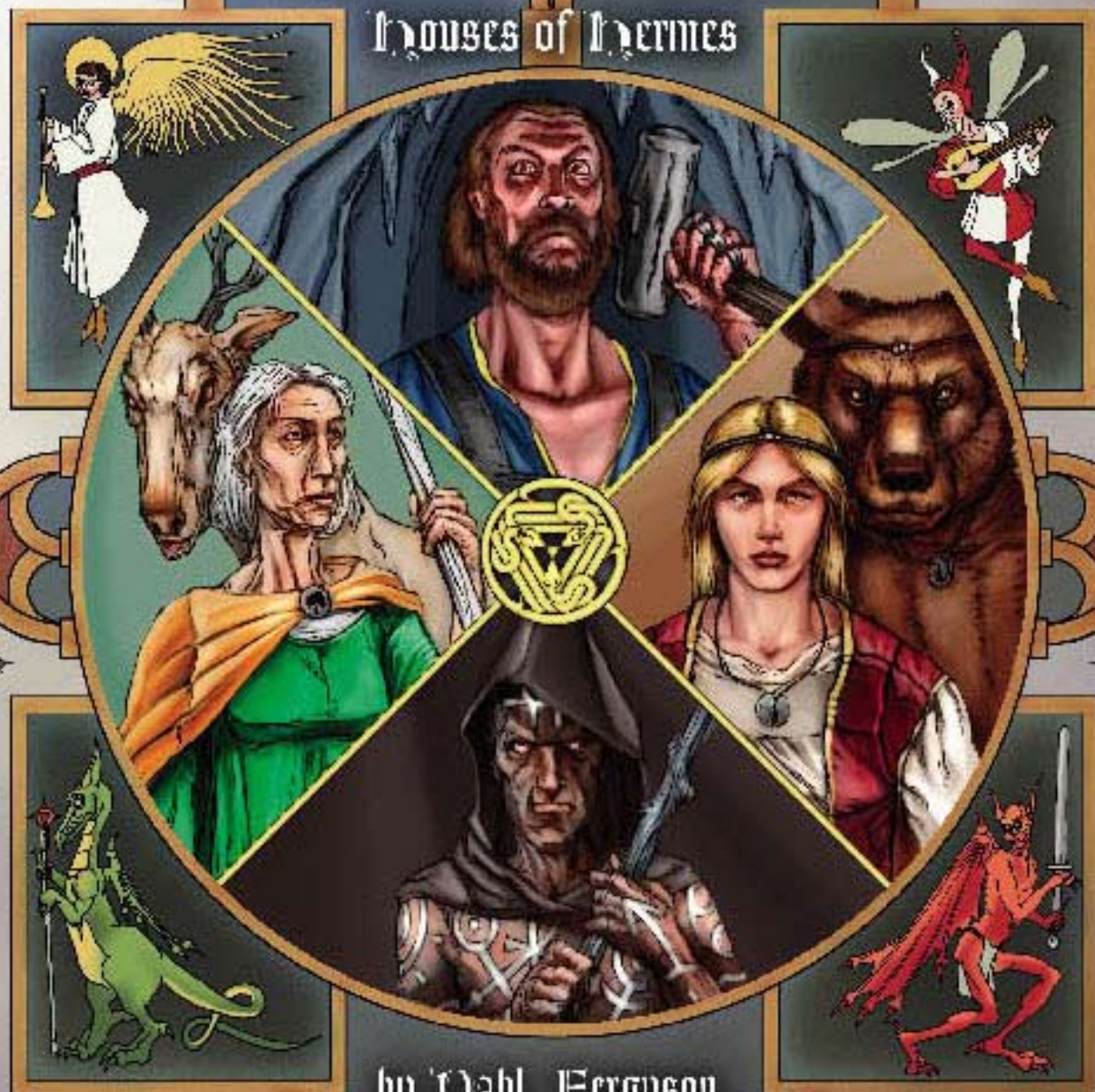


Asmodeus

Mystery Cults

Houses of Hermes



by Dahl, Ferguson,
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Mystery Cults

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Table of Contents

The Mechanics of Initiation

POTENT MAGIC.....	6
-------------------	---

House Bjornaer

HISTORY	7
Bjornaer the Founder.....	7
The Founding of House Bjornaer	8
The Early Years of the House	9
The Schism War.....	9
Recent Events.....	10
CUSTOMS OF HOUSE BJORNAER.....	10
Harmonists & Wilderists	11
House, Clan, & Sept.....	11
The Bjornaer Council.....	15
The Gathering of Twelve Years	15
The Apprenticeship of a Bjornaer Magus	16
THE HEARTBEAST.....	18
Choosing the Heartbeast	19
The Heartbeast in Play	22
THE MYSTERIES OF HOUSE BJORNAER	24
Initiating the Clan Mysteries	25
Initiating the House Mysteries	25
Initiating ... the Inner Heartbeast	28
The Three Inner Mysteries	30
The Inner Heartbeast in Play.....	32
Refining the Inner Heartbeast.....	32
THE HUNTRESS IN THE WOOD	33
History of the Huntress in the Wood	34
The Huntress Today	34
Structure of the Huntress.....	34
THE MAGIC OF HOUSE BJORNAER.....	35
CHARACTERS OF HOUSE BJORNAER.....	36
Virtues & Flaws	36
New Virtues	37
New Flaws	38
New Abilities.....	38
APPENDIX: MUNDANE BEASTS	38

House Criamon

THE FOUNDER	45
-------------------	----

WHAT THE HOUSE BELIEVES.....	45
PRACTICES & BELIEFS	48
Apt Action.....	48
Riddles.....	49
Stigmata	50
Body Modification Rules.....	51
Life as a Criamon Magus	51
The Gorgiastics.....	52
Final Transmission	52
Adulterations: Lingering Problems	53
THE CAVE OF TWISTING SHADOWS...	55
The Central Clutch.....	55
The Prima.....	55
THE PATHS	58
Stations.....	59
Enigmatic Wisdom	60
The Path of the Body.....	61
The Path of Seeming	64
The Path of Strife.....	67
The Path of Walking Backwards.....	70
Other Paths.....	73
New Virtues	73
New Flaws	73

House Merinita

HISTORY	75
The House Divided	77
200 Years After.....	78
The Future of the House.....	78
HOUSE SOCIETY	79
The Search for Arcadia	79
Belief & Mythic Europe	80
Do Faeries Dream of Counting Sheep?... ..	82
The Sundered Realms	83
MERINITA MYSTERIES.....	85
New Virtues	85
New Flaws	87
New Abilities.....	88
Familiars	88
Arcadian Mysteries.....	92
Folk Mysteries	96
Illusion Mysteries	100
Nature Mysteries.....	102

House Verditius

HISTORY	107
The Cult of Hephaestus.....	107
The Cult of Vulcan	108
The Founder Verditius	108
The Early Years of House Verditius.....	110
The House After Verditius.....	110
Crises in the Order	111
Conflicts in the House	111
Current Concerns	112
VERDITIUS MAGI.....	112
Apprenticeship	112
Gauntleted Magus	113
Journeymen and Masters.....	113
The Primus	114
Prices for Enchantments.....	114
Vendettas.....	115
The Contest	116
THE MYSTERY CULT OF VERDITIUS	116
Initiation ... Mysteries of Verditius.....	117
The Outer Mystery of Verditius Magic	117
Learning the Inner Mysteries	118
Hubris.....	118
Ordeals.....	120
Confraternities	121
HOUSE VERDITIUS INNER MYSTERIES..	123
Enchant Casting Tools	123
Items of Quality	124
Reforging Enchanted Items.....	125
Verditius Elder Runes	127
Automata	128
Bind Curse.....	131
Bind Magical Creatures	134
Item Attunement	135
VIRTUES & FLAWS	135
New Virtues	135
New Flaws	136
APPENDIX: EXPANDED FORM & MATERIAL	
BONUSES	137

Contributors

138



Introduction

The Mechanics of Initiation

The process of Initiation into a Mystery is given a full treatment in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, but a summary of the mechanics is provided here for reference.

All of the Exoteric (that is, House) Mysteries are governed by a separate (House) Lore; thus there is a House Bjornaer Lore, a House Criamon Lore, a House Merinita Lore, and a House Verditius Lore. Initiates who have not been apprenticed to a member of the House need at least (House) Lore 1; the Mystagogue for any Initiate must also know the same Lore, but generally needs a high level if the Initiation is to succeed. To grant the Initiate a new mystery Virtue, the Mystagogue generates an Initiation Total, which determines the success or failure of the Initiation:

INITIATION TOTAL = Presence + (House) Lore + Script bonus

The Initiation Total is based on the Mystagogue's scores. There is no die roll; if the total is higher than the target level the Initiation succeeds. Initiation Scripts and their bonuses are described in the following chapters. The target for this total is the Initiation Target Level, which depends on the kind of Virtue to be initiated, Major or Minor:

TO INITIATE A MINOR VIRTUE KNOWN BY THE MYSTAGOGUE: Target Level 15

TO INITIATE A MAJOR VIRTUE KNOWN BY THE MYSTAGOGUE: Target Level 21

The target level is increased in the unlikely event that the Mystagogue does not know the Initiated Virtue. This is

most often the case in the event of a maga who decides to try to initiate herself in a Mystery Virtue without a Mystagogue, in which case the Initiate acts as her own Mystagogue and uses her own scores in the Initiation Total.

**TO INITIATE A NEW MINOR VIRTUE:
Target Level 18**

**TO INITIATE A NEW MAJOR VIRTUE:
Target Level 30**

In addition, if the Initiate underwent a previous Ordeal (gained a Flaw, lost a Virtue, or increased a Flaw from Minor to Major) for a previous Initiation, reduce the Target Level as follows:

**FIRST INITIATION AFTER AN ORDEAL:
Subtract 3 for a Minor, 6 for a Medium, or 9 for a Major Ordeal**

**SECOND INITIATION AFTER AN ORDEAL:
Subtract 2 for a Minor, 4 for a Medium, or 6 for a Major Ordeal**

**THIRD INITIATION AFTER AN ORDEAL:
Subtract 1 for a Minor, 2 for a Medium, or 3 for a Major Ordeal**

Only one past Ordeal counts towards a new Initiation, and there is a minimum Target Level of 9 no matter how great a reduction is applied.

If the Initiation Total equals or exceeds the Target Level, then the Initiation succeeds automatically. No die roll is made — the Initiate need only be properly prepared, and skilled enough to succeed.

If the Mystagogue's Initiation Total does not exceed the Target Level, the Mystagogue may be able to vary and

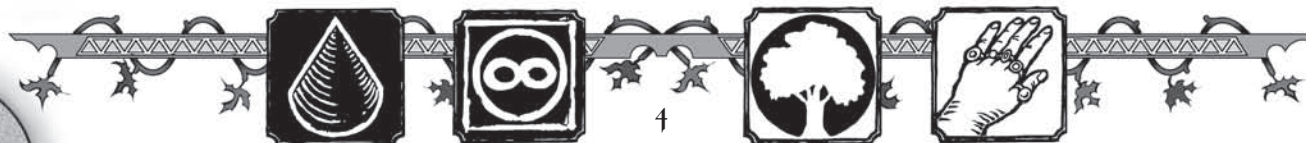
extend the Script, to make it more effective. If that is still not enough (for example, no Script exists) then the Mystagogue can experiment to attempt to discover a Script.

THE INITIATION SCRIPT

An Initiation Script is a written text (similar to a Lab Text) which describes the process of a successful Initiation: the chants and methods, the places and times, and the sacrifices made. If this Script is followed exactly, it grants its bonus to the Initiation Total. Scripts usually detail the price of Initiation, which may take the form of an **Initiation Ordeal** (the acquisition of a Major or Minor Flaw, loss of a Major or Minor Virtue, or increasing a Minor Flaw to Major level), an **Initiation Quest** (a lengthy journey with a series of challenges), and/or an **Initiation Sacrifice** (of time, wealth, knowledge, or power). The Scripts detailed in this book give the bonus contributed to the Initiation Total from each component of the Script involved. More details about Initiation Scripts can be found in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, Chapter 2: Entering the Mysteries, which also includes details of the process of creating a new Script.

VARYING A SCRIPT

It may be necessary for a Mystagogue to modify an Initiation Script; for example, to add additional elements to it to make a difficult Initiation possible for an inexperienced Mystagogue. To vary the Script, the Mystagogue makes the following test:



Stress Die + Intelligence + (House) Lore vs. Ease Factor

The Ease Factor is 9 to extend the Script with a new component, such as an additional Quest. Magi with lower Presence or (House) Lore often try to extend Scripts they acquire.

The Ease Factor is 12 to change a component, such as varying the place, the time, or the subject of a Quest. It is impossible to change the Virtue a Script Initiates; that requires a new Script.

The Mystagogue may only attempt one change in a given Initiation. If the test fails, the Initiation would fail (and the Mystagogue knows this), but the original Script (or a different variation) may be attempted in another season. If the variation test roll succeeds, the modified Script is used as above to generate the Initiation Total, and if this equals or exceeds the Initiation Target Level, the Initiation succeeds with no further rolls. If the Script would fail, the Initiate does not need to make any of the sacrifices that the Script would require; the Mystagogue realizes the problem before that stage is reached.

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

Character Creation & the Mysteries

Those who wish to play characters already Initiated into the Inner Mysteries of a Mystery Cult should discuss this with the storyguide. It is unusual (but not unknown) for a magus fresh from apprenticeship to know some of the inner secrets of his House, in which case the magus character should be designed with House Mystery Virtues as normal Virtues, part of the standard ten Virtues and Flaws. These are accounted for as normal: in particular, Flaws acquired now do not later count as past Ordeals. Note that if a particular Virtue requires some other specific Virtue or Flaw, this is still required. Mysteries with Initiation



Example Elements of an Initiation Script

The Mysteries Revised Edition has many examples of different Script bonuses, but the ones below are most commonly employed. See the following chapters for the bonuses of other Script elements.

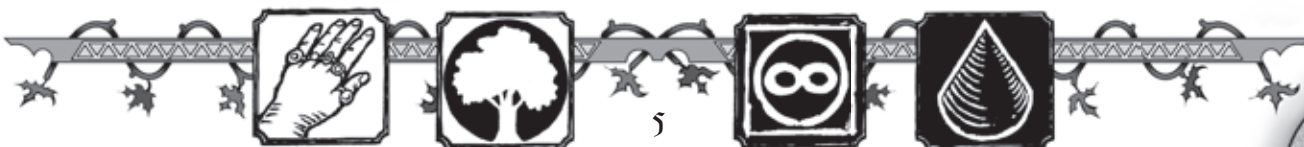
- +3 Initiate has to be at a special place at a special time for the Initiation
- +3 Initiate has to complete a specific Quest
- +1 Initiate sacrifices time — serving another in the cult (one bonus only)

- +1 Initiate sacrifices material goods or wealth (entailing real personal loss)
- +3 to +6 Initiate sacrifices something of great and symbolic value (familiar, talisman, powerful invested device)
- +3 Initiate suffers an Ordeal inflicting a Minor Flaw or removing a Minor Virtue
- +6 Initiate suffers an Ordeal increasing a Minor Flaw to Major level
- +9 Initiate suffers an Ordeal inflicting a Major Flaw or removing a Major Virtue

Scripts demanding the Sacrifice of familiars, talismans, and the like, or similar Ordeals and Quests clearly beyond the ability of the character, should be vetoed by the storyguide.

For older characters who are advanced in years before play begins, the acquisition of a Mystery Virtue can take the place of a season of laboratory activity,

and thus subtracts 10 experience points from the character's total. The Ordeals, Quests, and Sacrifices demanded by the Initiation Script must be suffered as usual; a player may, for example, have to pay to create a talisman during character creation, and then destroy it, if an Initiation Script demands it.



Potent Spell Example

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

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

Potent Magic

Potent Magic, a Hermetic Virtue available in Major and Minor versions, was described in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, but is reproduced here as it is also used by some of the Mysteries in this book.

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

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

DESCRIPTION

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

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

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

POTENT SPELLS

A Potent spell has a bonus known as its Potency, which derives from combining one or more Casting Items into the design of the spell. Casting Items use the factors given in the Shape and Material Bonus table (see ArM5, page 110): each Casting Item provides one bonus. (If more than one bonus is possible, the spell design states which one is used.)

POTENCY = Sum of bonus from each Casting Item

POTENCY BONUS: Add Potency to Casting Score

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

Any magus can learn a Potent spell from a Lab Text or teacher, and apply

Potency to his Casting Score; the Potent Magic Virtue is required to design a Potent spell from scratch, but not to reproduce one from a Lab Text.

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

POTENT MAGIC AND POTENT SPELLS

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

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

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

In addition, a magus who knows a spell within the field of his Potent Magic may invent a variant spell with different Casting Items (including a variant with no Casting Items). If the only difference is a change in Casting Items, he may invent the variant in a single season.

DESIGNING COVENANT LIBRARIES

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

Chapter One

House Bjornaer

The childhood of our House has passed. We were born into darkness, weaned in the wild places of the world, took our first tottering steps in the shadows of our forefathers. Now it is time for us to come forth from the wilderness and experience the full light of the Order of Hermes. Now it is time for us to honor the memory of our ancestors by living our own lives, filled with the wisdom we have learned — and still learn yet — at their knees. Now is the time that we stand proud as heirs, as adults, as magi.

— Primus Salmo,
speaking to the House in 1023

When asked, all that most magi know about the members of House Bjornaer is that they can change shape. The more arrogant magi dismiss them as practitioners of primitive magic; the more misty-eyed ones see them as the last remnants of a forgotten people — noble savages. Neither group will be easily able to find a magus of the House who fulfills either stereotype, yet they endure. Few can mention a famous historical member of the House, fewer still know any historical event which involved a Bjornaer magus. Although the Order does not realize it, they know next to nothing about this secretive House, and what they do know is unsupported by fact. This is a result of deliberate efforts on behalf of the followers of Bjornaer, who recognize the power inherent in secrets. In truth, House Bjornaer is a cult of the ancestors, gaining power in the present because of the weight of all of those who have gone before. They believe that it is the ancestor-spirits that reside within them that gives them the power to change shape; through greater communication with these spirits inside them, they seek to become creatures of magic.

Key Facts

Population: 79

Domus Magna: Crintera in the Rhine Tribunal

Prima: Falke. She had this position in the House thrust upon her, and is struggling to acquire the qualities of leadership. She currently strives to carry out a strategy of isolation and patience, and is trying to regain the trust of the Quaesitores and others in the Order. Falke's heartbeast is a silver-gray falcon with white-banded wings. For more information on Falke, see *Guardians of the Forests: The Rhine Tribunal*, page 96.

Favored Tribunals: The Novgorod and Loch Leglean Tribunals, where there are still many wild places left in which to roam undisturbed, followed by the Rhine Tribunal.

Motto: *Potentio super ipso potentia super allis.* (Power over the self is power over others.)

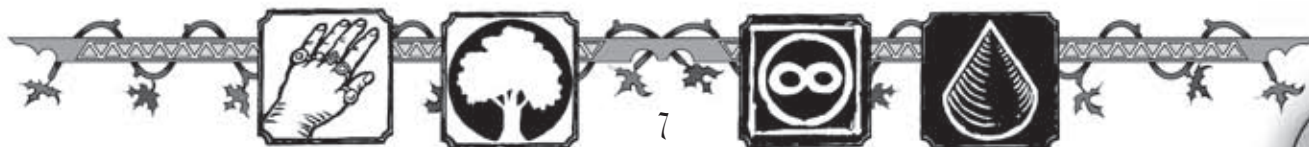
Symbols: A cone. When Trianoma was devising the iconography of the Order she chose the cone as a symbol for House Bjornaer; as it can cast the shadow of triangle or a circle, but never both at the same time, thus reflecting the heartbeast. House Bjornaer also uses another symbol; a Janus-style head combining the face of a bear with that of a woman.

History

Over the four and a half centuries since the founding of the Order of Hermes, House Bjornaer has changed substantially in its demeanor, politics, and magic. From primitive shapechangers to savage defenders of the wilderness, and now to upstanding members of the Order of Hermes, these dramatic changes have left scars on the House that are still apparent today. To fully understand the Bjornaer magus, one must understand the history of the House, and it is no accident that much of this history lies shrouded in mystery — House Bjornaer do not want other Houses to understand them.

Bjornaer the Founder

As with many Mystery Cults, the story of the central figure of House Bjornaer — the Founder herself — is as much legend as it is history. She was from a remnant tribe of the Gothic people who once occupied the whole of northeastern Germany, and her name was actually Birna, which means 'she-bear' in the language of her tribe. As an initiate of a witch-cult, Birna received visitations from an ancestor, who took the form of a spirit-bear. It told her that the witches enslaved ancestor-spirits with evil magic, and convinced Birna to try to find a way to break the power of the cult. Birna pretended that she was magically weak, while learning the hidden lore of her tradition. She was scorned and mocked by the witch-cult for her meager powers, and her resentment for them grew daily.



Famous Figures

Birna: Gothic witch and Founder of the House

Hérisson: Founder of the Harmonist philosophy; unappreciated in his time

Salmo: Primus following the Schism War who refocused the House in a more traditional Hermetic mould

Urgen: Previous primus, a direct and sometimes violent magus who resigned in favor of Falke

Crintera: Domus Magna

The domus magna of House Bjornaer is Crintera, situated on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea, just off the northern coast of Germany. Its permanent members are the six members of the Bjornaer Council. The covenant proper is situated in a regio in the middle of a magical forest. As well as the six huts of the Bjornaer Council, the top level of the regio has a large meeting area where the Gathering of Twelve Years is held. For more information about Crintera and the members of the Bjornaer Council, see *Guardians of the Forests*, page 92.

When stories of a traveling witch came to the ears of the tribe, Birna's superiors naturally sent their most expendable member to face her. However, this "witch," named Trianoma, told Birna of a new magical society where she would be treated as an equal and be taught magic that would surpass that of those who despised her. Birna readily agreed to join the Order of Hermes, but advised Trianoma that there was little point continuing further east into the territory of the German tribes, as the sorcerers there were both hostile and of little consequence. This petty revenge denied her former tradition the possibility of joining the Order, and they in turn assumed that Birna had been killed by the witch and mourned her not.

The Name "Bjornaer"

Birna spoke no Latin when she met Trianoma, and was never much of a scholar. Her first apprentices called themselves the *barns Bjornaer* (meaning "The Children of Birna" in Old Gothic), which became the *auditores Bjornaer* ("Followers of 'Bjornaer'") to the nascent Order. Neither Birna nor her followers saw fit to correct the grammatical error, recognizing the power inherent in names, and Birna was therefore known as Bjornaer to the rest of the Order.

All Bjornaer magi know the real name of their Founder, but never speak it to outsiders. They use the name Bjornaer only as an adjective, knowing that it means "of Birna" in Gothic. Thus, a member of this House is not "a Bjornaer," but instead "a Bjornaer magus," "a Bjornaer follower," or "a member of House Bjornaer."

The Founding of House Bjornaer

Birna's native tradition relied on shapechanging and ecstatic trances, while the magic of Bonisagus was based on a classical understanding of natural philosophy, and Birna found it necessary to change her entire worldview to adopt the new magic. However, Merinita proved to be a kind and patient mentor, and they became as sisters. With her help, Birna was able to overcome her shortcomings, and over time became an equal of the other Founders. Birna referred to the bear-shape granted by her ancestor as "the beast of her heart," and it forever frustrated Bonisagus that his theory had no means of penetrating the "disguise" of Birna's bear form. Birna realized that it should be possible to cause other Gifted individuals to come into communion with their own ancestral spirits. Using her knowledge of her tribe's magical rites, and Merinita's training in the pagan Mysteries, the two magae devised the Ritual of Twelve Years to do just that.

Birna chose her apprentices only from among the Germanic tribes. She initi-

The Formation of the Clans

The last instructions offered to Birna's followers were characteristically enigmatic. To each of her six apprentices she said but one word. To Midusulf she said "Lead," Sirnas was told "Protect," Ilfetu was commanded "Teach," Maruhs was told "Strive," Arelie "Remember," and finally, to Wilkis she said "Nourish." The apprentices divided the House into six clans, each of which undertook one of these duties. Wilkis, the most eloquent of the six, was appointed to be the first primus of the House on the passing of Birna. The second primus was Fauho, the filius of Midusulf, with the heartbeast of a fox.

ated them into the heartbeast as well as Hermetic magic, and her early apprentices assisted in the teaching of the later ones, mirroring Birna's own "apprenticeship" under Bonisagus and Merinita. Midusulf and Maruhs came from her own tribe; Midusulf literally means "mead-wolf" in Old Gothic, and signifies a bear, whereas Maruhs means "stallion" in the same language. When her third apprentice proved to be a spy from the witch-cult, Birna hunted down the traitor and ended his life with her claws and teeth; henceforth she turned her attentions to other Germanic tribes. Ilfetu ("Swan" in his native tongue) came from the marshes of ancient Frisia, whereas Wilkis ("Wolf") and Arelie ("Eagle") came from a Prussian tribe. Finally, Sirnas ("Stag") originated from amongst the Wends of the Baltic Coast.

Only Ilfetu learned the Ritual of Twelve Years from his master, and the House met on a regular basis to conduct this ritual for new apprentices at Birna's eventual home, the covenant of Crintera. At one of these early Gatherings in 831, the ancient Birna, then over a century old, imparted some last instructions to her House and disappeared forever in the form of an immense bear. Birna's six "children" continued to recruit apprentices from the shapechanging traditions of the Germanic and Slavic tribes, just like their mater. Due

to this predominance of "pagan barbarians" among the *barns Bjornaer*, the House quickly gained a reputation for savagery, a reputation that the House is still trying to shake. The goal of most of its members was to defend the wilderness against the invasion of the Dominion brought by the expanding human population. Birna had taught that the wilderness holds a great secret of magic, a secret that can be experienced, but not tamed. The soil untuned by plowshare, the river untouched by the prow of a boat, the forest that had yet to feel the bite of an axe; these things were sacred to Birna's Children.

The Early Years of the House

In the early days of the Order, a rift struck House Merinita. Two magi of that House battled to determine its future course, and when the matter was decided, the losers were accepted into House Bjornaer. They were initiated into the Outer Mystery of the House, and, despite their differing philosophy, were made welcome. This lineage has now long since died out, but they left behind a lasting legacy in the shape of a secret society within House Bjornaer (see *The Huntress in the Wood*).

As human populations expanded and the tangles of forests disappeared all across Europe, House Bjornaer tried to turn back the tide of mundane expansion. Most Bjornaer magi saw little wrong with extreme measures — such as killing peasants — in the fight to keep mankind within the stone walls of its towns. Many legends about ravaging creatures who could walk as both fearsome beasts and men stem from this time. In the tenth century, a member of House Bjornaer called Hérissou came to the realization that this attitude was proving counter-productive — humans destroy what they fear. The behavior of his sodales was making the locals more determined to cut down the forests and destroy all of the dangerous beasts within. Hérissou tried to convince his House to encourage the humans to live in harmony with nature, rather than attacking those who violate it. However,

The Gothic Shapeshifters

According to House Bjornaer, the Gothic witch-cult practiced Infernal magic. The ancestor-spirits of the Goths took the form of animals, and protected their descendants from ill-fortune. Once these spirits were enslaved by the cult, a witch could become any animal whose spirit she controlled. The witches could also force the ancestors to prophesy, or to reverse their protective powers and instead lay curses. Denied the Order by the vengeful Birna, this magical tradition was gradually wiped out by the civilizing forces of Charlemagne's Empire, expanding Christianity, and the secret pogroms of House Bjornaer. The last remnants of the Goths were assimilated into the Slavic people of the region, and the shapeshifters are believed to have been eradicated shortly after the Schism War. Unbeknown to the House, the descendants of this magical tradition — the witch-women and their skin-changing people — still exist in secret in the forests of Pomerania (and perhaps elsewhere).

They bear a deep and abiding resentment for the great traitor Birna, whose name is reviled in stories transmitted from generation to generation.

SAGA SEED: THE SECRET ENEMY

The Gothic shapeshifters gain a charismatic chieftain who unites some of the tribes under one banner. This leader becomes sufficiently motivated to try to eradicate House Bjornaer, possibly due to actions performed or witnessed by the player characters. These people do everything in their power to wipe out every last one of the Bjornaer followers, even at the expense of their own lives. They are magically weak compared to Hermetic magi, but they are physically strong, highly loyal to each other, and fanatical in their task. More about the Pomeranian witches can be found in *Guardians of the Forests*, page 99.

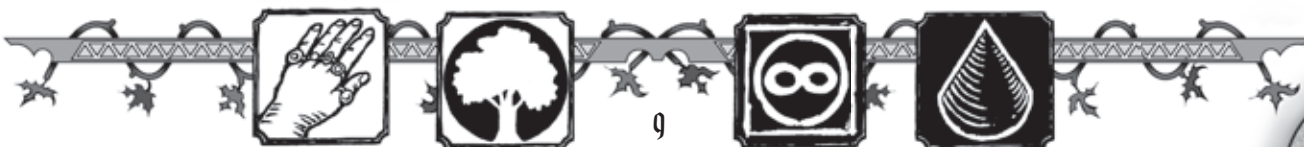
he was ridiculed and became the laughingstock of the House.

The Schism War

At the Gathering of Twelve Years in 999, concerns were raised that the Order of Hermes was in danger of fragmenting due to internal conflict. The non-Latinate Houses of Diedne, Ex Miscellanea, and Bjornaer seemed to be in particular danger, as the traditionally Roman Houses banded together and openly attacked magi from "primitive" traditions in flagrant disregard of the Oath of Hermes. House Bjornaer became paranoid and insular, and many retreated to Crintra. When the wholesale attacks against House Diedne began in 1004, the last few members of House Bjornaer joined their sodales in Crintra. Some Roman Houses feared that House Bjornaer would side with House Diedne, but instead, none were seen for nearly 15 years until the Schism War was well and truly over.

When House Bjornaer emerged from Crintra they were led by a primus called Salmo, a descendent of Ilfetu. He had a clear vision of the future of his House, the foremost aspect of which was to integrate themselves more closely with the Latinate Houses. Under his guidance, House Bjornaer kept a low profile, and its members gradually became more similar to the standard Hermetic magus in a deliberate attempt to prevent itself from becoming a target in the event of a future Schism War. Whilst it retains a House structure that preserves features of its tribal past, the average member of the House Bjornaer of today is as civilized and cultured as any other magus in the Order.

Another consequence of the Schism War was the increasing popularity of the teachings of Hérissou. They were attractive to the post-Schism House, primarily because they espoused a policy that attracted less attention from the Quaesitores. The more traditional members of the House started to call themselves "Wilderists" in response to these





new "Harmonists." Both factions still exist in House Bjornaer, and the Harmonists have grown to equal the Wilderists in number.

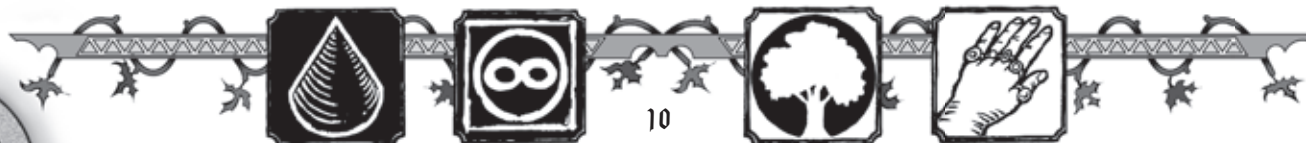
Recent Events

The most notable event to have struck House Bjornaer in the last century or so was the invasion of the island of Rügen by King Valdemar I of Denmark in 1168, followed by the conquest in 1201 of the surrounding German provinces. While the covenant of Crintera itself was safe within its regio, the House feared that the settlement of Christian folk on a formerly pagan island would result in the destruction of its aura. Appeals to both the Rhine Tribunal and the Grand

Tribunal fell on deaf ears; the House was merely reminded in the strongest terms of its duty to uphold the Oath of Hermes, and many Bjornaer magi are still resentful that the Order failed them in their time of greatest need. Fifty years later, the biggest effect that this invasion actually had on House Bjornaer was to cause the primus to change twice. The first time brought the aggressive Urgen to the leadership of the House. He spent the three decades of his tenure lashing out at the mundanes and covenants whom he believed were responsible for aiding the invasion. He was popular in the House, unpopular in the Order, and largely impotent with respect to his overall goal. He resigned as primus in 1203 in favor of the present incumbent, the level-headed Falke, though he remains active in the politics of the House.

