opposed to one produced artificially, by an artisan), it also possesses a "nature," determined first by its form and second by its matter. A substance's nature disposes it to certain kinds of behavior. Fire naturally communicates warmth, rocks naturally fall if lifted out of their natural place, babies naturally grow and mature, acorns naturally develop into oak trees, and so on.

Natures can be isolated through long and persistent observation: whatever cannot be the product of chance (because of the regularity of its occurrence) or of artifice (because no artificer had anything to do with it) must be the result of nature. Because natures determine all cases of natural change, they fascinate

the physicist, natural philosopher, and Hermetic alchemist.

The Primary Qualities

The familiar substances of everyday experience are complex rather than simple. In other words, all sublunary objects are either compounds or mixtures reducible to fundamental principles, the four elements.

In Aristotelian terms, the elements are forms of matter. Each elemental form contains two of the primary qualities. There are four primary qualities, and every substance under the Moon contains some amount of each: hot, cold, wet, and dry. Coldness and wetness combine to yield Water. Matter informed by coldness and dryness produces Earth. Hotness and wetness produce Air, while hotness and dryness produce Fire. The behavior of everything terrestrial can be understood by studying the primary qualities and natures of the four elements. You cannot separate these qualities and obtain one without the other. All things in the terrestrial sphere are combinations of these four qualities.

Secondary Matter

Two types of matter exist and help explain the process of motion, insubstantial primary matter and substantial secondary matter.

Primary matter combines with the primary qualities to produce elements in their pure form. Without quality, primary matter is insubstantial. Secondary matter already contains primary qualities, is substantial, and can take on accidents and secondary qualities.
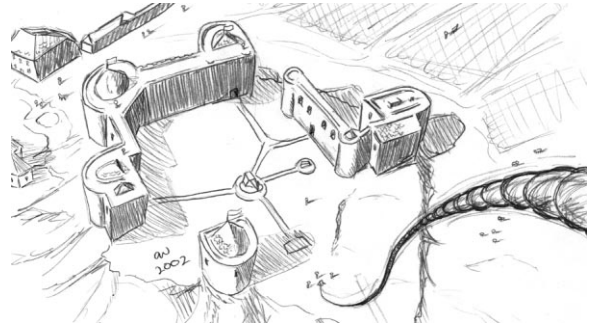
The marble slab, for example, already exists and has properties (size, shape, color, density, et cetera) before the sculptor endows it with the accidents of a bust of Pallas.

Motion

Do not think that the cosmos is static. In the sublunary realm, natural motion ceases when a moving object reaches its natural place, and violent motion ends when an external force no longer acts. If God suddenly put every object in its proper place and eliminated external movers, the world would come screeching to a halt.

Or would it? This misapprehension comes from concentrating on only one kind of motion, the change of place. Nature exists in a constant state of flux and transition from potential to actual. Constant change occurs in biological matter, as all things living are always growing, developing, or withering. The motion of life, as microcosm, reflects the motion of the terrestrial realm.

Impetus

Why, for example, does a rock continue to move through the air once it leaves the hand of the thrower? Aristotle's answer looks to the action of Air. As a rock travels, it pushes air, which either swirls around to push the rock from behind, or transmits the motion to the next piece of air, which carries the rock along with it.

Here, perhaps uniquely, Aristotle is wrong. Those who study the Art of Rego adopt a theory of impetus, which has found its way into the lectures of the so-called scholastics in Paris and beyond.

A projectile moves because the process of throwing imparts to an object an additional qualitative disposition (an additional form or nature), which in turn accounts for the object's continued motion. The rock continues to move along its trajectory because it has, once it leaves the hand of the thrower, a quality naturally present and predisposed for moving the body. Its nature now becomes that of an object moving along a path that had previously not been natural to it. As it moves the projectile, this added quality is weakened, either because it is not a permanent quality, and therefore naturally remitted, or because of the resistance of the air. As a consequence, the projectile slowly loses its imparted motion and assumes its natural motion, that is, toward the center of the universe. Consequently, a rock thrown away from the Earth falls through an arced trajectory back to the ground.
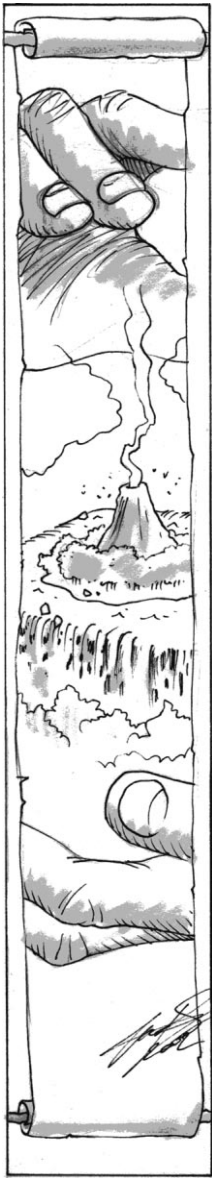
The Fourth Day

During the first three days the outlines of the universe were sketched out in the amorphous mass that became the cosmos. Now, on the fourth day, began the process of filling out the details. Theologians call this and the next two days the ornamenting of the universe.

The Stars

Ornamentation begins in the heavens. God sets out two luminaries, the Sun and Moon, to rule respectively over day and night, and commands the other heavenly lights to take up residence in their respective orbs. Except for the occasional and miraculous additions, the work of the fourth day sees the heavens established in the arrangement we see today.

How do the stars and planets influence the elements and creatures below? We already know the medium of influence, vis propagated from the aether. But how does the process unfold?

The Golden Chain

Putting together all we have discussed, we can reconstruct the golden chain of cause and effect, from the uncountable effects occurring at this very moment to God's in principii choice to bring forth the universe.

The stars perform a crucial role in helping the universe run smoothly and according to God's plan. They are the most essential and obvious links in the great golden chain that joins Heaven to Earth and humanity to God. Every effect observed in the sublunary world initiates at least in part in the stars. In other words, the motions of the celestial bodies are the efficient causes of every effect.

At the beginning of the golden chain comes God, Creator and First Mover of all that follows. First He created all things movable and subject to change and then He moved them. God's presence is necessary to keep nature running smoothly. If God were to withdraw from nature we would not live, nor be moved, nor exist.

God does not immediately involve Himself in each and every activity that takes place in nature. He is not the direct, universal cause of all natural effects. Instead, efficient causation proceeds from God through many series of secondary agents, each of which is superior to the one that immediately follows it in the order of causation, forming the links in the golden chain.

The very next links in the golden chain after God are the intelligences, the celestial Unmoved Movers. The intelligences move the stars and planets, inducing the aether within to radiate vis. Through the medium of radiant vis, the stars and planets move the four terrestrial elemental spheres, causing the primary qualities to impress upon primary matter.

The Effects of the Primary Qualities

When radiant vis changes some of the qualities of an object without changing the substance itself, the object has been altered. Cold water, when influenced by a warming quality, becomes warm, while remaining water. Such changes can become quite complex if the subject being altered is itself complex. Changes in the human body, including disease, are manifestations of alteration.

Radiant vis cannot affect the substantial forms themselves, but can add or subtract substantial forms of an object by changing the primary qualities in the processes known as generation and corruption. By manipulating the primary qualities, radiant vis can either introduce substantial form to primary matter or separate matter from a substantial form. For example, vapors trapped in the earth slowly ripen into minerals under the generative influence of the primary qualities, while food spoils under corruptive influence.

God selected in principii the finite number of substantial forms that exist. There shall never be more, or fewer, substantial forms than those God envisioned. In other words, radiant vis (and the Arts of magic) cannot generate, corrupt, or alter substantial forms, just the matter informed by them. This is the Aristotelian expression of the limit of essential nature.

Secondary Qualities

In addition to causing accidental and substantial changes, primary qualities also give rise to secondary qualities: softness, hardness, viscosity, mass, levity, rarity, density, odor, flavor, color, incandescence and so forth. Secondary qualities differ from primary qualities, as they do not affect the medium through which they pass.

The Art of Imáginem creates and manipulates secondary qualities, which do not themselves affect changes or motion in matter. With Imáginem, you can impress into the air the secondary qualities of a flying carpet, allowing others to feel the carpet's plush softness, but you cannot actually bring motion to matter, and so your flying carpet can support no cargo.

Both primary and secondary qualities radiate over distances. Both can be reflected and refracted. Each can be expressed in varying degrees through the intension and remission of forms. As the golden chain stretches out through the sublunary region, the radiant vis reflects, refracts, intensifies and remits, causing infinite variations of qualities.

The changes of qualities give us a model for the active Hermetic Techniques. Creo, obviously, brings about creative change by impressing primary qualities into primary matter. Perdo, likewise, brings about destructive change by removing primary and secondary qualities from secondary matter. Muto, the art of alteration, changes the substance and qualities of secondary matter. Rego concerns the fourth type of Aristotelian change: locomotion, the change of place. Everything locomotes, including thoughts and phantoms.

Magic and the Golden Chain

This and nothing more is the process of magic. Only through the manipulation of the radiant vis can
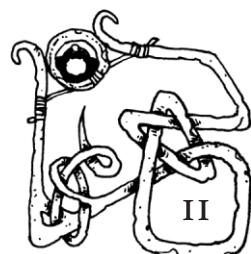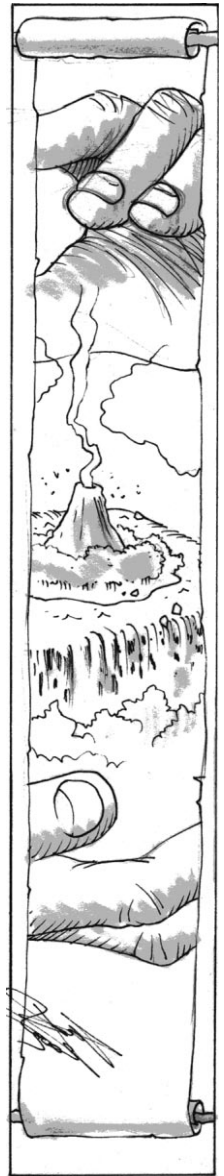
we grasp the golden chain. Magic is truly golden, as its study and use brings the magus close to celestial perfection and the light of God. But magic is also enchaining, because the magus is bound to the laws of nature and cause and effect.

The Limit of Creation

With the Arts of Creo and Terram, a magus can command the radiant vis to impress upon ambient matter the form of a flawless diamond. The celestial spheres continue to turn, however, and the vis radiating down from the heavens continues to caress all things, including the diamond, coaxing the forms to change. The duration of a spell expires when its power can no longer keep the eternal kiss of the radiant vis at bay. When its original Creo Terram spell expires, the matter of the diamond literally gives up the ghost, and vanishes back in the ambient background.

By using raw vis, the closest approximation to aether on the Earth, the magus can create enduring objects, the closest approximation to ex nihilo creation achievable by mortals. Such "permanent" objects can still be dispelled by Perdo Vim, breaking up the raw vis shell that protects the object from the bombardment of radiant vis, but they possess sufficient permanence to provide nutrition. Truly permanent objects require the greater magic of ritual, or, in the case of spells that heal or improve, the presence of already informed matter, such as a cracked stone or severed limb.

Even the oldest among us know we live on time borrowed from raw vis, and one day inevitability will call the debt due.

The Limit of Arcane Connection

Vision, being the most powerful sense, is the normal boundary of human understanding and influence. Even the greatest astrologers, with their ancient charts and precision instruments, still must gaze at the heavens with their eyes. The golden chain, easy to behold and understand with the naked eye, becomes hopelessly complex and incomprehensible beyond the scope of vision.

Arcane connections bring part of the unseen into the magus' field of view, thereby allowing the magus to affect it. For example, taking one cobblestone from a road allows you to see part of the road regardless of your actual distance from it. With an Arcane Connection, you can grasp links of the golden chain otherwise inaccessible. Of course, as time passes, the golden chain between the Arcane Connection and the intended target lengthens and throws out branches. Consequently, the effectiveness of Arcane Connections fade with time.

The Limit of Time

Time, in and of itself, does not exist. We perceive the passage of time by observing secondary qualities produced by motion. Motion comes from the Prime Mover through the golden chain. "Time passes" is the vulgar way of saying "the golden chain has many links."

To stop time, equivalent to stopping all motion in the entire world, we would have to keep the heavens from spinning. Journeying back in time, to reverse motion, requires the celestial spheres to rotate backwards. To move forward in time, to speed motion of all things but ourselves, we would have to coax the intelligences to push harder.

The past lives on only in the sense of memory. It can only be visited with the Art of Mentem, if the magus has access to a witness of the past, or with of rituals of Intéllego Imáginem that distill images of the past from the secondary qualities impressed in the present. The future has yet to be created by the Unmoved Movers, and can only be glimpsed through the science of divination.

The Fifth Day

Once He finished ornamenting the celestial realms, God turned His attention to the elements that lay below. The work of the fifth and sixth days adds the final details to the elemental spheres, the forms of life that pertain to each. The waters brought forth all forms of marine life, including reptiles and sea monsters. Air became the natural abode of birds. Lastly, on the sixth day, Earth gave rise to animals and the human species.

God imparted to each living creature a command that he gave no other object in all creation: "thrive and multiply." Growth and reproduction distinguish the animate from the inanimate and permit living creatures to populate the Earth.

The Four Powers

Living creatures, like everything else, combine matter and form. The soul, the substantial form of life, impresses into organic matter, and manifests itself in four basic ways, called powers.

The most fundamental manifestation of life, the vegetative power enables living beings to follow God's prime directive to thrive and multiply. Even the lowest form of life, the mould on the very last link of the golden chain, possesses the vegetative impulse, the ability to utilize nutrition to grow and multiply.

The capacity to perceive the external world, the sensitive power, separates plants from animals. Creatures that can react to what they sense possess the power of appetite, the ability to act on desires and instincts. True reaction requires locomotion, and animals with the propensity to move possess the motive power.

The Fifth Power and the Soul

All living beings embody souls in this sense, but several kinds of souls exist. Plant souls only possess the vegetative power. Animal souls possess the vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, and motive powers. A fifth power, the intellective (the ability to think), separates humanity from all living creatures, and sets the human soul just below rational creatures in the grand scheme of things.

The Sixth Day

God's ornamenting the terrestrial realms ends with the creation of humanity, as if the mortal world and the creatures within it existed just to provide an abode for our kind, as if God made the cosmos for us.

Even with all of its shortcomings, faults and weaknesses, humanity is still God's greatest creation. Man is rex et dominus, king and lord, of the sensible sublunary world. He embodies all that there is in the universe. Humanity's microcosm mirrors the macrocosm in perfect completion. Like angels we think and act freely; and like animals we sense; like plants we grow and reproduce; and like the heavens and Earth we are composed of a mixture of the elements, a duality of perfection and imperfection. God created only humanity in His likeness. Neither the angels nor any other creatures enjoy such a gift and burden.

Language

Language is divine. In Genesis, God gives the responsibility (and power) of naming all living things to Adam. In Plato's *Cratylus*, the gods first fix the names of things in the proper way. Some Seekers claim these two versions describe the same event.

Higher powers also gifted writing to us. Cadmus, Phoenician demigod of ancient myth, founded Thebes and brought written language to the Greeks. According to Islam, God gave Arabic script and language to the Biblical Adam. Before Moses could bring the Law of God to the people of Israel, God first gave Moses the script of Hebrew so that he could inscribe the Law and teach it to others.

Which language represents the oldest and truest tongue of humanity? The Greek historian Herodotus claimed that Egyptian is the true tongue. Most Christian and Jewish scholars, of course, look to Hebrew, the language spoken by God in the Bible, as the oldest and purest language. Many academicians insist

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Catreus filius Hyale

Catreus, middle aged magus of House Tremere, hopes to one day make everyone in the world speak the same language. If every object in the world had just one name, he argues, then anyone could work great magic over anything simply by saying its name. While a fascinating idea in the abstract, most magi dismiss Catreus' unattainable notions.

To bolster his theory, Catreus has taken to more demonstrable methods. He is abducting young children from various parts of the world, and raising them together in isolation, hoping clues to the primal tongue will emerge as they try to communicate with one another. The mind of a child, many claim, is innocent and unsullied, and may have sympathetic links to humanity's primordial existence.

Catreus has abducted a child from a village near the covenant. When unnatural things stalk the night, the local villagers always blame the player magi, balancing the covenant's need to retain friendly relations with neighbors against meddling in the affairs of other wizards.

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that all humanity first spoke Syriac, the Aramaic language of the Christian Orient.

The tale of the Tower of Babel tells us, however, that such a question can never be answered with complete satisfaction. By God's command, language naturally fragments and multiplies into mutually incomprehensible tongues. The father tongue, therefore, must remain forever lost.

Yet the Tower of Babel teaches us another lesson in metaphor. With the power of the first tongue, Nimrod built a tower that threatened the very vaults of Heaven. Without the first tongue, the tower fell, the celestial regions were safe from a mortal siege. Does this mean that the first tongue contained the power to break the limit of the lunar sphere? At least one group of Seekers hunts the father tongue, the only antediluvian artifact to survive the Deluge, as the key to breaking every limit of magic.

The Language of Angels

The very words we speak join the planets on the golden chain that governs the motions of the Earth. All spoken words, called vocables, gain power and meaning from the heavenly harmony that produces the radiant vis, just like all other things under the Moon. Some vocables sympathize with the divine language, with the many aspects of the Word God spoke to create the universe. These are the "magic words" of incantation. The planets, intelligences, and elder powers all have lexicons of magic vocables filled with their strength.

When a mortal speaks, the power of his will channels into the vocable, and his soul enters the golden chain. The soul of a mortal, however, possesses little sympathy with the heavens above, and his words cause nary a stir in the rain of vis. The Gifted soul of the magus, unlike the souls of mortals, shines as a mirror of the heavens. When the magus speaks, the power of his Gifted soul infuses his words. The vocables of magi, therefore, contain greater power over the radiant vis than those of mortals. "Magic words," the words we learn as apprentices to cast spells, sympathize with the angelic language of the celestial realm. When magi incant, they send forth vocables doubly empowered by their own souls and God, vocables capable of the greatest marvels.

Every uttered word always affects some matter somewhere, though not always in perceptible ways. Vocables have the greatest effect on air and substances of an airy nature. Words, therefore, affect living creatures and human beings above all other things because of the spirits' airy composition.

The Power of Latin

Latin is the principle language of the Church, state administration, theology, philosophy, science, history, biography, and belles lettres. The rich literature of today's Latin binds our society and way of life to the legacy of Roman times.

Language channels occult power. In the age of Empire, wizards called upon the power of the ancient tongues of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian,

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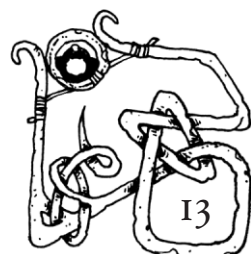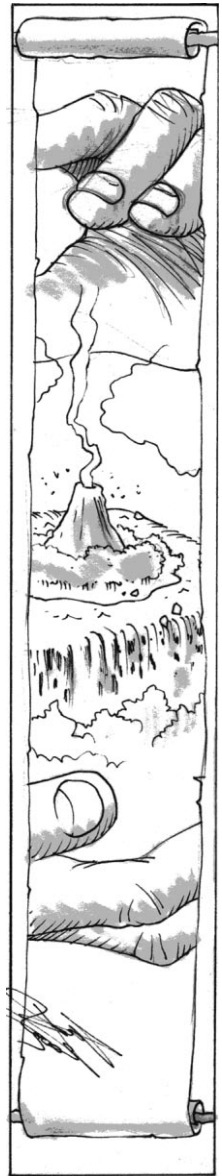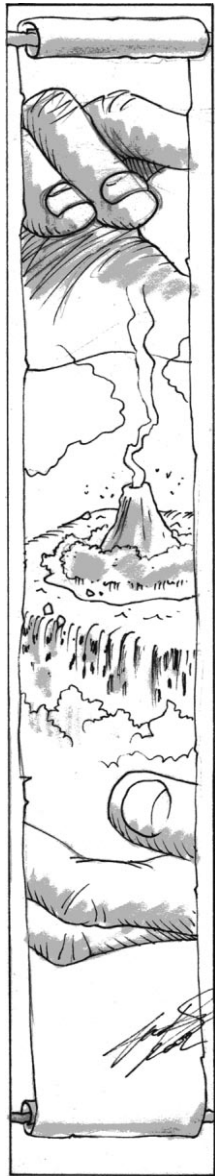
Persian, and Latin. Centuries after Rome's light faded in the West, as Bonisagus created the Hermetic Arts and Trianoma assembled the Founders, they realized that language would underpin their new Order. A single language of power would have to be picked to insure unification across culture and magic tradition.

The language they chose, and rightly so, was Latin.

Since God struck against Babel, language naturally fragments, and since language is the medium of enchantment, magic fragmented along with it into the scattered hedge wizardry of post-Biblical times. Latin, however, carries in it the power of the Empire, the might of the united world. The Founders knew that Latin possessed the same force as the language of Nimrod and the tower-builders, and chose Latin as the one true tool of hegemony.

Is this power real, or symbolic? If we were to speak and work Hermetic magic in our native tongues, would we not only lose our community bonds, but also our magic as well? Either way, the Founders chose well, and the quaesitores act justly when they enforce the very first rule of the Founding Tribunal: that all political discourse, magical writing, and occult speech, remain now and forever in Latin, the language of the Emperor and the power of God made manifest on Earth.

The Seventh Day

Now, at last, and without coincidence, we can examine the limit of energy as God rests to contemplate His creations. The limit of energy requires mortal creatures to rest after their temporal labors, be they magical or mundane. Unlike the other limits, the limit of energy comes not from the stars, but from our biological bodies.

For every creature walking the Earth, "energy" means food, or more technically, nutrition. Galen explained the limit best…

Growth without restoration is just like the inflation of a balloon (a sheep's bladder). The balloon grows as it fills with air, but the growth is false. The balloon does not gain in strength or size. Instead, its skin is stretched and thinned to the limit as it fills with an inert substance. Nutritious growth, however, fills the living body with enlivened sustenance that can be transformed into strong muscle, blood, and bone.

Taking nutrition from magic fills you up like a balloon. False growth can distort and damage your body. Growth and restoration reinforced with raw vis, over time, saps the body of its natural vitality as it becomes more accustomed to consuming magic rather than the food God intended. This principle explains many costs of magic: why mortals warp and distort when subject too often to spells, why longevity potions cost us fertility and bring us closer to Twilight, why so many of us withdraw from the world, and why mortals often see us as monsters, not men.

God rested after six days, and, by your leave, so must I, unless I have failed to live up to your expectations.

Twilight and Ageing Revisited

by David Woods

Here I am at the hearth
Of my host, Yngvar
The Generous, who grants
Gold to heroic men;
Free-handed fosterer,
You'll find no three-year
Babe among bards
More brilliant than me
– Egil Skallagrimson, Egil's Saga

Foreword

You may wonder what exactly is wrong with the current Ageing and Twilight rules that needs revision. Having a rabid simulationist streak, I have identified a number of issues. These issues can be split between the rules with respect to mundanes and with respect to magi.

I would like to thank Eric Grove-Stephensen and Mark Shirley for their comments and suggestions.

Mundane Ageing

I'll deal first with the problems I see with respect to mundanes. Using computer simulations I ran through the lives of thirty thousand subjects with the current ageing rules. I compiled results for different living conditions, staminas and even initial Decrepitude Points. Taking the Sta. +0 results, the distribution of life expectancy was remarkably tight (95% between 70 and 80). Out of thirty thousand people, not one died older than 84. Living conditions did have an effect, but not as great as might have been expected. The only factor that made a huge difference to life expectancy was decrepitude points, gained either from story events or freak rolls on ageing. This accounted for the few deaths before 70.