Customs of House Bjornaer

House Bjornaer has several unique conventions that set them apart from other magi, but also make them a target for accusations of savagery and barbarism. This maintenance of "primitive" customs, such as animal names and a tribal organization, forms a link to their past and their ancestors, from which the Bjornaer magi draw power. The stereotype of the Bjornaer magus is a scruffy, uncultured individual who spends much time in the wild, uses primarily nature-oriented magic, and is afraid of fire. While individuals like this do exist, they are no more common in House Bjornaer than they are in any of the other Houses. They



choose to adopt the trappings of a simpler existence, it is not that they are forced down this path by inferior philosophy or poor education. Members of House Bjornaer may actually benefit from this stereotype, for while their enemies underestimate them, the Bjornaer magus has the upper hand, whether it is on the Tribunal debating floor, the certamen circle, or the battlefield of Wizard's War.

Harmonists & Wilderists

Central to the philosophy of House Bjornaer is that the wellspring of all magic is those areas that remain in their pristine state, untouched by the hand of man. Magi of the House believe that only in untouched wildernesses can the ancestral spirits be found, for the attention of mankind corrupts the pure spirits with heathenry, and they become fae. Likewise, they believe that pagan religions — even those that revere nature — are tainted by the Faerie realm, and thus anathema to the ancestors. This explains much of House Bjornaer's antipathy towards the goals of House Merinita; the Bjornaer followers believe that faeries have usurped their ancestors.

Just how the pristine wilderness of the ancestors is to be defended has divided the House. Harmonists (Concordiarii) believe that the "invasion" of the wilderness by the growing human population is inevitable. There are too few members of House Bjornaer to be able to defend all the areas that need defending, and all humans have the right to contact their ancestors, so the Harmonists teach mundanes that they need to live in harmony with the wild. If they treat it with respect, and learn to co-exist with nature rather than try to tame it, the inherent magic of those wild places need not be destroyed.

Wilderists (Feritarii), on the other hand, wish to see humankind sent back to the cities, corralled within stone walls where they can do no harm. They ensure that humans consider forests, marshes, and moors to be places of danger, where wild beasts roam and untamable forces are in control. The ancestor sites are thereby

Bjornaer Names

The members of House Bjornaer place great stock in names. Upon entering the House, they choose a new name for themselves to reflect this stage in their life, and many choose the name of their heartbeast, in either Latin or their native tongue, which represents their new connection with their ancestors. Alternatively, they may take on figurative bynames, such as Flinthoof, Snake Eye, or Grey Hame. They may append this name to their given name — Richard Corvus, Ursula Sharp Tooth, etc. Bjornaer magi often adopt the name of Birna or her apprentices as a family name: "Falke Bjornaer" means, literally, "Falke of Birna's Line"; the appropriate declensions for the *bams Bjornaer* are Areleins, Ilfetwis, Maruhis, Midusulfis, Sirnaus, and Wilkjis.

Throughout his life, the typical Bjornaer magus acquires new bynames

to commemorate specific events in his life. For example, he may be known for a great deed ("Griffin's Bane," "Great Climber"), an enchanted device that he created or discovered ("Rosewood Crown," "Fenris's Tooth"), or an event that changed him greatly, such as Twilight scars or an injury ("Goat Legs," "Half-Hand"). Once these names are combined with the magus's genealogy, the recitation of the full name of a Bjornaer magus may become a prodigious feat of memory.

Some members of House Bjornaer undergo a specific Mystery that strips them of their given name and grants them a secret name (see Secret Name, below). This prevents harmful magic being used against them through the power of sympathy.

protected from the hobnail boots of the vulgar mundanes. The more zealous members of this faction seek to revert areas that have already been tamed to their original state, driving out settlers and protecting them from further incursions. In time, they hope, the ancestors will return to these places again.



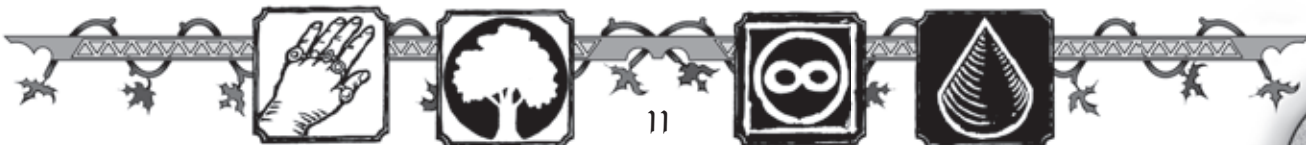
House, Clan, & Sept

House Bjornaer has a tribal internal structure, which is based on the subdivision of the House into clans, and subdivision of the clans into septs. This structure encourages a close relationship between

the magi of the House; the members of a sept are usually close comrades bound by ties of mutual support. This makes House Bjornaer unusually cohesive, and magi are often surprised that these "primitive" magi are capable of the degree of organization and strength that they have displayed in the past.

THE SIX CLANS

The basic level of organization in the House is the **clan**. Each apprentice accepted into the House joins the clan of those who taught him, and becomes part of that lineage. These clans are named after Birna's six apprentices, thus there is a Clan Arelie, Clan Ilfetu, and so forth. Each clan consists of several lines of descent from these first apprentices, and together they constitute six viewpoints that drive the politics of the House. Individuals within a clan are not constrained by the political stance of their clans, yet tend to share their opinions due to their upbringing. A small tribunal may easily be dominated by a single clan. Those tribunals with few wilderness areas left tend to have members from the Harmonist clans, whereas



The Clan Mysteries

Bjornaer magi may be initiated into both **Clan Mysteries** and **House Mysteries**. Each clan's description lists the Initiation Scripts for the Clan Mysteries available to the members of that clan. Those Mysteries marked with an asterisk (*) in the clan descriptions below are detailed in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*; the rest may be found in this book or in ArM5. The mechanics of these Scripts can be found under the heading **Initiating the Clan Mysteries**, below.

members of Clans Midusulf, Maruhs, and Ilfetu (the Wilderist clans) are more likely towards the fringes of the Order, where primal wilderness still reigns.

Clans Midusulf and Sirnas are the largest, with about 18 members each; Clan Ilfetu is the smallest with six magi. The other three clans have about 12 members each.

CLAN ARELIE

"Remember"

DESCRIPTION

Clan Arelie believes that the ancestors can be best honored through remembrance, and seeks to preserve as much of the stories and teaching of the bygone age as possible. It attempts to dispel the "Germanic barbarian" stereotype of the House, and is the most outward-looking of the clans, keen to know what is going on in the rest of the Order. Many members are taught the rare Academic Ability Art of Memory (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, Chapter 3: Curious Common Magics).

POLITICAL STANCE

Harmonist, to the point of pacifism. They are the first to complain to the House when a Wilderist acts out of turn, but have a reputation for being the last to come to the defense of the House. Clan Midusulf accuse Clan Arelie of being the caged birds of the Order in general, and the Quaesitores in particular.

SAMPLE ROLES

Peacemaker: This magus desires nothing more than peace. He usually latches on to one particular issue at a time, and bends thoughts and deeds to resolve the conflict.

Spy: Skilled in subtle magics and mundane stealth, this magus discovers much information about others, both friends and foes. He may have a noble purpose (such as spying for the good of the House), but not all do.

Philosopher: Skilled in rhetoric and debate, this magus has received a classical education and loves the cut and thrust of scholarly debate.

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial of the Tree: The initiate is hanged by his wrists for four days, henceforth suffering from Palsied Hands, but acquires a Piercing Gaze.

The Deed of Forgotten Lore: The initiate must uncover a previously forgotten or unknown fact about a clan ancestor, for which he acquires the Clear Thinker Virtue.

The Oath of the Empty Hand: The initiate vows never to raise a weapon against another being, and acquires an Affinity with Mentem.

CLAN CHIEF

Ursula Densacer ("Sharp-Tooth" in Latin) has received accolades for her erudition from House Jerbiton, and her volumes of poetry are widely circulated by that House. She has a wolf heartbeast, and is good friends with Prima Falke.

CLAN ILFETU

"Teach"

DESCRIPTION

Clan Ilfetu, the most mystically inclined of the six clans, administers to the cult of ancestors, conducting all the public rites of the House. It also leads the way in discovering new Mysteries. They are dreamers and theorists, considered to be both blessed and moonstruck. While holding much of the power of the House, being the only ones to Initiate the House Mysteries, they do not overtly exercise this

authority. To be a member of this clan, you must take the Clan Ilfetu Minor Virtue.

POLITICAL STANCE

Wilderist. Clan Ilfetu is Wilderist because Birna commanded them to preserve the wild, and the Wilderist offers the most protection to the ancestors who dwell in wild places.

SAMPLE ROLES

Prophet: A reader of auguries, apparently more than a little mad. Their divinations and subsequent pronouncements may not be real, but they are respected.

Theoretician: An innovator, either in Hermetic magic or the Mystery of the Heartbeast.

Crusader: A zealous promoter of a particular religious ideal who is trying to make others see the light. If this archetype espouses a non-religious view, then it is better suited to Clan Maruhs.

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial and the Oath of the Prophet: To acquire the Mystery of Divination* (a Major Virtue), the Initiate must endure a trial and swear an oath. The Initiate is pinned under a large rock for 9 days and acquires the Visions Flaw; they must also swear always to tell the truth.

The Deed of Honor: The Initiate must locate an ancestor site and claim it for the House, thereby receiving the Second Sight Virtue.

CLAN CHIEF

Ardea is well-respected in the House, for many of the current generation of Bjornaer magi were Initiated into the House by this elderly maga with a heron heartbeast. Ardea is believed to be the most powerful mystic in the House, and is accorded great respect as its spiritual mother.

CLAN MARUHS

"Strive"

DESCRIPTION

Clan Maruhs refuses to allow itself to be bound by the rules of culture, but demands to do whatever it wishes. Its

members have romantic souls, and are driven by strong passions, which makes them excellent poets and daring heroes. They form a bridge between the past and future, doing their utmost to be remembered by their own descendants. They have a reputation for wildness: "As capricious as the wind and as mercurial as the Maruhs," goes a saying in House Bjornaer.

POLITICAL STANCE

Wilderist. Adopting the policies of the Harmonists would mean that Clan Maruhs would be forced to conform, and that is anathema to them. They are therefore Wilderists.

SAMPLE ROLES

Puck: This magus delights in causing mischief, often out of a desire to break tired patterns of behavior and add a random element to people's lives.

Wanderer: Unable to settle, she always desires new experiences and action. This need not entail moving from one's home, but the desire for adventure is strong.

Rebel: This magus refuses to conform. He may be treated as a dangerous maverick or a defender of free will, but to many he is just a nuisance.

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial of Chains: Bound by magical chains and cast into a pit, the escape of the Initiate gives her more magical power (Puissant Art) at the cost of less control (Unpredictable Magic).

The Deed of Emulation: The candidate must replicate a heroic deed performed by an ancestor as closely as is possible; this earns her the Dream Magic* Virtue.

The Oath of the Muse: The Initiate must vow to never hesitate to follow her inspiration (gaining the Reckless Flaw); in return she is visited by the muse of Free Expression.

CLAN CHIEF

Larus Egg-Thief is a wandering magus of no fixed covenant. In his heartbeast form of a skua (a rapacious seabird) he haunts the coasts of western Europe. His former apprentices can contact him by leaving messages in certain places he checks regularly.

CLAN MIDUSULF

"Lead"

DESCRIPTION

Descended from the eldest of Birna's apprentices, this clan is often looked to by the others for leadership. Clan Midusulf considers that it is its sacred trust to preserve their ancestors through House Bjornaer. Those magi who fit the stereotypical view of the House as uncivilized savages are most likely to be members of Clan Midusulf, not that they care what other Houses think of them. They are arch-conservatives, resistant to change, but they also have the deepest understanding of the Mystery of the Heartbeast.

POLITICAL STANCE

Wilderist. Clan Midusulf is the most fervently opposed to the Harmonist stance. They are aggressive and sometimes arrogant about getting their point across.

SAMPLE ROLES

Savage Warrior: This champion of the Wilderist cause lives in the wild, which he considers his territory, and he fights all who despoil it.

Chieftain: A leader of men who rules through actions, not through words or by birth. This archetype is also suitable as a "Leader of the Pack" from Clan Wilkis.

Recluse: This magus wants nothing more than to be left alone to conclude her studies in peace. Woe betide any who disturb her!

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial of the Sacred Marriage: The Initiate is ritually wedded to the earth through the letting of blood; he gains an Affinity with Heartbeast in return for a Study Requirement.

The Deed of Glory: The Initiate must win some prize (an apprentice, a magical item, etc.) for the House; in return he gains Study Bonus.

The Oath of Steadfastness: The Initiate vows to never allow an insult to Bjornaer magi to go unpunished (Oversensitive); in return his magic is stronger in the presence of other Bjornaer magi (Special Circumstances).

Story Seed: In Search of a Heron

The Seat of the Swan on the Bjornaer Council has always traditionally been held by a lineage of magae who share a heron heartbeast. However, no Initiate has possessed a heron heartbeast in over fifty years, and Ardea is already old. The whole House is desperately seeking a suitable apprentice for her, but each potential candidate turns out to be a different creature. Some are whispering that the ancestors are displeased with House Bjornaer for some reason, and are punishing them.

Rumors about heron heartbeasts may send Bjornaer player character magi all over Europe in the service of their House. A player character with a heron heartbeast will become the heir of Ardea, marked for great things, but stifled by the over-protectiveness of the House.

CLAN CHIEF

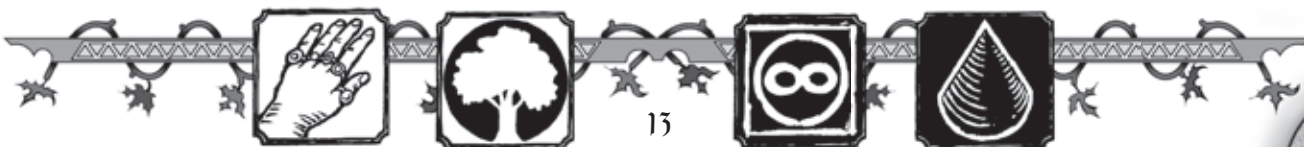
Urgen (or more fully, Archmage Urgen Midusulfis Twin-Slayer) is the leader of Clan Midusulf, the leader of the Bjornaer Council (see below), and the former primus of the House. He is well-known for his aggressive stance on the issue of mundane encroachment on wild places, and has been accused of harassing villages with animal attacks.

CLAN SIRNAS

"Protect"

DESCRIPTION

Much as the stag guards the herd of deer, Clan Sirnas consider themselves the protectors of all Bjornaer magi, and they believe that a direct conflict with humans will be ultimately detrimental to the House. Clan Sirnas are often accredited with noble virtues such as bravery, honor, and loyalty, and they always seem to be searching for a cause. Most of the Merinita who joined House Bjornaer in the ninth century joined Clan Sirnas.



POLITICAL STANCE

Harmonist. Clan Sirnas is the most active of the Harmonist clans; unlike Clan Arelie, they believe in fighting for their ideals, and in this often find allies amongst Clan Wilkis.

SAMPLE ROLES

Guardian of the Wild: Holding a territory in trust for the greater good, the Guardian fiercely protects it from harm.

Champion: This magus defends others, adopting the fights of those weaker than himself.

Healer: The wounds of the world are entrusted to the care of a healer. This may be a literal healing of wounds, or a more general care for the hurt that has been done to nature through the actions of mankind.

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial of Self Control: The Initiate must starve himself until he collapses, despite the constant presence of food. The memory of this inflicts Deleterious Circumstances (when hungry). For this he gains the Strong Willed Virtue.

The Deed of the Woodland Warden: The Initiate acquires the Awakening Virtue (see House Merinita: Nature Mysteries) in return for protecting the wilderness from real threat.

The Oath of the Helpful Stranger: The Initiate swears to forever protect those less strong than himself, and acquires a Minor Magical Focus in wards to assist him realizing this Oath.

CLAN CHIEF

Ophia Sirnaus Isle-Warden lives on one of the larger uninhabited islands of the Aegean Sea. The other members of her sept dwell nearby, but this serpent-maga prefers the solitude of her retreat, which contains a shrine dedicated to Artemis.

CLAN WILKIS

"Nourish"

DESCRIPTION

Clan Wilkis honors their ancestors by strengthening the House as a whole. Its members ensure that lore of the House



is actively sought out; they rescue House secrets from the hands of outsiders, and hunt down those who endanger the House with their actions. They are expected to be loyal to the primus no matter to which clan he or she belongs, and to enforce the decisions of the Bjornaer Council (see below). By having no explicit representative on the Bjornaer Council, Clan Wilkis remains focused on the good of the House rather than personal agendas. Clan Wilkis members often have the Pack Leader Minor Virtue, as they prefer to Initiate their apprentices into the House early in their training.

POLITICAL STANCE

Harmonist. Members of Clan Wilkis tend to be disdainful of mundane populations, but believe that if they are forced to live in harmony with them, then so be it. They tend to be swayed by the opinions of the current primus, supporting the actions of the less zealous Wilderists when a Wilderist is primus, and taking a stronger Harmonist stance when (as currently), the primus is a Harmonist.

SAMPLE ROLES

Hunter: Skilled in finding his prey, this magus takes on the role of a hoplite, tracking down those magi who break their oaths to either the House or the Order, or both.

Politician: The ruthless predator can find easy prey in the debating chambers of the Order of Hermes. A diplomatic politician is more suited to Clan Arelie.

Genealogist: Aided by a prodigious memory, the genealogist tracks the lineages and septs of the House, and is consulted by all for her wisdom.

CLAN INITIATIONS

The Trial of Self-Negation: The Initiate must perform humiliating and degrading acts before many witnesses, becoming Infamous (and acquiring a new by-name), but the shame can fuel her rage, giving her the Berserk Virtue.

The Deed of Fealty: The Initiate must complete a task that has no meaning other than to prove her loyalty to her House; she acquires Cautious Sorcerer.

The Oath of Completion: The candidate vows to complete the unfinished life's work of a clan ancestor. Such dedication grants her Life Boost.

CLAN CHIEF

Technically, the prima is the chief of Clan Wilkis, but she appoints a deputy, currently Retetarius Bjornaer. He has a

salmon heartbeast and dwells in the River Danube and its tributaries. This allows him to move swiftly to most of southern and eastern Europe, and, by crossing overland to the source of the Rhine, the rest of Europe also. His sept is one of the most widely geographically spread, but all can use the rivers as a mode of transport.

THE SEPTS

Septs are informal groupings whose members are all from the same clan, and descended Hermetically from a common ancestor. Septs are usually named after the most recent ancestor held in common by all the members, but occasionally a prominent member of the lineage provides the name instead. Some septs consist of close "family" ties, and may share peculiarities of their magic, such as a specific Art or a common heartbeast, but other septs are formed due to geographic proximity rather than strong blood ties, and their members may be very different from one another. It is very unusual to find a sept with highly diverse heartbeasts, and most share a temperament at least (see below).

Not all Bjornaer magi are members of a sept, but most are, for the division of the House into septs reinforces bonds of loyalty within the Hermetic "family." Important functions of the sept are the training of apprentices, the teaching of the Abilities Heartbeast and House Bjornaer Lore, and Initiation into the clan Mysteries. A Bjornaer follower in need of assistance can call upon his sept-brothers; most Bjornaer can expect that at least one of their sept will give them a season of help, on the understanding that they owe the same in return.

The largest current sept of House Bjornaer has eight members, but 3–4 members is much more common, and members of the same sept tend to live in close proximity to one another; not necessarily at the same covenant, but certainly in neighboring ones. Bjornaer magi are rarely found alone; where there is one, there are usually other members of her sept within a week's travel as the crow flies, or the horse gallops, or the wolf runs. If circumstances drive members further away than this, the sept may be divided. A

Bjornaer magus who finds himself socially and/or geographically isolated from his sept might strike out alone, with the hopes of founding his own sept through his apprentices. However, it is more likely that he will try to form an alliance with local Bjornaer followers of the same clan, which may mean the renaming of the sept to reflect a different most recent common ancestor. For example, when the magus Stellatus moved from a covenant in the Normandy Tribunal to one in Iberia, he found a local sept of his clan, Clan Arelie, which happened to consist of Lacerta and his filius Natrix. The most recent ancestor between Stellatus and Lacerta was a ninth century magus called Suspirium, and the sept was renamed after him.

Some example septs are described below.

THE SEPT OF GYÖNGY (Clan Maruhs) is a lineage that takes its name from a sorceress who never joined the Order of Hermes, but whose descendants joined during the Schism War. They were Initiated into the Outer Mystery of the House, and were found to all share a magpie heartbeast. Since then, the sept has only accepted members who have the same heartbeast, but have spread their knowledge of Dream Magic to the rest of the clan. The members of the Sept of Gyöngy share many characteristics with the form of their soul, relishing in nightmares, mischief, and the mysteries of the night.

THE SEPT OF ORN (Clan Wilkis) consists of Aquila filia Orn, Corvus filius Aquila, Ealwynn, and Coenwulf (both trained by Hosvir Goatlegs filius Orn). They inhabit three geographically close covenants in England and Scotland. Hosvir was obsessed with rebelling against the Norman nobility of England and his filii share this goal; Aquila is disinterested in such mundanity, and when she passes into Final Twilight (which will be soon), it is likely that the sept will split into the sept of Hosvir and the sept of Aquila.

The Bjornaer Council

House Bjornaer is not ruled by its primus but instead by the Bjornaer

Council, whose six seats are named after the heartbeasts of the six *barns* Bjornaer. The Seat of the Bear is the leader of the Bjornaer Council, and is always a member of Clan Midusulf who has a bear heartbeast. The Seat of the Wolf is occupied by the Primus, who acts as a spokesperson to the Order of Hermes through the Grand Tribunal, and directs Clan Wilkis to carry out the decisions of the council. The Seat of the Swan (Clan Ilfetu) is occupied by the House's premier mystic, the Seat of the Horse (Clan Maruhs) is responsible for the membership of the House, the Seat of the Stag (Clan Sirnas) is the House's protector, and the Seat of the Eagle (Clan Arelie) is responsible for keeping an eye on the rest of the Order. The magi who occupy these seats are not necessarily the leaders of their respective clans, just their spokesmen, and upon being elected to their role take up residence at Crintera.

Candidates for primus are chosen by the Bjornaer Council, whereas all other positions on the council are decided by a vote of the entire House (usually at the next Gathering of Twelve Years; see below). The primi are most often drawn from Clan Wilkis (like the current incumbent, Falke), but even if this is not the case, they represent that clan on the Council. If a primus is chosen who has the heartbeast of a bear, then the Seats of Wolf and Bear are combined (regardless of the clan of the new primus), and the Seat of the Fox (named after Fauho, second primus of the House) is occupied by a representative from Clan Wilkis. The Seat of the Fox only exists under this circumstance.

The Gathering of Twelve Years

The members of House Bjornaer congregate every 12 years at Crintera, during which time they perform rituals associated with maintaining their lineage and solidifying the bonds within the House. The Gathering is also a social and political occasion, and no member of the House is willingly absent. It is an event central to the House's cult of ancestors,



a time to honor one's predecessors in the company of one's mystical family.

The Gathering begins on the night of the full moon closest to the summer solstice, and magi begin to arrive up to a fortnight beforehand. Only Initiates into the House Mysteries are permitted to attend, and they assemble in human form at the center of Crintera, on top of a huge wooden platform. A pool fed by a substantial stream lies nearby. Those awaiting Initiation must wait on the ground. The Bjornaer Council intone an ancient Gothic ritual which is supposed to ensure that no shapeshifters are present at the meeting, for it causes all those with a heartbeast to simultaneously assume that form. After this initial change, individuals are free to take whichever form they prefer, although human form is most prevalent, for sheer ease of communication rather than anything else.

The Ritual of Twelve Years is then conducted for each applicant to the House; all who fail the Initiation are then escorted to the lowest level of the regio, out of Crintera and forever barred from House Bjornaer. Nominations for vacant council seats follow the Initiation, with the actual vote taking place much later in the Gathering. All Initiated members of the House, whether they have completed their apprenticeship or not, have the right to vote.

The only other organized event takes place towards the end of the Gathering. All Initiates assemble — seated — to hear the Eagle Elder present the news of the Order, and the Horse Elder recites all news from within the House. Finally, the Bear Elder announces any political decisions to be pursued over the next twelve years. Everybody present has the right to speak, signifying their desire to do so by standing up; points may be debated and decisions changed as a result of these debates.

During the rest of the Gathering, which lasts about a week, the House honors the memory of its lineage. Those skilled at the performing arts prepare songs, sagas, or mystery plays that revolve around famous ancestors, or their own deeds in pursuit of the secrets of the House. Each member of the House strives to uncover as much information about his

lineage as possible, as this information is vital in the pursuit of the Inner Mysteries of the House. It is also a time for the reaffirmation of old friendships and the settling of grudges.

No Bjornaer magi discuss what goes on at Gatherings with magi from other Houses. They neither confirm nor deny anything rumored to have gone on, which has added to the mystery of the Gathering



amongst the curious magi of the Order. The most paranoid members of the Order intimate that House Bjornaer have very good reasons for wanting to keep the business of the Gathering a secret.

Sagas with Bjornaer magi should not neglect the Gathering of Twelve Years (the next few will be held in 1227, 1239, and 1251); players without Bjornaer characters should be given significant characters to play during the event. It is a great opportunity to introduce powerful and enigmatic members of the House, make new friends and enemies, and resolve internal matters, as well as introduce story hooks that lead the characters into new adventures. All characters who attend a Gathering of Twelve Years should gain five experience points (as Adventure experience) which can be applied to any appropriate Ability used during the Gathering.

The Apprenticeship of a Bjornaer Magus

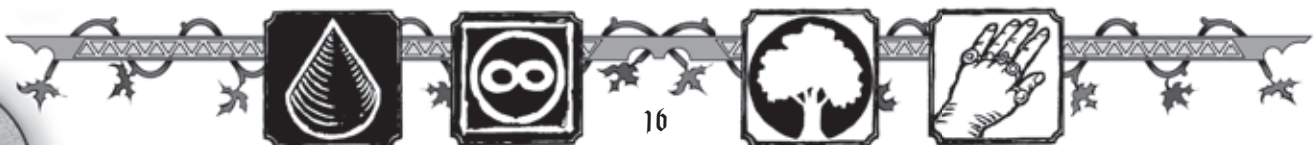
There are two distinct phases in the training of a young Bjornaer magus, known as the **sleeping years** (from Opening the Arts to the Ritual of Twelve Years) and the **awakened years** (from the Ritual of Twelve Years to induction into the Order).

THE SLEEPING YEARS

When Gifted children are found by a Bjornaer follower, they normally spend at least two years with the magus before apprenticeship begins. During this period the child is taught Latin and closely observed for his temperament and personality. If deemed suitable for the sept, the child is taken as an apprentice, otherwise he is passed on to another magus. A new apprentice is called a **catulus**, or "cub." The catulus period is very different from the apprenticeship of other Hermetic magi. Catuli are the common property of the sept; all magi of the sept take a turn in teaching the catulus, and likewise, all members have an equal right to his assistance in the laboratory. As sept members tend to dwell in close proximity, this regular travel does not impinge upon an apprentice's study. During the sleeping years, a sept attempts to guess the heartbeast of the catulus, based on his personality and physiognomy. This is important, for the Initiation of the Heartbeast might fail if the catulus is unsuited to the sept. Little mention is made of the cultic practices and beliefs of the House to a catulus; such secrets are revealed in the season immediately prior to the apprentice's Initiation into the House Mystery, giving him only sufficient understanding to get him through the ritual. A catulus apprenticed to a magus without a sept receives training under one magus, much like a standard Hermetic apprenticeship.

THE AWAKENED YEARS

Shared training ends when the Ritual of Twelve Years is conducted and the apprentice takes his heartbeast shape for the first time. At this point he is considered to have passed his Apprentice's Gauntlet and is a member of House Bjornaer, with a voice equal to any other member of the House. However, the Code of Hermes specifies that an apprentice will receive 15 seasons of training over 15 years before joining the Order. A single magus therefore takes over the training of the Initiated apprentice until he is ready to swear the Oath of Hermes and become a full member of the Order. The identity of this mas-



ter is determined by the sept, although occasionally the House decides that the apprentice is better placed with another master. A particularly valued apprentice may provoke fierce politicking, brawling, or certamen to determine who has the right to complete his training. The training is always completed by a magus whose own heartbeast is suited to the heartbeast of the apprentice — no lynx magus will train a hare, for example!

As well as magical training, the apprentice is taught the doctrines of the cult of ancestors and its true history, and encouraged to research his Hermetic ancestry.

BJORNAER MAGI AND SHAPESHIFTING APPRENTICES

Contrary to the beliefs of most magi, Bjornaer followers rarely take apprentices who already have the ability to change shape. House Bjornaer insist that the heartbeast must be awakened during the Ritual of Twelve Years, and believe children who can already shapeshift must be scions of the House's ancient enemies, or else afflicted with the curse of lycanthropy. However, it is possible — although very unlikely — for a Bjornaer follower to reach Initiation into the Order of Hermes with either the Skinchanger or Shapeshifter Virtues. Clans Arelie and Ilfetu never accept shapeshifting apprentices for fear of infiltration by their ancestral foes. Clans Midusulf and Wilkis who discover Gifted shapeshifters publicly take them as apprentices, but these apprentices always meet with unfortunate accidents during their apprenticeship, and never become members of House Bjornaer. Clans Sirnas and Maruhs take on shapeshifting children as long as the apprentice can take only a single shape, for they believe that it is better to indoctrinate such children into the House beliefs to keep them from their heritage. If the Ritual of Twelve Years awakens a different heartbeast than the shape the apprentice has been using, the child is passed over to Clan Wilkis and not seen again. Of course, these measures do not safeguard the House for certain against shapeshifters; an apprentice may be skilled at hiding his heritage, be wholly

ignorant of it, or his sept may be willing to hide the apprentice's heritage for whatever reason.

Magi who are known to have shape-shifted before Initiation are called *uswaurpa* ("reject"), and acquire this byname along with the scorn of their peers. A shapeshifting magus who seeks Initiation will have to demonstrate an unwillingness to use his "unnatural" powers, and must accept the Secret Name Mystery before any other, giving the House power over him should he prove false. If the Inner Mystery of the House is sought, the ancestors reject the candidate unless the magus accepts the loss of his Skinchanger or Shapeshifter Virtue as the Ordeal; this is the equivalent of taking a Minor or Major Flaw respectively. Of course, the magus can seek other Mysteries that do not care about his shapechanging abilities, such as the Huntress in the Wood (see below).

Of course, all this assumes that the magus is known to have shapes other than his heartbeast (for example, he has been witnessed using a shape other than his heartbeast). If the House is ignorant of this ability, then the Dark Secret Flaw is appropriate to the character, as the discovery of this fact could have serious repercussions. It is perhaps better to accept the scorn of the House by admitting these abilities, rather than live in fear that the secret will be discovered.

EXPERIENCES OF APPRENTICESHIP

The experiences of a Bjornaer apprenticeship vary between individuals. Most apprentices are discovered in between two Gatherings, and therefore receive their training both before their Gauntlet and after it. The Ritual of Twelve Years need not be performed at a Gathering, but this is the most convenient time and place where the mystical forces align. Those septs that seek the ritual outside of a Gathering risk failure.

If the Gifted child is found immediately before the Gathering of Twelve Years, his apprenticeship starts with the Awakening of the Heartbeast, and proceeds much like a standard Hermetic apprenticeship. However, throughout this

Story Seed: The Unwelcomed Apprentice

A good friend of the covenant (perhaps even a companion) has a Gifted child who can also change shape. The characters may well decide that it is in the child's best interests to be trained by a Bjornaer magus (unless there is a Bjornaer magus at the covenant to persuade them against this course). When the child goes missing a few years later, the characters may be asked to investigate.

training, he is treated as the social equal of his master, helping his master in the laboratory in return for training. In the eyes of the Order, however, the apprentice is no different from any other apprentice.

If an apprentice is discovered immediately following a Gathering, he has twelve years of being traded between members of the same sept, being treated like a child no matter what his real age. During this time he must defer to the Initiated, even if they are apprentices themselves who are physically younger than he. The awakening of his own heartbeast will occur towards the end of apprenticeship, and he will be "finished off" under a single master for only three years.

JOINING HOUSE BJORNAER

On occasion, a member of the Order of Hermes wishes to join House Bjornaer from a different House. Most mature members of House Bjornaer have witnessed the Initiation of a magus from another House, but it is far from being a common event. The Bjornaer Council interviews all candidates, and if they appear to be sincere in their desire to join House Bjornaer, they are adopted by a sept. The candidate then assists that sept in its business — as if he were a *catulus* — earning the respect of the sept through this "apprenticeship." After at least five years, the candidate is brought to the Ritual of Twelve Years, preferably at a Gathering. Once Initiated into the House Mystery, the candidate is accorded all privileges of the House.



Bjornaer Magi and Religion

While House Bjornaer derives power from its cult of ancestors, it is not a religion *per se*. These magi do not worship their ancestors, they honor them by remembrance, composing poems or songs of their deeds and performing reenactments of those deeds. These cultic practices do not interfere with the practice of any religion, with the exception of the core doctrine that every person has an animal ancestor, which can prove troubling for religious magus. The House presents this concept as a fact, offering no explanation. Bjornaer magi therefore have differing views of how this situation came about. Some simply assume that the ancestors were human, but took animal form after death. Many Christian magi link the animal ancestors to Adam's command over the beasts, and it is the pure spirit of the beasts of Eden that accompany the soul. A more radical Christian view is that the "beasts"

of Scripture (i.e., angels) are the ancestors. Other Bjornaer magi, influenced by Gnosticism, associate the introduction of animal ancestors into the lineage of humankind with the expulsion from Eden; it is a consequence of sin that humans are inflicted with animal passions (and thus animal spirits).

Pagan magi of House Bjornaer are rarely part of an organized cult, as these cults are involved in the worship of Faerie creatures and are anathema to the cult of ancestors. Instead, they tend to follow their own spiritual path, which incorporates the cultic practices of the House. The Huntress in the Wood (see below) is a counter-example of a society of pagan Bjornaer magi who profess the faith of Diana the Huntress. These zealous pagans often eschew the Inner Mysteries of the House for their own Mysteries, and may abandon the cult of ancestors altogether.

A magus who can shapechange without the use of a spell is always denied entrance to the House, although a reason for the refusal is never given. Likewise, any magus who is an Initiate of another House Mystery, or known to be a member of an Esoteric Mystery (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*), is refused membership. A magus cannot successfully complete the Ritual of Twelve Years if he has ever bound a familiar, even if the familiar is now dead.

The Heartbeast

The heartbeast is the name that Bjornaer magi use to describe the animal form they all possess as the mainstay of their House's cultic practices. Bjornaer magi are taught that a human is tripartite, consisting of a material body, an immaterial spirit, and an immortal soul. The spirit forms the link between the body and the soul, and controls the animal passions, the instincts and the fears, and the tendency towards virtues and vices. They believe

that the heartbeast is an active expression of a person's spirit, and therefore every human being has the potential to possess one, but in most people it lies dormant, preventing them from fully realizing their animal nature and completing the transformation between human and animal.

The secret taught to Bjornaer apprentices is that the spirit — the dormant heartbeast — is the spirit of an animal ancestor. These ancestral spirits are inherited through the line of the father, just as the materiality of the body is derived from the mother. (The soul, of course, is derived from God, at least according to Christian magi.) The Ritual of Twelve Years brings both spiritual parts of a person — soul and spirit — into an equal partnership, allowing both to inform the body. When the soul is in control, the magus is in human form; when the ancestor spirit is in control, the magus adopts animal form.

Undergoing the Ritual of Twelve Years is the only way to gain the Heartbeast Virtue (and Ability), and is synonymous with joining House Bjornaer. The ritual is more than a rite that awakens the heartbeast: it also joins the

magus to the family of House Bjornaer, much as a cutting, grafted to a tree, becomes part of that tree. Mystically, his parens is now equivalent to a true parent, and sept-brothers and -sisters are as close as true relatives following the rite. Supernatural powers that affect ancestry or descendents (such as the Merinita Target Bloodline) operate now on the Hermetic family instead of the biological family. No one can leave House Bjornaer once Initiated — a cutting taken from its parent tree withers and perishes. The obligation for ensuring such cuttings perish falls on the shoulders of Clan Wilkis. In response to heinous crimes, the Bjornaer Council may on occasion declare a Bjornaer magus an orphan, severed from his sept and anathema to the House. Such unfortunates rarely last out the year, targeted as they are by multiple Wizard's Wars.

Every individual has a different perspective on what it means to have an awakened heartbeast. These differing opinions are due to the deeply personal nature of the heartbeast — it cannot be described, it can only be experienced. It cannot be even remotely approximated by Muto spells such as *Shape of the Woodland Prowler*. The transformed body might look, feel, and sound like a wolf, but it is essentially still human, with a human mind. When a Bjornaer magus becomes his heartbeast, he actually becomes a wolf, and is indistinguishable from a wolf according to any test Hermetic magic cares to devise (see Ringing the Changes, below). A Bjornaer maga who becomes pregnant must remain in one form from the moment the pregnancy starts to show, or else the child will not come to term. Such pregnancies result in children with the same physical form as their mother at the time of birth, regardless of the species of their father. Cross-species mating is avoided by most Bjornaer magi: the limited experience of the House is that a child with an animal father appears to lack a soul (the normal state for mundane animals), and always has the mind of a beast (that is, possesses Cunning rather than Intelligence). Children with animal mothers are always born as animals, and appear to be no different from mundane beasts.



Bjornaer magi are more in touch with their passions and emotions than most; they have come to the realization that they are as much their heartbeast as they are the human form that they inhabited before the Ritual of Twelve Years. As time goes on, they learn to identify more closely with the animal side of their nature.

Choosing the Heartbeast

The heartbeast is part of your character as much as any other trait he possesses, and you should choose a beast that portrays the type of character you wish to play. This need not stereotype characters with similar heartbeasts. Although all magi with a fox heartbeast are cunning and sly, this is but one facet of their nature. Fox-Bjornaer can also be vengeful, forgiving, dispassionate, or lustful. They share only one (important) characteristic with each other — their essential foxishness.

Also be aware that your character's heartbeast often has outward, physical signs as well. Most Bear-Bjornaer are large, most Weasel-Bjornaer are lithe, skinny, and small. You should not necessarily allow the heartbeast to dictate Virtues and Flaws (you do not need to buy Small Frame or Dwarf just because your character has the heartbeast of a weasel), although there is nothing wrong with doing this. However, you should certainly pick Characteristics keeping the heartbeast in mind.

Finally, consider the rest of your troupe when choosing a heartbeast, particularly if there are other Bjornaer magi in your covenant. Many Bjornaer followers do not get on with one another, particularly if they are directly opposed (Wolf and Hare) or identical (two Stags). Many animals do not share territory with members of the same species, and Bjornaer magi are no different.

Naturally, a magus can only have one heartbeast, for he only has a single spirit. Shapechangers who have multiple forms are likely to be not using their heartbeast at all, but using magic to make a physical rather than a spiritual change in form.



HEARTBEAST TEMPERAMENTS

Heartbeasts can be divided into four basic types, named after the four classical temperaments of human physiognomy — sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. In the past, these four types had different names, deriving from the four elements (air, fire, earth, and water, respectively) or further back still, the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter). However, the temperament classification has been used by all Bjornaer magi since the Schism War, in an attempt to make a break with their pagan past.

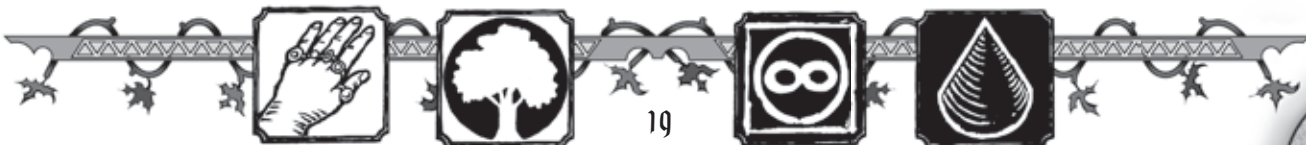
The four main temperaments may be **pure**, or they may be **aspected** by another temperament (see the diagram on p. 21).

Sanguine heartbeasts are birds, from the largest eagle to the smallest robin.

Such characters are often gregarious and lively, quick-witted and dexterous. Those predatory birds who fly by day have a choleric aspect; water birds are considered to be phlegmatic-aspected.

Choleric heartbeasts are land animals that are active, fierce, fast, or all three; nearly all predators are choleric, as are the free-spirited herbivores such as horses. Choleric characters tend to be emotional, but they are also loyal and brave. The smallest and fastest of the predators are choleric-sanguine, whereas the larger herbivores such as the horses and stags have a melancholic aspect.

Melancholic heartbeasts are all the slow-moving land animals, or those of a generally docile nature. Melancholic characters are steadfast, not generally quick to anger, but dangerous once roused. They





also tend to be lazy and greedy. The more aggressive melancholic heartbeasts (bears, bulls, wild boar) have a choleric aspect, whereas the most placid (such as hares, wild sheep, and the like) have a minor phlegmatic nature.

Phlegmatic heartbeasts are all creatures that crawl and swim. Phlegmatic characters have reputations as deep thinkers, but are often introverted and find affection difficult. All fish fall into this category, including frogs and salamanders, as well as reptiles and aquatic mammals. However, dry-skinned reptiles have a sanguine aspect, whereas land animals that have an aquatic existence, such as beaver, otters, and seals, are considered to be aspected by melancholy.

The following creatures are *not* available as heartbeasts:

- **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS:** Only "noble" animals became the ancestors of humans. There are Bjornaer magi who take the form of rams, bulls, and goats, but they always take the wild versions of these beasts.
- **CREATURES SMALLER THAN A WEASEL (Size -7):** Vermin are excluded for the same reason domesticated animals are; they are not noble. However, a storyguide may permit such a heartbeast, but the Dwarf Flaw should be obligatory.
- **CREATURES LARGER THAN AN AUROCHS (Size +3):** While there are rumors of Bjornaer magi with the heartbeasts of elephants and whales, none of these shapes have been substantiated. If a player desires to play such a creature, the storyguide should

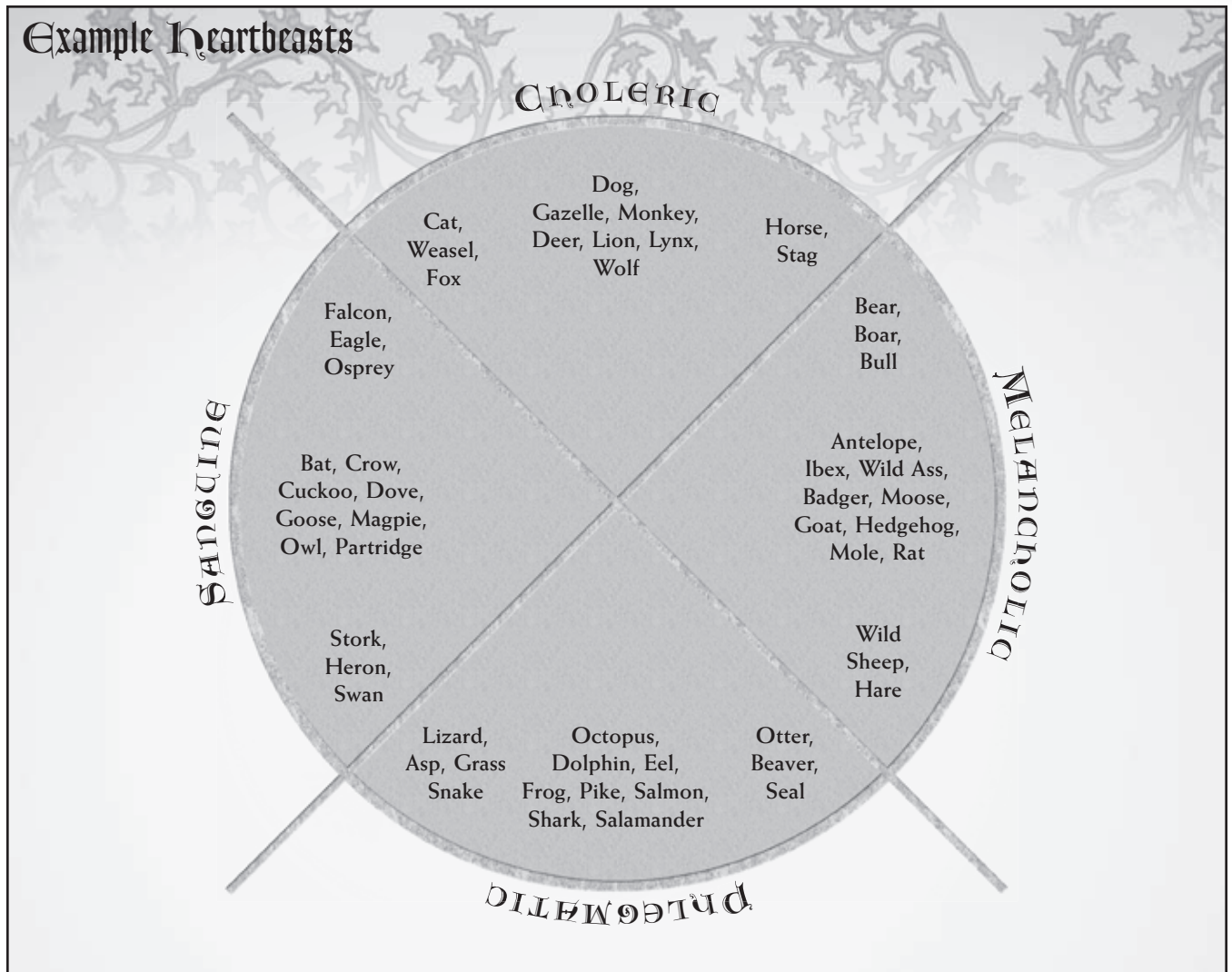
consider carefully before allowing it, as it may well unbalance the game. At the very least, it is reasonable to expect such a magus to have the Giant Blood Virtue.

- **CREATURES WITH MIGHT SCORES:** Only natural creatures exist as heartbeasts.
- **INANIMATE OBJECTS:** Objects such as rocks or clouds no spirit, and thus cannot become heartbeasts.

A creature from beyond the bounds of Mythic Europe is an unlikely choice for a heartbeast, but not impossible. However, many such beasts, like the crocodile or hyena, are so unusual to the inhabitants of Mythic Europe that they are best represented as beasts of legend with Magic Might scores (and therefore not allowed as heartbeasts). Playing a magus with a



Example Heartbeasts



heartbeast that is a mundane version of one of these animals (if permitted by the storyguide) requires, at the very least, an exotic origin, and perhaps the Well-Traveled Virtue or Outsider Flaw.

A player choosing a creature of Size -5 or smaller as a heartbeast can take it as one Size category larger if he wishes, as a particularly noble member of its species. Thus, creatures who are naturally Size -8 are allowed as heartbeasts, but only if this option is applied.

SHAPESHIFTING, LYCANTHROPY, AND THE BJORNAER HEARTBEAST

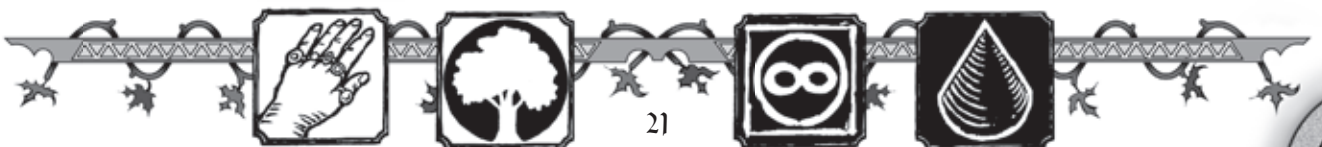
Members of other Houses often find it surprising that members of House Bjornaer do not make greater use of

shapechanging spells. Bjornaer magi hardly ever know spells that can turn themselves or others into animal form, and they eschew the use of magic that makes more than a superficial change to either their heartbeat or their human form. The idea of changing shape to a creature who is not part of one's being generates feelings of revulsion in most Bjornaer magi. Despite the general opinion of the House, there are some Bjornaer magi who transcend these bounds of "decency," and they may suffer the disapproval of their sodales and a negative Reputation. Magi from other Houses who use shapechanging spells regularly are treated with disdain, but are not expected to know any better.

The shapeshifter who uses his innate supernatural power is treated with a super-

stitious dread by even the most urbane of the House. Without the Ritual of Twelve Years, these shapeshifters cannot adopt the forms of their ancestral spirits; instead, it is believed, they must acquire spirits from elsewhere. Those shapeshifters who can take multiple forms are especially abhorred as soul-stealers, a dreadful perversion of Birna's sacred rite. All Bjornaer apprentices learn the stories of the Gothic shapeshifters who lurked on the fringes of society, stealing babies for their forbidden rituals.

Lycanthropes are afforded some pity by the House, as creatures overcome by their ancestral spirits. Instead of being in balance, their animal ancestors dominate their souls at certain phases of the moon. Bjornaer magi often take on responsibility for hunting down lycanthropes to prevent



Ringing the Changes

There are three basic types of shapechangers in Mythic Europe, and they have different responses to magic due to their natures.

The use of a spell or invested item (including the Skinchanger Virtue) to change shape does not change the underlying fact that the target is human. While he may be affected by Animal spells, he may also be affected by Corpus and Mentem spells, and any ongoing magics using these Forms cast prior to transformation remain in effect. The transformation magic is bound by a duration, during which time the spell or effect may be detected with Intellego Vim spells. The Penetration Total of the caster must exceed the Magic Resistance of anyone that the shapechanged human wishes to touch (or attack). Furthermore, remaining in this form may incur Warping.

Those who have an innate supernatural power to change shape (represented by Virtues or Flaws such as Shapeshifter and Lycanthrope) only invoke a magical effect at the moment of transformation. Thus, the shapechange is not an active effect while that character is in animal

form. Consequentially, Penetration is not required for mundane attacks, nor does the creature radiate magic or suffer Warping due to the transformation. However, this type of shapechanger is still a human in an animal shape, and so Corpus and Mentem magics are effective, as are Animal spells. An exception is the lycanthrope, who do not retain his human mind when transformed, and therefore cannot be affected by Mentem spells, although Corpus spells still work.

The heartbeast is the most total transformation of the three. Unlike the other two, the Bjornaer magus does not merely take the physical characteristics (the "accidents") of an animal shape; he actually becomes the animal in question. Despite retaining his human intelligence, he cannot be affected by Mentem or Corpus magics while in heartbeast form. Spells already in effect before the transformation remain in effect, however. Similarly, Animal spells cast on the heartbeast remain in effect after transformation to human form. As with shapeshifters, there is no ongoing magic beyond the moment of transformation.

their depredations, or even for finding a cure for the fiendish curse that caused the condition in the first place.

Because of these strong feelings about shapechanging, calling a member of House Bjornaer a shapeshifter or a werewolf is considered to be a mortal insult, and has led to Wizard's War on more than one occasion.

The Heartbeast in Play

The consequences of possessing a heartbeast are discussed below, expanding the details of the Outer Mystery of House Bjornaer given on pages 91–92 of *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*. An expanded description of the Heartbeast Ability is

given under New and Modified Abilities, below.

CHANGING FORM

A Bjornaer magus can adopt his heartbeast form after a moment's concentration, and under most circumstances this requires no roll. The actual transformation takes a full round, as the magus gradually transforms into animal form. During this round, the magus can perform most physical or mental actions unhindered, but cannot perform complex tasks such as casting spells. An action undertaken during transformation can use the Abilities of either form, as the magus controls which part of his body transforms first. Thus, he could attack

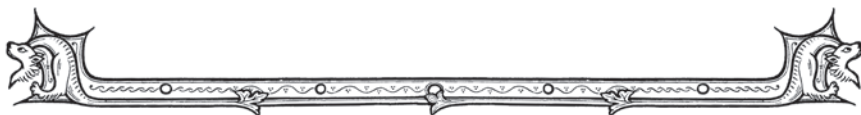
Plant Heartbeasts

The possession of a plant "heartbeast" is permitted, but such characters should be highly unusual. While having an animal ancestor is at least conceivable to the thinkers of the Mythic Europe, a plant ancestor is not. Such individuals have posed a puzzle to the philosophers of House Bjornaer, as they are not in accord with the origin myth of the House. When assuming his plant form, the Bjornaer magus is capable of doing whatever a plant can do; that is, not very much. Without the application of magic, he cannot move, nor do things that are unnatural for the season, such as bear fruit in winter. It is highly likely that such characters have the Cyclic Magic Virtue and/or Flaw. Such characters may also change their temperament and personality according to the season. Only "noble" plants may be chosen as "heartplants," this includes trees and mystical herbs.

with a sword, dropping it at the very end of the round as his hands become paws, or instead transform his upper body first and use a bite attack whilst his hindquarters are still changing from human legs. For small heartbeasts, these distinctions of the change may be lost because of the dramatic decrease in overall size. The transformation to human form is identical but in reverse. The clothes and possessions of the magus do not transform with him.

If the magus is under the influence of a shapechanging spell, he may attempt to adopt either of his forms by making a Stamina + Heartbeast roll, against an Ease Factor of (3 + magnitude of the spell). If successful, the spell is canceled. As the actual process of changing between shapes is a magical act, a magus affected by spells which would normally suppress his magic (such as *Aegis of the Hearth*) must also make a Stamina + Heartbeast roll against an Ease Factor of (3 + magnitude of the spell) to effect the transformation.

A magus in heartbeast form cannot make the gestures necessary for spellcasting; even exotic forms such as apes do not



Statistics of Shapechangers

The appendix to this chapter describes the process for producing the statistics for an average member of a particular species, but most player characters are not average humans, and so tend to have characteristics in animal form that differ from the species average. For Bjornaer magi and other shapeshifters, determine the statistics for the creature as described in the appendix, then follow these steps:

1. CHARACTERISTICS

For all Characteristics other than Intelligence/Cunning:

- If the human and the animal Characteristic are both negative, use the lower of the two.
- If the human and the animal Characteristic are both positive, use the higher of the two.

Otherwise, add the two Characteristics together.

2. CUNNING VS. INTELLIGENCE

If the shapechanger is a lycanthrope, apply the Cunning score of the animal, otherwise retain human Intelligence.

Example of Characteristics, Cunning, and Intelligence:

Ulf (magus): Int +2, Per -1, Pre +2, Com 0, Str -1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1

Wolf: Cun +1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com +1, Str -1, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1

Ulf in Heartbeast form:

Int +2 (human value)

Per -1 (sum of human -1 and wolf +2)

Pre +2 (sum of human +2 and wolf 0)

Com +1 (sum of human 0 and wolf +1)

Str -1 (lowest of human -1 and wolf -1)

Sta +3 (highest of human +1 and wolf +3)

Dex +2 (highest of human +1 and wolf +2)

Qik +1 (highest of human +1 and wolf +1)

3. SIZE

Human Size has no impact on the Size statistic of the shapechanged form. However, if the animal form is within the size range of most animals (Size -4 to Size 0) and the character has a Virtue or Flaw that affects Size, then she will be a notably large or small member of her species.

4. VIRTUES & FLAWS

Apply all the Virtues and Flaws of the animal form while shapechanged, as well as all Virtues and Flaws of the human form, if applicable. For example, a Lame character is still Lame as an animal. If the animal form already has a Virtue or Flaw possessed by the character, it applies only once.

5. GENERAL ABILITIES

Use the General Abilities of the animal form. None of the human General Abilities can be accessed other than languages (which can still be understood) and lores. Arcane and Academic Abilities are available to the shapechanger if he

retains Intelligence. Supernatural Abilities can always be used.

6. COMMUNICATING

Acquire the ability to communicate with members of the same or similar species as the shapechanged form. Animals of the same temperament and aspect, which also share the same diet and habitat, can be considered to speak dialects of the same language. Thus, it can be assumed that all eagles, hawks, and buzzards share a common language, but this differs from the shared language of the swans, storks, and herons, and also from the language spoken by songbirds.

7. WOUNDS & EXPERIENCE

Any wounds taken in the human form are reflected in the animal form, and vice versa. Thus, a human with a Medium Wound has a Medium Wound in cat form, despite the fact that if that wound had been inflicted when in cat form, it would have been more serious due to the different wound ranges of a cat and a human. Lycanthropes are an exception to this — when transforming back into human form, all wounds taken while an animal are healed, although wounds suffered as a human remain.

A character who spends a substantial amount of time in animal form may apply any experience gained for that period (either through adventuring, exposure, or practice) to the Abilities of her animal form.

Magical Items and Changing Form

Bjornaer magi who make enchanted items for their own use face a problem when changing form, in that they will not wish to abandon the items if they are the wrong size or they can no longer hold them. The solution is the following well-known effect, instilled into the item, and then connected with a Linked Trigger (see ArM5, page 99) to any

other effects instilled in the item, such as those that change its size, shape, or appearance.

PERCEIVE THE CHANGE

InAn 14

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

Pen 0, constant effect

This effect detects whether the enchanted item is touching an animal; if so, it triggers any effects tied to it with a Linked Trigger. Linked powers should be designed with constant effect. It cancels any linked effects as soon as human form is assumed. The wielder can choose not to resist this effect (see ArM5, page 99). If this effect is instilled in a talisman, it can be made with Range Personal for a final level of 9.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; +1 two uses/day, +3 environmental trigger [sunrise/sunset])



have sufficient manual dexterity. It is not possible for a magus to partially change form without assistance from a spell or the Mystery of Theriomorphy (see House Mysteries, below).

THE HIDDEN SHAPE

Another aspect of the Bjornaer heartbeast is called the Hidden Shape. While the actual act of change is magical, there is no continuing mystical effect once the transformation has taken place, because the heartbeast is a reflection of the magus's essential nature. To any magic that is subject to the Limit of Essential Nature (including Hermetic magic), a heartbeast appears as a mundane animal. Nevertheless, a Bjornaer magus in heartbeast form under the influence of a magical effect (including Parma Magica) may be distinguished from a mundane beast by spells and powers that can detect the presence of magic. The magus still has The Gift, but humans rarely notice the negative social penalties of a wild animal, as they are usually pretty distrustful of wild animals anyway.

BJORNAER MAGI AND FAMILIARS

The final consequence of being Initiated into the Outer Mystery of House Bjornaer is the inability to bind a familiar. The Ritual of Twelve Years, like other Mysteries of Initiation, leaves a scar on the soul of the Initiated magus; Birna, having no personal desire to bond a familiar, considered it to be an acceptable loss when she invented the ritual. Any magus who has ever bound a familiar, even if it has since died, cannot successfully complete the Ritual of Twelve Years, and so cannot join the House.

HEARTBEASTS AND WIZARD'S TWILIGHT

When a Bjornaer magus undergoes Wizard's Twilight, he usually adopts the form of his heartbeast. However, he often acts like the mundane animal of his heartbeast rather than as a being with intelligence, and some liken Wizard's Twilight to a form of Bjornaer Lycanthropy (although not within earshot of a member of the House!). Magi with high Warping Scores

may well adopt the form of their innermost heartbeast (see Inner Mysteries, below).

When Final Twilight comes to a Bjornaer magus, he always adopts the form of his heartbeast and flees all human contact. If the magus only knows the Outer House Mystery, he becomes a mundane beast. However, if he has achieved any of the Inner Mysteries of the House, he converts into his inner heartbeast and acquires a Magic Might equal to (5 x Heartbeast Ability). House Bjornaer refers to these beings as Great Beasts, and treats them with a great deal of reverence and superstition. The appearance of a Great Beast is considered to be a powerful omen, especially at the Gathering of Twelve Years. The last time a Great Beast was seen was at the Gathering of 1167; only a year later, the island was invaded by the King of Denmark.

The Mysteries of House Bjornaer

The Outer Mystery of House Bjornaer is the **Heartbeast**, which brings the ancestral spirit into harmony with the human soul. It prepares the way for acceptance of the **House Mysteries**, which allow the magus to emulate his ancestors and their magic. The **Clan Mysteries** assist the clans in fulfilling the duties to their ancestors. The **Inner Mysteries** of House Bjornaer bring the magus even closer to his ancestors. The magus learns through the process of **ata-vism** — the acquisition of ancestral char-



acteristics — how to adopt the form of a particularly notable animal ancestor. He acquires a third form of the heartbeast, giving him an outer heartbeast (the animal form) and an inner heartbeast (the ancestral form).

Initiating the Clan Mysteries

Clan Mysteries are Initiated by elder members of the clan acting as Mystagogues; these clan members are often members of the same sept as the Initiate. The Initiation Scripts used by a clan are unique to that clan, and are not employed by other clans. These Scripts originated from the native beliefs of the founders of each clan, but have been elaborated over the years; however, they all follow broadly a similar template. All Clan Mysteries (with one exception; see Clan Ilfetu, above) are Minor Virtues, and thus have an Ease Factor of 15. They require a Mystagogue who knows the sought Virtue and has a (Presence + House Bjornaer Lore) of at least 8, although a previous Ordeal bonus may be in effect, which reduces this.

THE TRIAL OF (NAME)

In a special place and at a special time (+3), the Initiate must undergo a rite of physical or mental mortification (+1), and suffers a Minor Ordeal (+3). If a Major Ordeal is suffered instead, this script has a +13 Script bonus.

THE DEED OF (NAME)

The Initiate is charged to discover a quest that will satisfy his ancestors (+3); complete that quest (+3); then spend a season composing a poem, lay, or song detailing his heroic deed (+1).

THE OATH OF (NAME)

The Initiate must make a solemn oath equivalent to the Vow Flaw (+3) that will please her ancestors, and spend a year demonstrating her dedication to that oath (+1). Her Mystagogue must then spend a season teaching her the new Virtue (+3). If the oath is broken in a minor way, the Virtue is lost until amends are made. If

broken in a major fashion, no restitution is sufficient.

Initiating the House Mysteries

The House Mysteries (Heartbeast, Secret Name, Sensory Magic, Theriomorphy) are Initiated by members of Clan Ilfetu. The description of each of the House Mysteries listed below includes the Initiation Script, although alternate, more stringent scripts may be known to Clan Ilfetu if the Mystagogue does not know the Virtue being Initiated, or has insufficient knowledge of the House Lore. However, the Ritual of Twelve Years is the only method employed by the House to Initiate new members.

The Initiation Scripts for the House Mysteries often call for the ritual to be conducted in a specific location that is resonant with the power of the ancestors, known as an **ancestor site**. All members of House Bjornaer know Crintera to be such a place, but other locations are also known to Clan Ilfetu. These are invariably located in regions of pristine wilderness, far from the habitations of mankind, where the ancients made long pilgrimages to make offerings to their ancestor spirits. As such, reaching the location of the rite is not merely a long journey, it is one fraught with peril, for the spirits guard these regions still, and set challenges to test the mettle of those who would reach them.

THE RITUAL OF TWELVE YEARS (MINOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

This is the Initiation rite of the Mystery of House Bjornaer, which confers the Heartbeast Virtue. Only members of Clan Ilfetu know the Initiation Script for the Ritual of Twelve Years. The Gathering of Twelve Years is a particularly propitious time for the ritual, but it can take place at any ancestor site, at an appropriate time calculated by the Mystagogue. Any magus who wishes to be present at the ritual is entitled to attend (and typically the members of the Initiate's sept are pres-

Example Ancestor Sites

PRIPET MARSHES

The Pripet Marshes, in the Novgorod Tribunal, are the supposed origin of all the Slavic people, although all migrated away many centuries ago. They are occupied (and protected) by the Bjornaer-only covenant of Pripet Maior, who are careful not to interact too closely with the spirits of the marsh, lest they become tainted by human imagination and turn fae.