Most people simply gained five ageing afflictions at level six around 64 and then accumulate +1 decrepitude per year from that point i.e. death 10 years later.

Original Ageing Histogram

Original System, Stamina 0
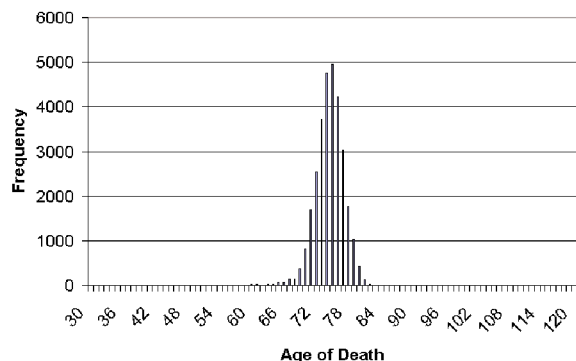
So in the main, the current ageing rules are merely an exercise in dice rolling, giving the illusion of chance but actually delivering very little variation. Given the number of rolls and the nature of the table, the number of Afflictions points you have soon approaches the statistical mean. By the time you have five Afflictions at level six, gaining +1 decrepitude per year becomes certain. The only point of real tension is the rare circumstance of rolling 19+. Other than this rare possibility, players may as well consult a lookup table.

Although we have accounts of medieval people living into their nineties, the ageing rules do not allow for this. Conversely medieval people did die in their forties and fifties. In my opinion there needs to be more variation in the system, in particular more variation in age of death.

Decrepitude

Another point is the use of Decrepitude Points. As a generalised measure of age, it served its purpose in previous editions. However, with the introduction of ageing Afflictions in ArsM4, Decrepitude started to look too abstract in my opinion. What are Decrepitude points, what are they measuring?

There are two ways of gaining Decrepitude points: from Ageing rolls or particularly severe injury. Some storyguides imagine ageing Decrepitude is also injury, interpreting Ageing rolls as falls on ice and other common accidents. However, this leads to the question of why Creo magic cannot heal this injury and thus remove the Decrepitude point? Claiming that it cannot be removed because it is beyond Hermetic Limits does not appear satisfactory to me. We have one group of injuries that are fixable by Hermetic magic and another that are not. However, the distinction between the two appears to lie with an arbitrary game-term designation rather than any distinction between them on a physical level.

Injures caused by supernatural creatures or though magical rituals may be marked on a metaphysical level, but the supernatural element makes this plausible. Claiming that the injury is distinct on a metaphysical level merely because it arose from an Ageing roll appears to me a crude intrusion of mechanics on the game world.

If Decrepitude is not injury, but deeper processes of age, why can it be caused by injury? Again this appears to me to be a crude intrusion of mechanics on game world.

The solution

The new system introduces Cosmetic Afflictions to add more variability. Decrepitude is now defined as the accumulation of life threatening conditions. With this system, it is possible for a man of eighty to be in good health while others will have dropped dead in their fifties.

People often die as a result of a medical crisis from which they fail to recover. This new system will attempt to model such events, which may occur a number of times during a lifetime. The older the person, the more difficult it will be for them to recover. The presence of a skilled herbalist, physician or magus will be an important factor in survival chances.
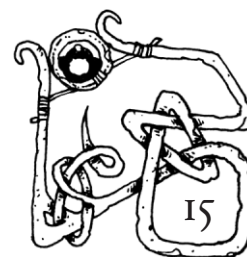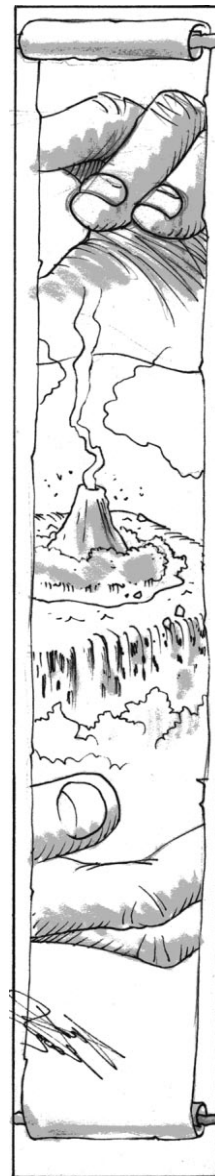
The ageing roll is unchanged, except that Decrepitude is not added, as the feedback of this would narrow the distribution drastically.

Quality die + age/10 (round down) + Living Condition Modifier + Longevity Potion Modifier

Note that even those who use longevity potions still use a Quality die under this system.

The Ageing Table

2 or less	No apparent ageing *
3-6	No effect
7-9	+1 Cosmetic Affiliation
10	+1 Physical Affliction
11	No effect
12	+1 Mental Affliction
13-14	+1 Cosmetic Affiliation
15	+1 Physical Affliction and Crisis
16	+1 to Decrepitude
17	+1 Mental Affliction and Crisis
18	+1 to Mental and +1 to Physical
19+	+1 to Decrepitude and Crisis

* This integrates/replaces the apparent ageing rules in *WGRE*. Longevity potions designed to minimise apparent ageing work on a roll of 6 or less.

Cosmetic Afflictions are descriptive but have little or no effect in game terms. They may be physical or mental in nature. Physical examples include hair loss, leathery skin, warts, tooth loss, impotence, weight gain or weight loss. Mental examples take the form of personality traits such as intolerant, tolerant, rambling, considered, belligerent, passive, paranoid and trustful. These range from 1 to 5 as other Afflictions. These Afflictions are for roleplaying effect only. Characters can have no more than five Cosmetic Afflictions. Further gains add to Physical or Mental Afflictions (player choice).

Decrepitude is similar to a physical affliction, but is life threatening. Conditions associated with Decrepitude normally involve organs thought essential for life by medieval physicians (heart, lungs, liver, and brain) or the blood in general. For the purposes of this system a character may only have one Decrepitude score. However, in roleplaying terms, Decrepitude score may represent a combination of life threatening medical problems rather than a single cause.

If characters reach a Decrepitude score of 4, they are extremely frail. Long journeys and other stressful activities are likely to cause such people a Crisis. As soon as Decrepitude reaches 5 the character is bedridden and dying. The character may last hours, days or even months, at the storyguide's discretion, but taking into account the skill of any attending physician or herbalist. This is an opportunity for characters to put their affairs in order before moving on.

Once five non-cosmetic afflictions (physical plus mental) have been gained at level 5, further physical or mental afflictions add +1 to the subject's Decrepitude score.
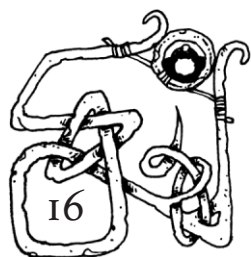
It is recommended that the Living Condition modifier is restricted to -1 to +1, as every point shifts the distribution over by a decade.

Ageing Metaphysics

Ageing Afflictions and Decrepitude scores are not injuries. Rather they are emergent properties arising from the interaction of time on the individual body. Good diet, lifestyle and longevity potions can delay the onset and progression of these properties, but they cannot reverse them once manifest.

Afflictions and Decrepitude can be caused by a poorly healed injury. However, these should be designated as Injury Afflictions or Injury Decrepitude. If the body is restored by Creo magic, Injury Afflictions and Injury Decrepitude can be removed. However, points added by genuine ageing processes can never be. Unless an injury is marked on a metaphysical level, by powerful non-Hermetic magic, it can be restored by Hermetic magic. The initiation rites of various Mystery Cults are known to generate such marked injuries.

For example, the grog Peter injures his back in his youth. He recovers but it is never quite right (+2 Bad Back). As he grows older ageing rolls add 3 points to this, giving him a +5 Bad Back Affliction. He tells a magus of his old injury and as a reward for good service, the magus restores it. The character now has a +3 Bad Back Affliction. Much better, but not gone completely.

The Crisis Table

Only roll on the Crisis table if the character's Decrepitude rating is at level 1 or more. Otherwise the character is bedridden for a week but recovers, unless the storyguide wishes to make a story event of the illness.

Roll a simple die and add the subject's age in decades as well as his Decrepitude score.

7 or less	Bedridden for a week
8-13	Bedridden for a month
14	Minor illness. Sta. Roll of +3 to survive
15	Serious Illness. Sta. roll of +6 survive
16	Major illness. Sta. roll of +9 survive
17	Acute illness. Sta. roll of +12 to survive
18+	Terminal Illness (magical assistance required to survive)

An illness usually develops over the course of weeks or months. If a herbalist, physician or magus is called within this period they may be able to help. An herbalism or medicine roll of 6+ will allow the patient to use the Herbalism or Medicine score as a bonus to his survival roll. If the herbalist or physician botches, then the subject rolls with a -3 modifier.

Characters who survive an illness still require a recovery period. The wound recovery table can be used for this purpose. Treat an Acute or Major illness as a heavy wound. Treat a Serious or Minor illness as a moderate wound. As usual, competent nursing care can help reduce recovery times. Alternatively simply assume the season is lost.

Magi can use Creo Corpus to help the subject over the crisis. Required spell level is dependent on the class of the illness. Minor 20, Serious 25, Major 30, Acute 35, Terminal 40. Without vis these spells merely delay the roll (possibly to allow the arrival of the herbalist or physician). Use of Muto Corpus to temporarily boost Stamina stresses the body and the subject must make the test again unaided when the spell expires.

Stamina 0, Medicine 3

The chart above shows the results generated from the system proposed in this article. For stamina 0 characters, living in average conditions, with access to a moderately skilled physician or herbalist (score of 3).

Magical Ageing

Very few sagas (none that I have heard of) run long enough for magi to die of old age. Even sagas that restrict longevity potions, either by house rule or saga circumstance, rarely have magi reaching 10 decrepitude points. Rather the life expectancy of magi is limited by Twilight. Still the lifetime of an average saga is generally shorter than this, with only a minority of magi entering final Twilight before its conclusion. Restricting the availability of super powerful longevity potions normally results in a few minor ageing afflictions being gained and vis spent in re-brewing before final Twilight or the end of the saga is reached.

Other sagas allow longevity potions to be made by a specialist, either a fellow covenant member with an interest in Intellego Corpus, or by a true professional that markets his skills and his confidentiality to the Order at large. In such sagas magi can avoid ageing rolls entirely, as their potions will certainly render them immune for well beyond the end of the saga.

Neither of these situations is particularly satisfactory. One necessitates house rules and/or an Orwellian paranoia within the Order; the other renders the Ageing table obsolete for the most important class. Also the mechanics of longevity potions make them next to worthless to mundanes except in the most extreme cases.

Under this system, instead of a simple die, subjects under the effect of a longevity potion now roll the normal quality die. However, longevity potions only fail on a Crisis result. The potion averts the crisis, but its power is spent doing so. In this way mundanes may gain benefit from a modest longevity potion for a number of years and even magi with powerful potions may occasionally suffer an Affliction, or even Decrepitude and potion failure.

Twilight

There are two main sources of Twilight points, from longevity potions and temporary Twilights. The first is easy to generalise as it is regular and universal. However, temporary Twilights are extremely difficult because their occurrence is dependent on the saga and the individual character. Without Enigmatic Wisdom magi gain D10 points per temporary Twilight. Given that only 24 result in final Twilight, this leads to a huge element of luck in how many you can endure. The feedback of adding Twilight points to the roll to enter also makes a huge difference. This is the reverse of the problem encountered in the Ageing table where the results were too predictable.

To enter temporary Twilight a number of events have to (usually) occur:

1 The character must botch or encounter a powerful magical force.
2 The storyguide must decide to call a roll for Twilight
3 The storyguide must decide on any modifier.
4 The character must roll 24+ to enter.

The first is rare or dependent on the storyguide. The second and third is arbitrary. The fourth is extremely unlikely unless the storyguide has applied a large modifier or a number of Twilight points are already possessed. What this means is that the storyguide decides how often you go into Twilight - not necessarily a bad thing of course. If a player is unlucky early in a saga by gaining 14+ points, the storyguide can ensure he does not exit the saga too early by shielding him from further Twilights. On the other hand, storyguides can be tempted to pile on the modifier in order to produce the story event he desires. But applying a large modifier virtually ensures the character will suffer a bad effect.

This is hardly very satisfactory from a simulationist point of view. Twilight is also the measure of magi life expectancy. Very careful magi may avoid temporary Twilight entirely, giving a theoretical maximum age (if taken at 35) of 515 years! Many (including myself) feel this is way too long even on a theoretical level.

The solution

Twilight points act like experience points in the normal pyramidal way to give a Twilight Score. When your Twilight Score has reached 24 (300 Twilight points) you enter Final Twilight.

Twilight points accumulate in the following ways.
* +1 per year under the effect of a longevity potion
* +20 per dose of Elixir
* +D10 every temporary Twilight
* +1 per magical botch (spell, lab or Arcane Ability)

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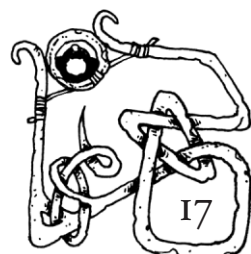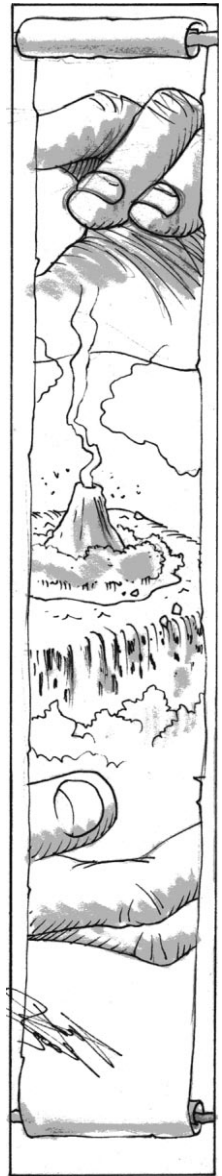
* + Your score in your highest Technique
* + Your score in your highest Form.

For example: The magus Andros has 30 in his highest Technique and 25 in his highest Form, has botched 10 times, has gained 10 from temporary Twilights and has been 30 years on longevity potions. He has a total of 105 twilight points. This equals a Twilight Score of 14.

Temporary Twilight should be unpredictable and may occur 'out of the blue', as well as from botches and encountering dangerous magic. As a rule of thumb, a storyguide may send a magus automatically into the Twilight void around the time (give or take a few years) his Twilight Score reaches 6 and every third increase from that point (9, 12, 15, 18 and 21). The timing, if it happens at all, is entirely up to the storyguide. He may wait until a botch is rolled and simply skip the normal entry roll. Or he may pick a suitable moment (or unsuitable to the character) from a story point of view. If the character has already entered Twilight during the intervening period, the storyguide might forego the opportunity to send him there automatically.

The consequence of this is that temporary Twilight happens to all magi. Even hyper-cautious magi will have trips into Twilight. The number of botches you roll is still a factor, but not the only one. Players will now potentially enter twilight from increasing their Arts, drinking an Elixir or even completely passively by living with a longevity potion.

In addition the storyguide should call a roll for Twilight on every magical botch. Asking for Twilight rolls on every botch serves to even out the incidents of Twilight throughout a Magus's lifetime. Early in his life a magus may experience automatic Twilight (from storyguide fiat) at relatively short intervals, but he is unlikely to enter from Twilight rolls. As his Twilight Score increases the number of Twilight points needed to cross a threshold increases greatly, but he is far more likely to enter Twilight on a roll.

The mechanics of entering Twilight are unchanged. However, Enigmatic Wisdom no longer subtracts from the number of Twilight points gained, but it still adds to entry and control rolls. Therefore Criamon are more likely to enter and gain Good Effects with the cost of an earlier Final Twilight.

Theoretically you could give a gifted person a longevity potion at 35 and as long as they practised no magic, encountered no potent magical forces and rolled a 1 every automatic Twilight, they might live to 329. Of course magi generally learn Arts and occasionally botch. It is imagined that the vast majority would enter Final Twilight well before 200. The number of Twilights, botches and what Arts scores are reached is still going to vary considerably from saga to saga and individual to individual. However, I imagine the average age to be about 150, with 5 percentile edges at about 75 and 200. If you still think the upper end is too high, consider that it was 515…
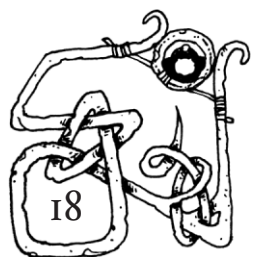
Twilight Effects

This system will lead to magi experiencing far more temporary Twilights during their lifetime. The Twilight Effect tables therefore need to be reworked. As ever the tables are only an aid. If a storyguide and player feel a particular result is especially appropriate then there is no reason to roll.

On a controlled twilight, the player has the option of foregoing a roll on the Good Effects table in order to reverse a previously gained Bad Effect.

Good Effects
1   Increased Understanding
2   Experience points in Affinity
3   Experience points in Arcane Ability
4   +1 experience point in Magic Sensitivity
5   Experience points in Art, one quality die
6   Potent magic (+1 to penetration rolls)
7   Innate magic (+1 to Concentration rolls involving magic)
8   Precise magic (+1 to finesse rolls)
9   Insight into discovery or Story event
10 +1 Hermetic Virtue and Roll Again

Bad Effects
1   Deleterious Circumstance (minor, rare) *
2   Deficiency in Form (minor) *
3   Crippled Ability (-1 to rolls on an Arcane Ability)
4   Cursed Ability (double botch dice involving an Arcane Talent)
5   Madness for D10 months
6   Impotent magic (-1 to penetration rolls)
7   Awkward magic (-1 to concentration rolls involving control of magic)
8   Poor control (-1 to finesse rolls)
9   Deficiency in Technique (minor) *
10 -1 Hermetic Flaw and Roll Again
*   If taken repeatedly an existing effect may increase in severity rather than a new one gained.

Twilight Afflictions

Every journey into the Twilight Void marks the magus, granting them +1 to a Twilight Affliction. In general these Twilight Afflictions are similar to cosmetic ageing Afflictions, but generate a bizarre magical appearance rather than the appearance of age. They should be created to reflect the magi's unique magical character.

The nature of these Afflictions depends on whether the Twilight was controlled or not. Afflictions gained through controlled Twilights are benign, while those gained from uncontrolled Twilights are malign. These Afflictions should range from 1 to 5, with 1 being hardly noticeable and 5 being obvious. In general benign afflictions will not interfere with a magus's life, whereas malign afflictions will reach a similar level to Flaws.

There are three types of Twilight Affliction: a weird physical affliction, a weird mental aberration or an automatic supernatural effect. The type of Affliction

should be agreed between the player and the storyguide.

Weird physical afflictions include things like strange hair, eye or skin colours; animal features like feathers, changes to facial and other bone structures or dietary requirements. Alternatively the affliction could be conditional on the type of aura you are in. For example, a magus might experience pain if outside a magical aura equal to or greater than his affliction rating. Strong Dominion auras may cause the loss of fatigue levels to such magi. Similarly a malign affliction may mimic a flaw like 'Painful Magic', but in a graduated way. By the same measure, the troupe might consider benign afflictions mimicking virtues as well, but this should be rare.

A weird mental aberration causes the magus to develop or increase a highly eccentric personality trait. Examples include obsessive rituals involving mundane activities, compulsive hoarding of magical paraphernalia, a specific paranoia against some improbable threat or any other trait associated in literature with weird old wizards. Again the difference between a benign and malign affliction should be preserved.

An automatic supernatural effect normally involves the magus's specialism. An Ignem specialist is likely to gain an affliction related to fire or heat. A benign Twilight Affliction may manifest as a change in temperature around the magus related to his mood. At level 5 it will be strong enough to be obvious, leaving people sweating or chilled. However, as it was a result of a controlled Twilight the effect is never dangerous. Alternatively, a malign affliction may affect the flammability of material around the magus. At level 5 nearby fires will flare up wildly and the merest spark may set things alight. Such an affliction may make the magus a menace to himself and others. Grogs will need to build and watch fires carefully if travelling with the magus, at least after the first nasty accident…

Points from controlled Twilights always go into a benign Affliction and vice versa. Magi must max-out their existing Afflictions (benign or malign) before gaining others. Therefore a magus who has had one controlled and one uncontrolled Twilight will have two Afflictions, one benign and one malign. He can only put points into a new benign or malign Affliction when the first Affliction of its type is at level 5.

Those with Magic Resistance easily resist automatic twilight effects. Magi with Parma can sense that their Parma is resisting something but also sense the trivial penetration. Such events would be commonplace when associating with Magi and would not be cause for alarm.

Twilight Afflictions heavily influence interactions with mundanes. A character with a normal or Blatant Gift has an additional social penalty with unfamiliar mundanes equal to his highest Twilight Affliction. Afflictions gained from controlled Twilight are still initially shocking to mundanes but they can become accustomed to them. Ongoing relationships only suffer a penalty from the highest malign Affliction.

The benign afflictions of Magi with Gentle Gifts are generally subtle or even pleasing. A Magus with a Gentle Gift can ignore his benign afflictions even

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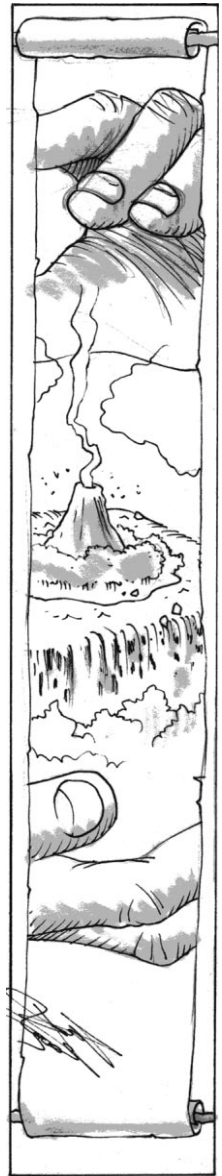
Helena the Illusionist

Helena the Illusionist is 76 years old.

She never bothered obtaining a powerful longevity potion and her own has failed her twice so far. She has gained the following **ageing afflictions**:

+3 Loss of Hair Colour (Cosmetic Affliction, physical)

+2 Rambling (Cosmetic Affliction, mental)

+1 Failing Sight (Physical Affliction)

+1 Painful Joints (Physical Affliction)

She has been through nine **Twilights** so far. Three have been controlled and six have not.

She gained the following **Good effects**:

Increased Understanding (Imáginem)

Innate Magic (+1 to Concentration rolls involving control of magic)

Experience points in Art (Intellego)

And the following **Bad effects**:

Deleterious Circumstance (In the dark, minor, rare)

Madness for 7 months

Crippled Ability (-1 to Certámen rolls)

Deficiency in Form x 2 (Mentem, now major)

Impotent Magic (-1 to penetration rolls)

Her **Twilight Afflictions** are:

Brightened Image (benign) +3

Twisted Sight (malign) +5

Dark Vision (malign) +1

The first two twilight afflictions were both automatic effects. Her benign Affliction causes her image to appear brighter than lighting conditions would normally allow. This effect is now quite noticeable in torch or candlelight conditions. Her first malign Affliction causes the images about her to appear sinister and threatening. In particular the images of people subtly shift in accordance with her fears and suspicions. This is now immediately noticeable, even to the unobservant.