KERRY MOUNTAINS POOL

Deep in the Kerry Mountains in Hibernia there is a pool where the ancient Irish came to cast votive offerings of great personal value to their ancestors. The still black waters of the pool are believed to hide untold wealth in gold, silver, and perhaps even ancient enchantments.

ent), but the sept has the right to dismiss participants who they believe might upset the mystic balance of the ritual by having contrary heartbeasts. By tradition, those magi who took part in the training of the Initiate (his sept), the Mystagogue, and up to six others cannot be refused attendance at the ritual, but the sept can turn away individuals in excess of this, if they choose.

The temperament of the heartbeast is usually evident in the personality (and even the appearance) of the Initiate. The ritual is only likely to fail if the heartbeast of the Initiate is completely contrary to those of the witnesses. As there is no way of determining a heartbeast or its temperament for sure prior to the ritual, this unfortunate situation does occur, but it is rare. The Ritual of Twelve Years can never be repeated for the same Initiate; thus, an Initiate who fails can never enter House Bjornaer. If Initiation is successful, the probationer immediately adopts the shape of his heartbeast, and gains the Heartbeast Virtue and Ability at level 1.



Ardea, the Swan Elder who conducts this ritual at the Gathering of Twelve Years, has a Presence of +3, the Puissant House Bjornaer Lore Virtue, an House Bjornaer Lore of 8+2, and a sanguine heartbeast (a heron).

INITIATION OF HEARTBEAST (THE RITUAL OF TWELVE YEARS)

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +6 + Participation Modifier (see below)

Script Details: At a place and time resonant with the House ancestors (+3), the Initiate forever loses the ability to bind a familiar (+3). The Participation Modifier provides +1 for every witness who has the same temperament as the probationer's heartbeast and -1 for every witness who has an opposing temperament (sanguine opposes melancholic

and choleric opposes phlegmatic). The Mystagogue is included in this modifier.

For the purposes of future Initiation into Clan or House Mysteries, the permanent loss of the ability to bind a familiar counts as a Minor Ordeal, but only if the character is Initiated after character creation (for example, if a magus joins House Bjornaer from another House).

SECRET NAME (MINOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

This Mystery permanently severs the sympathetic resonances of the magus's name and forges them anew with a name known only to the Mystagogue and the Initiate. All Arcane Connections to the magus that date from before the ritual immediately expire upon its completion, and all sympathetic connections become

invalid. The magus produces new Arcane Connections after the ritual has taken place, but no sympathetic connection will ever work against him again, even if created after the ritual. The Mystagogue provides a secret name that allows the magus to work magic upon himself; without this he would not be able to use the Personal Range. However, anyone knowing the secret name — such as the Mystagogue, or wizards who know the mystery of Synthemata Magic (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*) — need not subtract the spell level from the Penetration Total of any spells cast against the target, much like the Weak Magic Resistance Flaw. Clan Ilfetu considers these secret names to be a sacred trust, and has never been suspected of misusing them.

The Initiate chooses a new public name as well as receiving the secret one. There is inevitably a time of confusion



while sodales get used to referring to the magus by his new public name, but this is part of the symbolic sacrifice of this Mystery. This Mystery can benefit any person (Gifted or not) who possesses Magic Resistance, and those few magi outside the House who learn of it occasionally ask the House to perform it on their behalf.

The Initiation of this Mystery fails if the magus has a Talisman or a Familiar; these enchantments form too great a tie to the magus's past identity to be broken by the Initiation process.

INITIATION OF SECRET NAME

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +8

Script Details: On the anniversary of the Initiate's birth, the Mystagogue and the Initiate enter a round tent that has been set up on an ancestor site (+3) and perform a ritual cleansing together which must end at the hour of the Initiate's birth (+2); the Initiate acquires a minor version of the Weak Magic Resistance Flaw, a Minor Ordeal (+3).

THERIOMORPHY (MINOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

Using this Mystery, a magus may apply any Quality (see the appendix to this chapter, below) or Virtue possessed by his Heartbeast to his human form on a Stamina + Heartbeast roll against an Ease Factor of 9. This process takes a whole round. He gains all the benefits for that Quality, but also undergoes a physical change to reflect the abilities acquired. For example, if Fast Runner is added to the human form, the magus acquires the legs of his heartbeast. If he adds Sharp Ears, he grows a set of animal ears. The magus may acquire natural weapons in this fashion, employing them using his human Brawl Ability. To rid himself of the Quality or Virtue, the magus must make another Stamina + Heartbeast roll against an Ease Factor of 9.

Use of this Virtue is not protected by the Hidden Shape, and counts as a constant mystical effect with respect to Warping. Use of this Mystery in front of

others (particularly mundanes) may have a strong psychological effect; a Brave roll is required to face such a creature.

If a magus with this Mystery also has an inner heartbeast (see below), he may access the Minor Powers of the Inner Heartbeast as well as its Qualities and Virtues. Many Bjornaer magi dislike this Mystery, but some manage to overcome their revulsion for shapeshifting in return for its utility.

INITIATION OF THERIOMORPHY

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +6

Script Details: The Initiate must spend a whole year as his heartbeast, acting entirely in accordance with the abilities of a mundane animal, eschewing both magic and his Parma Magica (+3). This is followed by a ritual that awakens this power and taints the human form permanently with an animal feature, a Minor Ordeal reflected in either Feral Scent or Disfigured (animal feature) (+3).

SENSORY MAGIC (MINOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

House Bjornaer know spells which affect all those who hear a lion's roar, get caught in the gaze of a wolf, or smell the musk of a stag. They can attach a magical scent to an area to create a ward and co-opt a target's hearing to spread Mentem effects. These are all special categories of Targets, invented by Birna and Bonisagus together, but the work was never completed, and they were imperfectly melded to Hermetic Theory, remaining a Mystery of House Bjornaer.

Each of these Targets consists of an area of effect. When within this area of effect, anyone sensing the Bjornaer magus through the specified sense becomes a target of the spell. For example, with the Scent Target, anyone able to smell the caster is affected by the spell. Targets need not be present at the casting of the spell, and are continuously acquired throughout the spell's duration. The effects on all targets ceases with the spell's expiry, no matter how long they have been affected.

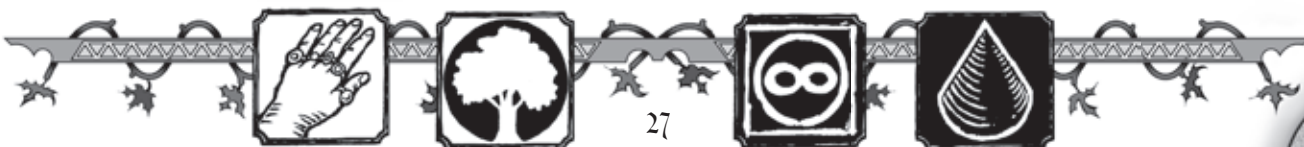
Story Seed: A Thousand Heartbeasts

It is a well-kept secret of Clan Ilfetu that The Gift is not a pre-requisite for Initiation into the Heartbeast Mystery (although a different Initiation Script is required for the unGifted, as the Ordeal that destroys the ability to bind a familiar is not appropriate). However, as the ritual binds the Initiate to the Hermetic ancestors, no sane Mystagogue would mystically adopt a mundane into the Bjornaer family through Initiation.

However, rumor has it that a rogue member of Clan Ilfetu is doing precisely this. Clan Ilfetu is horrified at the profanation of its most sacred ritual, while the House is concerned that the Code has been broken. Stories of whole villages of mundanes able to access their heartbeasts are surely exaggerations, aren't they? More worryingly, these mundanes have all become part of House Bjornaer through the ritual — what is the House going to do with them?

There are a number of restrictions on these spells:

- The Range must be Personal, and spells must penetrate the Magic Resistance (if any) of those within the area of effect to take effect, although the caster is never affected by his own Sensory Magic.
- The magus must create a taste, texture, scent, sound, or spectacle that transmits the spell to the target. This sensory medium may be mundane, magical, or even created by the magus's sigil. The magus must continue to radiate these species to affect new targets throughout the spell's duration, so, for example, a magus who becomes invisible after casting a spell with a Spectacle Target cannot affect new targets. The caster is always at the center of his spell's effect.
- The spell can only affect a being who is capable of sensing the caster in the way specified. For example,



deaf people are immune to Target Sound spells. Similarly, non-living objects cannot be affected by these spells.

- The spell cannot employ the Technique of Intellego, even as a requisite. Spells which grant magical senses (see ArM5, pages 113–114) fill that role. As magical senses were successfully integrated into standard Hermetic theory by Birna and Bonisagus, they do not require this Mystery to invent.
- The Form of the spell must be appropriate to the sensory medium. An Ignem spell cannot be transmitted by sound, because fires don't affect people through sound, but through touch (burning) and sight (brightness) instead.
- These spells cannot be invested into magical items.
- Characters who have not been Initiated into this mystery cannot learn Sensory Magic spells from those who have been Initiated, or invent them from their Lab Texts.

When inventing Formulaic or Ritual spells which employ Sensory Targets, the magus's Heartbeast Ability score is added to the Lab Total. This also limits which spells a magus is capable of using — the spell must not be inappropriate to the caster's heartbeast. A Bjornaer magus with the heartbeast of a hare is unable to duplicate the spell *Scent of the Predator* listed below, for example. The storyguide, as always, is the final arbiter of which spells can be produced by which Bjornaer magi. Bjornaer magi with Sensory Magic are more in touch with their senses than the average magus, and may also add their Heartbeast Ability score to their Lab Totals when inventing Intellego spells that grant magical senses.

SENSORY TARGETS

FLAVOR

The spell affects any being that tastes the caster (or anything else included in his Personal set of items). The Flavor Target is equivalent to Individual.

TEXTURE

The spell affects any being who touches the caster. This differs from Touch Range in that the spell affects any appropriate target who touches the caster while the spell persists. The target must touch the caster's skin with its own, and be theoretically able to describe the texture of it. Remember that the target must be capable of perceiving a touch, therefore this target cannot be used, for example, to destroy all weapons that touch the magus. The Texture Target is equivalent to Part.

SCENT

The spell affects any being who smells the caster, effective over approximately three paces. Wind conditions can affect the area influenced of the spell, providing directionality or increasing the area of effect up to a six-paces radius. Creatures with a keen sense of smell (or characters with that Virtue, see New Virtues) can be affected from even further away, up to 15 paces. The Scent Target is equivalent to Group.

SOUND

The spell affects any being who hears the sound the caster makes. Use the Voice Range column of the Words and Gestures table on ArM5, page 83 to determine the area of effect around the magus. Potential targets with the Poor Hearing Flaw (or those who have blocked their ears) are treated as one category further away from the caster; those with the Sharp Ears Virtue are considered to be one category closer. These spells can be cast without any words (at the usual penalty), but an actual sound must be created to carry the spell. The Sound Target is equivalent to Structure.

SPECTACLE

The spell affects any being who sees the caster. Targets looking in completely the wrong direction cannot be affected. Those looking vaguely in the caster's direction are as likely as not catch him in their field of view, which is sufficient to transmit the spell. A potential target need not be able to see the caster clearly — a shadowy shape in the fog or a distant figure is sufficient, as long as the general form can be determined. A lesser-known ramification of this Target is that anyone

scrying on the caster is also affected. Those with the Keen Vision Virtue are more likely to see the caster, whereas those with Poor Eyesight are at an advantage avoiding the effect. The Spectacle Target is the equivalent of Boundary.

INITIATION OF SENSORY MAGIC

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The Initiate must craft an object in the shape of his heartbeast and enchant it with the ability to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. He must then locate an ancestor site with a deep pool in which no man has swum, and, at the dark of the moon (+3), cast the enchanted item into it (a major sacrifice of time and vis, +6).

Initiating the Mysteries of the Inner Heartbeast

As a magus of House Bjornaer researches the legends of his ancestors, he discovers that some were able to assume the forms of Great Beasts before succumbing to Final Twilight, becoming creatures of myth with a host of supernatural powers. Furthermore, those who enter Final Twilight as Great Beasts do not die a natural death, and they may be sought out to reveal the secret of the Inner Heartbeast. The Bjornaer magus must have an House Bjornaer Lore of at least 5 to reach this conclusion. The player of a Bjornaer magus should discuss with his storyguide what he sees as the form of his magus's inner heartbeast to be before his character begins this Initiation; broadly speaking, there are three choices: a perfect **epitome** of his species; a **chimera** or amalgam of two or more creatures; or an **anima**, a creature of pure elemental matter. Each is considered a separate Inner Mystery of House Bjornaer.

Example: Ulf Bjornaer is a magus with the heartbeast of a wolf, and a Magical Focus in Fear. He wishes to be able to adopt the inner heartbeast of a shadow-wolf, a creature of darkness and terror (an anima).

Naturally, a Bjornaer magus may have many potential ancestors to learn from, but

Examples Spells with Sensory Magic Targets

REVENGE OF THE BITTEN TOAD

PeAn 20

R: Per, D: Diam, T: Flavor

Any creatures who bite (or otherwise taste) the caster suffer a Heavy Wound. Any successful bite attack against the caster results in the creature tasting him, even if no wound is actually inflicted. The caster still suffers any damage inflicted by the bite, but his opponent is typically deterred from further attacks.

(Base 15, +1 Diam)

HIBERNATION OF THE SLUMBERING TURB

ReMe 35

R: Per, D: Year, T: Texture, Ritual

Req: Creo

Anyone touching the caster falls asleep and does not awaken until the spell expires. The caster is not affected by this magic, and his own sleep is natural. Those affected by the spell do not need to eat or drink while it persists, but when they awaken, they are ravenously hungry. Despite the usual length of a Year Duration spell, this spell's effects always end at the Spring Equinox. This spell was invented by Odorpes of the Sept of Urgen, who lives separate from the rest of her covenant. She hibernates and puts all her covenfolk to sleep with her, so she need not provision them during the winter.

(Base 4, +4 Year, +1 Texture, +1 Creo requisite, +1 complexity)

SCENT OF THE PREDATOR

CrMe 20

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Scent

Anyone smelling the caster is struck by an overwhelming sensation of menace

and hostility. The cowardly flee, whereas braver souls are intimidated, granting the caster a +3 to all attempts to cow the target into obeying him.

(Base 4, +2 Sun, +2 Scent)

MARKING THE TERRITORY

ReCo 15

R: Per, D: Ring, T: Scent

Anyone smelling the territory marked out by the caster's scent (usually his urine) cannot enter the warded area for as long as the scent stays fresh, requiring the caster to renew it regularly. The spell manifests as a physical compulsion to turn back upon smelling the magus's scent. This spell must penetrate successfully to bar passage to any intruder with Magic Resistance, assuming that the intruder is usually associated with the Form of Corpus. (Intruders associated with other Forms are not warded against in any way.)

(Base 3 [move in direction "away"], +2 Ring, +2 Scent)

CLARION CALL OF THE WAR HORSE

MuMe 15

R: Per, D: Diam, T: Sound

Anyone hearing the caster's battle cry is heartened by its tone, and receives a +3 bonus to his Brave Personality Trait.



Those attaining Brave scores greater than +3 through this spell perform acts of courage well beyond those expected of them.

(Base 3, +1 Diam, +3 Sound)

THE ROOSTER'S CROW

PeVi Gen

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Sound

Any demons who hear the caster's shout lose Might equal to the spell's (level - 5) if the spell penetrates their Magic Resistance.

(Base effect, +3 Sound)

BRILLIANCE OF THE EAGLE'S PLUMAGE

CrIg 30

R: Per, D: Conc, T: Spectacle

Anyone looking directly at the caster is blinded by the brilliant light shining from his body. The caster does not shed light as such; it is only those who look at him who are affected. All victims must make a Stamina stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to avoid blindness. On a botch, the blinding is permanent, otherwise a Stamina stress roll (no botch) against an Ease Factor of 9 can be attempted every minute until recovered.

(Base 5, +1 Conc, +4 Spectacle)

CLOSED MOUTH OF THE NIGHTWALKER

PeMe 40

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Spectacle

Anyone seeing the caster instantly forgets that he did so, assuming that the spell's Penetration breaches the target's Magic Resistance. The caster may not necessarily be aware that he has been seen.

(Base 10, +2 Sun, +4 Spectacle)

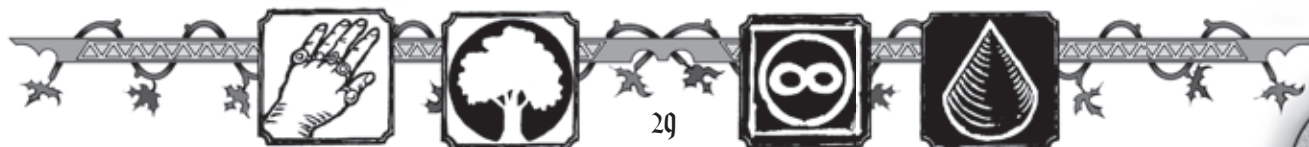
the search should narrow quickly, excluding those ancestors who have inappropriate heartbeats, or who have pursued a path that is incompatible with that desired by the postulant. Of those who are left, some will inevitably have perished through violence or misadventure, and others will be completely untraceable. By the time the magus has eventually stumbled upon a true lead to a suitable ancestor, he has passed the first hurdle to this Inner Mystery.

Example: After many false starts, Ulf finally discovers that his ancestor Lupercus haunts the Bielowiezka Forest in the form of an immense wolf, and he sets out for Poland.

The second stage of the Quest towards this Inner Mystery is to communicate with the Great Beast and convince it to impart the knowledge sought. Great Beasts have succumbed to Final Twilight and become creatures of the Magic realm; however, they were once human, and most

are still in possession of true Intelligence. Despite this, they now possess wholly different motivations and goals, most of which are utterly inscrutable. Successfully communicating with a Great Beast can be a lengthy and frustrating process.

Example: The Great Beast that was once Lupercus is a wily quarry, quite beyond Ulf's ability to track. It takes him months to even get a glimpse of his ancestor, and Ulf starts to despair of any actual contact. Finally, one of Ulf's nightly



Great Beasts as Mystagogues

Great Beasts should be considered to have a Presence of +2 and an House Bjornaer Lore of 8. As they are members of House Bjornaer who have undergone the Initiation into the Inner Heartbeast themselves, they should be considered to know the Mystery sought, regardless of which of the three Inner Mysteries they took themselves.

howls, hitherto unaccompanied, is joined by an immensely deep wolf-voice, and Ulf knows he has made contact.

The ancestor may put any obstacles in the way of a postulant magus that the storyguide desires. A magus must show his dedication to the cause; Great Beasts disdain the company of magi, who are painful reminders of their own lost humanity, and only the most persistent seekers attract their favor. Great Beasts set tasks and trials for their prospective students; in game terms, the magus must earn a total of 10 Adventure experience points from these trials. These experience points are not spent on advancement; instead, the seasons usually spent resolving these experience points into Abilities are instead spent contemplating how the tasks being set by the Great Beast relate to the Mystery sought.

Example: Ulf communicates nightly with his mentor over the vast distances that the wolf howls carry. Under his ancestor's instruction, the magus drives a village of hunters from the edges of the Bielowiezka and becomes leader of the forest's largest wolf-packs without using his magical capabilities. Ulf realizes that his ancestor is making him act like a creature of stealth, cunning, darkness, and fear, and resolves this learning into the first glimmering of how he can become the creature he desires.

Once the magus has completed the Quests, the Great Beast agrees to Initiate the Mystery of the Inner Heartbeast. This process takes a season as the Great Beast tears apart the ancestral spirit of the magus and reassembles it in the form of the inner heartbeast. The magus suffers either a Hermetic or Supernatural Major Flaw as part of this Ordeal. Every

Great Beast imposes its own choice of Ordeal, which reflects the desired Inner Heartbeast. Common Ordeals include a Deficient Technique (a serpent epitome might find Creo magics particularly difficult), a Necessary Condition (a bull chimera might need to be touching the ground), a Restriction (a choleric anima might not be able to use magic when at sea), or a Greater Malediction (burned by sunlight, silver becomes poisonous, and so forth). Some Great Beasts even inflict the Lycanthrope Flaw on their Initiates, making them lose control over their inner heartbeast for a few nights each month.

At the end of the season, the Initiation Total based on the scores of the Great Beast (as Mystagogue) is calculated, and if it equals or exceeds the Ease Factor, then the Initiation is successful and the magus acquires whichever of the three Inner Heartbeast Mysteries he was attempting to learn.

Example: Satisfied by his pupil's dedication, the Great Beast finally meets with Ulf, appearing without warning out of the shadows. Over the course of a season, Ulf runs nightly at his ancestor's side, and within his shadow acquires a weakness for light — the Restriction (bright light) Flaw. At the end of the season, his Initiation into the Mystery of the Anima is complete.

INITIATION TO THE MYSTERY OF THE INNER HEARTBEAST

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Great Beast)

Script Bonus: +13

Script Details: The Initiate must Sacrifice time to discover a suitable ancestor (+1), Quest to achieve the approval of the Great Beast (+3), and undergo a Major Ordeal (+9).



The Three Inner Mysteries

There are three paths to the Inner Mysteries of House Bjornaer, each with a different type of inner heartbeast as its ultimate goal.

THE MYSTERY OF THE EPITOME (MAJOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

The Gifted man is a more Perfect Man, the Virtuous Beast is a more Perfect Beast.

The Great Beast shows the magus how to perfect the form of his heartbeast so that it is a perfection of the base form and a closer reflection of the ideal form of that creature — a Beast of Virtue. A Beast of Virtue is a supernatural version of a mundane beast. In appearance it does not vary substantially from the mundane animal, although it may be larger and more impressive. This is the most common path of House Bjornaer, bringing the magus into closer contact with the essence of his true self.

Upon being Initiated into this Mystery, the inner heartbeast is drawn out from the outer heartbeast. There are a number of benefits to this transformation:

- One Characteristic of the inner heartbeast (other than Intelligence) receives a permanent +3 bonus to the value of the base animal (ignoring any adjustments for the magus's own Characteristics). That same Characteristic receives a permanent +1 bonus in human form as well, which might alter the Characteristics of the outer heartbeast in the usual fashion. The Characteristic raised in this fashion must be one for which the mundane beast is well-known, such as an eagle's Perception, a wolf's Presence, or a bear's Stamina.

Example: An eagle has a Perception of +2, but the Bjornaer magus's human Perception is -1, so his outer heartbeast has a Perception of +1. However, his inner heartbeast acquires a Perception of +5, and his human form also gets a +1 bonus for a final Perception of 0. This means that his outer heartbeast finishes with a Perception of +2.

Sample Mythic Feats

Perception: See a sword being drawn at a mile distance; hear grass grow

Presence: Stop a riot with a glance, make an animal slavishly obedient

Communication: Command a creature to obey to the death, speak a language never heard

Strength: Lift something 20 times one's own weight, inflict a Heavy Wound on a creature of Size +1 or less on a successful attack

Stamina: Become immovable until choosing to move (Grapple Strength of 21 required to move such a character), ignore an Incapacitating Wound for two minutes, recover a Light Wound overnight

Dexterity: Run across treetops, fight two opponents simultaneously

Quickness: Move at ten times normal speed until fatigued, act twice in a single round

- The inner heartbeast may perform a Mythic Feat related to its increased Characteristic at a cost of 1 Confidence Point. A Mythic Feat is an automatically successful incredible action that would normally be covered by a single die roll, and cannot be used on an activity which usually takes days or seasons to perform.
- The inner heartbeast is a perfect specimen of its type. When in the form of his virtuous inner heartbeast, a Bjornaer magus does not suffer from any Physical Flaws that would normally affect his shape. A Lame magus is not lame as a Beast of Virtue, for example, although he is still affected by that Flaw as his outer heartbeast.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHIMERA (MAJOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

The Beasts of Legend are our Ancestors, not our Foes.

The Great Beast transforms the outer heartbeast into a new inner heartbeast that combines the features of more than



one mundane creature. Such a hybrid creature is called a chimera. There are a number of famous chimeras mentioned in legend, such as the griffin, hippogriff, and unicorn, but the chimera need not mimic one of these famous examples. Instead, the inner heartbeast can take any two creatures and borrow features from each. The storyguide should ensure that the combined form chosen as a character's inner heartbeast is still noble; for example, a hybrid of tortoise and falcon looks ridiculous, even though the individual animals qualify as noble.

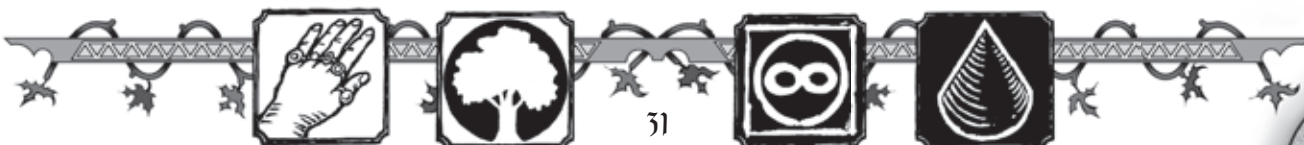
Naturally, one of the base creatures must be the outer heartbeast of the magus, and for the most part, this animal should make up at least half of the chimera's body. It is impossible to include human as one of the components of the chimerical form (creating a centaur or mermaid, for example).

Once the shape of the basic chimera has been decided, the storyguide and player should decide which Characteristics, Abilities, Virtues, and Qualities (see the appendix to this chapter, below) are retained by the chimera from each of its parent animals. This determines the base form of the inner heartbeast.

As well as combining features from each animal form, there are a number of other benefits to this transformation:

- A chimerical heartbeast is one size category larger than the outer heartbeast, or as big as the creature added to the outer heartbeast, whichever results in the greatest final size.

Example: An eagle-Bjornaer (Size -2) acquiring Characteristics of a Lion (Size +2) becomes Size +2. A lion-Bjornaer adding the features of an eagle becomes Size +3.



Sample Elemental Forms

Stone: The body is transformed into solid stone. The magus's mass increases five-fold with no change in overall dimensions (+2 to Size with correspondingly increased wound range, but Strength is unaffected). His Soak receives a +15 bonus, but Quickness is reduced by 5.

Air: As *Cloak of Mist*, constantly in effect.

Fire: The body is transformed into living fire. The magus needs no fuel to burn, but he ignites flammable materials that come into contact with him, and inflicts +10 damage if he touches anyone. His fire cannot be quenched, and he cannot suppress it.

Water: As *Transform to Water*, constantly in effect.

Other elements should be based upon the effects listed here.

- The inner heartbeast gains a new Minor Virtue. Sanguine heartbeasts gain Lightning Reflexes. Choleric heartbeasts gain Reserves of Strength. Melancholic heartbeasts gain a Lesser Immunity (the player and storyguide should determine this immunity between them). Phlegmatic heartbeasts gain Intuition. If the character already has the Virtue in question, the storyguide should pick another suitable one.
- The combat abilities of the chimera are determined by the Abilities, Virtues, and Qualities it retains from each of its forms.

THE MYSTERY OF THE ANIMA (MAJOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

Open Your Heart to the Realm of Magic.

The Great Beast transforms the heartbeast into a spiritual or elemental form. These are often the hardest translations to inner heartbeast to make because of the new form is so wholly different from the old one, and are consequently the least common.

Upon acquiring this Inner Mystery, the Bjornaer magus can transform into a creature of the same shape and size as his outer heartbeast, but composed of elemental matter. This body may be made of one of the traditional four elements of earth, fire, air, or water, or other matter such as smoke or shadow. While in this form, the magus is affected by the Hermetic Form associated with (or closest to) that element, rather than the Form of Animal.

The Inner Heartbeast in Play

Once Initiated, the form of the inner heartbeast can be taken by first assuming the form of their outer heartbeast, then making a Stamina + Heartbeast roll against an Ease Factor of 9. This process takes a full round, in which the magus can do nothing except defend himself, using the statistics of his outer heartbeast until the change is complete. The reverse process is the same, but requires no roll; the change from inner heartbeast to outer heartbeast is automatic.

Any powers or other features possessed by the inner heartbeast may only be used when the magus is in that form. All features of the inner heartbeast apply equally and simultaneously. The magus cannot decide to just adopt some features of his new form any more than he could take on part of his outer heartbeast. The Hidden Shape still applies to the inner heartbeast, although it is often of more limited use while in this shape, as many inner heartbeasts have obviously supernatural characteristics. Unless modified or refined by Inner Mysteries, the inner heartbeast has all of the Characteristics, Qualities, Virtues, Flaws, and Abilities of the outer heartbeast.

Refining the Inner Heartbeast

An inner heartbeast can be refined further by a number of smaller Initiations. Further Initiations involve changing the

Size or Characteristics of the inner heartbeast, or acquiring new Qualities, Virtues, or Powers. The magus must rely on his own knowledge for this process of refinement, for his Mystagogue has returned to its solitude in the wilderness.

INITIATION OF A REFINEMENT

Both the teachings of his Great Beast ancestor and the lore he has gathered from the House allow a Bjornaer magus to develop an embryonic rite that serve as his first step on this path. This rite begins with no Quest and no Ordeal, and involves only a season of ritual cleansing in isolation at an ancestor site (see above), invoking his ancestors and physically consuming a large amount of vis, which causes Warping. However, this rite may be insufficient on its own to Initiate the refinements desired, and must be varied to grant a bigger bonus. All Initiations use the Presence of the human form, not that of either heartbeast. This embryonic Script is unique in that it can Initiate any Refinement Mystery; however, it cannot be used to Initiate any other Mystery.

EMBRYONIC INITIATION OF A REFINEMENT MYSTERY

Ease Factor: Varies, see Refinements, below

Script Bonus: +7 + Resonant Bonus

Script Details: The magus must spend at least one season at an ancestor site (+3), physically consuming one pawn of vis (of an appropriate Art) per three points of the Initiation Ease Factor, and acquiring 1 Warping Point because of this (+1). The Virtue acquired can only be used in the form of the inner heartbeast (special bonus of +3). The type of inner heartbeast offers a **Resonant Bonus** to the Initiation of certain Refinements:

- MYSTERY OF THE EPITOME: +3 to Virtues and Increasing Characteristics
- MYSTERY OF THE CHIMERA: +3 to Qualities and Changing Size
- MYSTERY OF THE ANIMA: +3 to Minor and Major Powers

This embryonic Script is rarely sufficient to Initiate the desired Mystery,

and the magus must therefore usually add another Script element as detailed in the Introduction. The storyguide also adds a sympathetic Script bonus (or penalty) from -5 to +5 depending upon how suited he feels the added component is to the Initiation of the specific refinement. This bonus should be kept a secret from the player until the Initiation rite is performed.

REFINEMENTS

Refinements affect only the inner heartbeast. It is impossible to apply any Refinement Mystery to the human form or to the outer heartbeast.

CHANGING SIZE

The Size of the inner heartbeast may be increased, one point at a time. Size increased in this way does not affect Strength or Quickness in the usual manner (see the appendix to this chapter, below). The larger the form increases past its natural size, the harder it is to Initiate this refinement. *Appropriate vis: Muto. Ease Factor 18 + (3 per previous Size increase).*

INCREASING CHARACTERISTIC SCORES

Any Characteristic of the inner heartbeast other than Intelligence is increased by 1. The farther that Characteristics increase past their natural values, the harder it is to Initiate this refinement. *Appropriate vis: Creo. Ease Factor 18 + (3 per previous increase to this Characteristic).*

ACQUIRING QUALITIES

The inner heartbeast may acquire an animal Quality, such as physical features or natural abilities. A list of Qualities can be found in the appendix to this chapter, below. Qualities generally provide lesser benefits than a Virtue does, and so the Initiation is slightly easier. *Appropriate vis: Animal. Ease Factor 15.*

ACQUIRING VIRTUES

The inner heartbeast may acquire either Major or Minor Flaws from a specific list. These lists may be extended to other Virtues with the agreement of the storyguide. *Appropriate vis: Vim.*

- **MAJOR VIRTUES:** Greater Immunity, Ways of the (Land). Ease Factor 30.
- **MINOR VIRTUES:** Enduring Constitution, Keen Sense of Smell, Keen Vision, Lesser Immunity, Lightning Reflexes, Long-Winded, Magic Sensitivity, Perfect Balance, Piercing Gaze, Rapid Convalescence, Reserves of Strength, Second Sight, Sharp Ears, Tough, Wilderness Sense. Ease Factor 18.

ACQUIRING POWERS

The inner heartbeast may acquire a supernatural Power, designed as if it were a magical effect for an invested item, including Uses per Day and Penetration. The magus's Lab Total in the appropriate Arts must exceed the effect level or its formulation is beyond him. However, the Power is not actually enchanted, but Initiated instead. If the desired Power cannot be formulated as a Hermetic effect, it cannot be Initiated. Sensory targets may be Initiated as Major Powers if the magus knows that Mystery. *Appropriate vis: Form of Power acquired.*

- Minor Powers affect only the magus himself (such as a resistance to fire) or are Magical Sense Intellego spells. Minor Powers may have a constant effect. Ease Factor 21.
- Major Powers are any effects that can affect a target other than the Bjornaer magus himself. As a rule of thumb, if a spell needs a Penetration Total to have an effect, then it is a Major Power. Major Powers cannot have a constant effect. Ease Factor 30.

Example: Ulf's inner heartbeast (through the Mystery of the Anima) is that of a wolf made entirely from shadows. This is treated like the air shape, and his statistics are adjusted accordingly. He wants to give himself the ability to move from shadow to shadow in order to creep up on his foes; this is a Rego Animal spell, using the Rego Corpus guidelines for instant transportation. The base level of 15 allows him to transport up to 50 paces, and

he wants to be able to do this 24 times per day, for a total level of 20. (He needs to have a Rego Corpus Lab Total of 20). This Minor Power would normally require an Initiation Total of 21+ (a Minor Power), but since this is the first Initiation following the Major Ordeal suffered to acquire his inner heartbeast, he is seeking a total of 12 instead.

Knowing that his anima heartbeast is amenable to the Initiation of powers, he decides not to vary the embryonic Script. His Script bonus is +10 (+7 + 3 for an anima heartbeast), which, with his Presence of 2 and House Bjornaer Lore of 5, is more than sufficient to Initiate the Mystery.

Several refinements later, Ulf wishes to increase his Size by one point to 0. This Initiation will have an Ease Factor of 18 (he has used up all his previous Ordeal bonus). With no resonant bonus from his inner heartbeast, he decides to add a Quest to the simple Script, to seek out the largest wolf in the tribunal and defeat it in fair combat. The Script variation roll is successful, and the storyguide also awards a +3 sympathetic bonus because the Quest is so appropriate to the Mystery sought. His Script bonus is therefore +13 (7 + 3 for the quest + 3 sympathetic bonus) for an Initiation Total of 20. Had he received no sympathetic bonus for the appropriate Quest, he would have failed, and had to start again with the embryonic Script.

The Huntress in the Wood

The Esoteric Mystery Cult of the Huntress in the Wood — also known simply as the Huntress — guards teachings descended from the followers of Merinita who were defeated by Quendalon at the beginning of the ninth century, and who took shelter in House Bjornaer. The cult also contains members of House Merinita who reject the faerie ways of their House, and a few members of other Houses, mostly from Houses Flambeau and Ex Miscellanea, who are attracted to the messianic teachings of the cult.



They have a dramatic and ambitious goal — to train and anoint a pagan messiah, to whom the Goddess Diana will grant the key to unlocking the power of nature, thus changing the entire Order of Hermes and its magic. In the pursuit of this goal they have abandoned the ancestor cult of House Bjornaer in all but name, paying only lip service to the House rituals at social occasions. Instead, they devote themselves to the worship of Diana in secret rituals out of sight of the rest of the House.

History of the Huntress in the Wood

The Huntress believe that the battle between Quendalon and Myanar was a battle over the leadership of the cult of Diana, the Roman goddess of animals and the hunt. In antiquity, the priest of Diana Nemorensis ("Diana of the Wood") had to slay his predecessor to claim leadership of the cult. According to the Huntress, Quendalon first slew Merinita to become the high priest of Diana, then slew Myanar, who challenged him for that leadership.

Myanar's followers fled to the embrace of House Bjornaer, where they established a rival cult of Diana in secret, and hoarded fragments of scattered lore, which they claim to be Merinita's true magic before the taint of faerie infected the House. For a couple of centuries, the society stayed hidden mostly within House Bjornaer, until in 1129, Mendalus of House Merinita proclaimed at the Grand Tribunal that Quendalon had been wrong, and the Order had a duty to follow the true path of Merinita. Several Merinita took up this pursuit of wilderness magic, starting a sub-tradition in the House. Mendalus was actually a hierophant of the Huntress who became crazed after a protracted Twilight. His actions worked towards the goals of the Huntress, but he was in danger of revealing their secrets. He believed that he was the messiah they had been searching for, and the other hierophants of the Huntress were forced to silence him by declaring Wizard's War against him and slaying him.

The Huntress secretly contacted those Merinita who had followed Mendalus,

and those who were deemed worthy were invited to join. Since then, magi from other Houses who express an interest in Mendalus's teachings are carefully vetted by the Huntress, and occasionally offered membership.

The Huntress Today

The Huntress is a small and fanatical sect with a very specific goal: to train an individual sufficiently so that he will possess enough power to find Quendalon (who is supposedly hiding in Arcadia) and destroy him. The goddess herself will then anoint her new high priest or priestess with the power to change the entire Order from being practitioners of Hermetic magic to cultists of nature worship. To achieve this end, the Huntress is devoted to reclaiming the secrets of ancient nature worshipers. Some say the Huntress has collected fragments of wisdom from House Diedne, and even seeks to contact any survivors for aid in defeating Quendalon and converting his followers.

Very few magi outside the Huntress give credence to Huntress' claims. The Huntress is not actively hostile against House Merinita, instead directing all its energies to contemplating the mysteries of the wilderness, convinced the new high priest will win over House Merinita with messianic powers. The faerie magicians of House Merinita keep a watchful eye on the Huntress, of course, but do not treat it as a threat without evidence of direct hostility against the rest of the House.

Meetings of the Huntress always take place with considerable secrecy on the Ides of August (Diana's holy day) at a place sacred to the goddess (which changes every year). Indeed, members traditionally wear masks at these meetings and adopt cult names derived from the legends of Diana. Only the innermost members know that several members of the Huntress are, in fact, hedge wizards (some possibly of the lineage of Diedne) who are not members of the Order of Hermes. The anonymity of the society thus offers them protection from magi who would seek to hunt them down.

Structure of the Huntress

The Huntress possesses three levels of Initiation, the outer **kerykes**, the inner **eumolpids**, and the innermost **hierophants**. The Ability Huntress in the Wood Lore (abbreviated to Huntress Lore) is necessary for the Initiation of these grades.

KERYKES

Members of this rank are devoted to the study of nature, and they do not concern themselves with the overall goal of the society; indeed, they are only aware of the goals of the cult if they take a personal interest. They are charged with recovering the lore of nature known to the ancients, but lost in modern times. To become a member of the society and join the kerykes, it is necessary undergo an Initiation which grants the Mystery of Nature Lore (see House Merinita: Nature Mysteries) at one of the yearly meetings of the cult. A Bjornaer magus inducted into the cult will probably be Initiated by his sept members, but not until after his Initiation into the Order of Hermes.

INITIATION TO THE RANK OF KERYKIS AND THE MYSTERY OF NATURE LORE

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The Initiate must acquire Huntress Lore 1 through at least one season's tutelage under the Mystagogue (+3); discover and give to the hierophants a piece of magical lore related to the study or worship of nature hitherto unknown to them, such as a new (or old) spell, an ancient book, or an invested item made by House Diedne (+3); and take an Oath of obedience to the hierophants of the cult (Vow Flaw, +3).

EUMOLPIDS

The eumolpids are concerned with the religious aspect of the society, in particular, the worship of Diana, and the identification and training of the pagan

messiah. A kerykes wishing to join the eumolpids must have a Huntress Lore of 3, and her Initiation grants the Mystery of Hermetic Theurgy (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*). Eumolpids who prove themselves loyal to the Huntress and who further its goals may also be Initiated into the Mysteries of Names of Power and Invocation Magic (both described in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*), learning the names of powerful nature-oriented deities such as Demeter and Kore.

INITIATION TO THE RANK OF EUMOLPID AND THE MYSTERY OF HERMETIC THEURGY

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +12

Script Details: On the Ides of August, the Initiate must either bathe in the waters of Lake Nemi (in the Roman Tribunal) or anoint the statue of Diana at Ephesus (in the Theban Tribunal) with sacred oil (+3), and must receive a mystical mark that forever alienates him from the fae (Supernatural Nuisance Flaw, +9).

HIEROPHANTS

The three hierophants of the Huntress, who lead the cult, are elected by the eumolpids. One is always a priestess of Diana, a second is always a priestess of Ceres. The third can be either male or female, but is usually a priest of a pagan god. Upon being chosen as a hierophant, a magus is Initiated into the Mystery of Hermetic Synthemata (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*) by the other two. This Mystery is vital in the Huntress's plans, as with it they hope to be able to control the messiah when they create him. During the rite, the Initiate reveals her identity to the other two hierophants; thus, the senior hierophant always knows the identity of the other two, whereas the junior knows the identity of neither of the others.

The hierophants guard an Initiation Script for the innermost Mystery of the cult, Ascendancy to the Hall of Heroes (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, Chapter 9: Hermetic Theurgy). Once the pagan messiah has been chosen from amongst the kerykis, he will prove himself by slay-

ing Quendalon, earning in the process the blessing of Diana, and become the focus of veneration by the eumolpids as he reforms the Order of Hermes.

INITIATION TO THE RANK OF HIEROPHANT AND THE MYSTERY OF HERMETIC SYNTHMATA

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +7

Script Details: The Initiate is stripped naked (Sacrifice of anonymity, +1). The Initiate must then track, chase, and bring down one of Diana's sacred white stags in a single day (+3); cloaked in the skin of the stag she must discover her secret name, which she gives to the other hierophants (a Minor Ordeal as described under the Secret Name Mystery, +3).

INITIATION TO THE RANK OF CHOSEN OF DIANA AND THE MYSTERY OF ASCENDANCY TO THE HALL OF HEROES

Ease Factor: 30 (Major Virtue unknown to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +24

Script Details: The Initiate must undergo a unique Quest to find Quendalon in Arcadia and slay him (+6). This is followed by the Sacrifice of everything that he owns or has made or written in his life as a magus (+6), and a ritual blinding by the hierophants (Major Ordeal, +9) in the presence of Diana herself (+3).

The Magic of House Bjornaer

House Bjornaer are as magically diverse as any other House, although they do show a distinct bias towards Muto magic, despite their unease about

shapechanging. It is believed that magi of House Bjornaer commonly have a Deficiency in Ignem Magic because of the association of fire with civilization, a thing that beasts instinctively fear. This slander is widespread throughout the Order, although at least since the Schism War, it has not been true; some Bjornaer magi find this accusation insulting.

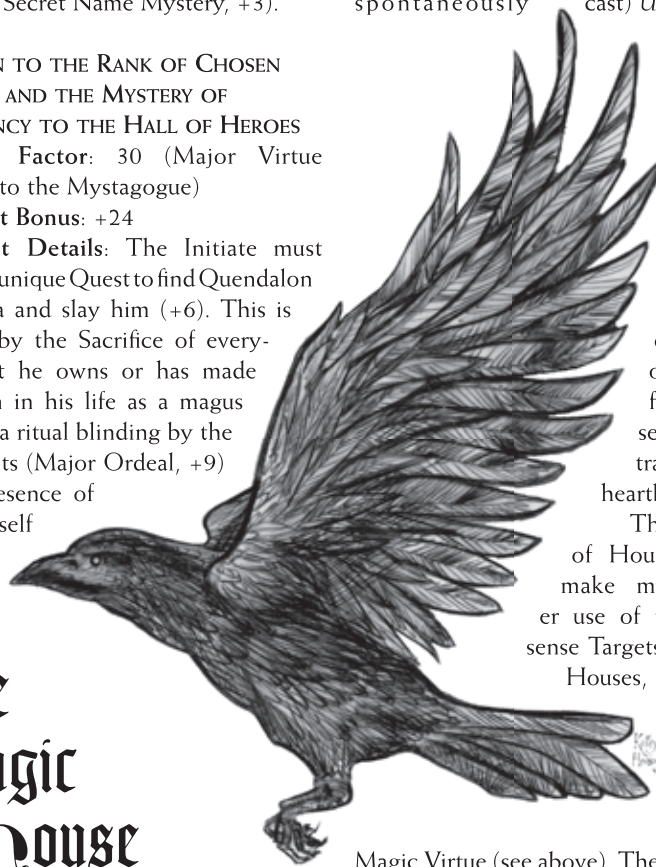
A follower of House Bjornaer is likely to have some connection between his heartbeast and his magic. At least some of a magus's spells mimic the mythic properties ascribed to his heartbeast, or enhance his natural abilities. Spells that allow him to do things in animal form that he would normally be only able to do in human form are also very popular. Most Bjornaer magi, for example, know (or are able to spontaneously cast) *Unseen Arm*, to

allow them to open doors and turn the pages of books; with other spells, many can create a set of clothes for themselves if they travel a lot in heartbeast form.

The members of House Bjornaer make much heavier use of the magical sense Targets than other Houses, even those who have not Initiated the Sensory

Magic Virtue (see above). Their version of *Speak with the Living Flame*, for example, is a Range Personal, Target Hearing spell with a free Mentem requisite, which interprets the sound of the fire into thoughts.

There are some spells known to House Bjornaer that are not widely disseminated in the Order, but are often found in the personal libraries of members of House



Bjornaer; these spells are detailed below. Any spell that affects a heartbeast of Size +2 or greater must be invented with a Size modifier (see ArM5, page 113), and is thus at least a magnitude higher.

THE VOICE OF THE BJORNAER MAGUS
MuAn 15

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

This spell allows the caster to speak with a human voice when shapechanged into the form of an animal. The caster must be in animal form to cast this spell because it targets the vocal capacity of that form, and must be able to cast this spell with no words or gestures (usually a -15 penalty), but while under its influence, may use his own voice without penalty to spellcasting.

(Base 5, +2 Sun)

FORM OF THE (TEMPERAMENT) HEARTBEAST
MuAn 10

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

There are four versions of this spell, one for each of the sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic temperaments. These spells must be cast in animal form because they enhance the correspondences to the temperament of that form, whereas humans naturally have a more balanced temperament than animals. A Bjornaer magus may revert to human form after casting this spell and still retain its effects. It is not required that the animal form he takes take matches the temperament listed in the spell's name; however, if the two do match, all bonuses granted by the spell are increased by one. Only one of these spells may be cast on the same character at any one time; they operate by influencing the bodily humors, and only one humor at a time may be influenced in this way.

Sanguine: +1 Qik; +3 to all rolls to negate the natural fear the caster instills (as a wild animal with The Gift); temporarily acquires the Cheerful Personality Trait at +3 (or increases preexisting trait by 3)

Choleric: +1 Dex; +3 to all rolls to follow a trail or find something deliberately hidden; temporarily acquires the Brave Personality Trait at +3 (or increases preexisting trait by 3)

Melancholic: +1 Sta; +3 to all rolls to communicate across a language barrier, through empathy, via sign language, and so forth; temporarily acquires the Creative Personality Trait at +3 (or increases preexisting trait by 3)

Phlegmatic: +1 Str; +3 to all rolls involving intuition and memory; temporarily acquires the Cool-Headed Personality Trait at +3 (or increases preexisting trait by 3)

(Base 5, +2 Sun; +1 complexity)

FACILITATE THE STIFLED (FORM) SPELL
MuVi Gen

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

This spell is cast at the same time as another formulaic spell (see ArM5, page 159) whose level must be less than twice the level of this spell. If successfully cast, the targeted spell may be cast with no penalty to the casting total due to reduced or absent gestures and/or voice. While this Muto Vim spell requires gestures and voice as normal, the casting total of the follow-up spell is not penalized, and thus difficult spells at the limit of a magus's ability have a greater chance of success when in restricted circumstances, without incurring fatigue loss. If the targeted spell has Range Voice, the volume used to cast this spell determines the actual range. There are ten versions of this spell, each affecting spells of one of the Hermetic Forms. This spell is particularly useful to Bjornaer magi who wish to maintain the appearance of mundane animals yet still cast spells.

(Base effect, +1 Touch)

one), although he may be willing to take suggestions from you.

Virtues & Flaws

You should consider what Virtues are particularly appropriate for your character's heartbeast — one might expect a Bjornaer-bear to be Large, a Bjornaer-wolf to have a Piercing Gaze, or a Bjornaer-eagle to have Keen Vision. Similarly, you should consider what Flaws are suitable for the heartbeast. For example, a boar-Bjornaer might have Poor Eyesight, a bull-Bjornaer might be Clumsy, and a weasel-Bjornaer might have a Small Frame. In particular, Personality Flaws should be chosen while keeping the heartbeast in mind. You may wish to invent some new Personality Flaws for Bjornaer characters, such as Brooding, Hibernation, Migratory, Territorial, Loner, Dandy, Savage, or Carnivorous.

Bjornaer characters are unlikely to have Faerie Blood, due to the general dislike of House Bjornaer for faerie matters. Possessing either the Skinchanger or Shapechanger Virtue, or the Lycanthrope Flaw, is a major hindrance to the magus in the House, and you should carefully consider the background of your character which led to him finishing his apprenticeship with both this Virtue and his life intact. If the House is not aware of the Virtue he will be hindered less, but should take the Dark Secret Flaw to account for the story possibilities if it is found out that he has an ability believed to mark him as one of the ancient enemies of the House. For information on the restrictions placed on shapechanging Bjornaer magi, see Apprenticeship, above.

Characters of House Bjornaer

The first step in character creation when designing a magus of House Bjornaer is to decide upon the heartbeast. You should then decide on which clan you want to belong to, based on the philosophical stance of your character. Your storyguide decides upon the location and composition of your sept (if you have

MYTHIC BLOOD

Birna had several natural children through her life, and her bloodline is carefully guarded by House Bjornaer, and watched for signs of The Gift. Magi of this lineage always have a bear heartbeast, but apart from this, the Founder's bloodline may manifest in a number of ways. Most commonly, those of Birna's blood receive

a Minor Magical Focus in Legendary Creatures and acquire one of the *Form of the (Temperament) Heartbeast* spells as their magical feat. These spells were originally modeled from Birna's own innate abilities. The hereditary Minor Personality Flaw from Birna's line is Slothful (see New Flaws, below).

It is also possible to bear the blood of one of the Great Beasts — Gifted children may arise from the interaction of the Great Beasts with shapechanged humans. The benefits of this Virtue are typically related to the supernatural powers of the Great Beast.

New Virtues

CLAN ILFETU

Minor, Hermetic

The character is a member of Clan Ilfetu, and has received extra training in the rituals of the House. You receive 50 extra experience points that may be spent on House Bjornaer Lore, Magic Lore (with a specialty in the Great Beasts), and Gothic, the dead language that the House uses for all of its rituals. It is possible that the magus has also been Initiated into the Esoteric Mystery of Divination and Augury (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*); if so, this Virtue must be purchased with the normal allowance of ten points of Virtues and Flaws. Clan Ilfetu teaches the Divination method of haemagmomancy, which is divination by observing the blood splatters of wounded animals; this gives the following bonuses to Divination: +5 family, +3 Corpus.

KEEN SENSE OF SMELL

Minor, General

The character's nose is more sensitive than normal for a human. He gets a +3 bonus to all rolls involving his sense of smell, including following tracks with the Hunt Ability.

PACK LEADER / NATURAL LEADER

Minor, General

The character is a dominant person with a demeanor that encourages others to do what he says. His self-assured manner gives him a +3 bonus to social situations

Common Virtues & Flaws

Every Bjornaer magus has the free Supernatural Virtue Heartbeast. Members of Clan Ilfetu are required to take the new Virtue "Clan Ilfetu". Other common Virtues and Flaws are:

- **Affinity with Heartbeast**
- **Animal Ken**
- **Deft Form**
- **Inoffensive to Animals**
- **Puissant Heartbeast**
- **Quiet Magic**
- **Special Circumstances:** When in human or heartbeast form.
- **Self-Confident:** Magi who experienced the Ritual of Twelve Years early in their apprenticeship are treated as equals by adults at a very early age, which gives self-assurance and confidence.
- **Study Bonus:** Particularly useful for magi who spend a lot of time in heartbeast form.
- **Subtle Magic**
- **Ways of the (Land):** Particularly suitable for traditional "savage" Bjornaer magi.
- **Wilderness Sense:** Particularly suitable for traditional "savage" Bjornaer magi.
- **Animal Companion:** Some Bjornaer magi form deep attachments to animals of the same species, and these may fill roles similar to spouses or dependents.
- **Bad Reputation:** If known to be a shapeshifter before the Ritual of Twelve Years, a character may take the reputation of Uswaurpa (reject).
- **Feral Upbringing:** Once common, this Flaw is now much rarer as the House tries to shake off its primitive roots; they no longer seek out apprentices such as this.
- **Low Self-Esteem:** Magi who were catuli for most of their apprenticeships often become accustomed to being ordered around, even by those younger than they are.
- **Magical Animal Companion:** Bjornaer magi sometimes forge friendships with magical creatures to fill the void of being forbidden familiars.
- **Mentor:** A sept-member to whom the character owes much of his training.
- **Necessary Condition:** When in human or heartbeast form.
- **Restriction:** When in human or heartbeast form.
- **Study Requirement**

Examples of Mythic Blood

BLOOD	MAGICAL FEAT	MINOR MAGICAL FOCUS	PERSONALITY FLAW
Birna	<i>Form of the (Temperament) Heartbeast</i>	Legendary Creatures	Slothful
Wolf of Virtue	Paralyze a man at R: Eye	Wolves	Envious
Owl of Virtue	<i>Silence of the Smothered Sound</i>	Ghosts	Nocturnal
Griffin	<i>Panic of the Elephant's Mouse</i>	Courage	Reckless
Phoenix	<i>Coat of Flame, R: Touch</i>	Aging	Higher Purpose

in which he takes the lead; people are more likely to follow his orders or do as

he suggests. If he is Gifted, this bonus can temporarily help to overcome the social

penalty of The Gift, due to the strength of his domineering personality. Members of House Bjornaer who were Initiated early in their apprenticeship often have this Virtue.

UNBOUND TONGUE

Minor, Supernatural

Whenever the character is transformed into a non-human form (whether by spell, magic item, curse, or a heartbeast) he may speak any human languages he knows with no impediment. If he is a magus, he may use his voice as normal to cast spells.

New Flaws

FERAL SCENT

Minor, General

Perhaps due to his beast blood or feral upbringing, the character has the strong natural smell of a wild animal. Humans tend to avoid being too close to him, and may be on edge in his vicinity without knowing why. He may well spook domesticated animals if he surprises them. He suffers a -1 penalty to social interactions (which stacks with the penalties imposed by The Gift, if he has it), and develops a negative Reputation of Unclean at level 2. However, if he has Initiated the Sensory Magic Mystery, any spells he casts with a Scent Target have twice their normal area of effect.

PACK MENTALITY / FOLLOWER

Minor, Personality

The character is a follower, not a leader. He rarely takes the initiative, but is usually happy to follow the direction of a forthright and decisive person. If he finds a leader, he tends to stick with her.

SECRETIVE

Minor, Personality

The character is prone to keeping secrets from his sodales. He rarely explains what he is doing or why he is doing it, which can frustrate those around him.

SLOTHFUL

Minor, Personality

The character is lazy and indolent, and enjoys nothing better than doing as

little as possible. He is very good at coming up with excuses as to why things need not be done right now. When roused into action, he works as hard as any other, but is constantly looking for opportunities to lapse into sloth again.

New Abilities

An asterisk (*) indicates an Ability that cannot be used at all by characters with no score (see ArM5, page 62).

DEAD LANGUAGE: GOTHIC (ACADEMIC)*

This is the language used in all the rituals of House Bjornaer, and is essential for any member of Clan Ilfetu. As a dead language, it has little use outside of a ritual context. Specialties: rituals, deciphering.

HEARTBEAST (SUPERNATURAL)*

This Ability is only possessed by those who have undergone the Ritual of Twelve Years. It governs the understanding that a Bjornaer magus has for his heartbeast, both on an intellectual and a visceral level. He has the knowledge of what it means to be an animal of his species; he knows how to survive, what to eat, how to care for himself, and so forth. This Ability grants the character a Personality Trait named for the appropriate animal, at a level equal to half the score in this Ability. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it allows the magus to change form. This Ability cannot be learned from books, and for it to be taught, the teacher must have the same temperament of heartbeast as the pupil. Specialties: changing to human form, Initiation.

HOUSE BJORNAER LORE (ARCANE)

This is the (Organization) Lore of House Bjornaer, providing knowledge of the legends, history, structure, operation, and goals of the House. It is used to recite lineages, remember sept affiliations, and so forth, but also details the magics, rites, and secrets of the House's Exoteric Mystery and Cult of Ancestors. This Lore is primarily orally transmitted, as Bjornaer magi are very cautious about letting these secrets into the hands of others. It is most commonly taught by sept and clan members or learned through self-discovery; every time a

magus spends a season initiating a Mystery, he gains experience in House Bjornaer Lore from exposure. Specialties: lineages, legends, ancestors, Clan Mysteries.

Appendix: Mundane Beasts

Rather than providing an exhaustive appendix with many creature statistics, the guidelines here allow you to easily create any statistics for heartbeasts, familiars, and other mundane creatures in a few simple steps.

1. Type & Size

There are four categories of beasts: Birds, Fish, Hoofed Beasts and Clawed Beasts. Birds are self explanatory. Fish includes amphibians such as frogs, toads, and salamanders, and reptiles such as snakes and lizards, as well as more traditional fish and whales. Hoofed Beasts includes both domestic animals and wild ones. The category of Clawed Beasts contains all creatures that do not fit into the other types.

2. Characteristics

As stated on page 191 of ArM5, mundane beasts have a Characteristic called Cunning in place of an Intelligence score. Use Cunning for rolls that would otherwise call for Intelligence, such as finding a way out of a closed barn. While beasts have a limited capacity for problem-solving, they lack imagination, reason, and intelligence as such. Communication and Presence have slightly different meanings for animals. Presence represents how much impact that the creature has on its human viewers. Creatures with a low Presence are barely noticed; those with a high Presence instill awe, fear, or wonder. Communication, as for humans, represents the ability of the animal to impart

information; few animals (to the medieval mind) are capable of the transmission of complex thoughts to others. For beasts, the Quickness Characteristic has mainly to do with reflexes and agility, and little to do with movement rate. Many animals can run faster than a human, but that does not necessarily mean they have better Initiative and Defense scores. Animals that run fast, but do not have especially good reflexes, have a Quality (see below) that reflects this.

Unlike human characters, animals only spend points on their four physical Characteristics (Stamina, Strength, Dexterity and Quickness). Like human characters, each has up to seven points to spend on increasing these Characteristics. Negative points may also be taken to gain an equal number of positive points, but an animal cannot have more than two Characteristics with negative values, and the minimum value is equal to (Size – 5). There is no maximum Characteristic score for an animal, and no Virtue or Flaw is needed for extreme Characteristic scores for animals.

After spending points on Characteristics, add twice the Size to Strength and subtract the Size from Quickness.

These adjustments may give an animal a third negative Characteristic, or reduce a Characteristic below the minimum of (Size – 5).

The other four Characteristics (Cunning, Perception, Presence, and Communication) are given values according to the creature's type.

A creature may have the Minor Virtue Increased Characteristics one or more times (particularly appropriate for predators), just like a human character. The Characteristic points gained from this Virtue may be applied to any of the physical Characteristics. These points should be spent *before* applying the adjustments for Size. See step 3, below, for adjustments to this Virtue.

3. Virtues & Flaws

Each species of beast has certain Virtues and Flaws that are common to all

Size Examples

Each Size category is approximately twice as heavy as the next smaller Size category. A 1-point difference in Size doubles the weight, 2 points multiplies it by five, and a 1-point increase in Size entails a ten-fold increase in mass. Thus, a pig weighs approximately the same as 50 hedgehogs, 200 rats, or 2000 mice. Note that the Rat has been moved from Size –8 in ArM5 (page 192) to Size –7 in this table. Birds are one Size point bigger than their weight would suggest, accounting for their larger overall dimension; if you need to know the weight of a bird, subtract one from the Size before calculation. All weights are approximate.

SIZE EXAMPLES

–15	insect
–10	minnow, mouse (1 oz)
–9	bat, frog
–8	mole, salamander, toad (5 oz)
–7	rat, weasel
–6	lizard, stoat, thrush (1.5 lbs)

–5	cuckoo, dove, eel, polecat, grass snake, hedgehog, partridge, rabbit
–4	adder, cockerel, crow, magpie, octopus, owl, raven (7 lbs)
–3	badger, carp, cat, duck, falcon, gull, hare, human baby, osprey, otter, pike
–2	beaver, dog, eagle, fox, goose, grouse, heron, human child, roe deer, salmon (30 lbs)
–1	adolescent human, ape, crane, gazelle, lynx, sheep, stork, swan, wild goat, wolf
0	adult, antelope, boar, deer, dolphin, pig (150 lbs)
+1	buck (male fallow deer), ibex, pony, seal
+2	bear, horse, lion, stag (male red deer) (700 lbs)
+3	aurochs, moose, shark, walrus, war horse
+4	elephant (3000 lb = 1.5 tons)
+5	killer whale
+9	humpbacked whale (64 tons)

Creatures of Non-Standard Size

You may wish to create creatures that are larger or smaller than the average for their type, or that have been affected by Muto Animal spells. This is a simple procedure: for every point of Size removed, subtract two from Strength (and therefore Damage Total), add one to Quickness (and therefore Initiative and Defense Totals), and decrease the damage range for each wound level by one

(minimum of one). Note that the creature's mass has halved, at least. Increasing Size has exactly the opposite effect.

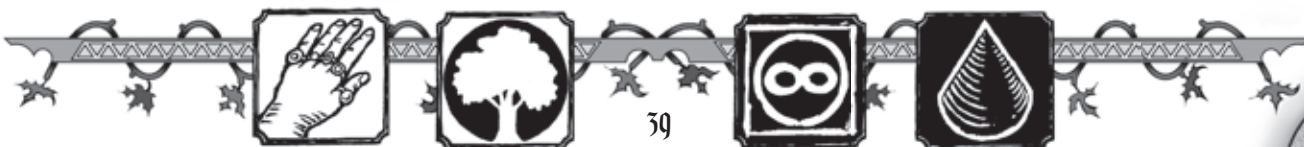
Note that these rules entail a minor change to the descriptions for the spells *Beast of Minuscule Proportions* and *Beast of Outlandish Size*, in that Initiative is increased or reduced (respectively) by one in addition to the listed effects.

Mental Characteristics of Creatures

TYPE	CUN	PER	PRE	COM
Clawed Beast	0	0	–2	–5
Hoofed Beast	–2	0	–4	–5
Bird	–1	+2	–1	–2
Fish	–3	–2	–5	–6

members of that species. Species Virtue and Flaws are not given for game balance

reasons, but rather to provide rules for the unique strengths and features of beasts.



Example Physical Characteristics of Creatures

TYPE OF CREATURE	SIZE	STR	STA	DEX	QIK	EXAMPLE
Small predator	-5	-7	0	+1	+5	Polecat
Large predator	-1	0	+3	-1	+1	Lynx
Rodent	-7	-12	+1	+3	+5	Rat
Small herbivore	-3	-7	+3	+2	+2	Hare
Large herbivore	0	+2	+2	0	+1	Boar
Songbird	-6	-12	0	+3	+7	Thrush
Predatory bird	-3	-6	0	+1	+6	Falcon
Reptile	-4	-8	+2	+2	+3	Adder
Large fish	-2	-4	+4	0	0	Salmon

When designing your own species, simply assign the Virtues and Flaws that describe the species the way you imagine it. It is recommended that a species have at least one point of Flaws for every three points of Virtues. All beasts get their species' Virtues and Flaws for free.

Exceptional beasts may also take individual Virtues or Flaws that set them apart from others of their kind. Any individual Virtues a beast takes must be balanced with individual Flaws, just as for human characters.

Personality Flaws are particularly appropriate for beasts; you may need to come up with new flaws of this type, and creatures can have more than one.