Her third twilight affliction is a mental aberration. The resulting personality trait involves paranoia about a magus she helped March decades ago. Her twilight vision predicts he will return from the grave to enact revenge (despite assurances that he was given a Christian burial). She constantly looks out for signs of possession in people about her, signs she often finds. She now provides her servants with magic resistance charms, as powerful as she can make or afford to commission.

Of course the vision may be true or false, but it constantly plays on her mind. On her next twilight she intends to explore the vision further, to test its truth. The success of this depends on her control roll.
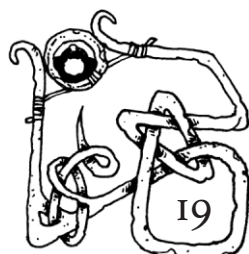
when interacting with unfamiliar mundanes. Malign afflictions still apply in full.

Options

Increasing or decreasing the rate at which magi gain Twilight points is fairly easy. For instance, the various options below may suit various styles of Saga.

+1 per year living within a Magical Aura of 6 or more

This could apply to magi and covenfolk. Mundanes wouldn't enter twilight, but they might develop Twilight Afflictions. When a mundane gains a Twilight score of 6 they gain a Twilight Affliction and another at 9 and so on. A grog born and raised in a magic aura of 6+ would therefore gain his first Twilight Affliction at twenty-one, his second at forty-four and his third at seventy-seven (or there about). If he were given a longevity potion he would gain afflictions at an increased rate. The nature of these afflictions (benign or malign), for each individual, would be a troupe decision. Generational accumulation of Twilight Afflictions is often observed. In addition, such aura generated 'warping' Afflictions often have a theme unique to the site.

-1 per season abstaining from all magical activity

You must foreswear magic for an entire season. You must avoid casting a single spell, totally give up lab work, you can't even study the Arts. You can never reduce your Twilight Score, only those points gathered after it last increased. In this way magi fearful of Final Twilight can stave it off, but only by denying their vocation. This is not possible if the magus uses an Elixir.

+1 per season subject to powerful magical forces

If a magus habitually lives under spell and/or item effects exceeding a sum total of 10 magnitudes, he gains +1 twilight points per season. Aegis, Parma, Longevity and Elixir do not count towards this total, but all other effects do. So if a magus sleeps within a '*Circular Ward against Demons*', has a D: Perm '*Sight of Active Magic*', and wears a constant use enchanted device warding against weapons, he will gain points very quickly.

Final Words

As you now need 300 twilight points for Final Twilight, there is vastly more flexibility in how you obtain them. Handing out Twilight points could be used as a breaking mechanic on all sorts of actions a particular saga wishes to discourage. The choice, as they say, is yours.

The end is all.
Even now
High on the headland
Hel stands and waits,
Life fades, I must fall
And face my own end
Not in misery and mourning,
But with a man's heart.
– Egil Skallagrimson, Egil's Saga

Ars Sympathia

by Mark Shirley

There are Laws of Magic that are so fundamental to Hermetic magic that few magi (other than the researchers of House Bonisagus) give them much consideration. Yet there are groups of magi within the Order for which these basic laws form the central tenets of their magical practices. One such group are those who understand the Ars Sympathia, the Art of Sympathy.

Practitioners of Sympathetic Magic are often called *defigatores* (singular *defigator*, meaning 'one who binds') because they understand the world to be intimately connected with strands of magic. By creating or pulling on these magical strings, the world can be manipulated. Such bonds can be created by separating a part from the whole (which is the standard understanding of an arcane connection), but they can also be created by making something appear to be something else. To the defigator, image is everything. The defigatores believe that by changing an image, changes may be effected upon the source of that image. The image projected into the world is a reflection of the soul, in their philosophy, in the same way that the shadow is a reflection of the image. To the defigatores, the shadow is a useful metaphor — the shadow is an image of the body projected by a worldly source of light. The image, on the other hand, is a simulacrum of the soul projected by an other-worldly light. In the same way that a shadow is a distorted image of the body, flat and featureless, the image is a distorted image of the soul.

The practitioners of this path of magic are often expert manipulators of images. Most of their work is achieved through identification of images with reality, and thus producing stronger magics as a result. They are not necessarily great illusionists — although Imaginem is often their most powerful Art — their work concentrates upon simulacrum, not illusion. Arcane connections are very important to these magi, particularly symbolic ones. Much of their work involves identifying the threads of similarities that link all things.

Natural magicians place much more reliance on the laws of sympathy than do standard Hermetic magi — in fact at least half of their magic is only possible through these laws. The defigatores find that they have a lot in common with natural magicians, and watch their rise with interest.

Principles of Sympathy

The term 'Sympathetic Magic' was coined by Bonisagus (well, it was Frazer in *The Golden Bough*,
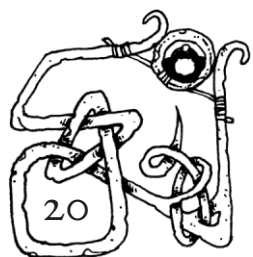
really) to describe two closely related facets of magical practice. These are encapsulated in two Laws of Magic:

The Law of Similarity

Often expressed in the phrase similia similibus ('like to like'), it expresses the concept that the material world can be manipulated by drawing upon analogy. "Just as this lead figurine is cold and immobile," runs an ancient Greek curse, "So may my enemy be cold and immobile." Hermetic Magic utilises this law in the use of some spell foci, such as a piece of rusted iron to help casting *Rusted Decay of Ten-Score Years* ("just as this iron has rusted, let this sword do the same"); or in some Form and Effect Bonuses for making enchanted items, such as a clam shell to gain a protection bonus ("Just as this shell protected the clam, let my armour protect me")

The Law of Contagion

Pars pro toto 'the part for the whole', encapsulates this magical rule. This law is most familiar to Hermetic magi as Arcane Connections — by possessing a piece of a person, a change can be enacted on that piece which will cause a similar change to occur to its originator. In a similar way there is a mystical link between a cobblestone taken from a town square and the whole square. The law of contagion also crops up in some spell foci, such as the use of a wolf's tooth to aid in the casting of *Shape of the Woodland Prowler*. Unfortunately, the longer that such connections spend apart, the weaker these links become, as the Arcane Connection gradually becomes an item in its own right rather than a piece of the original.

Note that many spell foci and Form/Effect bonuses operate through neither of these Laws. The two main alternatives are the Law of Occult Properties (hidden resonances cause effects, such as the ability of Sapphire to assist all knowledge-related spells) and the Law of Antipathy (where an opposing sympathy assists a spell: an axe can be used to aid spells to destroy wood because the two are 'natural enemies')

Outer Mystery: Hermetic Sympathy (+1 Virtue)

The Outer Mystery of Hermetic Sympathy gives the possessor an Affinity, starting at level 1, whenever working with an image or similacrum to effect a change on what it represents. The Affinity applies whenever a spell utilises the Law of Contagion (i.e. when using a Range of Arcane Connection). In addition, spells created with a Range of Arcane Connection can be invented at one magnitude lower than a standard Hermetic version of the same spell, equivalent to Range Sight.

In addition, any spell focus which operates through the Laws of Similarity or Contagion provides an additional +1 bonus to casting totals in the hands of a defigator. For example, when casting *Stench of the Twenty Corpses*, possession of a piece of a rotting corpse grants a +4 bonus to the casting roll in the hands of a defigator rather than +3 — in the same way that the piece of a corpse smells, so will the surrounding air.

Storyguides who have not introduced the Universal Mystery of Sympathetic Magic (*The Mysteries*, p. 25-27) may wish to make these effects unique to those initiated into this outer mystery. Alternatively, the score in Hermetic Sympathy may act as a bonus whenever using Sympathetic magic.

The Wizard's Grimoire, Revised Edition gives more information on the lifespan of different Arcane Connections.

Confound the Connection

This spell can severely limit the power of a defigator, whose power revolves around arcane connections. There are two basic ways in which you can deal with this, if this mystery is going to be prominent in your saga. Firstly, the spell can be simply deemed to be not effective The law which governs arcane connections is *pars pro toto*, the part for the whole, not the whole for the part. It could be reasoned that this connection is one way only, from the smaller part to the greater. Thus a lock of hair is an arcane connection to a person because it represents that person. However, the person is not an arcane connection to the lock of hair — the person is more complex than the part, therefore this spell will not work.

Secondly, this spell may be deemed only to work on a known arcane connection. A person sheds hairs all the time, but only if he can identify the hair that has been lost may this spell work. Thus the remains of a fingernail forms an arcane connection to the cut nail, and may be targeted by this spell. The strands of hair that have been cut are connected to the lock that has been taken, and this positive identification may be targeted with the spell. However, *Confound the Connection* may not be used as a 'blanket' spell to sever all arcane connections to a magus.

A third alternative is that defigatores may know ways to preserve their collections of arcane connections from such magics. Firstly, if carried on their person, it would not be unreasonable to expect the caster of *Confound the Connection* to have to breach the defigator's *Parma Magica* to destroy the contagious bond. Defigatores may be in the habit of crafting special boxes which have a *Charm against Magic* effect (or even a *Charm against Corpus Magic* which would be more effective for the same level), as well as some variant on *Charm against Putrefaction*.

Specularii (+2 Virtue)

This Inner Mystery is used to gain glimpses of information about the future. This is a subject normally closed to Hermetic magi, but through their knowledge of how images are reflections of the Macrocosm, initiates of the Ars Sympathia can broach the veil of the future.

The defigator needs a polished surface to gaze into, and the surface used must be appropriate to the information he or she hopes to glean. Thus the edge

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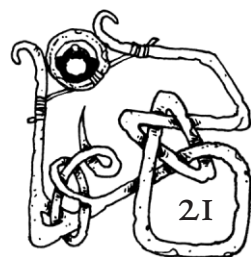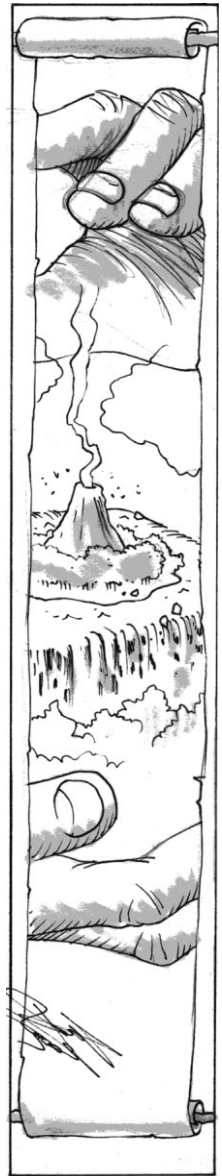
New Hermetic Flaw: Contagious Vis -2

This flaw is virtually unique to those who follow the *Ars Sympathia*, but by no means do all practitioners of this mystery possess it. It may be purchased at character creation, or may be gained through an initiation ordeal.

Whereas most magi can use vis without consideration of its physical form or its origin, those magi whose magic hinges on Sympathy find that the origin of the vis they use — for whatever purpose — influences the outcome of their magic. Therefore they need to carefully select the vis used as appropriate to the project at hand as well as ensuring that the Hermetic Art is correct. Strange side-effects occur with the 'wrong type' of vis, even though the intended effect still occurs as planned. The side-effects produced are appropriate to the laws of similarity. Thus to cast a spell to create a tree (Creo Herbam), Creo vis deriving from any vegetable source is most appropriate. Creo vis contained in hazel nuts will create a hazel tree, Creo vis from sunflowers will create a tree with unusual blossoms. However, Creo vis from the reproductive organs of a billy-goat would produce a bizarre tree, such as one with obscenely-shaped fruit, or one that bleated whenever it was touched.

Vim vis distilled fresh from a magical aura is considered the 'purest' vis, but even this may be infected with contagious resonances, if, for example, the aura results from a mighty battle between two wizards. The storyguide must adjudicate the suitability of any vis used to the task, and decide upon the potential side-effects of using the 'wrong type' of vis. Vis from Infernal or Faerie sources are particularly unpredictable. The only activity requiring vis which is exempt from this effect is studying Arts from vis.

of a sword is suitable to divine futures regarding conflicts or battles, a new coin for mercantile matters, the eyes or fingernails of a person for health, etc. The defigator must then cast *Summoning the Distant Image* whilst concentrating on the light scattered by the reflection. The arcane connection used for this spell must also be appropriate to the subject matter. Initiation into this virtue includes the learning of secret names which are then chanted, exhorting the airy spirits and daemons to reveal the future. The images seen by the magus through the spell will then change to reflect the most likely future. The defigator must specify how much in advance he wants to scry, bearing in mind that the further into the future he reaches, the less reliable his results. The defigator must formulate a specific question in his mind that pertains to the arcane connection that he possesses. The Storyguide should then make an Intelligence + Hermetic Sympathy stress roll on behalf of the defigator.

Depending on how good the roll was, the defigator will see and hear snatches of the important future events revolving around the person or place to which he has the arcane connection. These images will be appropriate to answering the question asked. Note that some events may not seem important at the time, but the airy spirits are not bound by time, and are aware of their true importance. In addition, the visions appearing are of importance to the target — not the scryer. A defigator may wish to see the future of a keep during a siege by using an arcane connection to the castle's chatelaine, but instead learns of her personal escape plans, a matter of far more immediate import to her! Note also that the information gained pertains to the object of the connection; thus if you have an arcane connection to the castle walls you may discover the answer to "Will the walls withstand the battering ram" or "Will the walls be stormed", but not "Who will win the battle."

When specularii is attempted, the storyguide should determine the Importance and Influence of the subject of the vision. The Importance is how strongly the event under question affects the people involved. A Trivial event might be one that relates to an unimportant detail of someone's life, or has little direct relevance to the questioner or the surrounding area. For example, trying to get a vision at the site of a theft from a farmer might fall into this category. The theft has no direct effect on the character, nor does it have any reaching consequences on anyone other than the farmer's immediate family. A Minor event might have a moderate influence on a person, community or region. An example of a Minor event would be one relating to the disappearance of the local priest. He has the potential to affect the lives of a large number of people, especially seeing as the reason he has disappeared is that he has been kidnapped by an Unseelie faerie. A Major event would relate to an event with far-reaching consequences, or that changes someone's life in a major way, such as a death.

The Influence of an event is how many people it affects. An event of Personal Influence is only directly relevant to a single person. An event that is Locally Influential might affect a small region or community, such as the covenant, or a smallish town. An event of Regional Influence will affect a whole region — the county that the character is in at the moment, or a city. It might have even further reaching consequences, at the discretion of the storyguide.

Once the storyguide has determined the Importance and Influence of the event under question, the roll should be made. The Ease Factor is dependent on the Importance and Influence — note that it is easier for the airy spirits to show the defigator events that influence more people. An attempt to view an event that affects the whole of the Languedoc is more likely to be successful than a specularii to discover who stole the widow Hebburn's chickens.

The visions that the magus sees are only one possible future, albeit the most likely one given current conditions. However, a defigator can only scry upon the future of a particular person or place once in a

Importance and Influence	Example	Roll Required
Major, Regional	The Albigensian Crusade	9+
Minor, Regional	The appointment of a new Bishop	12+
Trivial, Regional	The trysts of the king's daughter	15+
Major, Local	The murder of a priest	10+
Minor, Local	The marriage of the mayor	13+
Trivial, Local	The temperament of the local Fae Court	16+
Major, Personal	The murder of a farmer	11+
Minor, Personal	The location of a lost valuable	14+
Trivial, Personal	The theft of a horse	18+

week; all subsequent attempts at Specularii just show the current image.

Nota bene: The intent with the current system is that events which affect a lot of people are easy to forsee, but only in general details. Specific information is much more obscure. Some storyguides may prefer, for purposes of game balance, that unimportant information is easy to obtain through specularii, but important information is harder. In this case, reverse the order of the ease factors in the table above.

Vultivoli (+3 Virtue)

This inner mystery allows a defigator to craft an effigy which then becomes a durable arcane connection. The effigy may then be used as a standard arcane connection, a Sympathetic Connection for boosting Penetration, Certámen or Parma, or it can be used to cast a specialised groups of spells called Defixiones.

Vultivoli only works on specific individuals; it cannot be used to create an arcane connection to a specific place. The process starts with the creation of

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Informing the Wizard's Effigy

Muto Terram, Level 15 (20 without Hermetic Sympathy)

R: Arc, D: Diam, T: Small

Spell Focus: +2 a potter's sculpting tools

Requisites: Intellego, Imaginem

This spell creates an exact copy of a particular person in wax, clay, wood or bone, perfect in every detail except for size. First, a rough mannequin must be made in wax, clay, wood or the like. This spell is then cast using an arcane connection to the person whose image is to be imprinted on the effigy; and a casting requisite (if necessary) appropriate to the material of the mannequin. The spell summons the image of the person in question, and then moulds the image to fit the form (thus it is like a Creo spell, which starts with a Platonic form, which then informs primal matter to make substance). The spell is used particularly by defigatores with the Vultivoli Inner Mystery to transform a short-lived arcane connection into a long-lived one.

Casting requisites depend on the material used to craft the image — Animal if wax, Herbam if wood, etc.

Level rationale: Muto Terram 3, +4 mag for Range, -1 mag for Duration, +2 mag for InIm effect.

---

a mannequin, a mundane representation of the person to be affected. These mannequins are usually made of some pliable material such as clay or wax, but may also be carved from wood or bone. The mannequin can be made by hand (in which case a specific Craft skill is required), else it can be made with a specific spell, *Informing the Wizard's Effigy*. The disadvantage of the spell is that it requires an active arcane connection, but this can be of limited duration, such as shed skin or excrement which has a short life span (See *Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition* p. 74 for more details). This Mystery requires that the mannequin is of high quality — it must be as near to an exact copy of the target as possible.

Once the mannequin has been prepared, the defigator spends several weeks incanting secret chants over it, forging an arcane connection. The exact time varies with the defigator's skill — he can make as many effigies in a season as he has levels in Hermetic Sympathy, although he can only have one effigy of any one person at once. After this time has been spent, the mannequin is ritually given the same name as the target, at which point it becomes an active arcane connection. This creation, now called an *effigy*, has a lifespan dependent on its quality: make a stress roll modified by Dex + Craft (if the mannequin was hand-made) or Int + Finesse (if made with a spell). A total of 6+ means the arcane connection will last for several months; a 12+ means it will last for several years; a 15+ means it will last for several decades. For the exact length of time, if needed, roll a simple die each time a period of time elapses. If the result of the die is lower than the total number of time periods elapsed, the connection fades. For example, a connection that lasts for 'months' will always last at least one month; fail after two months only if the die roll comes up a 1; fade after three months on a 1 or a 2; and so on. Note that the defigator can choose for the effigy's connection to last for a shorter time category if desired, and all connections fail upon the death of their maker.

Effigies are more powerful than standard arcane connections. For a start, the connection can be broken only in three ways — when the duration elapses, if the effigy is physically destroyed or if the defigator who made it dies. Spells such as *Confound the Connection* have no effect. Secondly, as well as being an arcane connection, the effigy also counts as a +3 modifier for Sympathetic Connections (*The Mysteries* p. 25-27). Thirdly, they allow the use of Defixiones spells.

Defixiones

These are a special group of Hermetic spells that are amongst the oldest practices of the Order, reaching back in an unbroken line to the sorcerers of

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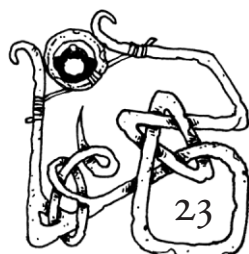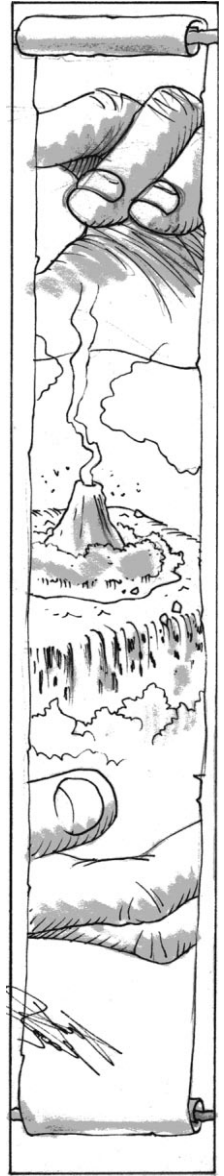
Rome, and before them, Ancient Greece. A defixio (sing.) is a curious mix of ritual spell and enchanted item, and they are only possible though the Inner Mystery of Vultivoli.

Defixiones consist of three components — an effigy, a lead tablet (*lamella*) and an incantation. The effigy must be made using the Vultivoli Inner Mystery. The lamella is engraved and infused with vis during a season of laboratory work. The incantation which accompanies the defixio is crafted at the same time as the lamella is made, and is effectively a one-use ritual spell. Design the spell according to the guidelines given below. The defigator may experiment if he wishes. The spell's level must be less than the maker's Int + Technique + Form + Aura + Hermetic Sympathy, else the defixio is beyond the magus's power to create. One pawn of vis must be invested into the lamella for every 5 levels (or fraction thereof) of the spell's level. Each defixio is unique to the named target, and if the defigator wishes to use exactly the same curse against a different target, he must create the lamella and defixio again.

The lamella bears the 'charges' against the target and the effects that the spell will have — a list of crimes and punishment, if you will. To lay the defixio upon the target, the defigator must chant the incantation over the lamella whilst rolling it up and hammering it flat. Copper nails are then driven through ritually proscribed parts of the effigy. This process takes fifteen minutes for every magnitude of the cursing spell, and consumes the vis invested into the lamella. The effigy and lamella are then buried somewhere where the target of the magic is likely to come near. As soon as the target comes within Range Reach of the buried effigy, the effects of the defixio activate (assuming that any magic resistance of the target is overcome), and can only be broken with the destruction of the effigy. Note that the target of the defixio is named in the lamella and is the origin of the arcane connection used to make the effigy. This target is the only one who will be affected by this casting of the ritual spell.

Creating a defixio: All defixiones should be designed like normal spells, with the following guidelines. All defixiones have a Range of Arcane Connection. The Duration is a special duration, Until Expiry of Effigy, (normally equivalent to Permanent, but for those with Vultivoli, treat as Season. The Duration of Until (Condition) was introduced in *Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition* p. 137 as a Duration of Faerie Magic). Spells with this duration cannot usually be dispelled by formulaic magic if that is not part of the condition. These spells can therefore have a duration of several decades! The Target of the spell is nearly always Individual. All defixiones are effectively one-use ritual spells, and will not work without an effigy and lamella, and can only be made to work by those with the inner mystery of Vultivoli. In addition, they will only work for the intended target.

Lifting a defixio: There are only a few ways in which a defixio may be lifted. The first is the destruction of the effigy, if it can be found. Expiry of the duration of the effigy will also end the spell, as will the death of the caster. Finally, ritual spells designed to break curses (such as *Free the Accursed Body* and *Return of Mental Lucidity*) can remove the effects of the defixio; the level of these spells must match or exceed the level of the curse-spell.

There are five traditional types of defixiones, each designed to have a particular effect on the target. Note that each of these categories includes a number of Technique / Form combinations. These spells tend to be very high level, because of the extreme range and duration, however, they are also very difficult to break. They are all designated as 'Defixio' spells, indicating that not only do they have all the requirements of a ritual spell, they also need a lamella and an effigy to work. All the example spells

given below are named after excerpts from real defixiones discovered around the Greek and Roman world.

Defixiones iudicariae, were originally designed to do harm to one's adversaries at a trial. These spells generally fall under the Hermetic Technique of Mentem, particularly Perdo Mentem to make people forget, Rego Mentem to make them unable to speak, and Muto Mentem to leave them confused about the details. Although they need not be used exclusively in criminal proceedings, many magi have found them useful at Tribunal against specific political enemies (although this is against the Code). Spells of this type are tied to a particular event — the target will be affected whenever they attempt to recall or speak about things tied to the event specified on the lamella.