4. Basic Abilities

All creatures have the following basic Abilities according to their type:

TYPE	ABILITIES
Clawed Beast	Brawl 3 (bite or claw), Survival 3 (home terrain), Awareness 3 (food), Athletics 3 (running)
Hoofed Beast	Brawl 2 (dodging), Survival 3 (home terrain), Awareness 3 (predators), Athletics 4 (running)
Bird	Brawl 2 (dodging), Survival 3 (home terrain), Awareness 4 (food), Athletics 3 (flying)

Fish

Brawl 2 (dodging), Survival 3 (home terrain), Awareness 2 (food), Swim 5 (home terrain)

Qualities (see below) may add further Abilities to this list. Animals (at least, those with Cunning rather than Intelligence) cannot acquire experience points to improve their Abilities once they have reached adulthood, nor can they learn new Abilities. However, an intelligent being can provide a tamed beast with Teaching experience points using Animal Handling instead of Teaching; these points can be applied to current Abilities or conceivable new Abilities.

Unless modified by Qualities, all creatures have one Natural Weapon (usually either teeth, claws, or hooves) as well as either fur, feathers, or scales, which gives them a Protection of 0.

A young animal may not have all of the Qualities that it will as an adult, and has reduced scores in most Abilities.

5. Qualities

Qualities are features of the animal that affect its capabilities. Add any appropriate Qualities from the following list to any creature's basic profile, or make up your own. If any Quality grants an Ability that the creature already has, use the highest score, and choose whichever specialty seems most appropriate. Through Qualities, a creature may have one or more extra Fatigue levels. One

Suitable Virtues & Flaws for Beasts

VIRTUES: Berserk, Enduring Constitution, Ferocity (see insert), Improved Characteristics*, Lightning Reflexes, Long-Winded, Perfect Balance, Rapid Convalescence, Piercing Gaze, Reserves of Strength, Self-Confident, Tough

FLAWS: Clumsy, Fragile Constitution, Poor Eyesight, Poor Hearing, Fear, Noncombatant, Nocturnal, Reckless, Reclusive, Weakness, most Major Personality Flaws taken as Minor Flaws

* Large creatures require more Characteristic points because high value Characteristics are increasingly more expensive. A creature of Size +1 or smaller gets 3 Characteristic points from this Virtue as normal, a creature of Size +2 gets 6 Characteristic points, a creature of Size +3 gets 9 Characteristic points, and so on.

Ferocity

Minor Virtue, beasts only

Like companion and magus characters, a beast with this Virtue has Confidence points. However, its Confidence points may only be used in situations where its natural animal ferocity is triggered, such as when defending its den or fighting a natural enemy. For each instance of this Virtue, describe a situation that activates Confidence for the species in question, and take 3 Confidence Points and a Confidence Score of 1 to use when those circumstances are met.

extra Fatigue level grants an additional Winded level, two extra grant another Winded Level and another Winded Level, and so forth.

Accomplished Flyer: This bird is either a particularly powerful flier, or an acrobatic one. Grants Athletics 5 (flying); the creature must be capable of flight.

Aggressive: Add 1 to Cunning; grants Brawl 5 (natural weapons).

Ambush Predator: The beast lies in wait for its prey and catches it by surprise.

Beasts of Legend

Presented below are brief descriptions of 20 animals, concentrating mainly on the mythic characteristics ascribed to them. Descriptions of the listed Qualities for each beast are given in the Qualities section.

Asp: The asp keeps its mouth open, with venom steaming from its jaws to injure all kinds of animals. Like all serpents it is cold by nature, and its bite steals heat from its prey. There are many types of asp, each distinguished by its venom: the *dipsa* makes one die of thirst, the *ypnalis* sends its victims to sleep, and the *emorrosis* makes its victims sweat blood. The venom of the *seps* devours the body and bones of its prey. *Virtues & Flaws:* Lightning Reflexes, Infamous. *Qualities:* Ambush Predator, Loathsome Appearance, Slippery, Venomous. (pblegmatic with sanguine aspect)

Badger: A fierce creature, for its size. Their tenaciousness is legendary. Some are born to be the servants of the others, and clean the nests by lying on their backs and holding onto the soil, whilst being dragged out by others. *Virtues & Flaws:* Enduring Constitution, Ferocity (when cornered), either Pack Leader or Pack Mentality. *Qualities:* Aggressive, Grapple, Large Claws, Tireless. (melancholic)

Bear: The bear is a nurturing creature who gives birth to formless young, which are then licked into shape. Their heads are said to be feeble, with the greatest strength lying in the arms and loins. Their weakness is for honey. *Virtues & Flaws:* Ferocity (when injured), Improved Characteristics x2, Tough, Greedy (Minor), Reclusive. *Qualities:* Aggressive, Extra Natural Weapons (claws), Grapple, Hardy, Imposing Appearance, Large Claws, Pursuit Predator, Tough Hide. (melancholic with choleric aspect)

Boar: The boar is wild and rough, and signifies fierceness. His thoughts are wild and unruly, too. *Virtues & Flaws:* Berserk, Enduring Constitution, Ferocity (when cornered), Tough, Greedy, Wrathful (Minor). *Qualities:* Aggressive, Extra Natural Weapons (tusks), Hardy, Herd Animal, Tireless. (melancholic with choleric aspect)

Crow: Soothsayers declare that the crow knows the paths of treachery, and can predict the future. Some say that God entrusts his secrets to the crow. Crows are known for their acrobatic flight. *Virtues & Flaws:* Second Sight, Visions. *Qualities:* Accomplished Flyer, Crafty, Keen Vision, Mimicry, Vocal. (sanguine)

Dove: A simple fowl and free from malice. It is a dainty and graceful eater, taking only the finest of grain. It is pursued by hawks, and uses mirrored surfaces to watch for their approach. Some believe that in every flock of doves, one is

an angel. *Virtues & Flaws:* Premonitions, Pious (Minor). *Qualities:* Timid (sanguine)

Eagle: The eagle has such wonderful eyesight that nothing can be hidden from its gaze. When the eagle becomes old and its feathers dull, it flies to the height of heaven and burns off the dross of age until the feathers shine like fire. *Virtues & Flaws:* Lesser Immunity (blindness), Piercing Gaze, Proud (Minor). *Qualities:* Extra Natural Weapons (claws), Fast Flyer, Keen Vision, Pursuit Predator. (sanguine with choleric aspect)

Eel: Eels are born from mud. They are so slippery that the harder one holds on to them, the more quickly they slip away. *Qualities:* Aquatic, Slippery x2. (pblegmatic)

Fox: A fraudulent and ingenious animal who feigns death to attract the attention of curious birds for him to eat. He never runs in a straight line, but always by devious ways. *Virtues & Flaws:* Perfect Balance, Nocturnal. *Qualities:* Ambush Predator, Crafty, Good Jumper, Keen Sense of Smell. (choleric with sanguine aspect)

Goat, Wild: A goat's eyes are very acute. They are the best climbers of all creatures, and the most sure-footed. The blood of a he-goat is said to be able to dissolve even diamond due to its excessive heat. *Virtues & Flaws:* Perfect Balance, Long-Winded, Lecherous (Minor). *Qualities:* Aggressive, Extra Natural Weapons (horns), Hardy, Herd Animal, Keen Vision, Skilled Climber. (melancholic)

Hare: Light-footed and swift-running, the hare is timid, and puts no trust in itself, but rather in God. *Virtues & Flaws:* Ferocity (eluding predators); Pious (Minor). *Qualities:* Fast Runner, Good Jumper, Keen Sense of Smell, Timid. (melancholic with pblegmatic aspect)

Horse: The spirit of a horse is great, it exults in the battlefield and is excited to fight by the sound of a trumpet. Its virility is extinguished if its mane is cut. *Virtues & Flaws:* Improved Characteristics, Long-Winded, Fear (loud noises). *Qualities:* Imposing Appearance, Fast Runner, Good Jumper, Tireless. (choleric with melancholic aspect)

Lizard: The lizard goes blind with age, but its sight is restored by the rising sun. There are several types of lizard; the *salamander* is proofed against fire, the *newt* is the enemy of poisonous creatures, and the *botrox* has a frog's face. Most lizards are venomous, but their venom is stronger during the day when they are warm. If a lizard is cut in twain, the parts scramble around until they find each other again, and rejoin. *Virtues & Flaws:* Greater Immunity (fire or poison), Rapid Convalescence, Depressed, Poor Eyesight. *Qualities:* Camouflage, Slippery, Venomous. (pblegmatic with sanguine aspect)

Otter: The otter has a playful and frivolous disposition, but is nevertheless the enemy of crocodiles, which he climbs inside and eats. *Virtues & Flaws:* Ferocity (against water creatures), Puissant Swim, Carefree. *Qualities:* Amphibious, Pursuit Predator. (pblegmatic with melancholic aspect)

Partridge: The female partridge secures protective coloration by clever camouflage, hiding their eggs from predators and her husband, who is a disgusting creature consumed by lust. As a devoted mother, the partridge feigns injury to distract foxes from her young. *Virtues & Flaws:* Puissant Stealth, Fragile Constitution. *Qualities:* Camouflage, Timid. (sanguine)

Salmon: A wise fish who feeds on the nuts of the hazel bush. Some say that the salmon is the oldest creature on earth. *Virtues & Flaws:* Improved Characteristics, Intuition, Unaging, Compassionate (Minor). *Qualities:* Aquatic, Slippery. (pblegmatic)

Stag: Stags are a symbol of health; they are able to restore themselves from old age by eating venomous serpents. They have the keenest of hearing. They have kings, whom they obey. *Virtues & Flaws:* Improved Characteristics, Unaging, Higher Purpose (protect the herd), Dutybound. *Qualities:* Defensive Fighter, Extra Natural Weapons (antlers), Fast Runner, Good Jumper, Large Antlers, Sharp Ears. (choleric with melancholic aspect)

Swan: The swan is good luck to those who make their living on water. Swans have the sweetness of music. They are strong flyers and able to cross vast distances. *Virtues & Flaws:* Luck, Inspirational, Puissant Music, Humble. *Qualities:* Accomplished Flyer, Timid, Vocal x2. (sanguine with pblegmatic aspect)

Weasel: The weasel is a hunter of snakes and mice. Weasels are skilled in healing. *Virtues & Flaws:* Greater Purifying Touch (venom), Short Attention Span. *Qualities:* Aggressive, Fast Runner, Pursuit Predator, Skilled Climber. (choleric with sanguine aspect)

Wolf: Wolves are well known for their rapacity and keep their strength in their chest and jaws. They can live on anything — plants, soil, even the wind — but it is flesh they like the most. Should a wolf gaze upon its prey, the creature is paralyzed and struck dumb; if the prey sees the wolf first, it is the wolf who cannot run. *Virtues & Flaws:* Ferocity (against livestock), Improved Characteristics x2, Long-Winded, Compulsion (killing), Infamous. *Qualities:* Aggressive, Hardy, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Animal/Pack Leader, Pursuit Predator, Sharp Ears, Thick Fur, Vocal. (choleric)

Aging

If an animal is to be an important part of a saga (as an animal companion, for example), its response to aging should be considered. There are three things to track: the age at which aging begins, the adjustment to the aging roll due to age, and the number of aging rolls per year. A human, with an average lifespan of 50 years (ignoring lifestyle modifiers), begins aging at 35, adds one to the aging roll for every ten years, and makes one aging roll each year. The storyguide should decide upon the average lifespan of the creature and adjust these figures accordingly. Thus, a

creature with an average lifespan of ten years has a modifier of $50 / 10 = 5$. It therefore begins aging at $35 / 5 = 7$ years old, adds one to the aging roll for every $10 / 5 = 2$ years of age, and makes $1 \times 5 = 5$ aging rolls each year. If more than one aging roll is made each year, they should be spread evenly throughout the four seasons, with any excess occurring in Winter.

When deciding upon the average lifespan of a creature, strict biological adherence is not necessary in Mythic Europe. Most small animals have an average lifespan of under ten years.

Grants Stealth 4 (stalking prey) and **Hunt 4** (prey). The beast's specialization for **Brawl** changes to one of the beast's natural weapons. If it has successfully crept up on its prey, it automatically wins Initiative in the first round of combat and gains a +3 to its Attack Total for the first round only.

Amphibious: Grants **Swim 4** (home terrain). The beast can hold its breath for twice as long as normal.

Aquatic: Grants **Swim 5** (home terrain). The beast can breathe water.

Camouflage: Add +3 to all rolls to hide, whenever the creature is not moving.

Crafty: Raise **Cunning** to 0 (if currently negative), or add 1. This Quality may be taken more than once for exceptionally cunning animals.

Defensive Fighter: The creature only fights to defend itself. Grants **Brawl** (dodging) 4 and an extra **Fatigue** level.

Domesticated: The beast loses any **Survival** Ability that it might have, but gains 1 point of **Communication**, if currently negative.

Extra Natural Weapons: Gain an extra set of natural weapons, such as horns/antlers, teeth/tusks, claws, or hooves. Only one set of weapons may be used in each round of combat. This Quality may be taken more than once.

Fast Runner: Add +3 to all rolls involving running.

Fast Flyer: Add +3 to all rolls involving speed while flying; the creature must be capable of flight.

Good Jumper: Add +3 to all rolls involving jumping.

Grapple: The creature may make a grapple attack instead of a normal attack. This attack may only be employed against an opponent that is less than or equal to the creature's (Size + 1). See *Non-Lethal Combat* (ArM5, page 174) for rules on grappling. If the creature has another natural weapon (such as a bite), it may add its current **Grapple Strength** to its Attack Total in subsequent rounds, until the opponent breaks free. The creature must defend against any opponent outside the grapple with its **Grapple Defense** (see *Natural Weapons Table*, below).

Hardy: The creature is used to harsh conditions; it has a **Survival 5** (home terrain) and an extra **Fatigue** level.

Herd Animal: The creature is brave when with others of its own kind. When forced to fight as a group, herd animals temporarily gain the **Ferocity** Virtue, which they may use to stampede or escape whatever is threatening them as a group. These animals do not have the **Ferocity** Virtue when caught on their own, unless taken as a Virtue. For example, a stag might have the Virtue, whereas the deer in his herd have this Quality.

Imposing Appearance: The creature has a beautiful, majestic, or awe-inspiring appearance that appeals even to humans. Raise **Presence** to 0 (if negative), or increase by 1 otherwise. This Quality may be taken more than once for exceptionally beautiful or impressive creatures.

Keen Eyesight: Add 1 to **Perception** and +3 to all rolls involving eyesight.

Keen Sense of Smell: Add 1 to **Perception**, +3 to all rolls using the sense of smell, and +2 to all **Hunt** rolls.

Large Claws: The creature's claws are larger than average for a creature of its Size. Use the weapon statistics for **Large Claws** listed below.

Large Horns/Antlers: The creature's horns or antlers are larger than average for a creature of its Size. Use the weapon statistics for **Large Horns** listed below.

Large Teeth: The creature's teeth are larger than average for a creature of its Size. Use the weapon statistics for **Large Teeth** listed below.

Loathsome Appearance: The creature is so repulsive that its **Presence** drops to -6. However, this should be treated as a **Presence** of +3 if the animal makes any attempt to scare or intimidate an opponent.

Mimicry: The creature is capable of mimicking other noises, such as a human voice. Raise **Communication** to 0 (if negative) or increase it by 1. It does not understand the meaning of the sounds it makes, unless the creature has **Intelligence** rather than **Cunning**, in which case the creature acquires **Living Language 3**. Note that a magus shapechanged into a creature with this Quality cannot form the precise and complex sounds required for spellcasting.

Pack Animal: These creatures may fight as a **Trained Group** when a **Pack Leader** is present. If the **Pack Leader** is not present, they may still fight as an **Untrained Group**.

Pack/Herd Leader: Add 1 to **Communication** and grant **Leadership 5** (own species).

Pursuit Predator: The beast actively hunts for its prey, either tracking its scent or chasing it down. Grants **Hunt 4** (prey) and an extra **Fatigue** level. The beast's Specialization for **Brawl** changes to one of the beast's natural weapons.

Sharp Ears: Add 1 to **Perception** and +3 to rolls involving hearing.

Shell: The creature is encased in a protective shell. Grants a +4 to **Protection**, but the creature suffers a -3 to all rolls involving fast or nimble movement.

Skilled Climber: Add +3 to all rolls involving climbing.

Slippery: This creature has a +6 to Defense rolls against Grapple attacks. This Quality may be taken more than once; the bonus rises by +3 each additional time it is taken.

Spiny: The creature is covered in spines; these grant a +1 bonus to Protection. If any opponent strikes at the creature with a bite, claw, or fist attack, he inflicts damage as normal, but suffers +5 damage in return. Some creatures have poison spines (see *Venomous*, below), in which case the attacker's own Attack Advantage is used against itself to determine the success of the *Venom* counterattack only.

Timid: Subtract 1 from Presence; grant Stealth 4 (hiding) and Awareness 4 (predators). Timid creatures usually lack natural weapons.

Tireless: The creature gains two extra Fatigue levels.

Thick Fur/Thick Scales: Add 1 to Protection; this Quality stacks with the Tough Virtue and the Tough Hide Quality.

Tough Hide: Add 2 to Protection; this Quality stacks with the Tough Virtue and the Thick Fur Quality.

Venomous: One of the creature's attacks (usually the bite) also delivers venom into the wounds it causes. Compare the creature's Attack Advantage to the victim's Protection (not Soak). If the creature's Advantage is higher, then the victim suffers the effect of the venom, regardless of whether the bite inflicts an actual wound. The Ease Factor to avoid damage from venom varies from 3 to 15 (see *ArM5*, page 180).

Vocal: The creature can produce impressive vocalizations, such as a powerful roar or howl, beautiful birdsong, or the like. Communication is raised to 0 (if negative) or increased by 1: gain Music 3. This Quality may be taken twice for particularly impressive vocal ability, increasing Music to 5.

5. Combat Statistics

Combat Statistics are calculated as normal (see *ArM5*, page 171), using the Natural Weapons Table. Because com-

Natural Weapons Table

	INIT	ATK	DEF	DAM
Grapple	0	0	0	n/a
Dodge	0	n/a	0	n/a
Teeth	0	+3	+1	+1
Large Teeth	+0	+4	+1	+3
Tusks	+0	+4	+2	+5
Claw	-1	+2	+3	+2
Large Claws	0	+5	+3	+4
Horns	+1	+3	-1	+2
Large Horns/Antlers	+2	+3	+2	+3
Hooves	+2	+2	+2	+1

All natural weapons use the Brawl Ability. Strength, Load, and cost are not applicable.

Animal Creation Example: Bear

A bear is a Clawed Beast of Size +2. The storyguide wants it to be strong and tough, but perhaps a little slow and clumsy. He buys Improved Characteristics twice, granting 12 extra Characteristic points (because the bear is Size +2), for a total of 19. These are spent in the following way: Str +2, Sta +4, Dex +2, Qik +2. Once the adjustments for Size have been made, the Bear has Str +6 and Qik 0.

The storyguide gives the bear the Tough and Ferocity Virtues, and takes the Greedy and Reclusive Minor Flaws. He picks the following Qualities for the bear: Aggressive, Extra Natural Weapons (bite), Grapple, Pursuit Predator, Hardy, Imposing Appearance, Large Claws, and Tough Hide. The storyguide also decides to give the bear an extra Ability, Swim. The bear's final statistics look like this:

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per 0, Pre 0, Com -5, Str +6, Sta +4, Dex +2, Qik 0
Size: +2
Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Ferocity (when injured), Improved Characteristics (x2), Tough, Greedy (minor), Reclusive

Qualities: Aggressive, Extra Natural Weapons (bite), Fast Runner, Grapple, Pursuit Predator, Hardy, Imposing Appearance, Large Claws, Tough Hide

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Slothful +3, Aggressive +2

Reputations: Ferocious (local) 2

Combat:

Claws: Init 0, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +10

Teeth: Init 0, Attack +10, Defense +6, Damage +7

Grapple: Init 0, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Soak: +9

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (sprinting), Awareness 3 (prey), Brawl 5 (claws), Hunt 4 (deer), Survival 5 (foraging), Swim 3 (against the current)

bat totals are affected by Characteristics, these weapons may be used for creatures of all Sizes; a mouse and a cat have the

same basic statistics for their bite attacks, but the combat totals are very different.



Chapter Two

House Criamon

You are already immortal. Time forms a great Circle. Every life is repeated, identical in every breath, each cycle of time.

You will live this current life, invariably, forever.

Isn't that horrible?

— Criamon, the Founder

House Criamon's members want all people to escape from time. They believe time is circular, which means every person lives an infinite number of identical lives. Every moment of suffering repeats inevitably forever. They believe Criamon found a refuge outside time, and that he holds the way there open for magi. This does not suffice.

Criamon's followers do not accept that they are superior to other humans. Abandoning the rest of humanity to infinite suffering is so immoral as to prevent salvation. Criamon magi want to save everyone from time. Criamon was fond of teaching through posing riddles, and his final question was "How can we all escape the circle of time?" This question is the Enigma, and lies at the center of the thoughts, actions, and identity of Criamon magi.

Criamon's followers have dedicated themselves to finding the answer. They acquire knowledge, to formulate possible answers. They seek wisdom, to discern the quality of the information they have uncovered. The search for the Enigma's solution may take many centuries. During the interim, Criamon magi live as aptly as they can. They believe that a degraded spirit is unlikely to comprehend the answer.

Key Facts

Population: The house has 94 living members, divided into seven groups called clutches. A clutch consists of all the Criamon magi in a Tribunal. In the early years of the Order each clutch lived as a covenant, and followed a unique lifestyle and series of Initiations, called a path. In 1220, each clutch still has strong links to its original path, though all but one have members from other paths. Each clutch still has a covenant that is considered its center, but some of these are no longer House covenants. Some magi are wanderers: they are part of a clutch, but do not live with other Criamon magi. These magi, usually young, live in mixed House covenants and visit their clutches occasionally, to transmit their insights and receive instruction. Two paths have no clutch.

Domus Magna: The Cave of Twisting Shadows, in the Greater Alps Tribunal, contains many of the older members of the House. Its resident magi, 12 living and numerous dead, are also called the Central Clutch.

Prima: Muscaria, filia Demetrius. The Prima's role is to support her house-

mates by managing mundane tasks, so that they are not distracted from the quest for the Enigma. She is young, pragmatic, and dislikes obfuscations.

Favored Tribunals: The Greater Alps, but clutches are found in six others. Sections of the House are particularly comfortable in Muslim lands.

Motto: *The World Within is the World Without.* If members of the House ever come to a consensus on the motto's meaning, they will choose a new one.

Symbol: The Loop of the Infinite in the Eye of Time is the current symbol of the House. This abbreviates the older symbol, a chain forming a figure of eight around a pair of hands. These represented the bound wrists of the Greek goddess Ananke. The Greeks never worshiped Ananke, the goddess of inevitability, because she could not choose to grant favors to her worshipers. Some Criamon ghosts have scaly marks on their wrists: these represented the coils of Kronos, the Greek representation of time in serpent form.

The Founder

Criamon destroyed most of the records that described his past, instructing his followers to remember his words, but not his life. Many seekers have tried to discover Criamon's birthplace or pre-Hermetic lineage. Those ghosts who knew Criamon say that these distractions are precisely what the Founder intended to remove. The Founder was not, however, able to destroy records kept by House Bonisagus. These primarily concern his life in the brief period between his initial meeting with Trianoma and the First Tribunal.

Trianoma describes Criamon as an elderly man, little concerned with vanities. He enjoyed intellectual humor, particularly concerning the Greek philosophers. His followers were pacifists, and had retreated to a regio in the Alps to avoid the chaos that stimulated the creation of the Order. Criamon was a vegetarian. He tattooed his apprentices to spare them from the more painful investitures he had suffered as a boy.

Criamon was the first Founder to pass from the world, a handful of years after the First Tribunal. Many of his descendants left the Cave of Twisting Shadows to create study groups, called clutches, in distant areas. Each returned to the Cave to die or pass into Twilight. Many later Criamon magi follow this pattern.

What the House Believes

Criamon's beliefs follow those of an ancient Greek magus-philosopher called Empedocles. Empedocles investigated natural and mystical phenomena, and revealed many insights that eventually contributed to Hermetic magic. He was also a pioneer in many mundane fields of study, including ethics, medicine, and rhetoric. Most Criamon magi live a version of Empedocles's lifestyle. Magi from outside House Criamon, however, consider some of Empedocles's insights to be false.

Empedocles' contributions greatly assisted the study of magic in the ancient world. He demonstrated that air was not empty space. He established that the generative juices of parents contain tiny copies of their limbs. He explained how the senses worked. In the process of investigating the mechanics of sight, he discovered that moonlight was reflected sunlight. He also found that light took time to travel. Empedocles's most significant discovery was that all material objects are made of water, earth, air, and fire in differing proportions.

Empedocles believed it was vital that magi live morally. The capacity to do magic is not, for Criamon magi, a tool. It is the inevitable result of knowing the truth, and acting aptly. To pollute oneself with sinful action is to damage the soul, which is the part of the self that manipulates mystic forces. Criamon magi do not believe morality is flexible, because they can chart the degree to which spiritual pollution impairs the Gift.

The need to live well forces magi to be concerned for other humans. Galen named Empedocles as the originator of medicine in Italy. Aristotle claimed Empedocles invented rhetoric. Empedocles, for part of his life, wandered as a soothsayer, and invented these fields of research to allow him to cure plagues and oppose tyrants. Criamon magi usually lack Empedocles's Gentle Gift, so they must be much more subtle about their good works.

Most non-Criamon magi think Empedocles was delusional. He played a pivotal role in the development of at least six of the Arts, but two of his other claims are too fantastic to be true. These are that time is circular, and that immortal spirits descend into the material world at the start of each cycle of time.

THE CIRCLE OF TIME

Empedocles believed time continues forever in cycles. He saw this as a guarantee of immortality and ascent to godhood. Criamon magi view circular time as an unguarded prison, from which they should mastermind a jailbreak. Each view assumes that changes in the comparative strength of two opposing forces

Famous Magi

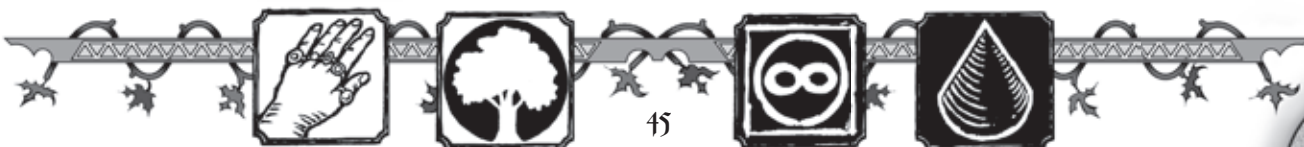
Juliastra, as the successor of the first Founder to pass from office, was the first Prima of any House. She evangelized the House's beliefs and rounded out its knowledge of the Arts.

Vederis wrote *The Travels of Fedoso*, a classic work of esoteric lore.

Abdkypris discovered the links between his House's beliefs and Sufism.

drive the cycle of time. The forces are harmony, which promotes cohesion, and strife, which promotes separation. The Art of Creo reflects harmony. The Art of Perdo reflects strife. The Art of Vim, and magic itself, reflects the energy released as harmony yields to strife. Most Criamon magi expect harmony to continue to yield to strife for at least the next few thousand years, and possibly for far longer.

Time is a circle so it has no beginning, but for the sake of explanation, imagine that the universe begins as an enormous sphere of undifferentiated matter. This sphere is bound together by the force of harmony. The House calls this state of the universe the Spharios. Time begins when strife, the force that separates, comes to the Spharios, bringing change. Strife, and change, intensifies over time. The Spharios divides into the four elements. As strife increases, the four elements take thousands of years to mix into increasingly elaborate patterns, creating everything. Simple life then appears as roaming, independent organs. Over time, these organs merge, creating complex organisms. The elaboration of the universe, and the life within it, continues for innumerable thousands of years, until the environment becomes too random to support life, and life forms become too incoherent to remain whole. Life is extinguished. The universe descends into a churning maelstrom of complete strife: the whirl of chaos. Harmony then acts on the whirl. It draws matter into differentiated lumps. Things become increasingly discrete, and life appears as environments become able to support it. Over epochs, each generation is fractionally more simple and pure. Eventually, the environment



Glossary

Adulteration: A creature or place created from the psychic detritus of a magus, particularly one who has entered Final Twilight.

Aptness: Moral correctness.

Avenue: The way a Criamon magus earns a Mystery Virtue is called that Virtue's avenue.

Alam: A mystical state so far separated from normal human life as to be connected to the four realms only in untested ways.

Axis Magica: The regio in which the Cave of Twisting Shadows lies.

Clutch: Originally, the study group for a path. Now, the Criamon magi of a certain Tribunal.

Enigma: Criamon's final puzzle for his descendants to solve: "How can we all escape the circle of time?"

Gorgiastics: Magi who have left House Criamon because they no longer share its beliefs.

Harmony: The force that attracts. One of the two great forces of the universe.

Hypostasis, The: The place outside the universe that Criamon magi aspire to reach. Loosely called "Twilight" by many other magi.

Immortals: In House Criamon's cosmology, a perfect race that fell into the material world. Magi, or perhaps all people, are reincarnated immortals.

Inspirato: The ocean of magical energy that washes over the Earth, permitting spellcasting.

Path: A field of study, a set of values, and the lifestyle they create. Each path grants different Mystery Virtues.

Repose: What Criamon magi do instead of dying. Varies by path.

Spharios: The sphere of perfect harmony. The universe at the extreme of harmony in the Circle of Time.

Station: A place of distinctly increased wisdom on a path, represented by the acquisition of a Mystery Virtue.

Stigma: A mark on the skin, like a tattoo, that represents a piece of spiritual development.

Strife: The force that divides. One of the two great forces of the universe.

an immortal again was naive. Empedocles's contrition and suffering cannot change the cyclical nature of time. In the next cycle of time, Empedocles will not remember his mistakes from this one. When the time of his cannibalism comes around again, he will sin. He does not know not to. This must inevitably split the Spharios and cast the immortals into time. The immortals will live another ninety thousand years in pain, for every cycle of time, for an infinite number of cycles. There is no way, in Empedocles's cosmology, for the history of the universe to change.

All that is known of Criamon's master is that he attempted to improve his student through two decades of torturous rituals. The suffering and degradation Criamon experienced magnified his consciousness and conscience, but made the first part of his life almost unendurably painful. Criamon knew he would be tortured for two decades per cycle, for an infinite number of cycles. He decided he wanted to escape, and he wanted to take everyone else with him.

Criamon found a refuge outside the circle of time. His followers call this refuge the Hypostasis. Most other magi call it Twilight, after the process that carries them there. Criamon magi believe that before the Founder discovered his refuge, Warped magi simply died.

Criamon remains partially within time, holding the Twilight road open. This is arduous, and Criamon's strength must eventually fail. By posing the Enigma, Criamon asked his followers to rescue him from his self-imposed duty. Criamon suffers to allow his followers to escape time, while they work to free him from his labor.

THE HYPOSTASIS

The Hypostasis, also called Twilight or the Alam of Repose, is whatever lies outside time. Criamon assured his followers that it is a wonderful place and that he is guaranteeing their ability to find final rest there. Criamon magi believe that those who fall into Final Twilight enter the fringes of Hypostasis. If they have impure spirits, they require lengthy and painful adjustment before they can

ceases to be sufficiently differentiated to support life. All things are absorbed back into the Spharios. After a period of timelessness, strife comes again to the Spharios. This cycle continues forever. Each cycle matches every previous and future cycle identically.

THE FALL OF THE IMMORTALS AND THE NEED FOR APT ACTION

Empedocles believed that the Spharios had fallen into strife because he, personally, had sinned grievously. During the time of perfect harmony, a race of spiritual beings inhabited the Spharios. One of these immortals, eventually reincarnated as Empedocles, had taken on claws and eaten meat. He had committed murder, and cannibalism.

As a result, the underlying laws of the universe, which the House calls Necessity, forced the immortals into the cycle of time for three eternities. The immortals

were reborn in base forms. Through millennia of reincarnation and suffering, each could regain purity. This would end strife, reintegrate the universe, and recreate the Spharios.