> *Let Pherenikos be bound before Hermes and Hekate, just as this lead is worthless and cold, so let that man and his hatred be cold towards me*
>
> Muto Mentem, 55, Defixio
> R: Arc., D: Until, T: Ind.
> This spell will cause a person to abandon their hatred for the magus and be forever his staunchest ally. (Attica, Greece, 4th century BC)
> Level rationale: Guideline 20, +4 mag for Range, +3 mag for Duration

Defixiones amatoriae, which have the aim of causing wild passion in the target. The Ancients used these spells to make sexual conquests, but any positive emotion can be affected. Thus these spells can be used to inspire love, loyalty, even worship. They can be very useful for gaining the assistance of influential mundanes, although the Order frowns on such activities.

> *I ask of you, angels who rule the fates of the children of Adam and Eve, let Michael find favour and affection in Sarah's eyes and do not let her belong to any man save him*
>
> Muto Imaginem, 30, Defixio
> R: Arc., D: Until, T: Ind.
> Requites: Intellego, Mentem
> This spell will cause the named man to appear more attractive to the named woman. The spell finds what qualities are most desired by the female target, and changes the man's image to match those qualities. As far as she is concerned, his Presence is increased by +1, or rises to 0, whichever produces the highest result. The man gets a +3 on rolls to charm the named woman. He may prove to be equally attractive to other women, however. (Palestine, 3rd century AD)
> Level rationale: Guideline 10, +2 mag for Range, +2 mag for Duration

Defixiones agonisticae, designed originally for the amphitheatre, can influence the outcome of conflicts and contests by sapping strength and skill. The majority are Perdo Corpus spells, leaving their targets drained of fatigue levels or inflicted with wasting diseases.

> *I invoke you, holy angels and dwellers in the underworld, in order that just as I hand over to you that impious, lawless and accursed Kardelos, so put him on a bed of torment*
>
> Perdo Corpus, 35, Defixio
> R: Arc., D: Until, T: Ind.
> This spell will cause severe pain so that the target is unable to move. (Rome, end of the 4th century AD)
> Level rationale: Guideline 10, +2 mag for Range, +3 mag for Duration

Defixiones ulciscendes, traditionally used against slanderers and thieves, form a general category of spells of revenge against those who have wronged the caster.

> *I call upon and beseech the highest god against those who by deceit murdered or cast a spell on poor Heraklea, untimely dead, causing her to spill her innocent blood in unjust fashion*
>
> Rego Vim, 55, Defixio
> R: Spec., D: Until, T: Ind.
> This spell summons spirits of vengeance, called *erinnyes* in Greek, to enact the vengeance specified in the lamella. The spirits attach themselves to their target using the arcane connection of the effigy, and start by causing misfortune to him. Over time they will systematically destroy his livelihood and drive him from his home, until eventually he goes mad. The erinnyes appear as three dog-faced women with brass scourges, but treat them as a single spirit with a Magic Might of 40. The original curse was set up on a stone on the island of Rheneia for all passers-by to see, the effigy presumably made with an arcane connection discovered at the murder scene. (Rheneia, Greece, 2nd century AD)
> Level rationale: Guideline 40, +3 mag for Duration

Defixiones mercatoriae were used against economic competitors, and to bring ruin to craftsmen. They can cause bad luck or loss of skill, or prompt negative personality traits.

> *I bind Lusanias the blower from the silver works, and whatever work he produces and his possessions*
>
> Perdo Terram, 40, Defixio
> R: Arc., D: Until, T: Spec.
> This curse is carried by the spell's target, but affects everything in the room that he works in (this is an example of the non-Hermetic nature of defixiones). Every small item in the room touched by the spell's target is damaged, although not necessarily obviously so. Items will break or crumble with the smallest force, and generally prove useless. (Athens, 5th century BC)
> Level rationale: Guideline 10, +2 mag for Range, +3 mag for Duration, +1 mag for Target

Imaginarii (+3 Virtue)

The mystery of Imaginarii allows a magus to create an illusion with a significant amount of reality.

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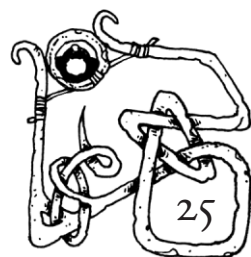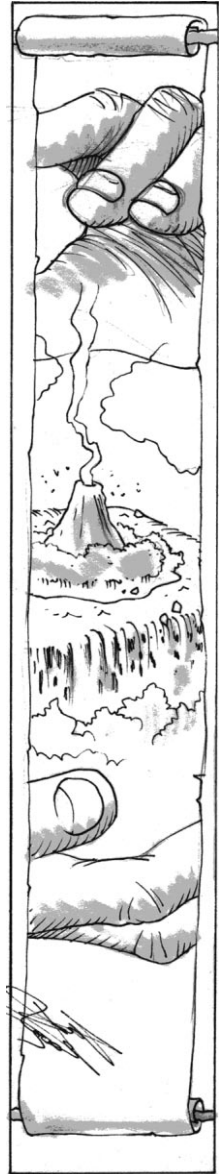
The defigator uses Imaginem magics to create or alter an image which not only has the same properties that a real item of the same type would have, but can act independently and intelligently if it is an illusion of a living being. These images are called imaginarii (singular imaginarius)

All imaginarii are Creo or Muto Imaginem spells. They may only be created by those with this virtue, but may be spontaneous or formulaic spells. When created as a formulaic spell, they cannot be cast by those who have not been initiated into this mystery. When a magus creates an imaginarius using this mystery, he is actually briefly creating a standard Hermetic Imaginem spell which is then 'occupied' by an airy spirit (see 'Theurgy' in *The Mysteries*). The airy spirit (or daemon) then inhabits the illusion until its duration expires, giving the image its solidity and independent action. The spell is therefore a particularly powerful expression of the Law of Similarity - by making something that looks like a horse, the magus creates something that is a horse, albeit for a brief time.

The basic level for an imaginarius is 20 for an unliving thing and 30 for a living thing (either target or effect), whether it is Creo or Muto (Range: Reach, Duration: Sun and Target: Individual). These illusions affect all five senses and are physically tangible. It behaves as a real item of that type would behave, so that flames flicker and spread, and a sword can be used to strike opponents. A level 30 Muto Imaginem imaginarius could make a rock look like a horse. The horse would move, make noises, smell and possibly allow itself to be ridden.

Imaginarii are no more flexible than normal formulaic spells, and tend to be less flexible than normal Imaginem spells. Thus while the Hermetic spell *Phantasmal Animal* creates any animal, there are many imaginarii, one for every species of animal. In general, use Creo and Muto spells of other forms as guidance for how broad imaginarii should be, but remember that these spells create effects rather then duplicating other spells.

An object affected by a Muto imaginarius is 'really' whatever it is underneath. The horse in the above example is really a rock, and can be detected as such. Second and Faerie Sight allows characters to detect the presence of the airy spirit if they make a Per + Sight roll against an Ease Factor of half the spell's level. Note that even if you know that something is an imaginarius it will still affect you as if it was what it appears to be.

An imaginarius cannot have a duration longer than Sun unless vis is used. Without any sustenance, the airy spirits will depart after this time. The effects of an imaginarius do not disappear at the end of the duration; however, only a semblance of reality is created by the airy spirit inhabiting the image, not true reality. The ashes of a scroll burnt by an imaginarius fire, if examined, turn out to be fragments of the original, and no information has actually been lost (it is just in pieces). A person wounded by a sword created by Creo Imaginem using this Mystery turns out not to have a wound after all; but one wounded by a rock changed into a sword by Muto Imaginem will suffer from blows from a rock (which is invariably less damaging than the sword blows, else why bother with the imaginarius?)

(NB: The details of this Mystery draw heavily on Lesser Glamour, a +3 Virtue for 'Merinita Mysteries' by David Chart, published in *Hermes Portal #4*)

Simulacrum (+4 Virtue)

Through this Inner Mystery, the defigator learns to stave off the ravages of old age by creating a simulacrum that will display the effects of age rather than the magus himself. This mystery does not enable the magus to live any longer than a non-initiated magus, however, he will tend to weather old age better.

The process begins with the creation of a mannequin, much like the inner mystery of Vultivoli, which is a prerequisite for this mystery. The mannequin is formed from a year's worth of the magus's exuviae — toenail clippings, hair, dried skin, etc., ground and mixed to a paste using the magus's own blood. Any item that forms an arcane connection (see the table in *Wizard's Grimoire, Revised Edition*) may be used to constitute the mannequin. Most defigatores choose to make a man-sized mannequin, but they can be smaller if desired. The next process, after the mannequin has been created, is to transform it into a durable material such as stone, bronze or the like. The choice of material is down to the magus, but the material affects the utility of the simulacrum much as the size does. The transformation process requires a Muto Corpus spell with a Terram requisite, of eighth magnitude, vis-boosted to instantaneous duration. If the magus is not capable of creating such a spell, he may be able to acquire it from fellow members of this Mystery. The final step in the creation of the mannequin is to use *Informing the Wizard's Effigy* to make the mannequin into an effigy of himself. A new version of this spell may need to be learnt with a Target of Individual rather than Small, depending upon the chosen size of the simulacrum. It is vitally important for the following steps that the effigy is as perfect as the defigator can make it. The Int + Finesse roll to craft the effigy into the likeness of the magus must exceed 18. If this roll is failed, it may be recast, and the defigator receives a +1 bonus to the finesse roll for each previous attempt. However, a botched finesse roll will ruin the mannequin and the magus must begin again. Note that if the magus has a talisman or a familiar (or both), these must also be figured into the effigy.

Up until now, the process has deviated only slightly from that to create a standard effigy. However, the magus now spends a season imbuing the effigy of himself with Vim *vis*. This process is exactly the same as if opening the item for enchantment in terms of the amount of *vis* required, based on the size and material of the effigy. To complete the sim-

ulacrum, the defigator needs to spend time incanting secret words taught him upon initiation into this virtue. In the first season spent doing this, make an Int + Hermetic Sympathy quality roll, with a ease factor equal to the number of pawns of Vim *vis* used to open the simulacrum for enchantment. If the roll fails, for each additional season a simple die roll is added to the total until the accumulated total equals or exceeds the ease factor. At this point, the simulacrum is primed.

As soon as this process is finished, all arcane connections to the defigator cease to work, even if they are effigies created by another defigator. From this point forth, the only arcane connection that will ever exist to the magus is the simulacrum itself. Sympathetic connections (see *The Mysteries*, p. 25-27) no longer apply either, and astrologers cannot create astrological connections using their inner mystery of Celestial Magic. The disadvantage is that anything that happens to the simulacrum will happen to the magus. If an enemy manages to get their hands on a magus's simulacrum, they can inflict all sorts of tortures upon it knowing that the magus is suffering in exactly the same way. Any spells cast upon a simulacrum affect the magus as if the spells were cast upon him, without the need for a Range of Arcane Connection. For this reason, defigatores keep their simulacra well hidden.

The simulacrum has a number of 'slots' equal to the number of pawns of Vim vis used to open the item for enchantment, just like a standard enchanted item. These slots may be used to instil standard powers into the simulacrum using the standard *Ars Magica* rules, including the level of the effect and any modifications from frequency of use, penetration totals and so on (although limiting use by others is not an available option). All of these powers instilled into the effect manifest through the magus however, rather than the simulacrum, regardless of the distance between the two. Instilling powers that have a Range of Reach or further have +10 added to their level of effect, those with Range Personal (meaning the magus rather than the effigy) have a -5 to their level of effect. Powers specifically designed to affect the simulacrum (but not the magus) have their final level divided by two. Such effects might include spells to protect the simulacrum from harm. When instilling powers into a simulacrum, Hermetic Sympathy is added to the lab total.

More useful to the magus than instilling powers however, is the facility for the 'slots' in the simulacrum to stave off the effects of old age. To enable this effect, one slot must be dedicated to the effect by applying a dose of the magus's standard longevity potion. This process takes less than a day (thus does not interfere with standard seasons). From the moment this is done, the defigator will not appear to age a single day. In addition, when the longevity potion next fails, the results of the ageing roll are applied to the simulacrum rather than the magus. One free slot is consumed for each level of an Afflic-

tion or each Decrepitude point. If there are no free slots, the magus suffers the effects of the ageing roll instead. When a simulacrum absorbs an ageing effect it develops a blemish or rust spot appropriate to the effect absorbed. After absorbing the effect caused by a failed roll, the simulacrum must be 'primed' again by applying another dose of the magus's longevity potion. If the simulacrum has no spare space to absorb ageing effects, they are applied to the magus instead, but the simulacrum continues to store the effects it has already absorbed. Thus if a magus has a Physical Affliction stored at level 4, and suffers an ageing effect which increases this Affliction by 2, he suffers the effects of the Affliction at level 2, but it is counted as if it were a 6 for all other purposes (that is, it cannot be increased further). Defigatores do not live any longer than other Hermetic Magi, but they weather the ravages of old age much better.

A defigator can only have one simulacrum at a time. He can choose to dissolve the bond between himself and his simulacrum safely, without destroying himself in the process. This takes a few days to perform, but is automatic, requiring no roll. However, all powers invested into the item are lost, and all stored ageing affects are immediately transferred to the magus. Anyone with the outer mystery of Hermetic Sympathy can make an attempt to dissolve someone else's simulacrum if they possess it with an Int + Hermetic Sympathy roll of 12+, with the same effect. Note that dissolving the simulacrum of your enemy is often a more subtle form of revenge than simply destroying it — although the latter will result in the death of the opponent, the former will cause all of his afflictions to come back and haunt him.

Mystae

Wanderers within Wisdom

Symbol: A road, stretching to the horizon, with a pair of figures upon it.

House Affilations: Criamon, Mercere, Bonisagus

Origin Myth: The Wanderers within Wisdom, or 'peregrinatores', as they sometimes style themselves, claim ancestry from an unnamed wizard, with whom Bonisagus was said to have spent a winter in study. It is said that after these talks, Bonisagus added two new concepts to his growing theory of magic — the art of Imaginem, and, more subtly, the way of integrating the Law of Similarity into spell foci. Some claim that this had more wide-reaching effects, for the Law permeates itself throughout Hermetic magic, from arcane connections to the *Parma Magica*, from the casting tools of Verditius to the certámen of Tremere. It is interesting to some that Greek texts mention a class of vagabond priests who begged for alms and uttered mystic pronouncements. Perhaps this society is more ancient than anyone realises.

Levels of Initiation: there is no formal structure to this society. They do not even meet regularly, and it can be quite a trial for a young initiate to find other members to advance his learning. Much of the
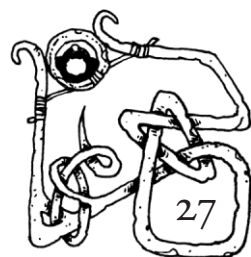
transmission of this art is between *magister* (master) and *tyro* (pupil) as they wander from place to place.

Goals and Practices: These magi are rarely members of covenants; if they are, then they will rarely spend much time there. They usually travel in pairs, magister and tyro, and rent laboratory space from other magi, paying in the knowledge that they gain. The goals of this group have been lost to the ravages of time, so that the society is now completely fractured, with only remnants existing. Some are trying to gather the scattered facts about their mysterious founder, believing that once his history has been reconstructed, their goals shall once more become clear.

Whereas it is true that these mystae are linked to both Criamon and wanderers, there is no evidence linking them to the wandering covenant of Semitae in the Stonehenge Tribunal. To some, the very lack of evidence raises suspicions.

Note that a tyro often has the Patron Virtue, but suffers from either an Obligation to assist his master or the Subservience ordeal. A magister gains assistance from his tyro for all laboratory activities.

Virtues: All defigatores mystae Virtues, Magical Imagination (+1), Affinity with Intellego (+3), Study Bonus (+2)

Preferred Initiation Ordeals: Subservience, Sacrifice of Power (Slow Caster), Sympathetic Resonances, Contagious Vis

Line of Hetera

Hetera was never a magus, but the name has been used to describe a lineage of members of house Ex Miscellanea. Claiming to spring directly from a Roman haruspex, these magi are possibly the best seers in the Order. They also claim lineage from the Delphic Oracles, but few consider this to be more than just a story. The current Prima of house Ex Miscellanea, Immanola, is rumoured to be a member of this line. The line is based primary in the Tribunals of Thebes and Rome, and it is believed that one member of the line is always present at a particular well in Constantinople. They choose their apprentices based on natural intuition for omens, and have been known to perform bizarre initiations that grant the abilities of Visions or Divination. Snakes are very popular amongst this line; its members often have snakes as Magical Animal Companions, and when they take familiars, they are invariably serpents.

Starting Abilities: Magic Theory 3, Parma Magica 2, Scribe Latin 2, Speak Latin 4, Speak Own Language 4, Augury 3, Hermetic Sympathy 3

Starting Experience: 13 + age

Required Virtues/Flaws: Hermetic Sympathy +1, Augury +3, Specularii +2

Line of Fabianus

Fabianus was a member of House Tytalus in the early part of the tenth century. Doubtless he was a member of a lineage harking back to the magical practitioners of Rome, for his descendants are still the masters of defixiones. Following rumours, he spent a lot of time travelling around the Baltic Sea in the north of the Rhine Tribunal, and even beyond its limits into Lithuania and further. There he met a group of pagan priests whom he managed to befriend, and learnt that their magic had strong resonances with his own. He resolved to learn from these Slavonic 'Curse-Makers', and he taught what he learnt to his apprentices.

The Line of Fabianus are notorious within the Order for being aggressively political, even for members of House Tytalus. Proportional to the number of members, more Wizard's Wars have been fought (and won) by members of this line than any group within the Order. The Quaesitores see them as dangerous troublemakers, and will harass known members of this line. They are particularly despised by House Flambeau because they do not 'fight fair' — they level curses against their opponents, causing bad luck and bad health, ruining concentration and influencing votes at tribunals. As well as their natural talents for Hex and Vultivoli, they can also be taught / initiated by elder members of the lineage to the Virtues of Craft Bane (+2) and Grant Curse (+4)

Starting Abilities: Intrigue 2, Magic Theory 4, Organisation Lore (Order of Hermes) 1, Parma

Magica 3, Scribe Latin 2, Speak Latin 5, Speak Own Language 4, Hermetic Sympathy 2, Hex 2

Starting Experience: 3 + age

Required Virtues/Flaws: Hermetic Sympathy +1, Vultivoli +3, Hex +2, Discredited Lineage –1

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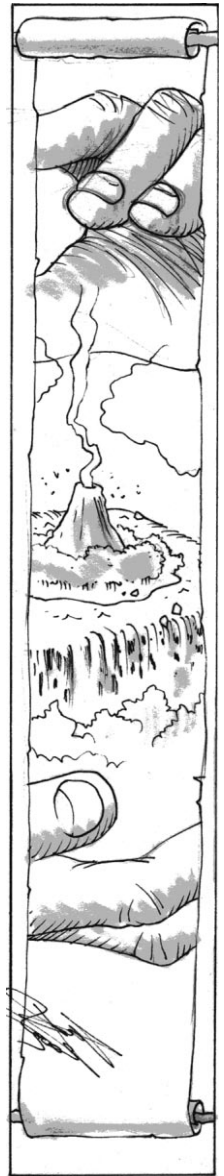Faraone & Obbink (1991) Magika Hiera. Oxford University Press

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Publisher's corner

Hello!

It looks like things went completely out of control this time! Ten articles, more than ten contributors and 52 pages. But who will complain? (Maybe I should raise the cover price?)

So, while you're reading these lines, you've certainly already discovered the news from the line editor, David Chart (you're doing a great job!), Adam Bank and Jeremiah Genest's take on the creation of the world, new rules for twilight and ageing by David Woods and Ars Sympathia by Mark Shirley. Now that your magus has gained a few more years to understand the world he is living in, he can experience the laws of sympathy and rediscover the magical practices of Antiquity.

And you still have to read (if you read this zine sequentially) the legend of St. Walaric by Sheila Thomas (parental control: explicit content), a new look at the Order and the Church by Mike Sloothaak (Quaesitorial control: dangerous content), Monty's back! by Jérôme Darmont (almost no danger, just hilarious), Michaël's new Heretic's Corner (Ars fan control: provocative content) and a few safe articles: the Omnibus Grimoire by Andrew Gronosky and Ex Bibliotheca Magvilli by Eric Minton, giving more than enough matter to fill the empty shelves of your Covenant's library, and our Dear Abelard's chronicles.

Last, I asked Radja to draw a cover on the theme of the world's creation to fit with Adam and Jeremiah's article. Of course, I got a gorgeous creation of the world (as you've certainly already seen). At least, Radja remembered she had to be dressed. I just hope that, seeing Sheila's article and Radja's cover, parents of young Ars Magica fans will not be too angry with me.

Next issue should be ready at the end of February, and this time, things will be under control!

Who's Who?

Adam Bank

Adam Bank co-authored Ars Magica supplements *Kabbalah: Mythic Judaism* and *The Mysteries*. Adam recently contributed to Atlas Game's *Occult Lore* by adapting astrology, alchemy, and magical memory for use in d20. He lives with his family in Texas.

Jeremiah Genest

Jeremiah Genest is the co-author of *Kaballah: Mythic Judaism* and *The Mysteries*.

Mark Shirley

Mark Shirley is, according to his last appraisal, a biological systems modeller, but is unsure what that means. His work involves nice fluffy things such as squirrels, badgers, arctic foxes, slugs and bubonic plague. He lives and works on the border between the Stonehenge and the Loch Leglean Tribunals (a mere 20 miles from the covenant of Horsingas), where he shares his home with two ferrets named after his grandmothers. Mark has been an avid fan of Ars Magica since second edition, and is currently joining his fifth saga, while still story-guiding the fourth.
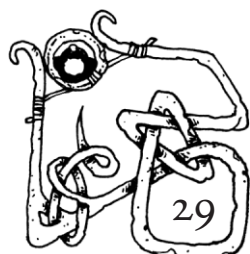
Saint Walaric's cures

by Sheila Thomas

Summary

In Picardy, not far from the abbey where St.Walaric was a monk, lies a chapel in the woods where pilgrims go to pray for the cure and prevention of kidney stones. The shrine is adorned with wax models of male and female genitalia. At one end of the altar are fixed two silver rings, one larger, the other smaller, through which a man in need of the cure may put his penis. There is a monk on duty by the altar who will give a pilgrim a blessed piece of Venetian gold thread which the visitor may take away with him and, to prevent kidney stones, tie in a certain fashion about his penis while praying. (In More's account, the monk is teased about how a woman may make use of the thread.) It is also a tradition at the shrine that, as a last resort against kidney stones, a man may have a candle made to the same length as his penis. This candle is then lit in the chapel and certain prayers are said as it burns away. More reports this last information as being passed on by a woman at the chapel and adds a suggestion that doing so might shrivel the penis.

Source

More, Thomas (1529) *Dialogue Concerning Heresies, Book II, Chapter 10* (In: Medieval Popular Religion 1000-1500, A Reader, ed J. Shinners; Ontario, Canada; Broadview Press; 1997. 1-55111-133-0) pages 203-204.

Legend

I was making my way across the gentle countryside of Picardy after a period of study amongst the scholars in Paris, en route for the coast and a boat home to England. The road I followed was little frequented but from time to time I encountered a merchant, farmer or pilgrim and often I took the opportunity for conversation.