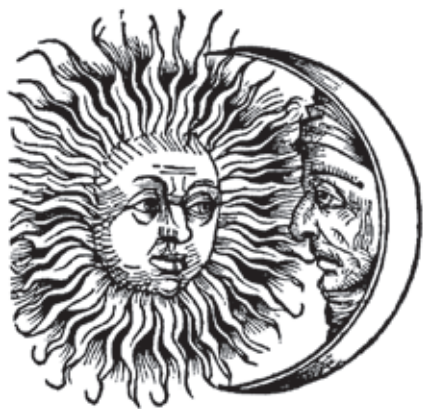
Empedocles believed that the process of expiation would finish sooner if the immortals lived in ways that did no further harm. He was a vegetarian, because he believed people regularly eat animals that are reincarnations of their relatives. He refused to engage in sex, because he thought it wrong to create more people, who must suffer. Empedocles was also a pacifist, and a democrat. Empedocles refused the kingship of his home town, setting up a democratic council that saw to the needs of the people instead.

THE NEED TO ESCAPE AND THE ENIGMA

Criamon believed Empedocles's cosmology, but thought his goal of becoming



enter it fully. This is one of the motivators for ethical behavior by Criamon magi. Criamon magi call those who are believed to live in the Hypostasis the "tangential magi."



THE COUNTER-CYCLICAL ALAM

If time is circular, all time exists simultaneously to an observer outside the circle. This means that the current universe, which is sliding toward the whirl of chaos, exists simultaneously with the time of the universe when harmony is increasing. Some Criamon magi claim to have traveled to the counter-cyclical alam. They are not correct, but there is no way to prove that without being outside time.

The majority of characters who claim to have visited the counter-cyclic alam have done so during uncontrolled Twilight experiences. A few other magi claim to have spoken to or combated creatures from the counter-cycle. Those who doubt the existence of a counter-cyclical alam suggest that the travel experiences magi report are Twilight-induced hallucinations, and the creatures that seem counter-cyclic are adulterations (psychic debris, described below). The mental detritus of older Criamon magi, they suggest, deludes younger Criamon magi.

Criamon magi differ on what the counter-cyclical alam is. Some say it is utterly mundane, lacking the strife necessary for magic. Others suggest that in the counter-cyclical alam, it is easier to create than destroy. They posit that the alam of Forms is the counter-cycle close to the reformation of the Spharior, which makes the Magic realm counter-cyclical. Some

Empedocles Was Sometimes Wrong

In the standard *Ars Magica* setting, Empedocles's disputed conclusions are wrong. Time is not cyclical. There never was a Spharior. There is no race of reincarnating immortals. In general, when the cosmology given in this chapter contradicts that given in other *Ars Magica* supplements, that is because the Criamon are wrong.

Even so, Criamon magi believe Empedocles's conclusions. Spurred by their logical consequence — that time is a prison — they have sought strange states of magical consciousness in their

effort to escape. These researches have yielded mystical abilities unique to their House. The Criamon create a coherent cosmology out of their insights, but use their House's beliefs as its basis. To an omniscient observer the Criamon are the most enlightened magi, and yet simultaneously the most self-deluded. They do not have the Delusion Flaw because there is no way for their error to be demonstrated within the usual game setting.

In your own saga, however, the Criamon magi might be right.

Cosmology for Criamon Magi

Criamon magi do not all agree on a single cosmology, but the view presented in this chapter is typical. Magi from other Houses, it should be noted, do not agree with Criamon beliefs. The House's view on how the universe really works colors the reactions of its members to the representatives of the realms that they encounter during stories.

Criamon magi have encountered many strange states of being, and conjectured the existence of many more. They use the term alam for mystical states that are so divorced from the mundane world that their alignment to the four realms is debatable. Two alams, the Hypostasis and counter-cyclical alam, play fundamental roles in Criamon cosmology.

suggest Faerie is counter-cyclical. Some suggest that they are in the time of rising harmony already, or that there is but a single universe which oscillates between extremes, which complicates the discussion enormously. The counter-cycle of time should last around 45,000 years, so it may contain many strange environments.

THE REALM OF MAGIC

Members of House Criamon believe that magic flows about the Earth in an intangible ocean, swirling in a gorgeous tide about the Axis Magica. This ocean, which they call the Inspirato, seeps naturally from the Earth, but eddies under astrological influences. Magic pools in places where it has eroded away the mundanity of the Earth, where great magic has been performed, or where creatures that feed from the ocean have dwelt. These are

auras. Sometimes the Inspirato concentrates into objects, creating vis.

Empedocles claimed that he, flung from harmony, had laid his allegiance in strife. Magic is the power of strife, channeled to the will of the caster. This is why it is possible to destroy with magic, but not create without consuming vis. Every magical act draws the universe away from harmony and brings the extinction of life closer. Criamon magi plan to leave time before that happens, and take everyone else with them, so they don't consider using magic to be evil.

The realm of Magic and the Hypostasis, Criamon magi claim, are not the same place. Criamon stated that the Hypostasis is the structure that cradles the universe; it is therefore outside the universe. The Magic realm, as a regulated place interacting with the mundane world, is likely to dissolve in the whirl. Many magi find it easiest to reach the



Hypostasis using magic. Some theorists from other Houses claim this is because the two are not truly separate — that the Hypostasis is like the Far Lands of Arcadia, the Highest Heaven, or the Deepest Hell.

THE REALM OF FAERIE

Some Criamon magi believe that Faerie is a reflection of the mortal world, others believe it is the counter-cyclical alam. If it reflects the mundane world, then it might not be worth investigating, since whatever it contains is already in the mortal world. Other Criamon think Faerie is not a reflection, or that a simplified derivative might express fundamental principles more clearly, so they study it.

HELL

Some Criamon magi worry that they caused Hell, and others that they are its residents. Superficially, Hell is full of little, evil demigods who want to keep people inside time. Criamon magi believe they reincarnate eternally, so if the House cannot leave time prior to the chaotic churning of matter just before the extinction of life, then they must take on forms that can live in that environment. Demons might, therefore, be future lives of magi. Perhaps only the most enlightened will escape time in this cycle, and Hell, forming as the whirl approaches, fills with the spirits that could not be saved this iteration. They might strike out against magi in envy, or to seek vengeance for being abandoned.

HEAVEN

Criamon magi are divided in their opinion of Jesus. Some are Muslims or Christians, and accept him as a prophet or as the son of the creator of the universe who has come with a way to step outside time. Others feel he is a tangential

immortal that can take his followers to the time of the Spharior, but not permanently. The Christian holy book says that the Devil must be loosed again, thousands of

and develop their own abilities, in the hope of discovering hidden aptitudes that will make escape easier. They also consider the nature of the bonds that hold humans within time and investigate places and mental states where the mundane constraints do not apply. A body of proven techniques based on House Criamon's understanding of these underlying facts, collectively called "Enigmatic Wisdom," guides the acquisition of further information.

Apt Action

Criamon magi believe that the universe will fall into chaos less quickly if magi live aptly. Most Criamon magi follow Criamon and Empedocles in their interpretation of what lifestyle is apt. They believe that:

- Magi are not a superior class of human. All suffering is the fault of Empedocles, and the other immortals who did not restrain him. If the peasants are also of the immortal race, then they were, and will be, peers in the perfect alam. Every magus has spent a thousand lives in the oyster bed, the leaf litter, and the soil: how can peasants be contemptible?
- Time is circular, and magi have a duty to assist others to escape. Most young magi do this by assisting older magi to complete their research.
- Worship is fruitless. Many magi believe they were pagan gods in previous lives and, having lived correctly, were reborn as magi. The pagan gods are trapped in the circle of time, they simply share a more comfortable estate of victimhood with beetles and shellfish. This is why the goddess whom Criamon use for their symbols is the one unable to assist humans. The Divine is a contentious issue among Criamon magi.
- The pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and power are distractions or temptations to corruption. It is wrong to steal, which means that the feudal system is wrong.

Practices & Beliefs

For centuries, the House has continued the task set for it by Criamon: seeking a better way to escape the cycle of time. Criamon magi examine the universe, because they need to understand how the prison of time is constructed and what tools are available to aid escape. They probe the mystical potential of humans,



- It is wrong to cause suffering, and wrong to seek it for yourself. Violence is only permissible in self-defense, and even then trickery and entrapment are preferable to wounding.

Most Criamon magi find their powers diminished if they fail to live aptly. This is detailed in the paths section, at the end of the chapter.

Riddles

At the beginning of her apprenticeship, each Criamon apprentice is given fifteen riddles, and their obvious solutions. The apprentice ponders them, while acquiring other skills, during her fifteen years of study. The magus develops a deep understanding of how each riddle is linked to its answer, and how the riddles and answers resonate with each other. This allows the magus to develop the House's mindset. This mindset, called Enigmatic Wisdom, allows the magus to participate in the search for the answer to the Enigma.

Most riddles have a shallow answer, which can be encapsulated in a brief sentence or word. The shallow answer is sometimes humorous, but need not be. The point of studying a riddle is to go beyond that simple answer, and illuminate the many deep connections that make the shallow answer true. After this examination of the riddle is complete, the magus integrates it with the other riddles she has solved, into a worldview filled with subtle connections between apparently unrelated objects, events, and symbols.

The word "riddle" has a second meaning that illuminates the function of Criamon puzzle sayings. A riddle is, literally, a sieve: to riddle is to shake things so that they separate into valuable and useless elements. Criamon riddles help magi learn to enter a mental state that allows them to sift experiences and find those which illuminate the Enigma. Enigmatic Wisdom is life, riddled.

An apprentice who is ready to become a magus is asked the Riddle of the Magus. The Riddle of the Magus varies between teachers, but usually asks the

apprentice to identify the correct path, for her, going forward. Examples include "What is apt?" "What lies before your feet?" or "What must you leave behind?" Superficially, the apprentice cannot fail, because any answer is acceptable. This is because Criamon magi do not ask this Riddle of those unready for life as a magus. Even in this case, there are shallow and deep answers. The shallow answer is whatever the new magus says, the deep one is whatever she does, for the rest of her life.

Some shallow answers to the Riddle of the Magus indicate a desire to follow one of the traditions of mystical study within the House. These traditions are called the paths, and a few are described in detail at the end of this chapter. Any character with a score of one in Enigmatic Wisdom can name the paths, describe what their adherents believe, and explain how they aid the quest for the answer to the Enigma. Some apprentices delay their choice of path indefinitely, and while indecisive, engage in practices they will later discard as inapt.

The House's strange method for acknowledging new magi — which the pacifistic Criamon do not call a Gauntlet, as other Houses do — is a formality. It comforts the other Houses, who often prefer a sharp division between those protected by the Code, and those owned by magi. All who have sufficient wisdom to aid the House are welcome to do so, and have the same status. Those who find their wisdom insufficient for the challenges they face may resume study with a master, and this causes no embarrassment.

ROLLS FOR RIDDLES

Players not wishing to roleplay composing or answering riddles can simulate these activities with Ability rolls. (Though such players might also prefer to play magi from other Houses, instead.) They roll Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom, against an Ease Factor that varies between three and 25, depending on the complexity of the riddle. If composing a riddle, the magus knows the text immediately, taking a few moments to convert his idea into

Enigmatic Wisdom For Magi From Other Houses

Magi from outside the House may study for a year with a magus, or one of the ghosts at the Cave of Twisting Shadows, and gain the Enigmatic Wisdom Ability, with a score of one. The Primus may offer those who complete such a course of study membership in House Criamon, if they desire it. The House has occasionally offered membership to those unfairly ejected from other Houses, regardless of their degree of Enigmatic Wisdom, to protect them from the death penalty that usually follows living a year without a House. The descendants of these magi eventually develop Enigmatic Wisdom, but a few current Criamon magi lack tattoos and do not understand the riddles. Muscaria uses them as informal ambassadors and investigators.

expressible form. If answering a riddle, the magus knows the shallow answer immediately, and grasps the deep meaning of the Riddle after about a year of occasional consideration.

A magus who has completed his apprenticeship is given a riddle by his master, which he ponders while continuing along his path. When the magus feels that he has exhausted the usefulness of the riddle, represented by gaining a Mystery Virtue (called a station by this House) or an increase in Enigmatic Wisdom score, the magus returns to his clutch and is given a new riddle. If the answer he has found is novel, it is sent to the Central Clutch.

Over the centuries, answers accrue. This lowers the Ease Factor of Enigmatic Wisdom rolls. No character will live long enough to notice this effect, unless the House makes a major advance in the quest for the answer, but magi consulting books of ancient riddles will find them interesting, but not particularly illuminating. This is one of the reasons that Criamon magi do not venerate age: the wisdom of the past is imperfect, or the answer would be known.



Examples of Criamon Apprentice Riddles

The deep answer to a Criamon riddle reflects a spiritual state that has blossomed in the magus, not the quickness of his mind or the eloquence of his speech. There are many correct, shallow answers to any riddle, but answers illuminate truths; they are more than an opinion. The following answers are, therefore, not definitive, but illuminate the simplest of the House's beliefs.

Abdkypris was traveling with his apprentice, and they stopped for the night in an ancient churchyard. Abdkypris found the child weeping at the grave of a married couple, long dead. Their grog asked "Why is he crying with joy?" What did Abdkypris answer?

"Anticipation." Time is circular: the boy had recognized one of the lives he had lived in the past, and so must live again in the future. He was overjoyed to know that he had met his lover, lived with her for decades, and must again, an infinite number of times.

An apprentice broke an egg in a saerie glade and used the vis within it to heal a damaged tree. The egg's mother came to him and said "Heal my egg, as you did the tree!" He said he could not heal all of her eggs. She asked "Why?"

"Water flows down hill." The eggs were the only vis source available, so it would have been necessary to break another egg to heal the first. The universe is falling into disorder. In the time of rising harmony, the opposite will be true.

Criamon and Jerbiton were having a meal during the First Tribunal, and discussing theology. Criamon passed Jerbiton a bowl of wheat

porridge and a glass of beer. "Have some of your angels and demons, Jerbiton!" he said. "Why are you laughing?" asked Flambeau.

"Time." Angels and demons differ because, following the Creation, some angels fell into moral decay. Demons are like fermented angels.

Jerbiton wanted to have demons identified as an enemy of the Order, in the Code of Hermes. Criamon agreed. Tyrtalus said "Angels too!" Criamon agreed. Flambeau proposed that Islamic wizards be included, and Criamon said "Ah, no. The two things are not the same at all." Two," asked Flambeau "not three?"

"Two." Angels and demons lead circular lives, that end and begin together in the moments of absolute strife and harmony. Islamic magi might persist outside time as immortals.

Trianoma wanted Criamon to join her new Order, but he thought she would never understand him. She convinced him by sending a flower, and a message, every day for a year. When he agreed, she told Bonisagus what she had done. He asked "What message did you send with each flower?"

"Happy birthday." Trianoma's flowers were a demonstration of respect for Criamon's belief that he had been reborn innumerable times.

A merchant came to the magician Demetrius and said, "If I knew the future, I could make a great deal of money. What happens after today?" Demetrius was lost for words, but his apprentice looked solemn and said "What did we tell you last time?"

"Everything: even today."

Criamon magi have intricate skin markings that represent their progress toward enlightenment. Each design, called a stigma, represents the magus having understood a vital element of the Enigma, or his role in the search for the answer. The first stigma usually appears when he answers the Riddle of the Magus. The magus does not choose the appearance of his marks, although the player does.

New stigmata appear, and older ones move and become more complex, as the magus absorbs transformative ideas (or, in game terms, increases his Enigmatic Wisdom score), or completes tasks that draw him along his mystery path. This includes learning the Inner Mysteries of any group, beginning or completing the training of an apprentice, seeking or binding a familiar, or producing a great work of the Art. A magus's stigmata represent the character's history and true nature. Stigmata are inevitably honest, but only other Criamon magi can interpret them accurately.

A Criamon magus's stigmata have no mechanical cause and cannot be removed, even by magic. If a magus loses a stigma, for example by suffering burns that destroy that patch of skin, the stigma regenerate, or migrate so that the burn forms part of their pattern. On rare occasions, a magus's stigmata have migrated to a familiar, talisman, or apprentice. Magi shifted into other shapes retain their stigmata in the new shape.

Certain symbols repeat across the bodies of the House's members: the most common is the loop of the infinite. This represents the prison of cyclical time. It appears on the forehead of each Primus. Criamon magi who have entered Twilight often develop loop marks on their wrists. This shows that they have broken their manacles, if only for a moment. Each path has stigmatic symbols, which are described in detail in their sections.

Other forms of body modification find temporary popularity in the House, but most members think Criamon's teachings forbid them. Criamon was branded repeatedly by his teacher, and suffered other physical mutilations. Criamon magi still know how to do these things, but have been told that these external interventions offer only power, not wisdom,

RIDDLES PREDICT CONFLICT

Many Criamon magi face difficult situations that suit their riddles perfectly. Criamon magi believe this providential luck reflects the guidance of tangential magi who dwell outside time. An argumentative Tyrtalus magus once put the counter case succinctly: "If you spend all of your time thinking about beer, then everything reminds you of beer." He was annoyed when "What reminds you of beer?" became a Criamon teaching riddle.

Stigmata

The House's view of the human body is complex. The body is the vehicle for the mind. The body is the medium that expresses The Gift. The body represents the universe. The skin, where the magus and the universe touch, is an avenue of expression for the accord between the world within and the world without. Marks on the body are more than decoration, because the body is more than meat.



and so they are a distraction that should not be pursued. A few Criamon magi do not heed this prohibition, because the House does not enforce it. Their apprentices are more disfigured, and psychologically damaged, than usual for a Criamon magus. One example is the current Prima, whose child-like appearance came about through a form of magical body modification.

Body Modification Rules

Magi from many Houses understand these techniques, but Criamon magi are those most likely to use them to modify themselves and their apprentices.

TATTOOS

Magi use the term *stigma* for both tattoos and the mystical markings of the Criamon magi, but understand that they are different classes of thing. Criamon stigmata cannot be enchanted items, but any magus can have ink tattoos that perform magic.

Tattoos do not have wide favor in Mythic Europe. The Book of Leviticus states that having tattoos is a sin, and the Romans used them to mark slaves and criminals. Pilgrims, however, are beginning to popularize tattoos. A cross inside the wrist, made by the Coptic priests of Jerusalem, is seen as proof that a pilgrim completed his journey.

The typical Criamon magus, covered in designs, is thought to be a sinner deformed by his own acts. A single visible tattoo is sufficient to earn the Disfigured flaw, being more ugly than a scar to most medieval people, since it cannot be an accident. Some young Criamon magi are not Disfigured, though, because their marks have appeared in locations usually concealed by clothing.

OTHER MODIFICATIONS

Head binding causes the most common disfigurement in the House, excluding

Stigmata for Outsiders

Players interested in religious matters may be aware that the term "stigmata" is also used for the miraculous appearance of the wounds of Christ upon the bodies of the faithful. This has yet to occur in Mythic Europe: the first documented case will be in 1222 in England, if your saga follows real world history. The first famous case, Saint Francis of Assisi, develops in 1224. His wounds are unusual, in that they are lumps of flesh on his hands that take the shape of nail heads on one side of the hand, and sharp nail points on the other. Later, bleeding wounds become the usual form of stig-

mata. Unlike Criamon stigmata, these hurt and often smell like jasmine.

Magical stigmata, like those possessed by House Criamon's members, sometimes appear on magi from other Houses. Each stigma usually represents a single, terrible incident that influences the magus for the remainder of his life. Rarely, Gifted children develop stigmata before the Order discovers them. One form, blotches that look like bruising, sometimes appears in newborns. The House prizes these children as apprentices.

Enchanting Tattoos

The rules given here are for simple tattoos used as enchanted items. *The Mysteries Revised Edition* gives an alternative system using a Minor Virtue called Inscription on the Soul, which is too lengthy for repetition. It allows magi to craft their own bodies into talismans. Members of the House may learn Inscription on the Soul from other Criamon magi, or from the ghosts at the Cave of Twisting Shadows. It is common only among House members following the Path of the Body, described later.

A tattoo has a base material score of 2, multiplied by a size modifier. A tiny

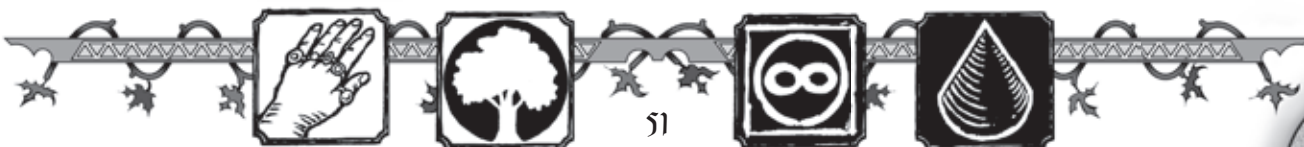
tattoo has a multiplier of one. A tattoo the size of the magus's palm or forehead has a multiplier of two. A tattoo that entirely covers a limb, or the scalp, has a multiplier of three. A tattoo that entirely covers the back or front of the torso has a multiplier of four. A tattoo is designed as personal magic, so it does not cause Warping. Tattoos may gain material bonuses by use of unusual inks, or by depictions of mystically resonant subjects. With minor modifications, these rules also describe the effects of mystical branding.

stigmata. A tight bandage is tied around the head of a child, to warp his developing skull. A magus whose skull has been altered during infancy has an aptitude for a single path symbolically linked to that particular skull shape. This acts as a +3 bonus for his Initiation Script for the first station (Mystery Virtue) of that path. The commonest skull shapes, the cone and double-lobed, suit the Path of Seeming and the Path of the Body respectively. The paths are described in detail at the end of this chapter. Other rituals of modification, for example castrations, breaking of bones, and severing patterns of finger and toe joints, have similar effects. Most Criamon find these modifications distasteful.

Life as a Criamon Magus

Individual Criamon magi have many goals. These include:

- Living an apt life. This can lead magi into stories that require them to solve personal problems.
- Meddling with mundane events so that their outcomes are apt. Criamon magi are democrats and believe people should help each other, but are also pacifists. Warriors rule Mythic Europe, and monsters infest it, so Criamon magi must act delicate-



Repose: House Criamon's Alternative to Death

Every path of Initiation into the House's Mysteries ends at a place where the magus ceases to strive. This is a point of blessedness and bliss. A conundrum recognized by many Criamon magi is this: to become so wise as to deserve repose, a magus must develop such compassion for other people that he cannot leave them to suffer. Most magi hold off repose so that they may aid others in the quest for the answer.

The different paths that members of the House follow end in different paradisaical states. The repose of each path is described at the end of that path's section, as are the powers granted to those who stand at the threshold of repose, choosing to abstain from bliss. These powers are simple but sweeping. Troupes desiring more limited and detailed powers may prefer those found for immortal magi in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*.

The Gorgiastics

Those magi who can no longer support the philosophy of the House cease to be members. It is obvious when a magus ceases to support the quest for the answer: their stigmata reflect that rejection, and they vanish entirely in many cases. Criamon magi call those who have rejected the Enigma Gorgiastics. They are named for a student of Empedocles who, turning against his master's teaching, posited that nothing existed, and even if something did exist, you could not understand it, and even if you could understand it, you could not communicate about it.

Criamon magi are generally non-violent, and believe the House's secrets are self-occluding, so those who wish to leave the House are treated civilly. Under Hermetic law the punishment for a year of orbushood – the crime of not having a House – is usually death, so the House avoids renouncing magi until they have arranged adoption into another House. Criamon magi have sometimes introduced young magi who wish to leave the House to others who have already left, who may act as mentors and sponsors.

There is no structured group of ex-Criamon magi, although many have informal contacts with each other, and the House. Most Gorgiastics are found in Houses Ex Miscellanea and Jerbiton. A Gorgiastic magus may return to House Criamon at any time, if he regains his desire to grapple with the Enigma. The stigmata of such characters return, changed by their unusual and difficult experiences.

Final Transmission

Transmission is the process through which a magus passes what he has learned on to other members of the House. Some Criamon magi report what they have found to their clutchmates. Others train skilled apprentices, or write books on their specialties. Some members of the House choose not to rest in death so that they can ensure the perfection of their transmission. Of these options, spectral tending of the House is considered most laudable, but many magi are unable to resist the reward that awaits them in the Hypostasis.

Some magi, fading into their path's repose, have perfect transmissions. In this instant, the magus's wisdom is encapsulated into a place or object, from which other Criamon magi may study, by contemplation. The covenants built in these Magical auras seem destined to play out tales that are allegories to the insights of the magus. Places of perfect transmission can be designed using rules given in *Covenants* Chapter 7: Libraries. As a simple alternative, treat the place as if it were an excellent book the magus wrote in the instant of entering Twilight, which a student reads by spending time meditating in its presence.

PERFECT TRANSMISSION SITE EXAMPLE

One site, particularly popular in the House, was created by the transmission of the Maga Niobe, who longed to be Prima but was never selected by the communal vision. As she faded into Twilight, a small pond appeared around her feet. A magus with Enigmatic Wisdom who meditates at this spring for a season can study from it. Use the rules for studying a pawn of vis in a standard laboratory, with no possibility of experimentation. The magus may study any Art in which he lacks the knowledge to train an apprentice (a score of 5). Several magi may use the pool simultaneously, but all must study the same Art in a given season. The area about the pool has a Magical aura of 1.

ly to aid others while remaining inconspicuous.

- Supporting other members of the House. Criamon magi maintain close connections to the other members of the House in their Tribunal, and to their masters. They aid these people, or their friends, when trouble comes.
- Training an apprentice and taking a familiar. Criamon magi believe in reincarnation, so they see these acts as helping other immortals edge closer to magushood.
- Hunting adulterations. Magi generate these embodiments of confusion, and Criamon magi destroy them. They are described in greater detail later in the chapter.
- Developing the capacity to engage in research, through magical study or other training. Magi developing themselves act much like other magi, acquiring resources and using them, but have a different motive from their sodales in other Houses.
- Exploring strange places, investigating unusual magical effects, and studying odd mystical creatures. Criamon magi know that the House has already investigated many sites. Dangerous and weird places, newly discovered, offer the promise of novel insights that could aid the House.
- Following a path to gain its wisdom and Mystery Virtues. The paths are detailed at the end of the chapter.
- Passing on wisdom acquired. This is called transmission.

Adulterations: Lingering Problems

Adulterations are impurities from the minds of magi, made solid and real by mystical forces. Criamon magi believe these creatures are usually created when magi fade into Final Twilight. They also attribute adulterations to poor Twilight experiences, magical trauma, the death of apprentices, and the loss of familiars. Whatever a specific adulteration's cause, each reflects an unresolved psychological issue, and is best destroyed by resolving that issue.

Members of House Criamon believe that when magi ascend into Final Twilight, they have moments of self-realization and definition. They shed all of those parts of themselves that they do not wish to carry into eternity. These pieces — usually fears or aspirations — fall back into the mortal world. These unwanted thoughts take material form, becoming adulterations, which allows other magi to deal with them.

A second source of adulterations is uncontrolled Twilight experiences. These adulterations are manifestations of thoughts dredged from magi by the stress of Twilight. This potential Twilight consequence should be considered an addition to the list of bad Twilight effects on ArM5, page 89. These adulterations are drawn to the magus who created them. If he resolves the adulteration, the magus is freed from the burden that it represents. In exceptional cases, a magus resolving a major adulteration gains a benefit from the list of positive Twilight outcomes that suits his recent experiences. Other forms of magical trauma, for example laboratory accidents, also sometimes create adulterations.

The death of an apprentice, Criamon magi believe, is particularly tragic. Apprentices cannot enter the Hypostasis, but nevertheless have powerful, active magical potential. This often becomes an adulteration, which seeks out the former apprentice's master. It is said that one of the malignancies, which are the greatest adulterations, is an apprentice of Criamon's who died. It haunts the Order, killing other apprentices so that they, too, spawn adulterations.

Life on the Threshold of Repose

To the unwise, characters on the threshold of repose seem to neglect their powers. They ignore problems well within their capabilities, instead advising and mentoring their juniors in resolving them. But to the wise, guided by allies outside time, life follows obvious patterns. Criamon elders act as mentors because waiting for the younger person, and then guiding his destiny, is the better strategy for the House. In addition to seeing problems solved — eventually — it trains and enlightens the next generation. This method also recognizes that the wisdom of the House is imperfect, and the novel insights of the young draw it closer to flawlessness.

There are some tasks, however, that fall to elders because their protégés cannot complete them. These include the following.

- Aiding magi facing insurmountable problems.
- Conducting campaigns against malignant spirits, major demons, and troublesome followers of the Divine.
- Contacting magical groups outside of Mythic Europe.
- Dealing with major catastrophes such as Europe-wide plagues, the invasion of the Huns, and the like.
- Exploring the realms and alams.
- Founding clutches.
- Researching new paths, avenues, and stations.
- Resolving complex situational adulterations.
- Seeking ancient Mysteries.



Designing Adulterations

Adulterations vary in severity. The weakest adulterations are minor events and beings, spawned by a magus in Twilight, that draw the magus's attention to personal weaknesses. Severe adulterations include terrible monsters and deathtraps born of evil acts or deep, personal recrimination. The adulterations left behind by the tangential have no single magus on which to focus, so they become problematic for all.

Some adulterations amalgamate. The House's members tell stories of the malignancies, incarnations of spiritual pollutions that have stalked the Earth since the time of Criamon, growing more powerful as more and more magi pass into Twilight in a state of spiritual transgression. Magi

who resolve these amalgamations draw the House closer to the Enigma.

Adulterations can be considered in two classes: creatures and places. Adulterous creatures have certain common features. Each has a Magical Might score that ranges from 10, for minor adulterations, to 45, for the malignancies. Most have magical abilities that parallel or mock the dominant Arts of their creators. An adulterous creature is, mystically, part of its creator, and so may pass an *Aegis of the Hearth* cast by its creator without invitation. Adulterations do not activate wards that ignore the adulteration's creator. Adulterations always know where their creator is. Creatures tend to force confrontation. Subconsciously,

this is so that the magus may not simply ignore them.

Adulterous places are usually in regiones. Some adulterous regiones may be entered and resolved by anyone, but a few will not open save to their creator. Once a magus has created an adulterous place, she is fated to return to it, over and again, until she resolves the issue that lies at its heart. After resolution, the regio usually vanishes. This either draws the contents of the regio back into the ambient magical energy of the world, or deposits them in the mundane world. Situational adulterations drawn from Final Twilight sometimes create permanent regiones or auras after resolution.

Example: Introducing an Adulteration

Antigone of Criamon suffers a Twilight incident and fails her control roll. The storyguide considers the options given for bad Twilight effects in the core rulebook, but decides that an adulteration might suit the saga better. While some troupes groups prefer the storyguide not foreshadow upcoming stories, as this detracts from the surprise, other troupes enjoy discussing, in broad terms, where they see their saga going. The storyguide seeks input from Antigone's player, as this is usual for this particular troupe.

The storyguide tells Antigone's player that the negative Twilight effect is an adulteration, and asks for broad guidance concerning what sorts of spiri-

tual flaws the character needs to expiate. The player may nominate any broad issue; players seeking inspiration might consider unwanted Personality Traits and Reputations. They might also consider grievous mistakes the character has made in previous stories. Antigone's player suggests her character's violent temper and Angry Personality Trait as the underlying issue to be embodied.

The storyguide considers the players input, and the adulteration then becomes a character or setting in an upcoming story. This provides the player with the opportunity to roleplay the character's spiritual development. The adulteration should not dominate the story, and need not be resolved immediately. Unresolved

adulterations do not appear in every story, but they do become recurring settings or characters.

A resolved adulteration represents a turning point for the character, with regard to the issue that the adulteration embodies. A single story does not, usually, resolve the matter entirely, however. The storyguide arranges for Antigone to confront her aggression embodied as a dragon attacking a village. When Antigone drowns the dragon in milk, she does not suddenly lose the trait it represented. She does lose one point from her Angry Personality Trait, and is assumed, through roleplaying in future stories, to be continuing to reduce her score.

THE CARNAL WOLF

The adulteration the House's members know best is caged within the Cave of Twisting Shadows. Apprentices are shown it to introduce the consequences of spiritual impurity. It takes the shape of a great wolf, with teeth so large that it cannot close its jaws. The creature embodies the carnal urges of Demetrius, the current Prima's teacher. Prior to its capture it ter-

rorized a village by worrying livestock and possessing drunkards, whom it drove to despicable acts.