All over Christendom there are places of pilgrimage; often these are centers for the veneration and importuning of a saint who has become associated with particular ailments. One such is Saint Walaric (also known as Waleric and Valery) who died early in the seventh century. The abbey most closely associated with the saint is Leuconaus, near the mouth of the River Somme but he is known and venerated throughout France and England and probably further afield. There is a church dedicated to St.Walaric in Alnmouth, close to my place of birth in Northumbria, so when one of my temporary traveling companions mentioned that he was headed for the chapel of Walaric, where he hoped to be cured of a very painful condition, and that this special shrine was but two hour's walk away, I decided to join him for the last part of his journey. The pilgrim walked slowly, obviously in considerable discomfort for he often stopped, grimaced and clutched at his lower back. Throughout our walk, I never heard him complain about the pain and he would not speak of what afflicted him; I soon returned to my musing as he recited prayer after prayer.

The abbey, strikingly sited on a promontory, is a much grander building than the little church at Alnmouth and I strode eagerly ahead towards the main entrance to the monastery but my companion called me back. He gestured towards the woods beyond and said we should go first in that direction. We followed a narrow but well-trodden path away from the monastery, into the woods. Just a few hundred yards along the path we entered a clearing where a small wooden chapel stands. The man went straight inside and I followed close behind. He went to the front and knelt before the altar, while I stayed standing a little further back and offered up prayers of thanks for my journey so far and prayers that I might, with God's grace, reach England on the morrow.

It was quite dark inside the chapel, with but one lamp high up near the altar and a few candles on the epistle side. Just as in every other curing shrine I ever visited, petitioners had left replicas of their ailing body parts. Mindful of my clerical vows, I tried to keep my gaze averted for there were waxen images of the private members of both male and female persons affixed to the walls so that I dare say there were above one hundred of the things in view. I was grateful that no women were here to pray today. The only other supplicant was a monk standing near the candles. In fact, my first impression was mistaken and he was not there as a supplicant but to assist the pilgrims, as I observed a little later when my former companion got to his feet and went to exchange words with the brother.

The sick man was instructed to loosen his lower garment and to insert his member through one or other of the two round silver rings that I could now see where fastened to the end of the altar. I saw the man look at the smaller then the much larger ring before picking one to use. While he reverently performed the prescribed act, the monk offered up prayers, humbly requesting St.Walaric to intercede with Our Lord for the sick man. I too prayed for his healing.

After these intercessions, the monk instructed the man to reinstate his clothing and then to kneel beside the altar. As I watched, the monk pulled out from somewhere I could not see a small ball of what appeared to be gold thread. He carefully cut off a length of perhaps two hand spans using a small knife, put the ball away and laid the cut piece upon the altar. Taking up a ceramic bowl from the altar, he sprinkled the thread with holy water while intoning a prayer so softly that I could hardly catch any of it. Replacing the bowl, he made a sign of the cross over the thread whilst reciting a recognisable blessing. Then he took up the piece of thread and handed it to the man, and seemed to be giving instruction of some kind. Intrigued, I moved a little closer. Indeed, the monk was showing the sick man how to loop the thread, how to tie it, and explaining what prayers
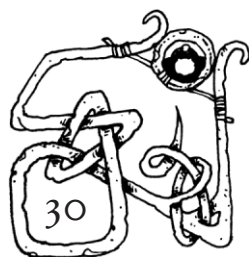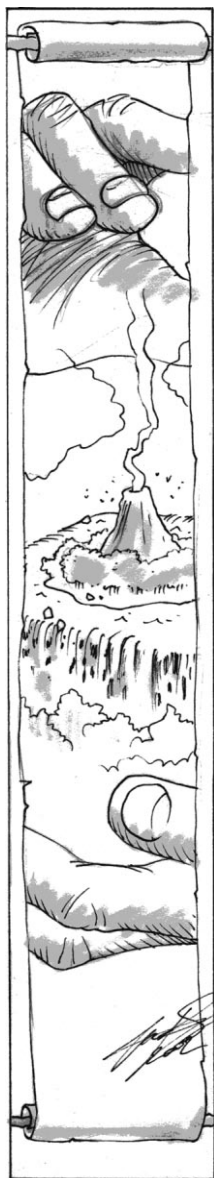
should accompany the operation. This thread is a remedy that one takes away to apply to one's private parts on reaching home, as a means of warding off any recurrence of the painful stones.

The hour of Sext was approaching and I desired to join the community for prayer and Holy Mass so I left the pilgrim still on his knees. I had not yet left the shelter of the trees when I saw a woman coming towards me along the path. She was of middle age and a peasant by the look of her. I bade her 'God bless' and stopped at the edge of the narrow track to allow her to pass, but she was determined to stop and speak with me. Not surprisingly, she assumed I had come for the cure, and she offered advice. If I would tell her the length of my male member, she would undertake to make a candle of the exact same length. If this candle were lit in the chapel, and allowed to burn away whilst certain prayers were said, she assured me that I would never again suffer from the stone.

Story hooks

The silver rings are Invested Devices enchanted with Creo Corpus to effect a cure, the ritual described being the trigger. They have been in use at the chapel for as long as anyone at the monastery can remember and there is no record there of their ori-gin. If someone broke the Code in providing the rings, it was probably so long ago as to be irrelevant now but a curious magus or maga might wish to investigate them.

Is there any truth in the recommendation of the special candle, or is it, as has been said by some, nothing to do with the Saint, but witchcraft? Will the burning of the candle bring a very unpleasant curse on the person it was made for?

According to the legend, only Venetian gold thread is used. Has some form of enchantment been placed upon it before it reaches the monastery? If so, would there be any strange result from using it for some other purpose? If it works to protect a man from this ailment for a period, surely it works for a woman too? Is the thread, in fact, just any gold-colored thread that carries no more benefit than the monk's simple blessing?

Note that St. Walaric's feast day is 1st April; this might be a suitable date for a party to find the chapel, although this place would not generally be considered especially amusing to the pious medieval mind.

Additional references

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http://perso.wanadoo.fr/st.valery/histoire.htm

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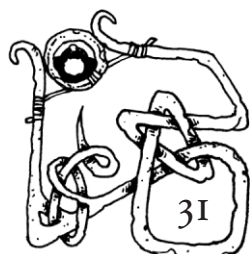
Omnibus Grimoire

by Andrew Gronosky

Author's Note: the Omnibus Grimoire is now accepting new spell submissions. E-mail your submissions to agronosky@attbi.com.

All spells will be peer reviewed before being published in this column. Authors will receive a free issue of Hermes' Portal. *All spells in this column were written by Andrew Gronosky, except where otherwise noted.*

Esteemed colleagues of the Order of Hermes,

It is my honor to present to you the second scroll of my collection of lesser-known spells, assembled from various obscure grimoires throughout the libraries of the Order. I am in the process of creating ten scrolls of spells, one devoted to each Form of magic, in my House's tradition of fostering collaboration and communication among magi. This season's scroll is devoted to the Art of Aquam.

The Form of Aquam is overlooked by many magi. In fact, Aquam is a useful Form, especially since it includes many well-known spells devoted to forming objects out of ice. This grimoire focuses mainly on liquid-related spells, since these do not seem to attract the attention they deserve. Seafaring magi need not be reminded of Aquam's usefulness, and this scroll includes a few spells that are of particular interest to sailors.

I am gratified by the warm reception the first scroll of this grimoire has received. Some of my correspondents have even gone so far as to send me via Redcap spell manuscripts from their own libraries, which I am most happy to include on this scroll. Interested magi may contact me at Harco covenant in the Tribunal of Rome.

Your colleague and servant,
JARIUS OF HOUSE MERCERE

Creo Aquam

Wizard's Washtub
Cr Aq 5
R: Reach; D: Sun; T: Individual
Spell Focus: A lump of soap (+1)
Requisite: Ignem

Fill a container up to the size of a bathtub with warm water. The water is not hot enough to scald a person (unless the caster botches) but may be tepid to steaming. It is suitable for washing people, clothes, or what have you, though one must bring one's own soap. This spell is popular among apprentices, for it saves them the laborious work of heating and carrying water by hand. The water will disappear when the spell duration expires.

Design: Fill a container with water, level 5. Reduce Range to Reach (-1 magnitude) and increase Target to Individual (+1 magnitude). Add an Ignem requisite to heat the water.

Flood of the Creeping Waters
Cr Aq 20
R: Near; D: Special; T: Room

Spell Focus: A stone from the basement of a flooded building (+2)

Cause water to bubble vigorously up from the ground or floor. The water can only originate at or below ground level, so this spell could be cast on a ground-floor room or an open pit, but not in an attic.

The water rises at about three inches per round (two feet per minute) for as long as you concentrate. The water will flow away normally if there is drainage, but if there is not, the room will eventually fill to the top. As soon as you stop concentrating, the water recedes at the same rate it rose. All traces of the water disappear at the next sunrise or sunset.

If you use raw vis to extend Duration, the water you create is nonmagical and does not recede when you stop concentrating.

Design: Create water that is not contained, level 10. Treat Duration as Sun. Increase Target to Room, +2 magnitude.

Torrent of Vitriol
Cr Aq 25
R: Near; D: Diameter; T: Individual
Aimed -1
Spell Focus: A vial of aqua regia (+3)
Requisite: Perdo

Shoot a narrow stream of corrosive acid at a target within range. The acid does +15 damage. If the damage is at least double the target's armor Protection, the armor is destroyed. The target's other equipment may also be damaged at the storyguide's discretion (Quik + Enc 9+ is suggested for Natural Resistance rolls). The acid remains for the spell's duration and may cause additional damage if the target does not remove his clothes or armor. The acid corrodes metal and organic matter, but not earth or stone.

Aqua regia is an alchemical mixture of concentrated nitric and concentrated hydrochloric acid, so called because it can dissolve the royal metal (gold).

This spell was invented by Sebastian of House Flambeau, an outspoken magus who asserts that Creo Ignem is not the only Art combination that can inflict impressive damage. Sebastian is noted for his repertoire of unconventional combat spells.

Design: Create a liquid that does +15 damage on contact, level 20. Reduce Duration to Diameter (-1 magnitude) and increase Target to Individual (+1 magnitude). Add an extra 1 magnitude for the bonus ability to destroy equipment. Add a Perdo requisite to create a destructive liquid, acid.

Intellego Aquam

Probe for Pure Water
In Aq 10
R: Personal; D: Concentration; T: Boundary
Spell focus: A dousing rod (+3)
Requisite: Terram

This is a Hermetic version of the common folk-magic practice of dousing for water. Walk slowly over the area enclosed by the boundary, and you will sense ground water beneath you when you pass over it. If you are using a forked dousing rod, grasp the
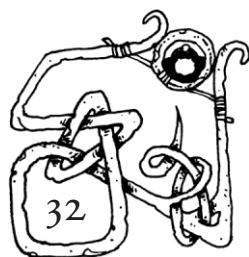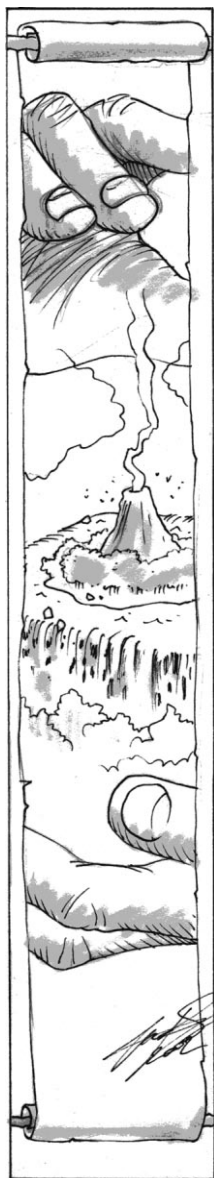
two ends of the fork and hold the rod horizontally in front of you. Its end will dip to point out the presence of water.

You can gauge the depth (below ground) of the water by the strength of the sensation you feel. The depth at which you can detect water is greatest in loose soil, decreasing from 50 feet through loose sand to 5 feet through hard-packed clay. You cannot detect water through stone.

This spell has been discredited by certain Hermetic theorists who claim it violates the Limit of Arcane Connection, and who therefore assert it must be a fraud. Before publishing it in this grimoire, I made a detailed study of this spell and I can assure the reader that it operates not by sensing water through the intervening earth (which would indeed violate the Limit of Arcane Connection), but by detecting tiny variations in soil moisture due to water that has seeped up from below. For this reason, the spell is not infallible. It is unusually subject to mundane conditions such as soil density and the depth underground of the water. It is particularly unreliable when the ground is moist, such as within two days of rainfall.

Design: Get an image of water and its immediate surroundings, level 3. Decrease Range to Personal (-1 magnitude) and increase Target to Boundary (+4 magnitude).

Sense of the Tides and Currents
In Aq 25
R: Personal/Touch; D: Concentration; T: Sight
Spell focus: A lodestone (+3)

You can perceive the invisible motions of water within sight: whether the tide is ebbing or flowing, the strength and direction of currents, the presence of an undertow, etc. If you convey this information to the pilot of a ship or boat, the pilot gains a bonus to relevant rolls equal to 3 plus your Communication (maximum +6), and has one less botch die. If you are piloting yourself, the bonus is +6 (regardless of your Communication) and two less botch dice. This includes rolls to avoid submerged obstacles like rocks or reefs, which become apparent from their effect on the water's motion.

Design: Learn the natural properties of a liquid, Level 5. Increase Target to Sight (+5 magnitude) and decrease Range to Personal (-1 magnitude).

True Sight of the Waters
In Aq 35
R: Personal/Touch; D: Concentration; T: Sight
Spell focus: The eye of a fish (+1)

Similar to True Sight of the Air, but with a larger Target, this spell allows you to see through water regardless of its clarity. You can see through dissolved and suspended materials such as mud, octopus ink, or algae, but not solid objects like schools of fish or kelp beds. You can see as far as line of sight and light conditions allow. If you are outside the water looking into it, this spell eliminates the effect of refraction. If you are under the water looking out, you can see clearly into the air. This spell does not create light, so if you wish to see well at considerable depth, you will need a magical light source.

Note that this spell has a much larger Target than True Sight of the Air, and that the Target guidelines for Intellego Auram are more generous than for Intellego Aquam. A variant of this spell (Eyes of the Fish, Level 25) exists with Target: Room. In open water, it allows clear visibility to 10 paces.

Design: Make your senses unaffected by water, Level 15. Reduce Range to Personal (-1 magnitude) and increase Target to Sight (+5 magnitude).

Muto Aquam

Thaumaturgical Transformation of Water to Wine
Mu Aq 5
R: Reach; D: Sun/Instant; T: Small
Spell focus: A grape (+2)

Transform up to a bucketful of water into wine. The wine changes back when the spell expires. Any impurities in the water are unaffected by this spell.

The caster's Wizard's Sigil may affect the appearance and flavor of the wine. If using the spell focus, crush the grape so its juice falls into the water.

Alas, I have no first-hand experience on whether the wine's intoxicating effects remain when the spell ends, and have not had the opportunity to consult a knowledgeable Corpus theorist who can settle this
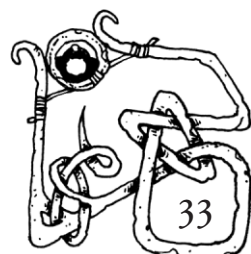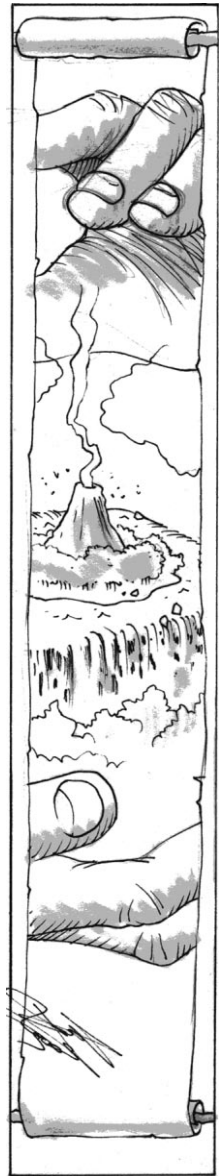
question. I suggest users of this spell conduct experiments on their grogs — judging by the reputation of grogs in general, there should not be a shortage of volunteer subjects.

Design: Change a liquid to another natural liquid, Level 4. Increase Range to Reach (+1 magnitude).

Ice in the Heat of Summer

Mu Aq 25
R: Touch; D: Instant; T: Small
Spell focus: A snowflake (+3)

Transform a Small amount of water (up to a bucketful) into ice. The transformation is permanent, though the ice melts normally if the temperature is above freezing. If using the spell focus, drop the snowflake into the water.

Some magi use ice in their laboratory processes and this is one way of creating it in the summer. Since ice is a natural state of water, the transformation can be permanent without using raw vis (though the ice must then be kept at a freezing temperature).

Design: Change a natural liquid into a corresponding solid, Level 5. Increase Duration to Instant (+4 magnitudes).

Purification of the Corrupted Well

Mu Aq 25; Ritual
R: Reach; D: Instant; T: Individual
Spell focus: Water from a pure spring (+1)

Purify a poisoned, corrupted, or disease-carrying water source, such as a well or spring. The water from that source will henceforward be clear and pure, though it could become corrupted again through mundane or supernatural means. This ritual is effective against mundane contamination, and it can also lift supernatural curses, dispel Hermetic spells, and drive out evil spirits, if a Vim casting requisite is used. Resolve these situations by analogy with the Perdo Vim guidelines, ArM 4 p. 158.

Design: Change a characteristic of a liquid within that liquid's normal range, Level 3. Increase Range to Reach (+1 magnitude), Duration to Instant (+4 magnitudes) and Target to Individual (+1 magnitude). The spell was deemed a Ritual because it is permanent and cannot be dispelled, though this ruling goes beyond the Ritual guidelines (ArM 4, p. 70 and see also the official errata at http://www.atlasgames.com/arm_errata.html).

Perdo Aquam

Shake of the Dog's Back

Pe Aq 15
R: Reach; D: Instant; T: Individual
Spell focus: Fur from a dog (+1)

Instantly dry a wet person or object. This spell does no harm to the target and can gently dry delicate materials, such as paper. With an Imaginem casting requisite, it can also remove stains caused by liquids — useful for cleaning up ink spills in the scriptorium.

Design: Destroy a liquid, Level 5. Increase Range to Reach (+1 magnitude) and Target to Individual (+1 magnitude).
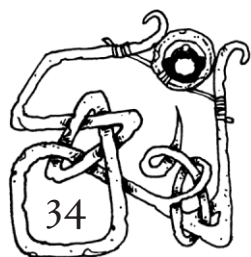
The Impotent Venom

Pe Aq 20; contributed by Eric Minton
R: Reach, D: Instant, T: Small
Spell Focus: A Unicorn's Horn (+5)

Nullify the baneful effects of a poisonous liquid. None of the liquid's other characteristics, such as its color or flavor, are affected. At the Storyguide's discretion, this spell might not be completely effective against a particularly virulent or magical poison, such as a dragon's venom.

Design: Destroy one property of a liquid 15, increase range to Reach (+1 magnitude).

Drain the Malodorous Swamp

Pe Aq 35; Ritual
R: Touch; D: Year/Permanent; T: Boundary
Spell focus: A fly whisk (+1)

Drain a swampy or marshy area, making the ground firm and dry. Surface water will not naturally return while the spell remains active.

Design: This is a variant of *Calling the Odious Drought* (Pe Aq 35, Ritual).

Rego Aquam

Calm the Turbulent Waters

Re Aq 20
R: Near; D: Concentration/Sun; T: Room
Spell Focus: A conch shell (+2)

Quiet all waves, swift currents, and other water turbulence within Near range. Unlike Break the Oncoming Wave (ReAq 10), this spell affects all currents and waves in the area, not just those coming toward you. If using the spell focus, blow the conch shell like a horn to calm the waters.

Design: Control an amount of liquid which is part of a larger body in a natural fashion, Level 10. Increase Target to Room to affect all water in the local vicinity (+2 magnitude).

Command the Steady Current

Re Aq 25
R: Near/Far; D: Concentration; T: Individual
Spell focus: An aquamarine stone (+3)

Control the strength and direction of one current in a body of water, even making it flow uphill. The spell affects an area about 15 paces across. Reversing the current causes great turbulence at the edge of the affected area, where your current collides with the natural current. This spell does not help you control that turbulence — beware of botches.

Design: Control an amount of liquid which is part of a larger body in a slightly unnatural fashion, Level 15. Increase Target to Individual (+1 magnitude) to affect one current. Add 1 magnitude to allow precise control.

Neptune's Chariot

Re Aq 35
R: Far/Sight; D: Conc; T: Structure
Spell focus: A piece of cork (+1)

Cause water to flow under and lift an object, even something as large as a ship or a beached whale. The

object must be in or adjacent to the water — within 5 paces of the water's edge.

The waters then carry the object at walking speed, anywhere in or adjacent to the body of water and within the spell's range. If you are riding on the object (or if the object is your body), you may travel this way for as long as you can maintain concentration. You need a casting Requisite for the Form of the object to be moved. The object you move need not be buoyant, but if it is not, you need a casting requisite for the object's Form and it will sink when the spell ends.

Design: Control an amount of liquid which is part of a larger body of water in a slightly unnatural fashion, Level 15. Increase Range to Far (+1 magnitude) and increase Target to Structure (+3 magnitude).

Monty's back!

by Jérôme Darmont

"Ah ah! I read some imprudent reader complained about the incompleteness of my last effort at vulgarizing my mighty magic in *Mythic Perspectives* #4 (remember all those silly spells inspired by *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). He even requested some insults uttered in an outrageous French accent (free interpretation)! So be it! I am an expert in French accents, believe me!"

Sillywalkus le Drôle, House Ex Miscellanea

Compel the Outrageous Insult

Re Me 30; Requisite: Im
R: Near; D: Diameter; T: Individual
Focus: A pair of mustaches (+2)

Unless s/he makes a Stamina roll of 9+, the target of this spell suddenly feels offensive toward the closest person. The target starts uttering colorful insults to its unfortunate victim. Worst of all, the insults sound like they are spoken in an outrageous French accent (the Imaginem requisite)!

This spell has been invented by Jacatus the Voluble, of House Jerbiton, who presumably didn't like his consortes from the Normandy Tribunal. Obviously, his invention is less effective in France…

Level rationale: 25 (more powerful than controlling an unnatural emotion, but less than a complex command), +10 (range boosted to Near), -5 (duration lowered to Diameter).

Vengeful Rain of Farm Animals

Cr An 55; Requisite: Re
R: Far; D: Diameter; T: Group
Aimed: -2
Focus: A catapult (+4)

This spell merely creates a whole bunch of live farm animals, ranging from chickens, turkeys and geese to goats, sheep and pigs, and even cows (!). Then the power of magic projects them through the air in a perfect parabola toward the spell's target (the Rego requisite). The animals are usually scared to death and yell it aloud! Quite an effect, for sure… The falling animals do from +5 to +25 damage.

This spell was invented in darker times. Besieged in his home covenant, Pancreatus of House Merinita needed some projectiles to throw at his enemies. Unfortunately, he was an Animal specialist…

Level rationale: 40 (create a very large animal; rather a herd, in our case), +15 (range boosted to Far), -5 (duration lowered to Diameter), +5 (target boosted to Group).

The Holy Hand Grenade

Potion Pe An 35; Requisite: Ig

This mighty, roughly spherical item is designed to kill the animal onto which it is thrown outright, in a flash of fire and smoke. It is perfect to stop such a dreadful creature as a *Bunny of Vengeance*, for instance. Actually, it has been designed for this purpose.

Level rationale: 35 (kill an animal), the Ignem requisite is for the smoke (ain't that kinky?).
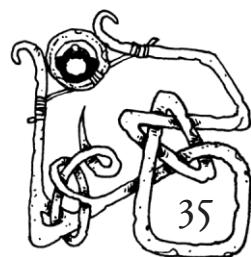
The Separation of Church and Order

by Mike Sloothaak

Introduction

A fantasy game system like Ars Magica, which assumes real magic exists within a historical foundation, is bound to run into inconsistencies and paradoxes. One of the central — and ultimately irresolvable — issues is the relationship between the Church and the Order. There is no right way to resolve this issue. The best way is that which brings your troupe the most enjoyment, but the inconsistency must eventually be resolved. The types of magi Ars Magica encourages us to play can only — when given enough time — set their eyes upon the thrones of Europe. The powers given to the Church by 4th edition rules would not stop them. Gifted players find fewer and fewer challenges as they mature — unless the troupe is willing to completely abandon the medieval historic context of the game, and change history.

Presented here is a historically inspired background that hopefully will be simple, fun to play, and protect the long-term historical context that inspires many Ars Magica players.

The rules found in *Pax Dei*, a supplement based on the 3rd edition rules, create a number of "dominions" and "tempers" which provide a counterweight to Hermetic powers. In *Pax Dei*'s mythic Europe, crusaders stand ready, carrying with them a righteous dominion and waiting for the story guide to order them into battle when a troupe gets a little too arrogant in their relations with the Church and its mundanes. Not surprising for any supplement, some Ars Magica folks have been critical of its approach, while others make much enjoyable use of it. *Pax Dei* deploys a number of complex rules to limit the ultimate power of player-magi to disrupt the underlying historical foundation of the game. While they may be interesting, the *Pax Dei* rules add another whole layer of complexity to every game in which they are deployed — rules that must be incorporated from the beginning if they are to be consistently applied.

The short background presented here can be used to create an alternative explanation of the continuing balance of power between the Dominion and the Order of Hermes consistent with 4th edition rules. This background can be "held back" however. Like the righteous crusaders of *Pax Dei*, one can keep these mythic secrets in reserve, waiting for the time that megalomania overwhelms your senior magi.

Historical Background

To understand the medieval myths and traditions this background is built upon, one must begin by understanding a little about the introduction of Christianity into Pagan Europe. Christianity is flexible when first encountering new cultures. Pagans recognized their own magic users. In addition, pagan rulers have often claimed magical powers to justify their positions. Missionaries have always been ready to compromise with powerful rulers and influential classes in a target culture — especially nobles and warlords. From the earliest of times, the Church threatened to burn peasant-witches and shamans at the stake, but would wink at the medieval king or queen who claimed the healing touch, or that their blood line included mystical or divine components from the pre-Christian era. This compromise is so ingrained in Western culture that it survives in some forms to modern times. The Archbishop of Canterbury crowned Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey while she was sitting atop the mystical Stone of Scone. The stone is supposed to (magically) guarantee the ascension of her progeny, and the Archbishop made no complaint of sacrilege or superstition. Queen Anne (1702-1714) is believed to be the last British Monarch to attempt the royal touch of healing [1], and rulers of many other kingdoms claimed some sort of healing power until the early 19th century [2].

Thus the early church needed to justify a limited assimilation of local magical traditions and beliefs, in exchange for the support of the ruling political classes. But the church insisted that all magic and magic users in a culture had to demonstrate their submission to the ultimate "magic" of the omnipotent Trinity. Early missionaries recognized they could only go so far to change a belief system in a culture.

Some precedent was necessary to justify such compromises, and the Bible is pretty consistent in condemning witchcraft, necromancy, divination, shape-shifting, calling up the dead, etc. There was one practical, positive portrayal of "pagan" magicians in the Bible — that of the magi who followed the star to the Christ Child, as described in the Gospel According to Matthew. These wise men were not Jews, and were using stars and ancient writings to gain knowledge that was not generally available. They were pagan astrologers who recognized and devoted themselves to the Christ Child. Missionaries could use them as an example of a type of magus approved by the Gospels—one who recognizes and bows to Christ as King of Kings. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

> It is said that after their return home, the Magi were baptized by St. Thomas and wrought much for the spread of the Faith in Christ. The story is traceable to an Arian writer of not earlier than the sixth century, whose work is printed, as "Opus imperfectum in Matthæum" among the writings of St. Chrysostom (P.G., LVI, 644). This author admits that he is drawing upon the apocryphal Book of Seth, and writes much about the Magi that is clearly legendary. The cathedral of Cologne contains what are claimed to be the remains of the Magi; these, it is said, were discovered in Persia, brought to Constantinople by St. Helena,
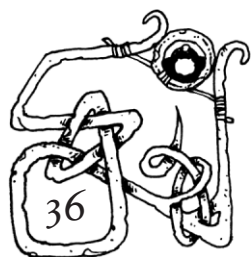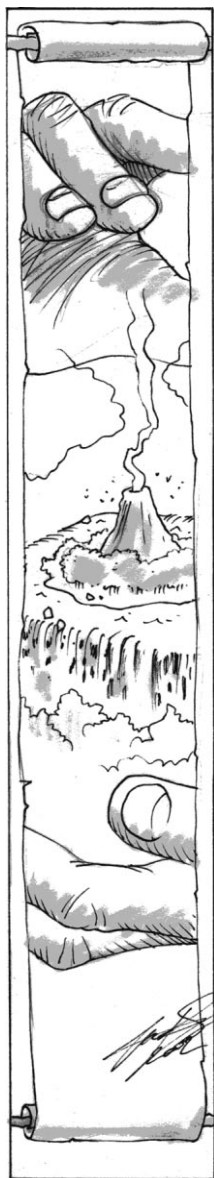
transferred to Milan in the fifth century and to Cologne in 1163 (Acta SS., I, 323) [3].

The medieval Church (and thus we may assume Ars Magica's mythic church) recognizes that magi can exist in God's plan, provided that:

- They recognize the ultimate authority of Christ.
- They use their magic for advancing justice or relieving human suffering.
- They do not attempt to short-circuit a person's free will by magical means.

Some segments of the Church go so far as to set aside a day in their calendar to recognize and celebrate magi, as described in *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* by Valerie I. J. Flint

There was, of course, very little firm liturgical unity in early Europe, but from as early as the late fourth century, Matthew's Magi had the foremost place in a great feast on 6 January [4]. They were not, however, alone. [The day was also designated as the date Christ was baptized, the day Jesus turned the water into wine, and sometimes the day of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.] "All added up to a considerable celebration of supernatural power, and of those wielders and objectives of this power which were thought appropriate to Christianity… and kept Matthew's Magi firmly in the forefront of devotional attention. And it kept in the forefront too, with them, the image of the good magus. In the later Middle Ages this feast became the ideal occasion for the coronation of a king, and the moment of the Offertory a fine media moment, as it were, for the king to stand in the tradition of these magi and bring gifts of many kinds, including, per-haps, supernatural ones… The liturgy stressed, then, miracles of supernatural and virtuous prevision and provision, miracles introduced by those Magi who were present at Christ's nativity." [5]

"Matthew's Magi thus become fine New Testament supports for later types of Christian magus similarly equipped." [6]

Enter Ars Magica

The alternative background — built upon Dr. Flint's comments — follows.

Although not generally known in the Order of Hermes, every year, on the Feast of the Epiphany (6 January) a delegation of senior Hermetic magi don humble peasant clothing, and travel incognito to Cologne cathedral. They bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh, along with funds necessary to conduct the feast. Once the gifts are placed on the altar, the local cardinal, with the knowledge of the Pope, blesses the delegation and thus the "truce" between the Church and the Order is sanctified for another year. The representatives of the Church demonstrate that the relics are still in their reliquary, and they promise the relics shall remain there for another year. They also swear that they will tolerate no magicians other than members of the Order of Hermes. In exchange, the representatives of the Order promise to assimilate all non-Christian magic users into its ranks, or eliminate them. They also promise not to "show off" magic and so distract the mundanes from the belief that ultimate authority and power come from God.

Whenever local friction between church and a covenant gets out of hand to the point that it becomes a concern to the entire Church and Order, the same ceremony is ordered locally. Local magi are
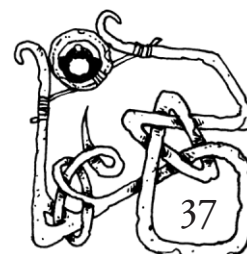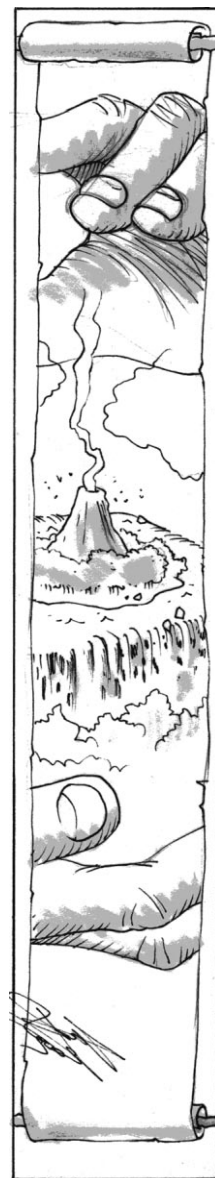
told to acquire the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and to present it to a local Bishop on the Feast day. Bishops are ordered to accept the gifts in an open ceremony, thus recognizing the local magi as part of God's Creation and his flock.

The Hermetic pilgrimage to the Relics of the Magi has occurred (first to Milan, and now to Cologne) since the relics were brought to Milan from Constantinople in the fifth century. They were brought West specifically because of the effect the relics have on human magic users. Leaders in the houses of Jerbiton, Bonisagus, Mercere, and Guernicus have always warned successors to conduct the pilgrimage, and never to openly come in conflict with the Church. At least one of the primi of the above-mentioned houses always leads the pilgrimage. Any magus or maga who has participated has been exposed to the relics, and thus knows their power first hand.

If their containers are opened, or if the relics — even a portion of them — are exposed in any way, all magical power in a region the size of a typical parish is affected. The relics of the magi of the Epiphany who bowed to Christ operate in this way to assure that their Hermetic successors do the same. Any magic that doesn't conform to God's plan (as described in the three points above) shuts down. The mechanics of the magic is immaterial, and allows no quibbling over fine points. If an Aegis of the Hearth spell is protecting any such deeds or people participating in such deeds, it shuts down. Love potions fail (as they affect free will) human created deceptions like fogs fail if they hide works or schemes that interfere with God's plan. Even the parma magica of individuals collapses and can not be re-established for those who in any way are interfering with God's plan. The solution:

- Stop interfering with the free will of others with magic,
- Stop using magic for injustice or to cause suffering,
- Demonstrate one's submission to Christ by bringing the three gifts to the local cathedral on 6 January.

or

- Convince the Church fathers to return the relics to their reliquary in Cologne.

Game Play Options

1 If you struggle to get your troupe out of their covenant laboratories, have a group of Knights Templar (with a small bone of one of Matthew's magi) pass near the covenant. As they approach, the effects as described above take place. Permanent magic is restored after the relic is gone, but the Aegis and similar rituals that require periodic renewal need to be re-established. Most players will see the need to investigate this catastrophe. Do they even know the story of the relics? How did the relic leave Cologne? Do the remains of another

"wise man" exist somewhere in the Levant? Let their efforts slowly expose the history of the relics.

2 After your troupe has a conflict with the local church, a Quaesitor is called in and orders the players to find gold, frankincense, and myrrh and to present it to the local Bishop during the Feast of the Epiphany. As they venture out to collect the necessary gifts, they are slowly exposed to the story of the relics.

3 Unknown to the players, a conflict between the Vatican and the Order begins to boil over, and the local redcap announces that revisions in the Code will be considered at the next grand tribunal meeting. The "join or die" rule and non-interference with the mundane rule may be eliminated. The players investigate, and find that a newly installed cardinal in Cologne is refusing to participate in the ceremony. Redcap messages encourage the players to try to smooth over any conflicts between them and any local faeries and hedge wizards, as the Order will need all the allies it can get if open conflict with the Church is likely in the near future and the relics are used against them. Things are deteriorating fast and the players need to beseech the Pope to put pressure on the cardinal, or the whole of mythic Europe could fall into chaos.

References

[1] www.friesian.com/perifran.htm

[2] www.charlescoulombe.com/coronat.html

[3] www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm

[4] B. Botte, Les Origines de la Noel et de l'Epiphanie (Louvain, 1932)

[5] Flint, Valerie I. J. The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe. (Princeton, New Jersey, 1991) p. 366-7.

[6] Flint, Valerie I. J. The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe. (Princeton, New Jersey, 1991) p. 372.

Ex Bibliotheca Magvilli

by Eric Minton

It takes a good bit of time and effort to create a covenant library. Turning that library into something more than a list of names and numbers is much harder. Here you'll find all manner of pre-generated magical and mundane books to flesh out your Saga's libraries. Feel free to submit your own books, scrolls, clay tablets, and so on for inclusion in this column.

Note that the costs listed for purchasing these books for a covenant's library during covenant creation do not include additional costs for any special benefits that may apply to a given book. Such alterations to the book's cost are left to the discretion of the individual Storyguide.

To determine a book's point value during covenant creation, use the following formulae:

Liber Quaestionum: Target + Quality

Summa: $2 \times$ (Level + Quality)

Tractatus: $3 \times$ (Quality)

The Peripheral Code of the Order of Hermes

By various authors

Appearance: The Peripheral Code comprises a full sixty-two volumes of unadorned text. Most of the volumes bear the marks of significant age: tattered covers, curling and dog-eared pages, and faded ink. The more recent volumes are fresher, however, with the newest being clean and crisp.

Description: These volumes contain a compilation of every ruling ever put forward at Tribunal in the history of the Order. The sheer quantity of information available within the Peripheral Code is only outweighed by the difficulty involved in finding anything specific within it. Due to the size of the Peripheral Code, only a few rare covenants (such as Magvillus and Harco) possess a complete copy.

Mechanics: Authority for Hermetic Law; Hermetic Law Summa, Level 10, Quality 0; Hermetic Lore Summa, Level 6, Quality 0.

Special Rules: If used to prepare for a legal case or dispute, a successful Int. + Conc. roll gives the litigator a +3 bonus to his or her Hermetic Law score. Copying the entire Peripheral Code requires several years' work by a skilled copyist. The Peripheral Code may not be glossed.

Cost: 82 points of Knowledges.

A Commentary on the Code of Hermes

By Guernicus

Appearance: A square volume bound in sleek brown leather, its front cover blazoned with the Quaesitorial balance in gold leaf. Corner-pieces and a locked clasp, all of brass, protect the work. The text within, scribed in a clear hand upon supple white vellum, bears highlights in several colors of ink. Numerous small illustrations of Guernicus, interspersed with a few depictions of the other Founders, offer reference points in the text, and glosses by early Primi of House Guernicus have been reproduced in the margins.

Description: Many Quaesitori consider this text, written by the Founder Guernicus in order to point out potential flaws in the Code, to be the first step towards establishing the Peripheral Code as the living crux of Hermetic law. Although its language lacks the polish to be found in the work of later generations of Quaesitorial scholars, this seminal work remains a cornerstone of legal thought in the Order.

Mechanics: Hermetic Law Summa, Level 5, Quality 9; Hermetic Law Tractatus, Quality 6.

Cost: 46 points of Knowledges.

A Reconciliation of Tribunal Law

By Fenicil scholae Guernici

Appearance: This volume's black canvas cover has been so thoroughly worn as to turn glossy in patches, and the edges have begun to fray. Rust smears its blackened iron corner-pieces. Within, a rainbow of faded arabesques adorns the text's brittle pages, highlighting significant passages in the text.

Description: An early attempt to codify the divergent rulings of the individual Tribunals of the Order in order to find a set of overarching legal principles. The author's conclusions regarding the autonomy of individual Tribunals with regard to legal precedents foreshadows the expansion of the Peripheral Code into the bloated, unwieldy corpus it has become today.

Mechanics: Hermetic Law Summa, Level 6, Quality 7; Hermetic Law Tractatus, Quality 4.

Cost: 38 points of Knowledges.

Interpretations of the Peripheral Code

By Tanaquil Iustifica scholae Guernici

Appearance: A plain leather-bound volume. The script is relatively clear, marred by a few blotches and smudges, and unadorned by additional colors or illustrations. A pair of leather bands holds the covers shut when not in use.

Description: A recent attempt to integrate the disparate rulings of the Peripheral Code into a cohesive set of legal principles. Not the most eloquent work on the subject, but more up-to-date than any of the classics in the field, and a valuable work in its own right.

Mechanics: Hermetic Law Tractatus, Quality 5.

Cost: 15 points of Knowledges.

The Legacy of Guernicus

By Chiron Raucus scholae Bonisagi

Glossed by Scrupulosa scholae Guernici

Appearance: Inside this text's clean new binding, one finds low-quality ink on worn palimpsest. The script itself is clear and refined, but the inferior ink has smeared and smudged in several places. Crabbed glosses fill virtually all of the available space in the margins.

Description: Written sometime in the past decade, this text presents a view of the ways House Guernicus and the Quaesitori have changed since their inception. Its thesis is that Guernicus' original
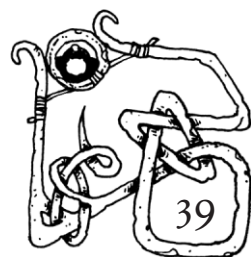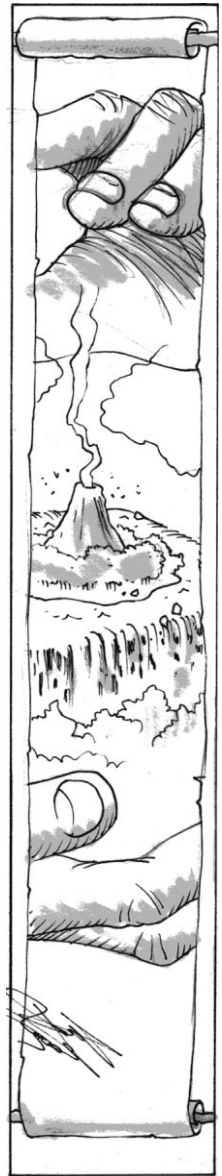
aim was to establish order by challenging assumptions rather than blindly accepting them, and that by rejecting this approach, the Traditionalist movement has led the Quaesitori and the Order into moral and ethical decline. The glossator, clearly a Traditionalist, argues against the author's thesis; Guernicus' work, she declares, was necessary to bring the Order out of its infancy, but a mature Order requires stability and complexity. Returning to the techniques employed in those early days, she writes, would subvert the goals that Guernicus strove to bring about in the first place.

Mechanics: Hermetic Law Tractatus, Quality 6; Hermetic Lore Tractatus, Quality 6.

Cost: 36 points of Knowledges.

Quaesitorial Grimoire

By Sensimira, Quaesitor ex Bonisago

Appearance: A plain-looking volume stored in a wooden box. Its leather covers feel dry with age but show little sign of wear. Written in a taut, jagged script with red accents. Tiny sketches of birds and cats stalk one another in the margins.

Description: The text comprises seven spells, along with extensive marginal notes regarding their proper use in the course of a Quaesitorial investigation. These notes provide a wealth of useful information as to what authority a Quaesitor actually has when questioning a fellow magus.

Mechanics: Hermetic Law Tractatus, Quality 5. Contains the following spells: *Whispers Through the Black Gate*, *Eyes of the Past*, *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, *The Manifestation of Memory*, *Sense of the Lingering Magic*, *Bind the Gift* (Level 40), *Chamber Without Magic* (Level 40).

Cost: 15 points of Knowledges + 200 levels of spells.

The Manifestation of Memory

Intéllego Mentem 35

R: Touch, D: Conc., T: Spec

Spell Focus: A Sprig of Rosemary (+1)

Requisites: Creo, Imáginem

Calls forth a specific memory from a living target's mind, and projects an image of the remembered event into a medium such as a mirror, water or smoke. The projected image encompasses both sight and sound, and is as detailed as the target's perceptions were at the time of the remembered event, no matter how much time has passed since then. If you use the spell focus, it must be in contact with the medium, and the spell ends if the focus is removed.

The target may resist this spell with a successful Intelligence stress roll of 9+. Alternatively, the target may attempt to alter the manifested memory; this requires a successful Int + Guile roll, and the difficulty ranges from 15 (minor changes) to 21 or more (wild alterations).

Casting requisite: the Form of the medium.

(Design: Read a person's surface thoughts 20, increase duration to Concentration +5, complex imagery +5, moving imagery +5)
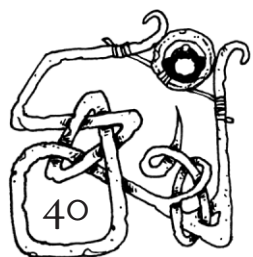
Bind the Gift

Perdo Vim General

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

Spell Focus: Iron Shackles (+5)

Suppresses a single target's ability to use magic. Whenever the target attempts to cast a spell, reduce his or her casting total by half the level of this spell + 5. To use the spell focus, you must affix the shackles upon the target's wrists; removing the shackles ends the spell. Quaesitori and hoplites have been known to employ this spell, or shackles enchanted with it, to restrain potentially dangerous magi before a Tribunal.

(Design: Reduce the casting total for all magic cast in the target:

General, reduce range to Touch: -5)

Chamber Without Magic

Perdo Vim General

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Room

Spell Focus: An Iron Bell (+3)

Suppresses the use of magic within a room. Whenever a spell is cast within the room, reduce its casting total by half the level of this spell. Pre-existing spells, spells cast outside the room and brought inside, and spells cast outside that target things inside the room are all unaffected. When casting the spell, you may designate one or more objects as tokens; whosoever bears such a token may use magic within the warded area without penalty. When using the spell focus, you must ring the bell as the spell is cast.

Designed in the early days of the Order to prevent belligerent magi from magically assaulting one another during Tribunal, the Chamber Without Magic fell into disfavor during the 12th century. The spell still finds use in places where the political climate seems especially volatile, such as the Iberian, Loch Leglean and Normandy Tribunals.

(Design: Reduce the casting total for all magic cast in the target:

General, reduce range to Touch: -5, increase target to Room +5)
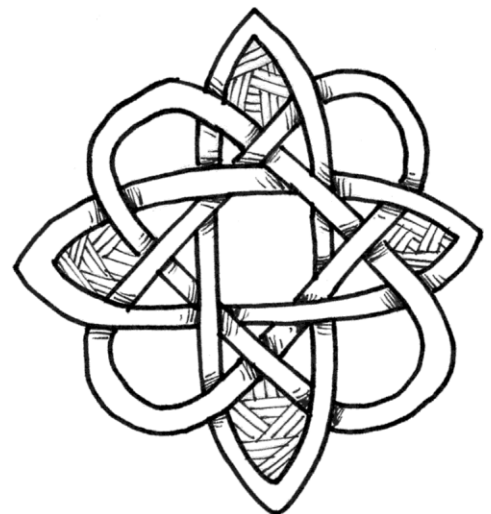
The Unbearable Lightness of Reading

by Michaël de Verteuil

This installment of Heretic's Corner begins with an interesting proposal sent in by Michael Schloss.

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Heretical Attribution

It is the goal of the Heretic's Corner to simplify the needlessly complicated aspects of the Ars Magica game system. So far it has focused on the gameplay aspects of the game, but some aspects of the character creation system are overly complicated as well.

Ars Magica characters have eight Characteristic scores, which is among the highest number of scores in RPGs today. Most RPGs have at most 5 or 6. In addition, Ars Magica also has the Virtues and Flaws system, which is a further tool for detailing characters' specific capabilities, which by its very nature makes much of the fine-differentiation of Characteristics unnecessary.

Characteristics can be infinitely subdivided, so the argument that two traits must be different Characteristics because they reflect different capacities is not sufficient. There certainly is a difference between agility and quickness, but there is also a difference between hand-eye coordination, balance, flexibility, reflexes, running speed, and fine motor control, between explosive strength (such as is used in combat and running) and static strength (carrying), and between verbal reasoning ability, memory, mathematical ability, and intellectual creativity.

All these traits and more could be made into separate Characteristics, but for the sake of simplicity the best approach is to make the Characteristics fairly broad, and use Virtues and Flaws to reflect fine differences within each Characteristic. Virtues and Flaws should also be used to reflect personal traits that could be Characteristics but are not, such as willpower.

When deciding whether a certain Characteristic should be amalgamated with another or left independent, there are two fundamental questions that need to be asked.

Correlation in Characters: How often does a character in this genre have a high level in one aspect of the Characteristic but a low level in another? If such contrasts are very common, then perhaps they should remain different Characteristics. If such contrasts are uncommon, then there should be a single Characteristic, with the rare contrasts reflected with Virtues and Flaws.

Conceptual Differentiation: How clear is the difference between the different aspects? For example, in the social realm it's often difficult to decide whether to use Presence or Communication, as the two are too interrelated. If there is any confusion over which Characteristic is most appropriate in a variety of circumstances, it's best to amalgamate them.

With these criteria in mind, the current eight characteristics can be reduced to a more simple and elegant five.

Vigor

An amalgamation of Strength and Stamina.

In some genres, weak but vigorously healthy characters are common. However, in the medieval worldview, strength and stamina usually go hand in hand. Barring accidents like disease, injury, and ageing (which have their own rules), people who are big and strong are seen as being more full of life and health than skinny weak people.

It may seem obvious to twentieth century eyes that there is a significant difference between strength and stamina, but in medieval society the two are often strongly correlated. Those people who are strongest — farmers, warriors and blacksmiths — also have the most stamina, as well as the physical bulk to resist injury. The diet and acts of labor that produce strength also create stamina.

There are exceptions of course, such as mendicant monks who walk from one end of Christendom to another, and strong but fat nobles, but these exceptions can be reflected with appropriate Virtues and Flaws.

With the current Characteristics, the Strength/Stamina split conceptually blurs in many circumstances, especially in combat. When a person is stabbed or hit with a weapon, physical bulk and strength often play more of a role in resisting the injury than cardiovascular fitness and health, and a strong person will tire more slowly than a weak person, given equal loads.

Quickness

An amalgamation of Dexterity and Quickness.

Medieval stories are replete with archetypes of quick graceful characters and slow clumsy characters, but quick clumsy characters and slow graceful characters are very uncommon. There is an argument for slow characters with excellent fine motor control, clumsy master craftsmen, clutzy scribes and the like, but even the current Characteristics division doesn't reflect this well, as agility and fine motor control are both governed by Dexterity. Encompassing it all under Quickness, and using Virtues and Flaws to reflect especially good or bad balance, coordination, reflexes, flexibility, running speed, or manual dexterity is both simpler and more potentially detailed.

It's possible to find examples of tasks that use only dexterity or quickness, but most of the tasks that are common in stories rely on both. Combat is the most obvious example. Hitting an opponent requires not only good coordination, but also the speed to beat an opponent's reflexes. Defending against opponents requires not only the speed to react to their attack, but also the coordination to move in the best way to avoid or intercept the blow. Even running requires both muscle speed and the
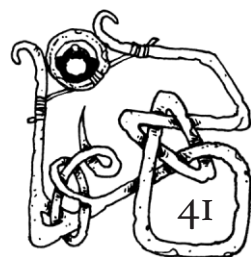
coordination to keep good balance and steady footing.

Intelligence

An amalgamation of Intelligence and the literary and explanatory aspects of Communication.

In general, intelligent people are also better spoken, able to more clearly communicate their ideas to others. There are exceptions of course, such as brilliant scholars who can only explain their ideas in obtuse ways, and dim-witted peasants who speak clearly and directly, but those exceptions are not the norm.

However, Intelligence does not correlate well with persuasiveness. Simply having good ideas does not make a character better at convincing others to follow them. For that reason, the interpersonal aspects of Communication are amalgamated with Presence.

Perception

Perception is the only one of the original characteristics that cannot be easily combined with another. Intelligence and perceptiveness are related, but there are numerous literary examples of oblivious intelligent people and astute simple people, so perception is best kept as a Characteristic of its own.

Presence

An amalgamation of Presence and the interpersonal aspects of Communication. Presence, suaveness, and persuasiveness in general.

Social relations involve a combination of personal magnetism and carefully chosen words, so it's difficult to determine whether Com or Pre is more important in social situations. More significantly, there are many interactions between the two, such personal magnetism and likeability lending credence to words.

What to do with the current game mechanics?

Combat

All dexterity and quickness-based characteristics are now based on Quickness. All strength and stamina based characteristics, including damage, fatigue, and soak, are now based on Vigor.

Learning and study

Book Quality is now based on Intelligence. Teaching quality is based on Presence.

Spellcasting

Lab work and spontaneous magic are unchanged. When casting formulaic magic, add Vigor to spellcasting rolls in place of Stamina.

✼   ✼   ✼

I have to admit to having felt a certain degree of scepticism when I first read Michael's proposal. Reducing the number of player Characteristics from 8 to 5 certainly sounds radical. But then I remembered that Heretic's Corner was a bout radical thinking. If a proposed change simplifies the rules without doing any damage to the feel and flow of the game,

and if the end result is still recognizably Ars Magica, it's worth considering.

So I carefully reviewed his arguments, extended them to their logical conclusions and, after serious reflection and consideration, determined that he was wrong! The arguments against subsuming Perception into Intelligence are not convincing in light of the role he suggests for Virtues and Flaws. The number of Characteristics can then be reduced from 5 to 4.

The beauty of Michael's proposal (or of my minor variant) is four-fold. The changes can be seamlessly integrated into all the existing game mechanics that use Characteristics. His consolidation largely reflects the natural pairing already implied in the "die-roll" method of character design. It also runs counter to what I consider to be a rather silly obsession with adding "new stuff". The natural tendency of ideas of this nature is to add to, rather than subtract from, the number of Characteristics. Finally, the proposal helps balance and equalize the values of the resulting Characteristics.

This last addresses what has always been a source of some irritation to me. All the characteristics are treated as if they were of equal value. They are assigned from the same pool of points, for example. But when you think about it, is a +1 Quickness currently worth the same as a +1 Intelligence? I doubt it.

All in all, excellent work Michael!

The two insights I draw from Michael's proposal are that bundling related features together can help equalize attributes, and that residual variation can be reproduced through Virtues and Flaws. I plan to use both insights in the next few instalments of Heretic's Corner. The current article has a dual purpose. It concludes our treatment of books and Abilities, and it launches into a completely new area: Covenant design. Specifically, "The Unbearable Lightness of Reading" is about designing a Covenant library.

It is traditionally at this point that I clear the ground for heresy by badmouthing the standard rules and the most recent efforts to fix them. As David Chart has clearly indicated that the "standard rules" had never been intended as a basis for Covenant design, I believe I can dispense with flogging this particular (dead?) horse. But, as Lenin once wrote, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. So I am going to badmouth the 3rd edition Covenant design rules instead.

When you get right down to it, the *ArM3* (and *ArM2*) rules for library design were stingy. This is not a criticism, because in my book "stingy" equalled "good". It prevented magi from starting the game as passive library fungi, and it gave player magi some implicit early collective tasks to perform in strengthening their Covenant. Specialists wrote books to fill the inevitable gaps in the Covenant's collection, and other magi copied the better texts so as to trade them for works that would fill the gaps the specialists could not. The main drawbacks of these earlier rules lay in their arbitrary division of libraries into three

(Arts, spells and Knowledges), and in their excessive abstraction such that only the best single available book on a subject had any value.

The single greatest conceptual advance that can be attributed to *ArM4* lies in its treatment of books. They now have texture, feel and individual value. This "individual value" poses a serious problem, however, for library design rules, as these must now be based on the likelihood of multiple books on a given subject. Lots of books have to be designed (which is time consuming), and clear rules are needed on how these books interrelate with one another.

Erik Dahl and Bjarke Roth have taken a stab at new Covenant and library design rules in Erik's "Covenants as Characters" in *HP*4. But their rules do not appeal to me for a number of reasons. They take the analogy between player characters and Covenants too far, in my view, by trying to make the design mechanics essentially similar. I don't think this does justice to the subtle complexity of a Covenant. "Covenants as Characters" justifies its high level of abstraction as a response to the time and effort previously required for Covenant design. I don't see why, however, Covenant design should be either quick or easy. The Covenant is not just any "character" to be designed as quickly and simply as an NPC or a PC. *ArM3* puts it this way:

"The Covenant is the most important character in your Saga, for the Covenant is the constant character in your Saga. Players' characters may come and go, but the Covenant remains and is the refuge of those transient people who reside in it. It's therefore important to understand and develop every aspect of your Covenant, for it is the foundation of your game."

A case in point can be found specifically in Erik and Bjarke's proposed new rules for library design. Not only is the richness brought to the game by the *ArM4* rules on individual books set aside, but we would not even be left with the clear "we have this, but we don't have that" library descriptions that were available under *ArM3* or *ArM2*. Planning a mage character's long-term course of study based on the contents of his library is, or at least was, one of the pleasures of running a mage. I also have a low tolerance for requiring die rolls in character or Covenant design, and a strong preference for a clear "you get what you pay for".

It follows inevitably from this discussion that the Covenant and library design rules I will be proposing in this article are going to be more complicated than those proposed by Erik and Bjarke. This does not mean that I don't think that they have advanced the argument significantly, because in fact they have. In the same way that I am going to draw on insights from Michael Schloss (consolidated Characteristics leavened by Virtues and Flaws), I will also be drawing insights from "Covenants as Characters" (integrating the concept of Virtues and Flaws into Covenant design and making it generally closer to character design) as well as from Erik's "Seasonal Characters" in *HP*5 (linking the number of Virtues and Flaws to the character's, or in this case the Covenant's, season). I also freely admit that my reservations concerning "Covenants as Characters" do not apply to NPC Covenants that do not have to be described with the same degree of loving detail and attention as player Covenants.

But "'nuff histry", let's get down to the actual new heretical rules I want to propose. But first I want to thank my corps of playtesters: Gary Barber, Matt Ryan and Michael Schloss, of course, and even Erik Dahl who was kind enough to comment even though I have just publicly strangled his babies at birth, and finally the indispensable Bjarke Roth who must be well on his way to apotheosis as the muse of heretical rule writers. Enjoy!

Covenant Characteristics

Each Covenant has four consolidated Characteristics: Library, Aura, Resources and Relations. All the Covenant attributes in the standard *ArM4* Covenant design rules are meant to fit under one or another of these Characteristics. Here I am taking a leaf from Michael's proposal. A Covenant should not have more Characteristics than it really needs, and each Characteristic should be of equivalent value. I think these four Characteristics can readily embody everything about a Covenant players feel is important. A score in each of these four should give a reader a quick appreciation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of their own or any other Covenant so described.

Characteristic scores ranging from -5 to +5 are purchased with Characteristic points according to the standard pyramidal function. Negative scores in some Characteristics yield additional Characteristic points that can be allocated towards higher scores in others.

The number of Characteristic points available and the maximum score a Covenant can have in any one Caracteristic depend on its season and the number of resident magi.

A **Spring** Covenant has a number of Characteristic points equal to 0 +1 for each resident mage over 3, for a maximum total number of points of 3. The maximum Characteristic score for a Spring Covenant is +3.

A **Summer** Covenant has 4 + 1 for each resident mage above 3, for a maximum total of 9 points, and a maximum score of +4.

An **Autumn** Covenant has 10 + 1 for each resident mage above 3 with no maximum number of points. Its individual Characteristic scores can range as high as +5.

A **Winter** Covenant has less than 0 points a maximum score of +5.

Season	Point Range	Maximum Score
Spring	0 - 3	+3
Summer	4 - 9	+4
Fall	10+	+5
Winter	< 0	+5
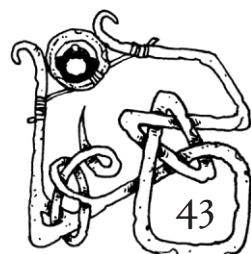
A Characteristic score serves two purposes:

1 It is cross indexed with one or more tables to determine the number of purchase points used in fleshing out the features of a Covenant associated with that Characteristic. For example, a Covenant's Library score will ultimately determine how many Book points will be available for allocation between the various books on Arts, Knowledges, Spells and Lab Texts in the Covenant library.

2 It also determines the base number of Virtue and Flaw points that can be applied to those features. These Virtues and Flaws help give the features of the Covenant their unique qualities. (See **Virtues and Flaws** below.) Where Erik proposed applying Virtues and Flaws to a Covenant as a whole, I prefer to treat them as an opportunity to reinsert the variety that bundling the Characteristics tends to dampen, by applying Covenant Virtues and Flaws specifically to each Characteristic. It also leaves scope for a lot more Virtues and Flaws in total, but without opening the door to all or most of them being applied to only a narrow range of Covenant features.

Positive scores yield an equivalent number of Virtue points for that Characteristic. Negative scores yield an equivalent number of Flaw points. These Virtues and Flaws do not have to be counterbalanced by equivalent Flaws and Virtues. Five additional Virtue points can be acquired for each Characteristic, but these extra points must be compensated for by taking on a matching number of Flaw points.

Having set the general rules, we now proceed to the specific rules for the Library Characteristic. Future articles will deal with the other three.

Book Points

A given Covenant's Library score corresponds to a number of Book points that can be used to purchase books on Knowledges, Arts, Spells and Enchantments (Lab Texts).

Library Score	Book points
-5	0
-4	30
-3	60
-2	80
-1	90
0	100
+1	200
+2	400
+3	700
+4	1100
+5	1600

Subject Ratings

Book points are used to purchase books within a limited number of "subjects". Each of the Arts is a subject, as is each Knowledge. These consist of the Academic Knowledges including Christian, Islamic and Jewish Theology, Speak Greek and Speak Hebrew, as well as the probably rarer and more esoteric Speak Armenian and Speak Coptic. They also include the Arcane Knowledges, though I do not use Hermetic Law, preferring to subsume that in Hermes Lore as described in "Less is More" in *HP*1.

There are also the Casual Knowledges which include varying Area Lores and vernacular languages as well as Common law and Strategy mentioned in Ordo Nobilis. The two main types of Organization Lore that might be found in a Covenant library would be Church and Hermes Lore, of course. There might be some books specifically on individual Houses, Hermetic secret societies or religious orders, but I would tend to just consider these Hermes and Church Lore respectively.

A particularly well endowed or unusual Covenant library might also include works on Exceptional Knowledges such as Alchemy and Herbalism or, if you are using *The Mysteries*, Craft Automata, Hermetic Astrology, Oneiromancy, Augury, Theurgy and Ars Notoria, though these latter books may only be for the initiated. Finally, each individual spell or enchantment also counts as a "subject".

Each subject in a library has a rating. This rating can be 0 if the library has no books in that subject. Ratings can be used to compare the coverage and depth on a subject between different collections, but it can also be used to determine the combined study or research value of a collection of books on a given subject. Book points are not spent twice, once on subject ratings and then a second time on books. Instead, points allocated to a given subject are used to buy individual books or, alternatively, points used to buy books on a given subject are then totalled up to produce a rating.

Rating	Point Cost	Research	Knowledge	Art
2	3	+1	2	5
3	6	+2	3	7
4	10	+2	4	9
5	15	+2	5	11
6	21	+3	6	13
7	28	+4	6	15
8	36	+5	7	16
9	45	+5	7	17
10	55	+5	8	18
11	66	+5	8	19
12	78	+6	9	20
13	91	+6	9	21
14	105	+6	10	22
15	120	+6	10	23
16	136	+6	10	24
17	153	+7	11	25

Point Cost: This is the old familiar pyramidal function and indicates the Book point cost of a given rating in one subject. As new books are added or old ones lost, the subject's rating rises or falls correspondingly.

Research: This is the bonus applied to a relevant Knowledge roll made while consulting the collection.

It is based on the optional rule described on page 75 of Ordo Nobilis, but the underlying formula is slightly different. The main text (usually a summa or, if using the Ex Libris rules, possibly an LQ) contributes its level in ep equivalents. All other works contribute one point each. The pyramidal function is then applied to the total to produce the research bonus. In theory this bonus could be applied to this type of research on other subjects such as a spell or device enchantment. For example, a successful research check against a spell might determine alternative usable foci, or optimal environmental or astrological casting conditions. A successful research check against a device enchantment could answer a question relating to possible material substitutions in the enchantment, identify the specific magical tradition of the original designer, or determine what form the designer's sigil might take when applied to a different magical effect. It is possible that some such "research" applications could exist for Arts as well, though I can't think of any off hand. I would recommend leaving the maximum Research bonus at +7.

Knowledge: A collection of books on a Knowledge can also be treated as a single Summa with a reduced base Quality of 6. If the collection includes any books with an even lower Quality, the Quality of the collection is that of its lowest Quality book. Because books can be consulted collectively as well as individually, a subject rating can thus act as a shortcut for troupes that would prefer to avoid or defer until later a book by book determination of a library's contents. By and large, however, book by book study is more efficient. There is thus a continuing incentive for players to actually eventually knuckle down and develop a comprehensive catalogue of their collections. Note that the Quality and usability of a collection can be affected by the library's Virtues and Flaws.

Art: If not treating Arts as Abilities as suggested in "Artistic Ability", a given rating in an Art produces the indicated Art Summa equivalent. Otherwise the rule is the same as for Knowledges above.

Books Costs

Each book in the library costs a certain number of Book points. The tables below may appear complicated as there are three sets of them, but this is because they must cater to three sets of rules: the standard rules, and those found in "Ex Libris" *HP*2 and "Artistic Ability" *HP*3. Just a quick reminder, the "Ex Libris" rules cap the level of Tractatus and turn
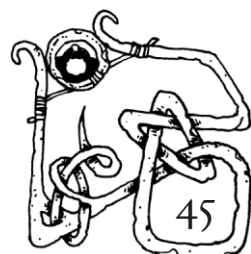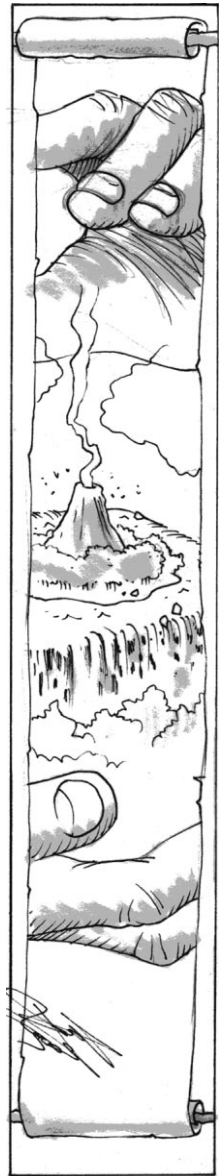
LQs into specialized Summae. "Artistic Ability" scales back Art scores and treats Arts as Exceptional Knowledges.

If Using the Standard ArM4 Book Rules

All Tractatus and LQ cost 3 each when using the standard rules. The level of a spell book is equal to the spell's magnitude. The level of a Lab text is equal to the magnitude of its enchantment. If more than one effect is contained in the enchantment, treat each effect as if it was covered by a different book. For example, if the enchanted item involves a level 25 effect and a level 15 effect, treat the Lab text as if it were a combined level 5 and level 3 summa for 15 Book points. The minimum cost for a summa, spell book, or Lab text (or Lab text component) is 3.

Table I. Summae on Knowledges, Spell books and Lab texts

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
3	3	7	25*
4	7	8	33**
5	12	9	42**
6	18*	10	52**

Table II. Summae on Arts

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
7	3	16	24
8	5	17	27
9	7	18	30
10	9	19	34***
11	11	20	38***
12	13	21	42***
13	15	22	47***
14	18	23	52***
15	21		

If using the "Ex Libris" and "Artistic Ability" rules

The cost of all Summae on Knowledges, Arts, Spell books and Lab texts is the same as that indicated in Table I above.

Table III. Tractatus on Knowledges, Arts, Spells and Enchantments

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
6	2	14	14*
7	3	15	16**
8	4	16	18**
9	5	17	21**
10	6	18	24**
11	8*	19	27**
12	10*	20	30**
13	12*		

Table IV. LQs on Knowledges and Arts

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
2	2	5	17**
3	5	6	26**
4	10*		

If using the "Ex Libris" but not the "Artistic Ability" rules

The cost of Summae on Knowledges, Spell books and Lab texts is the same as that indicated in Table I above. The cost of Summae on Arts is the same as in Table II. The cost of Tractatus on Knowledges, Spell books and Lab texts is the same as that indicated in Table III. The cost of LQs in Knowledges is the same as that indicated in Table IV.

Table V. Tractatus on Arts

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
14	2	33	15
16	3	34	16
18	4	35	17
21	5	36	18***
23	6	37	19***
24	7	38	20***
25	8	39	21***
26	9	40	22***
27	10	41	23***
29	11	42	24***
30	12	43	26***
31	13	44	28***
32	14	45	30***

Table VI. LQs on Arts

Level	Cost	Level	Cost
5	2	11	13
6	3	12	16***
7	5	13	19***
8	7	14	23***
9	9	15	27***
10	11		

* Only available for Knowledges if the Exceptional Books Virtue is chosen

** Not normally available for Knowledges, and only available for Arts, Spells and Enchantments if the Exceptional Books Virtue is chosen.

*** Only available if the Exceptional Books Virtue is chosen.

Book Quality

Unless affected by Virtues or Flaws, all books have the following standard Qualities

Tractatus: 6; Summae: 9; LQs: 12

Authorities

As previously mentioned in "Ex Libris" there is some confusion as to what exactly an Authority is under the standard rules. I am using the following "standard" definition:

An Authority in a given field consists of the collective major works on the subject written by all those authors (auctores) who are deemed to have defined it.

Thus an Authority is rarely, under the standard rules, a single book. For example, the Authority on *Artes Liberales* as described on page 57 of *ArM4* consists of the writings of Priscian and Donatus, the
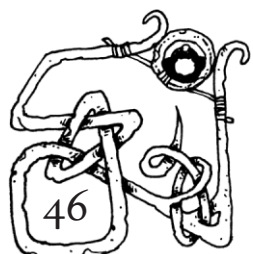
Logica vetus and *Logica nova* of Aristotle, the works of Cicero (notably his *De inventione*), Boethius' *De arithmetica* and *De musica*, Euclid's *Elementa* and *Optica*, and Ptolemy's *Libri almagesti* (themselves a set of several books). Because of their complexity and their highly limited use under the standard rules, Authorities are not purchased like normal books, but are instead acquired through the Authoritative Works Virtue described below.

The "Ex Libris" rules offer a different definition and different mechanics for what they describe as "Authoritative works". These consist of any book written by an Auctor for a given Art or Knowledge, and costs +5 Book points more than an equivalent "normal" book.

Enchanted Books

We are not just talking about any library here, but the library of a Hermetic Covenant. Previous rules have neglected the possibility of low magnitude magical enhancements to books. Here are a few ideas:

1 "Illuminated" books that cast a CrIg Moonbeam effect when they are opened and thus can be read in the dark;
2 "Masked" books that cast a CrIm illusion over their pages so as to make them seem blank or covered with gibberish (very useful for disguising Occult Lore books from prying eyes);
3 "Responsive" books endowed with a ReAn effect such that if opened they automatically turn to the next page containing a word mentioned in their presence (triples their value for research purposes and creates added incentives for keeping quiet in the library);
4 "Cursed" books that cast irritating effects on anyone displacing them from the library, such as MuIm blue skin (MuIm), CrIm stench of rotting fish, or PeCo clap or severe anal itch.

All these effects would be 1st magnitude, and so far too weak to bother a mage wearing a Parma. They would, on the other hand, be quite effective against potential light-fingered mundane "long-term borrowers". Each such enchantment raises the cost of the book affected by +10. As most smaller medieval books were bound two or more to a volume, a single enchantment could affect several books, though only one could be read or studied at one time.

Virtues and Flaws

Virtues +1

Multiple Copies: Up to an additional 10th of the total book points can be assigned to multiple copies of existing books in the library. These extra copies are free, but must be at least one Physical Quality level less than the originals. This Virtue can be taken more than once. These multiple copies may not be automatically traded as part of the Exchange Agreement Virtue, though they can be traded as part of an adventure. They also obviously do not affect the library's subject ratings. The Physical Quality of these extra books can be reduced by more than one to satisfy the -1 Poor Physical Quality Flaw.

Authoritative Works: If using the Ex Libris rules, this Virtue negates the +5 cost for 10 Authoritative works in any fields. If using the standard book rules, it grants a free Authority in one field. This Virtue may be chosen more than once.

Enchanted Books: This Virtue negates the +10 cost of any five book enchantments (as described above). This Virtue may be chosen more than once. Note that the enchantments apply to "volumes" and not "books", so several books bound together can benefit from the same enchantment. A given volume can also benefit from more than one enchantment.

Exceptional Book: Permits the purchase of a book of exceptionally high level as indicated by the asterisks (* or **). This Virtue can be taken more than once.

High Physical Quality: This Virtue grants the equivalent of 20% of the total book points towards the improvement of the physical Quality of some of the books in the library. Each time a book is "repurchased" with these extra points, its physical Quality improves by one. This Virtue may be taken more than once, and is compatible with the -1 Poor Physical Quality Flaw.

Clearly Written Books: The collection specializes in unusually well written masterpieces. This Virtue grants the equivalent of 10% of the total book points towards the improvement of the underlying Quality of some of the books in the library. Each time a book is "repurchased" with these extra points, its underlying Quality is improved by one. This Virtue may be taken more than once, and is compatible with the -1 Poorly Written Books Flaw.

Virtues +3

Exchange Agreement: Any new high or standard quality copies of books from the library made
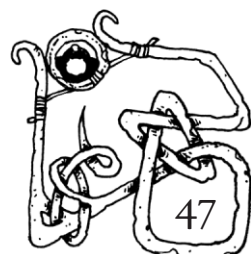
by the Covenant can be automatically traded with for new books of equivalent value from other libraries.

Flaws -1

Lending Obligation: A long-established and binding policy of lending books to other Covenants means that not all books may be available for a season when needed by a player character. Roll a stress die with a single botch possibility. On a 0 the book is "out". On a botch, the book is permanently lost and no return or compensation can be expected. Needless to say, perhaps, but taking inventory while subject to this Flaw is not recommended.

Divided Collection: The books in the library are held in two separate collections of roughly equal size under the control of different NPCs, or alternatively are kept in separate locations one or more days' journey apart. Individual players normally have easy access to only one or the other, and must normally exchange favours with the relevant NPC or travel to obtain access to the other collection. This Flaw may be taken more than once. If taken twice, the library is divided into three collections. If taken three times, it is divided into four collections, and so on.

Poor Physical Quality: This Flaw imposes the equivalent of 40% of the total book points towards a reduction in the physical Quality of some of the books in the library. Each time a book is "repurchased" with these points, its physical Quality is reduced by one. This Flaw may be taken more than once and is compatible with the +1 High Physical Quality Virtue.

Poor Underlying Quality: Many of the books in the collection are by authors with poor writing skills. This Flaws imposes the equivalent of 20% of the total book points towards a reduction in the underlying Quality of some of the books in the library. Each time a book is "repurchased" with these points, its underlying Quality is reduced by one. This Flaw may be taken more than once and is compatible with the +1 High Physical Quality Virtue.

Non Standard Language: Some of the books in the library are written in a language and script not normally used at the Covenant (which usually means some language other than Latin). At least 10% of the library's book points must be assigned to works in Greek, Hebrew, or Arabic, or 5% in some other even more esoteric academic languages (such as Coptic, Syriac, or Armenian). This Flaw may be taken more than once.

Double Cost Lab texts: The Covenant library never made a point of collecting copies of lab texts, leading to their relative rarity within the collection.

Flaws -2

Double Cost Grimoires: The Covenant library never made a point of collecting copies of spell books, leading to their relative rarity within the collection.

Decaying Collection: Because of climate, vermin, a Covenant-wide habit of eating while reading, or just plain bad luck, the physical Quality of the collection is in inexorable decline. Each time a book is consulted, roll a stress die with a single botch possibility. On a 0 the book's physical Quality has declined by one since its last use. On a botch, the book is now completely unusable. This Flaw can be countered to some extent with labour intensive frequent recopying, though this involves employing extra scribes and librarians and in itself risks damageing the originals.

Flaws -3

Double Cost Knowledges: The Covenant library never made a point of collecting works on Knowledges, leading to their relative rarity within the collection. Note that this Flaw will severely affect a library's subject ratings. This Flaw does not apply to Arts, even if using the "Artistic Ability" rules.

So that's it. Next issue we will move on to another Covenant Characteristic. Until then, just remember that any day without slaying some uselessly complicated Ars Magica sacred cow is at least a partially wasted one. Really fulfilling days involve the breaking of Ars taboos as well. And keep those ideas coming. I need them, and they can only lead to better heresies.

Dear Abelard

Salvete Sodales,

My dear and loyal friends, I must beg your forgiveness for my terseness this season, for a foul spirit has seized control of my body, and at intervals of four days I feel its cold touch take over my frame. It is a chilling experience, gentle reader, for as a magus I can see the shape of this ague that besieges me, and yet I am unable to banish him. He is a pale shade, with long nails, and he draws forth my humours even now, so that I can feel them collect in sweat upon my brow, and I burn with fiery fever though I am all shivering ice within.

I am frightened, and in pain and worry I have many times cursed my Arts, for they bring me no comfort. I can see the quartan that ails me, and I can perceive the imbalance within my blood, but I cannot right it, for such magical physicking is only tempo-

rary, and does not allow me time to heal while it holds my body in place. Neither I nor the other magi within my covenant have the skill to banish a spirit of this strength, and so it seems I must endure his touch if I am to overcome his influence. I am forced to rely upon more earthly remedies, and thrice a day I drink a tonic of herbs and fortified wine that will eventually sicken and drive away the spirit that assails me, or so I am assured.

I admit that I have been choleric of late, and I did spend much time in the sun during the waning summer. My thoughts became sad and solemn, and I kept to myself as I watched our fair earth again lose its life and begin to wilt and wither with the coming autumn. I will not tell you of the unkind thoughts that sometimes cross my mind, or of the times I have lied to people in the village, or even the covenant, in order to keep my secrets and my confidence, but these transgressions are now foremost among my thoughts. I confess that I do at times covet and desire, more than for that which I am due (for I am always wishing to regain the time I have lost, among other things), and I keep to myself, hiding behind my letters, rather than going forth into the world and helping others more tangibly in the flesh. These sins make me cold and dry, and yellow in color, and from this drying field the disease spirits may reap great harvest. I am certain I deserve this illness, and that it has come as punishment from God.

Thus, I caution you, my patient reader: live well, but live temperately, seeking moderation and avoiding sin. I would wish this awful malady on no one else, but my illnesses could easily be yours, if you are not mindful of your health and spirits.

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Dear Abelard,

A season ago, a maga in my covenant of Ricany was involved in a magical theft, which saw her swap her body with that of another. The body-thief, who was not a Hermetic mage, managed to get away, leaving my sodalis, Aleska, in the thief's body. Apart from the necessity of getting the body back, we are also left with two other pressing questions.

Firstly, we have ascertained that it is truly her in the body, and surprisingly she is still able to perform Hermetic magic, albeit with difficulty. I was taught by my parens that one of the Hermetic limits was that of the Soul, and also learnt that the Gift was contained within the soul. What is your more erudite opinion? My sodalis Elek says that there are two essences within the body: the Spirit and the Soul, both of which can contain the Gift. According to him, the Spirit is tied to the Realms of magic and the fae, whereas the Soul is the spark of life granted by God. My own research has been less fruitful due to a recent calamity that saw the loss of much of our library (and the great hall to boot!).

Additionally, we are left pondering Aleska's status under Hermetic Law. Neither Elek nor I have any knowledge of the intricacies of the law. Would you be able to consult your sodalis Moratamis of Guer-

nicus? Once again, we are unsure on this matter. The Hermetic Oath seems to place importance upon the presence of the Gift. Is the Oath binding upon the body or soul, or both? Is there precedent for magi being in a different body than the one in which they swore the oath? Can Aleska still vote at Tribunal, and is she protected under the Code?

Yours under the Oath,

Alias, follower of Tremere,
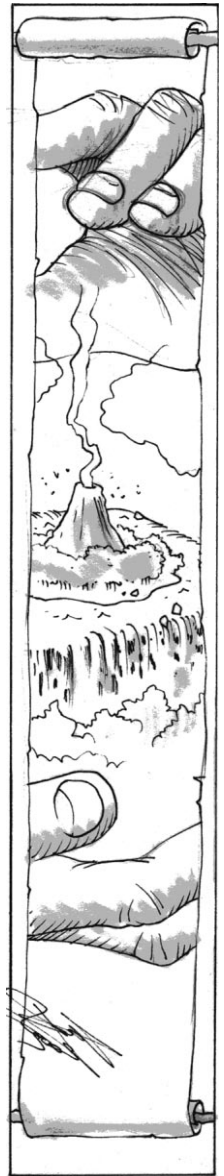member of the Ricany Covenant in A.A. 1359

My dear Alias,

Such calamities! My own troubles are nothing compared to the loss suffered by your sodalis and the disasters that have befallen your covenant. The thief must surely be punished, and I suspect you will find many of our Order who would be willing to help you deliver justice. Here we see again the reason for our founders' attempts to introduce all those who practice magic into the Order, for were the miscreant so governed, a Hermetic tribunal could address his crimes. As things stand now he is a menace, a fox among the chickens, and because of his magical ploy, any outside assistance must be handled with extreme delicacy and care.

I have asked my good friend Moratamis (to whom I always turn for answers to difficult legal questions, and who because of the situation was kind enough to waive her usual fee) about her status under the Code. Things are not going to be easy for wronged Aleska. There are apparently few precedents, but generally the Order looks to the body of the magus, and not the spirit. Consider those magi who have died before experiencing Final Twilight, and returned to earth in ghostly spirit form: without their living bodies, they are no longer considered members of the Order. They cannot vote, and they are not afforded the protections that those within our society take for granted.

Your enemy, it could be argued, armed as he is with the body of your sodalis, can exploit all of the rights normally accorded to her while he is controlling her body. Similarly, her situation is perilous, for she is not protected by the Code, and while it would be a regrettable misunderstanding, none of our Order could be faulted or punished for slaying or otherwise treating with her as the hedge wizard she appears to be. It is as if the thief is magically manipulating Aleska while he is trapped in your midst. When the spell ends, or perhaps when he dies, Aleska may naturally return to her own body, but I would not risk her life on this experiment.

You ask some very difficult questions concerning the soul and the spirit. Of course Hermetic magic (and, we must assume, whatever variety of magic the thief practiced) cannot affect Aleska's immortal soul. Therefore, he cannot exchange his fate for hers, and ultimately he will suffer the consequences for his actions. The soul is the beautiful individual unknowable self; I cannot begin to speculate whether it contains the Gift, or if the Gift is part of the spirit, the body, or some of all three. It may be that the Gift is

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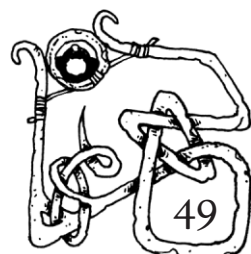
part of the body, but that as the thief possessed it also, Aleska may use his in lieu of her own. Or, it may be that the Gift is part of her spirit and travels with her (this I think more likely, as many of the aspects of our Gift that animals and others find disturbing are also evidenced by ghosts and magical spirits). The Gift may also be tied to the soul in some way, but we have no way of knowing the truth until we have joined with our Creator in the lands beyond the heavens.

Let us now turn to a letter that concerns one of my previous letters, in essence, and continues our discussion of the practice of certámen and other aspects of Hermetic law among those of House Mercere.

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Dear Abelard,

Greetings and salutations!

I am a member of House Mercere. While humbly in the performance of my duties, a young member of another House came into conflict with me over a trivial matter (the right to cross a narrow bridge). He insisted that I resolve the matter through certámen. I conceded his point and allowed him to have his way and cross first. I explained that most members of my House do not have the Gift necessary to conduct this duel. I neither confirmed nor denied my ability to engage in the duel.

Later, this same magus attempted to use magical means to interfere with my personal affairs, namely the recruitment of an apprentice for another member of my home covenant. I responded in kind and destroyed a magical item he was using to control the child in question.

This magus now intends to complain before my tribunal that I refused to engage him in certámen on the earlier occasion, and that this refusal, not his foolish interference in my affairs, cost him his magic item, and that I should now compensate him for it and deliver the apprentice to his control. He contends that, had he known I was Gifted, he would have resolved the matter of the apprentice in a more straightforward way (through certámen).

I contend that it was part of my duties as a Redcap to keep obscure the status of my Gift, as well as the Gift-status of my sibling Redcaps whenever possible, as it adds much to our protection when among strangers. If a magus can challenge us to certámen over a trivial matter and thus expose some of the strengths and weaknesses of a Redcap, the security of my House — and the Order — would be compromised significantly.

Even now I refuse to make clear whether I accomplished the destruction of his toy with a magic item of my own, or through the exercise of any
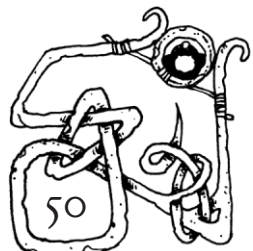
natural Gift. This refusal of course continues to infuriate my adversary.

Do you believe I acted within the Code and traditions of our Order?

Horrace ex Mercere, Novgorod Tribunal

My dear Horrace,

As I wrote in my letter before last, certámen is a method whereby two mages can settle their differences quickly, instead of the more lengthy means of resolution involving participation in Tribunal or quaesitorial mediation. Any magus may challenge another to certámen as a means of resolving a dispute, and both parties implicitly agree that the results of the contest are binding. There are, of course, other methods of resolving these conflicts.

Translator's Note: Abelard refers to the letters published as Dear Abelard in Hermes' Portal issue number 4, which discuss the subject of certámen in much greater detail.

These conditions apply also to followers of Mercere, even if they cannot engage in certámen. While refusing challenges is frowned upon, I believe it is understandable if the magi in question cannot defend themselves, and Tribunals will probably show leniency in such matters. However, I have heard that for this reason (I cannot confirm it in my weakened state) many Redcaps enlist friends or associates (or quaesitores, Gifted Redcaps, or other magi devoted to fairness in principle) to act as their champions in certámen. There is not, as far as I can tell, any formal procedure for this, but it is simple enough to insist upon a champion as part of the terms of the contest, or for the champion to challenge the adversary on his charge's behalf when their roles are reversed.

Moratamis, my learned colleague, writes in response to your letter: "This magus to whom [Horrace] caused such consternation seems to have been nettled beyond his faculties. Had he presented his case to me, I would have laughed at him. [The Redcap] conceded the earlier contest, for whatever reason, and in any case it had no bearing on the later dispute concerning the apprentice…" I have not included the remainder of Moratamis's reply, as I do not wish her more spirited tone to offend anyone. However, suffice it to say that she thinks little of his claim.

My opinion is this: you must admit that your attempts to keep secret whether or not you bear the gift have had their intended effect. Your adversary does not know whether or not you have the capacity to perform magic, and therefore he does not know whether or not it is effective to challenge you on any trivial matters that may occur between you. For how long do you intend to mislead him? I suspect that this magus will continue to throw pebbles at you, to speak analogously, until he knows the truth, and you may come out better if you simply tell him.

I do believe you should be commended for your restraint and your thoughtfulness, for you seem to consider your House and your peers without the Gift in everything you do. I find such consideration quite refreshing in these troubled times. That said, I cannot confirm that I think you acted according to the traditions of the Order, though you seem to have followed the strict letter of the Code. By refusing to explain why you conceded the certámen on the bridge, allowing a magus to believe that you do not have the Gift, you misled him into thinking you were unable to accept his challenge. I feel this goes against the spirit of the Order, for while it is his own fault that he did not challenge you again on the matter of the apprentice, you must admit that you did not act in an entirely straightforward manner during your dealings with him.
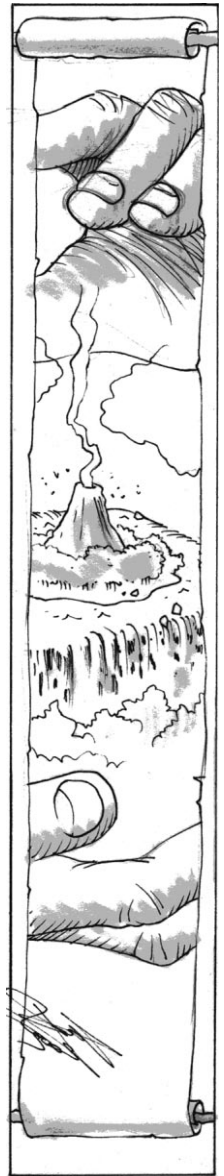
I understand your reasons for wishing to keep your Gift hidden, if indeed you have it, but I think you will find it is more difficult than it is worth. For example, you are aware of the tradition that a Gifted magus must have reached a certain level of understanding in every Art before he may take a new apprentice? If you are planning to teach your new apprentice magic, your Tribunal may require a demonstration of your knowledge, and it would be impossible subsequently to keep your magic a secret. It is true that you could likely teach the child as a normal Redcap for many years without having to answer the question, but as soon as you wished to begin teaching the Arts, you would have to have increased your magical abilities to an acceptable level.

I am, of course, not a member of your House, and you may have traditions and standards of which I am not aware. Perhaps your Tribunal handles these questions differently than mine. If you would take my advice, though, I suggest that you let go of this subtlety and deceit and share your talents honestly with all who have need of them. I believe it would do your peers a much greater compliment should you perform your good works, magical or otherwise, in their name and in service to the Order, rather than keeping them to yourself. Do not hide your light under a bushel; God has given you many virtues, and I believe you must make the most of all of them.

Until next issue, my dear readers,

ABELARD

"Dear Abelard" was written by Lanatus, follower of Bonisagus, and his sodalis Moratamis, follower of Guernicus. To receive his regular correspondence, or to ask for his advice, please send your name, covenant and Tribunal to Dear Abelard, Scriptoris Socii, Normandy. Your confidentiality will be respected.
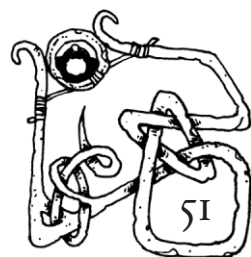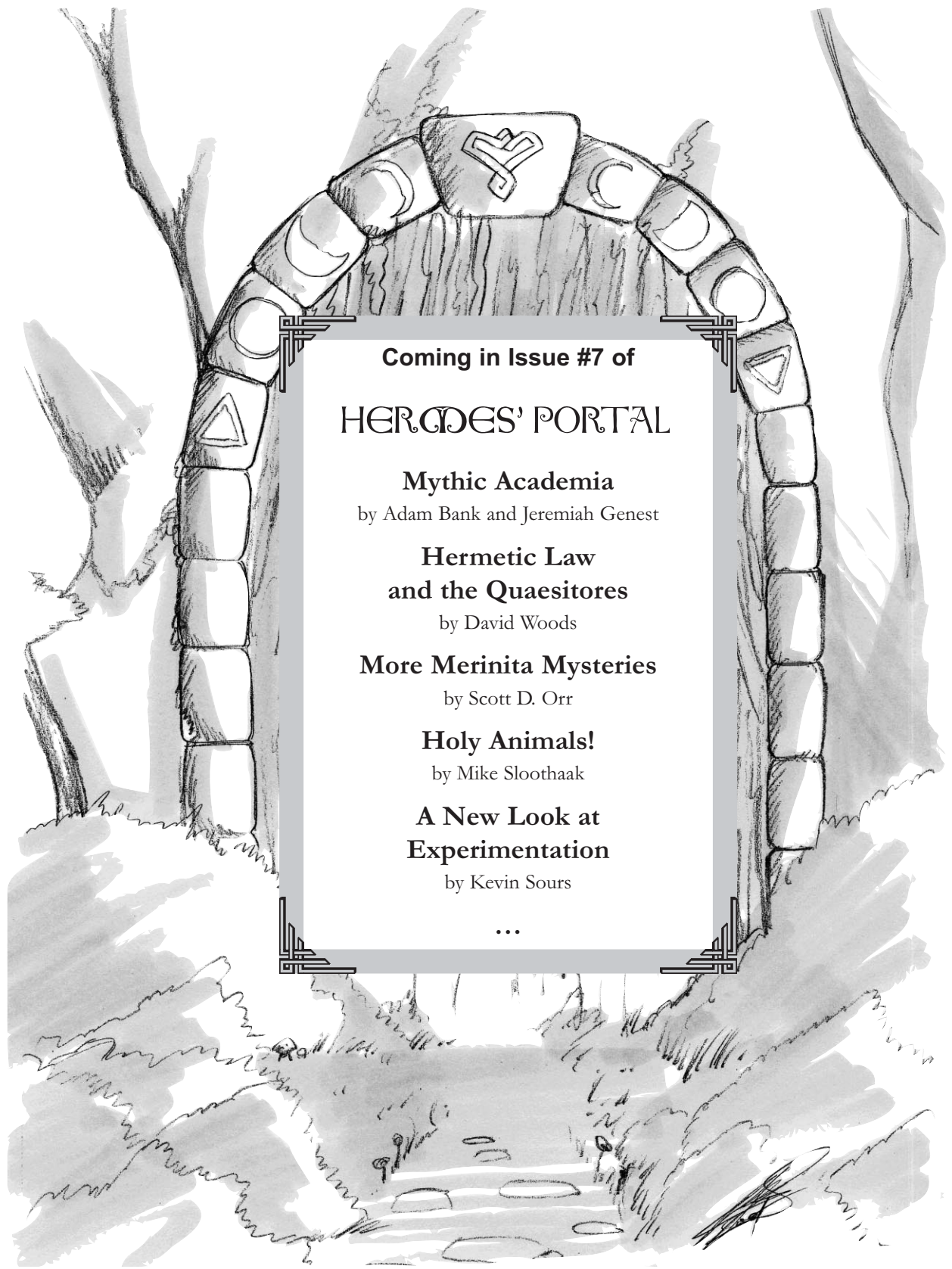
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