The Carnal Wolf's form could be destroyed by magic, but the adulteration would reform in some other place. It will instead resolve when confronted by the descendants of its creator, the Prima, for example. The Wolf represents the drive to feed, mate, and reproduce that Demetrius channeled into training Hermetic offspring. Any of Demetrius's

descendants could soothe the adulteration into non-existence or familiarity, but he has asked that it be used as a teaching aid until he enters repose.

Most Criamon magi believe that their housemates spawn fewer adulterations than other magi due to their greater capacity for self-reflection. This is false. The ability to shed spiritual burdens into the mundane world is an effect of Enigmatic Wisdom. Other magi expiate their spiritual impurities in the Hypostasis.

The spectral Primus Cato, who was a Bonisagus magus before joining House Criamon, has always believed Criamon magi create the majority of all adulterations. He pursues this idea among his other hobbies and sometimes, as a favor to him, his descendants study the lives of young, violent magi from other Houses, to determine if a narrative of transgression and expiation is discernable.

The Cave of Twisting Shadows

The Cave of Twisting Shadows is a regio that leads from the mortal world to the refuge Criamon discovered outside time. The covenant's inhabitants do not live in the mortal world at the base of the regio, nor in its highest level, the Hypostasis. Criamon magi call this regio the Axis Magica. It is, they say, the great pole around which the world's tides of magical energy circle. It is their domus magna.

Hundreds of dead covenfolk and magi haunt the Cave of Twisting Shadows. These ghosts do not have the monomaniacal personalities often noticed in the unquiet dead. The covenant's ghosts form extended families governed by their living members. These spirits believe that, once the answer is known, they will be able to enter the refuge outside time, as Hermetic magi can now. Many hundreds rest in their ashes, kept in urns within each family home, waiting for the call of the answer.

The Central Clutch

The Central Clutch is the custodian of the House's store of wisdom. Its primary task is to support the other parts of the House, whose specialists continue to research the answer. The Central Clutch trains most of the apprentices, engages in

Hermetic politics, and assists the senior members of the other clutches, when they require it. The Prima leads this clutch.

The Prima

The Prima of the House has many duties. She leads the council, of magi and elected covenfolk, which rules the Cave of Twisting Shadows. She coordinates the House's activities, and is its spokesperson to the other Houses. Most Primi also engage in research. The Prima ascends to the role through a complicated ritual, during which many Criamon magi enter a communal vision.

KILLING THE PRIMA

When the Prima feels close to Final Twilight, the members of House Criamon gather at the Cave of Twisting Shadows to kill her. A procession wends to the ninth level of the regio, where a non-Criamon ceremonially murders her. Her ghost then floats free and announces its intention not to pass through the gate into the Hypostasis. It chooses instead to stay in the mortal world to tend the House until the Enigma is answered.

Those magi present who have an Enigmatic Wisdom score of 3 or more then enter into a communal trace filled with incomprehensible images. When one believes the images indicate that he should accept the role of Primus, he stands and announces this to be so. The magus is acclaimed by his sodales. The only other formality of investiture is sending letters to Criamon magi unable to attend the ritual, and to the Primi of the other Houses.

The House tries to limit the time between the death and ascension of Primi. They believe the Hypostasis is inaccessible when there is no living Primus. Thus, they believe that magi who have fallen into temporary Twilight cannot return while the office is vacant, and that magi whose circumstances would usually force them into Final Twilight cannot shelter there during such periods; they simply die.

FAMOUS PRIMI

The Primi who followed Criamon were younger and less mystical than outsiders usually expect. The personality and aptitudes of the Primi appear to predict the crises the House faces during their custodianship. During the Schism War, for example, a militant Primus from the Path of Strife drew the House back to the Cave of Twisting Shadows. He offered sanctuary to members of non-combatant Houses, some of who joined the House afterward, creating unusual Criamon lineages. Three past Primi have left particularly significant legacies for the House.

Before becoming Criamon's successor, Juliasta filia Criamon was the first follower of the Winding Path. These magi do not live in the House's covenants, and some wander Europe seeking subjects for study. Juliasta also lived, for a time, in several non-Criamon covenants. She shared much of the House's knowledge with outsiders, learning useful arcana in exchange. This rounded out the capacities of Criamon magi, making their Arts comparable to their sodales in other Houses. Juliasta prepared the House for its journey.

The third Primus, Verderis, wrote an epic poem called *The Travels of Fedoso*, which many apprentices use to learn Latin. Fedoso is a young man who travels through a strange landscape facing mystical obstacles, figurative enemies, and perplexing situations. He finds allies and companions, but ends his journey alone at the peak of a mountain.

Many Criamon magi claim that *The Travels of Fedoso* is a map for the future of the House. Those versed in the text claim that it predicted the Corruption of House Tylalus and the Schism War. A few magi refuse to allow their students to read this book. They believe it causes the calamities it predicts.

The ghost of Verderis does not reside in the Cave of Twisting Shadows, one of only three Primi who are absent from the succession. He predicted that he would die away from the Cave of Twisting Shadows, and that his spirit would be lost for a time. He said he would be found, literally "netted in," as a harbinger of the coming answer. Many Criamon sought



Story Seeds for The Travels of Fedoso

- Verderis has the Premonitions Virtue, and withheld passages of *The Travels of Fedoso*. The Redcaps deliver an ancient letter, scribed by him, that offers a paragraph to the player characters. Verderis foresees they are the people best suited to deal with the calamity it predicts.
- A final page of the book, which describes what Fedoso sees from the mountain, begins to circulate. It is a forgery, but who has created it, and why?
- A young maga writes a sequel to *The Travels of Fedoso*. She vanishes, but characters reading the original now find that she has become character, aware she is trapped within a book. Can the characters save her, and how long do they wait before they intervene? If she changes the story is this necessarily a bad thing?
- The player characters are lost in a faerie wood, and are assisted by the Spider, a character from the book. Do they believe his claims that he is a spirit, or is he a faerie? If the Spider helps the characters escape, may he live in their covenant? Some scholars think the Spider predicted the depredations of an evil magus during the early period following the Order's founding. Can his precursor be trusted? Can he be used to ensure that the evil wizard really did die, many years ago?
- A magus claims to have found Fedoso's mountain. Who is the dead boy atop it, and why did he die?

him in the early years of the House, interpreting sections of *The Travels of Fedoso* as clues to his whereabouts, but this is a less popular practice in 1220.

Abdkypris was the most exciting Primus in recent times. He traveled through Muslim Iberia, North Africa, and the Levant to speak to the greatest thinkers of the Islamic world. His infusion of Islamic ideas, particularly Sufi wisdom, has enlivened debate in the House. Continued contact with Muslim thinkers has led the House into greater political activity. Many Criamon magi advocate peace in the Levant and Iberia.

FALSE AND UNUSUAL CLAIMANTS

Many factors prevent the selection of a magus claiming Primacy out of a desire for glory or power. The Prima does not rule the House, she simply coordinates it. She has little authority beyond her capacity to convince. She offers to forsake a place in the Hypostasis until the House answers the Enigma. The Prima is often not the wisest, or the most learned maga, she is simply the maga of her generation willing to delay paradise to tend the House.

On five occasions, a person present for a reason other than participation in

the deliberations claimed the Primacy. Three served the house admirably. The first was a researcher named Cato of Bonisagus. He was skilled in the Enigma and a great popularizer of Criamon's insights. The second, Diana of Merinita, was present to slay the previous Primus. Her acceptance caused a furor of cosmological speculation, since Criamon magi assumed that the murderer was forever in a state of spiritual pollution. She also served the House well, and her ghost continues to teach those Criamon interested in Faerie Lore. Primus Johannes, the third, was not a magus; he was a notary acting for a Quaesitor who was present at the deliberation. The rest of his House eventually accepted his Primacy. Johannes appointed a magus to communicate with outsiders and attend the Grand Tribunal on his behalf. That Tribunal ratified the Privileges of Criamon, the ruling that allows for House customs like the slaying of a willing Primus. Johannes's ghost persists, and is the House expert in Hermetic legal precedent.

The two "false claimants" fared worse. Victor of Tytalus was a diabolist trying to hide his soul in the Hypostasis. Immediately after he was acclaimed as Primus, he flung himself into the Hypostasis and was reduced to adultera-

tions. Sagitar of Tremere discovered that the role of Primus is a form of voluntary mystical slavery, a non-retractable offer to serve the House. His brief Primacy was filled with tragic coincidences that, dealt with, favored the House. His ghost haunts the Cave of Twisted Shadows, contrite and far wiser for his ordeal.

THE CURRENT PRIMA

The current Prima, Muscaria, did not expect to take the role. She did not understand that it is not Enigmatic Wisdom, but the desire to sacrifice wisdom for the service of others, that marks a potential Primus. Soon after becoming a maga, Muscaria concluded that she would never find the answer herself, so she instead developed the mushroom farms that allow the covenant to grow its own food. Muscaria is forty-one, which is young for a Criamon Prima, although she looks even younger.

Muscaria's master, Demetrius, is an alchemist. He believes that all of humanity will be saved by a solution, in the chemical sense. The solution must create a lifting joy in the spirit that breaks the bonds of time. Demetrius wanted his fili to have the best chance of using this elixir, and noted that alchemical potions are more effective on immature bodies. He gave Muscaria a longevity potion when she reached the age of adulthood: fourteen.

Muscaria espouses no particular theory concerning the answer, except that it will be difficult to find, so it is best to begin looking immediately. She still loves her teacher, despite thinking him blissfully mad. The longevity enchantment was a gift of paternal affection, and in honor of him, Muscaria has not allowed her body to enter adulthood, a form of mystical body modification. She appears to be an energetic adolescent who knows far too much.

THE SPECTRAL PRIMI

The spirits of the past Primi of the House remain in the Cave of Twisting Shadows. Their care of the House now

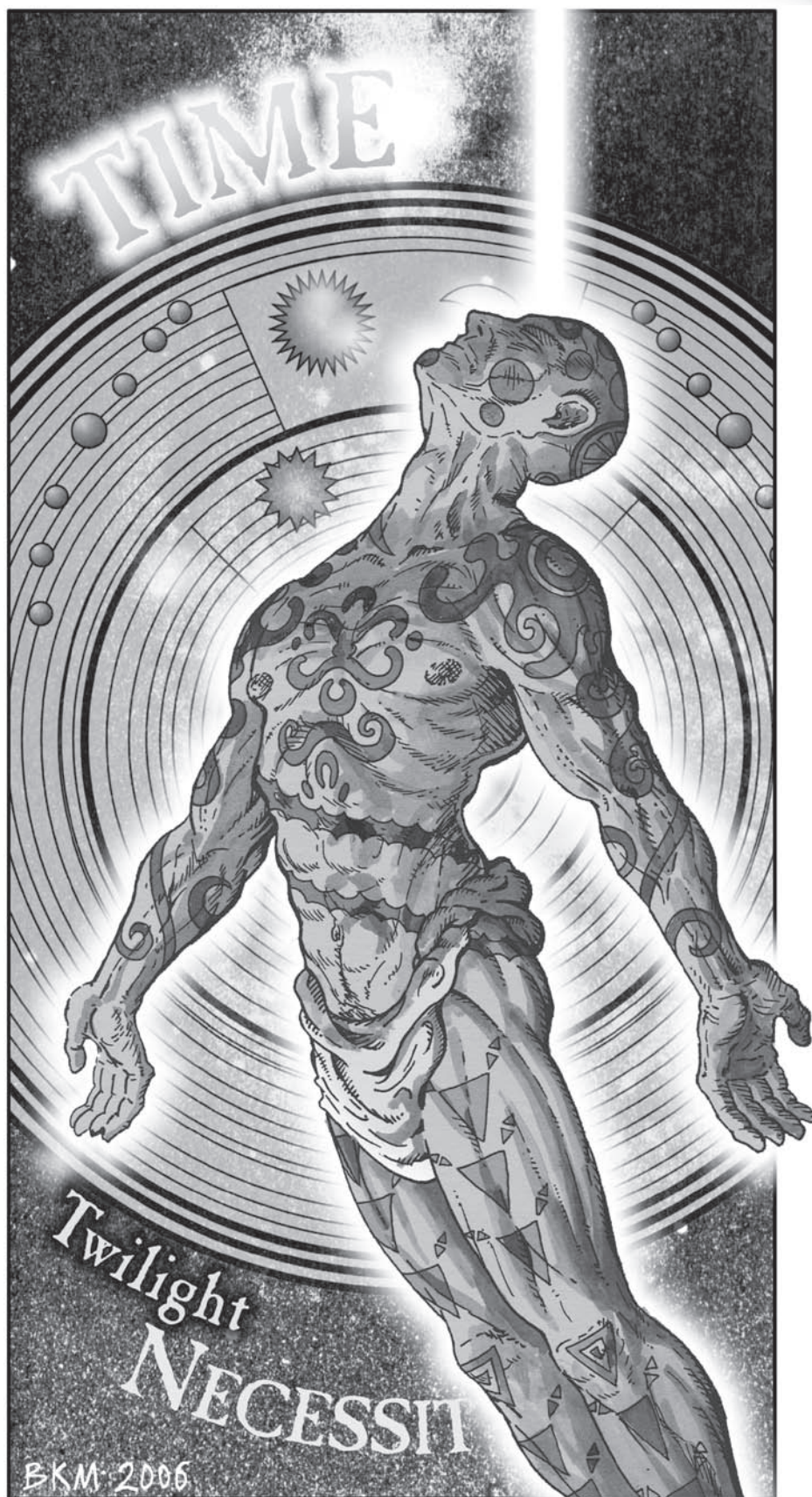
usually takes the form of teaching. They serve in lieu of a library for the covenant, and answer questions sent to them, usually by magi who have encountered inexplicable things. The Primi have different beliefs about how the quest for the Enigma will end. They agree that they will eventually enter the Hypostasis.

All Primi follow the Path of the Mirror. It is not described in detail in this chapter, because it is suited only for characters intending to remain, almost exclusively, within the Cave of Twisting Shadows. Initiates of the Path of the Mirror are instructed by the received wisdom of the House, as embodied in the spectral magi, so they develop abilities quickly. While within the regio the Prima can hear the thoughts of the covenant's ghosts, can sense and distort magical tides and currents, and can bind spirits to places or objects.

Members of the House also believe that a living Primus can draw the Axis Magica inside his own body and walk with it to another place. When the Primus enters Twilight, they believe, the Axis is re-established and the entire pattern of auras in Mythic Europe moves. This ability has either never been used, or perhaps was used by Criamon when he founded the covenant. While a magus incarnates the Axis Magica, they further believe, no other magus may return from Twilight. Those attempting to shelter there from magical harm cannot; they die instead.

THE SECRET OF THE AXIS MAGICA, AND WHAT LIES BEYOND

Most Hermetic magi know that House Criamon claims that their Founder waits for the answer to the Enigma so that he can, in good conscience, surrender the burden of keeping open the Twilight Road. Experienced Criamon magi understand the mechanics of the task: the Axis Magica is Criamon himself, transformed into a living bridge between this world and the sanctuary he discovered. Most think that Criamon is waiting for the House to find an alternative road. Some deduce that he is waiting for a messianic figure to take his place. A handful of magi



Pacing

A maga typically follows a given path for much of her life, becoming an Initiate of the highest station only after decades of study. This slow pacing is important to the maga, because it gives her time to integrate and test her understanding with worldly experience. For players, it spreads the Criamon character's Initiation stories across the length of a saga. This helps troupes to balance the importance of different player characters in the troupe's saga. Troupes playing sagas in which characters do not age much, because very little time passes,

might create skilled followers of a path as beginning characters.

The paths are more formal, and restrictive, than the Initiations of virtually any other Mystery Cult. This is because the Criamon cosmology is false: the House is less flexible because it can only reproduce those odd effects it has discovered. It cannot extrapolate broadly from them. Criamon magi see the formality of the House's structures as a method of intergenerational nurturance, however, believing that they offer only the best methods of Initiation.

suspect it is more complicated than that, and they are right.

The Primi in the Cave of Twisting Shadows are not ghosts, they are a single spirit of place. The Primi feel that they are individuals, but on a mystical level they are a single being, deceiving itself. The spirit learns and grows as new magi join it. Few magi understand that the genius locus of which the Primi are part once a tortured child, who refuses to be reborn to suffer, ever again. Still fewer suspect that the Primi are, perhaps, building their own messiah. The answer might integrate the genius locus into a single mind.

In the Hypostasis, the Primi claim, dwell the tangential magi. These are magi who have faded peacefully into Final Twilight, or those whose traumatic Final Twilight episodes have been soothed. The tangential have plans for the House that mortals cannot understand since they lack sufficient Enigmatic Wisdom. The tangential send visions through the Axis to their mortal successors. Some of the creatures that rose with the tangential, familiars for example, can step back into the world and act without risking universal catastrophe. They arrange minor, precise, surreptitious aid for other Criamon magi.

Criamon thinkers claim that the tangential are outside time, so some tangential magi have yet to be born. Others are of races from the counter-cycle of time. These beings, from the time of rising harmony, cause less stress when they enter time than characters born of the time of

rising strife. In the ancient history of the world, some acted as guides to magi, and were worshipped as animal-headed gods. Strife has progressed too far for such direct interventions today, but they dispatch servants into time, it make it begin to spiral, rather than circle.

The Paths

Criamon magi have not idled away the time since the Founder. Their inquiries into the nature of the universe have shown them many strange connections, and granted them many abilities not shared by other magi. Their fields of research, called paths, are traditional ways of acquiring wisdom. Each path has a clutch that acts as its center, but most clutches contain members who are not on its usual path. These magi travel to their path's clutch, or to the Cave of Twisting Shadows, when they require further training or guidance.

All Criamon magi see life as a spiritual journey, and it usually follows one of the paths that have been marked by their predecessors. This chapter does not describe all of the paths of House Criamon. Troupes are encouraged to develop further paths that suit their stories. Those trying to develop their own paths should follow the rules for discovering new Virtues given in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*.

Some magi, particularly the young, do not attempt to develop themselves spiritually, either by following a path or pioneering one their own. Criamon magi say that those individuals are following the Winding Path. This reflects the idea that all magi are living and acting, so they must be on a path to somewhere. Older magi say that directionlessness is the widest path, because those on it are hardly the first to eschew the dictates of Wisdom. Characters on the Winding Path sometimes stray from apt action concerning pacifism, which includes inappropriate sex and carnivorousness. Most magi on the Winding Path eventually find spiritual direction, sometimes with intriguing results.

A magus may follow only one path at a time. A path includes a mental framework that is incompatible with any other worldview. Changing paths is a life-shaking decision, because it means abandoning much that was learned on the previous path. A magus who steps from his path to another begins without the use of any stations upon it, save Enigmatic Wisdom. Magi rejoining a path regain the understanding they had before they left it. The Primi of the House are the single exception. They retain the stations on their previous paths when they step onto the path that only Primi travel, the Path of the Mirror.

SECRETS

Most mystery cults enforce secrecy with dreadful oaths and terrible threats, but Criamon magi do not consider this necessary. The things that the House has discovered on the paths to the Enigma are so obscure that a magus not trained in the Criamon way of thinking, through the riddle technique, simply cannot understand them. Those with sufficient Enigmatic Wisdom to support the House's mission, conversely, are welcome to know them. Those who try to develop Enigmatic Wisdom outside of the structure of the House's beliefs and practices inevitably fail — the House has been molded by the Mysteries. This means that House Criamon does not have to hide its secrets; its secrets hide themselves.

ENIGMATIC WISDOM AND HOUSE CRIAMON LORE

House Criamon's members have the Enigmatic Wisdom Ability, described in the core rules and elsewhere in this chapter, and House Criamon Lore. The latter Ability quantifies each magus's understanding of the House's task, and its strategy to reach its goal. This strategy encompasses the paths and stations, described below, but also includes the function of each of the clutches, and the roles of senior magi within the House.

GUIDES

A key figure in some Mystery Cults is the Mystagogue. This charismatic person commands a probationer, and grants him Initiation. Criamon magi believe that wisdom itself Initiates, and that the traveler on the path to wisdom does not need a master so much as he needs a guide. The game mechanics governing the roles of guide and Mystagogue involve the same numbers and formulae. The roles differ in how the characters behave in stories. Criamon magi have a non-hierarchical approach to spiritual development. Tasks based on impressing the guide are not usually significant — one cannot impress the Enigma.

Two exceptions are the Paths of the Mirror and Strife, which do have formal Initiation by superiors. The Path of the Mirror, followed only by the living Prima under the instruction of her predecessors, is a series of Initiations for those who choose to serve the worldly House. The Path of Strife transgresses the mores of the House.

Stations

Each path described below divides into five grades of progress, called stations. Stations are psychological states that, because of the wisdom they provide, allow magi to understand profound insights. This, in turn, gives magi supernatural powers, which players use as Mystery Virtues. To Criamon magi,

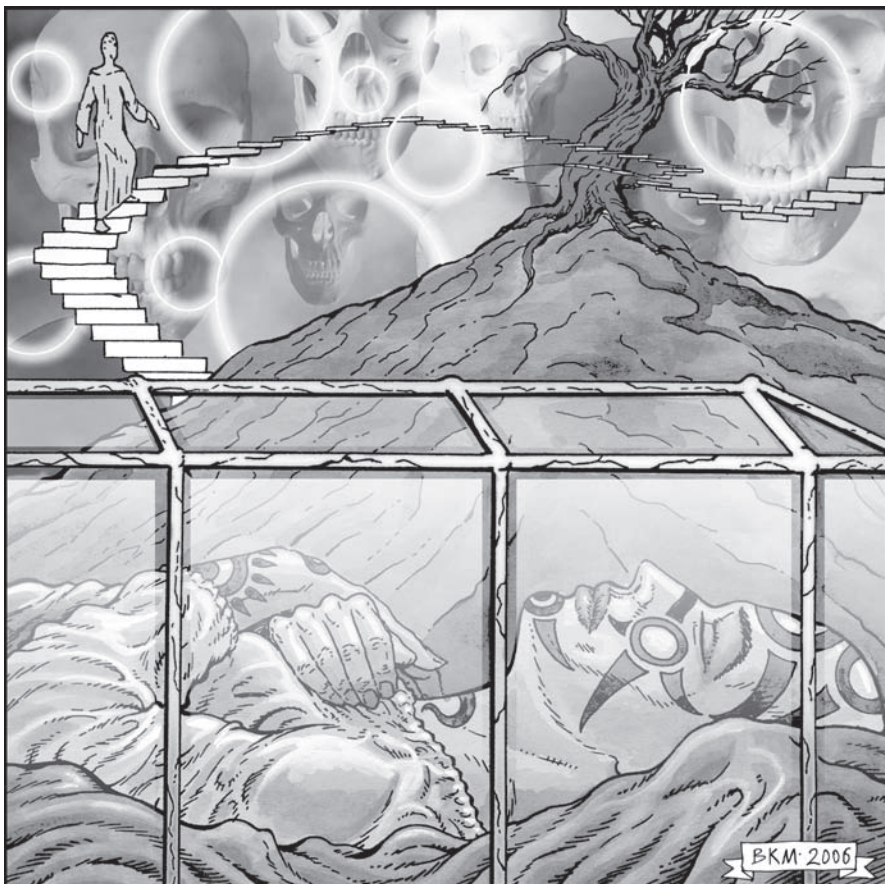
Psychodrama

Some of the avenues below require periods of introspection and meditation. Superficially, these times lack story potential: the magus is simply thinking. This underestimates the effort, and potential for failure, involved. Magi pausing to reflect are engaged in a process of excruciating self-examination that amounts to spiritual combat against the self. Player characters best experience this as an allegorical story that takes place in the mind of the magus.

For example, a magus sealed in a glass coffin for a year, in darkness, seems to have perfectly avoided any potential for story involvement. This is not the case: the magus, closed away from the petty distractions of life, has no choice but to confront his own nature and his role in the universe. He is forced to acknowledge, and replay repeatedly, his moments of greatest moral failure. He is constrained to confront the consequences of defects in his character and lifestyle,

unflinchingly. He is compelled to explore the universe, his body, and the links between, despite the pain and perversity of the process. Many magi claim to meet ancient spirits in this state — Strife, Uncertainty, Harmony, Surety, Swiftness, and so on. Some magi generate fantastic delusional worlds that assist their minds to deal with such difficult concepts, and conventional stories can be played within them, remembering that each character in those stories and worlds is invested with profound allegorical meaning.

A magus who fails to complete this ordeal may not progress on his path. Often the magus may attempt the avenue again, assisted by knowledge gained through prior failure. Absolute failure during psychodramatic stories sometimes has terrible effects. The magus is in a mystical mental state, so failure can force checks for Twilight. Magi occasionally die during their meditations, leaving highly troubled ghosts.



insight is the more important; the powers are mere effects of the process of increased enlightenment.

The process of reaching a new station is called following an avenue. Each avenue is a process of spiritual awakening, purification, and testing that is mechanically reflected by three elements. The magus must have a House Criamon Lore score of at least one more than the station's position on the path, undergo a trial or ritual investiture, and find insight in a story. This means that to reach the final station on the path, magi require a House Criamon Lore score of 6. This is usually only gained by extensive study at the Cave of Twisting Shadows, through instruction from the spectral embodiments of the House's collective lore, who guide the House's strategy.

The Initiation Script calculations given below for each avenue assume the guide's Presence + House Criamon Lore score equals 6. The House selects guides for young magi, and ensures that satisfactory teaching is always available. The ghostly magi at the Cave of Twisting Shadows also sometimes act as guides. Assume that these have a House Criamon Lore score of 9, and a Presence reflecting that which they had in life. They prefer to allow the living members of the House to perform Initiations into the lower stations.

A character proceeding on a path may find that she already has a Virtue or Flaw that lies on her route. The player should negotiate with the troupe to substitute another Virtue or Flaw, to balance the paths. It is possible for a magus to learn House Criamon Lore without developing the Flaws that typify the House, but all followers of the paths are eventually Disfigured, and all have either the Vow or Pious Flaw.

TO DO IS TO BE. TO BE IS TO DO

The avenues and stations are not, of themselves, sufficient to use new Virtues or powers. These benefits represent a state of spiritual purification. A magus who lives badly is rejecting that state, and loses the associated powers until purity is restored.

This is reflected by the Vow Flaw found in the first avenue of many paths. The Pious Flaw, similarly, is the deep desire to follow the lifestyle of a path. A magus who has the Pious Flaw and fails to act aptly ceases to advance on her path and, very slowly, loses his path's mystical abilities.

Enigmatic Wisdom

Enigmatic Wisdom lies at the beginning of each path. Criamon apprentices learn to view events and objects in unusual and intuitive ways, usually by meditating on 15 riddles related to the Arts. This training helps them to find connections between concepts, and place this knowledge into the context of the Enigma. This in turn allows Criamon magi to understand the nature of humans, the universe, and the ties between them in ways incomprehensible to other magi. Once a magus has grasped the foundational elements of wisdom, he may develop deeper understanding by considering the insights of others, which can be transmitted through books, discussion, or mystical experiences.

SYMBOLIC UNDERSTANDING

A Criamon magus may use his Enigmatic Wisdom score to understand subtle symbols. This allows magi to interpret arcane events, perplexing situations, dreams, and visions.

Criamon magi can understand what kind of life experience lies behind each of another magus's stigmata with a successful Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom roll against an Ease Factor of 6. They can tell whether a character has been Warped, and how severely, with a Perception + Enigmatic Wisdom roll against an Ease Factor six or more, and if they beat an Ease Factor of 12, they understand, in general terms, what sort of life experience caused the Warping.

This Ability also assists with interpreting dreams and visions. It does not grant supernatural visions, but many Criamon also have that — separate — Flaw.

LABYRINTH MEDITATIONS

Criamon magi may improve their concentration by engaging in labyrinth meditations. A labyrinth meditation is a non-magical ritual during which the magus walks slowly through a maze while contemplating a problem. Many contemplation mazes are simple ribbons, with a single path leading to a center, then out again. Simple contemplative labyrinths can be created with low-level spells.

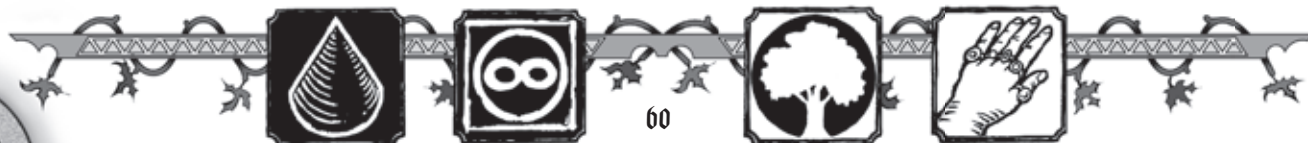
The magus's mental state remains focused for an hour after he completes the labyrinth. This allows a bonus on a single roll. This can be used to untangle a single conundrum (an Enigmatic Wisdom roll), recall a single fact (a Lore roll), or perform a single physical action. Physical actions must take no longer than one minute (ten combat rounds). The bonus is equal to half the magus's Enigmatic Wisdom score.

The magus must have a score of at least one in the required Ability before it can be assisted by labyrinth meditations. Meditations add grace to the magus's thoughts and actions, but do not grant conscious skill. A magus who does not know how to swim, for example, cannot use the clarity of thought and action provided by the meditation to swim.

Characters with an Enigmatic Wisdom score of three or more don't need a physical labyrinth; they can walk in a circle for the same effect. Those with a score of six or more don't even need to walk — they can imagine the circle. Labyrinth rituals take sixteen hours for characters with a score of one in Enigmatic Wisdom. The time required halves for each level they gain. Characters with brief meditation times cannot, however, perform several meditations and save or stack the bonuses.

TWILIGHT

Criamon magi understand Twilight better than other magi, and so navigate it more safely. This is reflected in the Twilight rules given in ArM5, pages 88–89.



The Path of the Body

The Path of the Body focuses on the human form. Some Criamon magi believe that the human body and the universe reflect each other structurally, so that knowing the body illuminates the prison of time. Others enhance the body as a tool and as a vehicle for escape from the universe. The Criamon Path of the Body is in many ways the inverse of Hermetic alchemy, which assumes the universe is perfect and a magus who reflects it perfectly will become immortal. Criamon magi assume that the universe, like each body, is inevitably decaying.

The five usual stations on the Path of the Body, in their most common order, are given below. Some Criamon magi, however, find the Station of Perfect Movement second and the Station of Spiritual Nourishment third. These different branches of this path correspond to the attitude of the magus. Those who see the body as a vessel for the spirit learn Nourishment first, while those who see the body in mechanistic terms learn Movement first. Each type of magus must learn respect for the opposing view before he can understand the Microcosmic Station. If the order is reversed, the Scripts for the two stations change: a Major Flaw (Pious) is always gained in the third avenue.

The followers of the Path of the Body tend toward practical, useful insights. An unusually large proportion of the Primi of the House followed this Path. Primi who have achieved the Microcosmic Station on this path are active administrators under whom the House co-ordinates its ventures effectively.

THE AVENUE OF SUBDUING THE MEAT AND THE STATION OF THE PERFECT TOOL

Several ritual investitures assist magi to find the first station of the Path of the Body, each of which is descended from a different tradition of mystics adopted into the early House. Those following this avenue develop control over their bodies' desires and distractions, usually through

The Path of the Body, Expressed Symbolically

The Initiation Scripts for the Path of the Body are as follows:

THE AVENUE OF SUBDUING THE MEAT AND THE STATION OF THE PERFECT TOOL

Target level 21, as Major Virtue (Minor Potency in an aspect of Corpus, may use Enigmatic Wisdom in lieu of Medicine and Chirurgy)

Script Bonus +15: Major Ordeal comprising three minor Flaws (Vow to not pollute the body and to use it aptly, Deleterious Circumstances while ill, Disfigured by stigmata) +9, sympathetic bonus (a complete year cycle as a plant, or similar) +3, special time and place (symbolic rebirth) +3

THE AVENUE OF DRINKING THE WINDS OF INSPIRATION AND THE STATION OF SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

See the note in the introductory section for this path to determine whether this is gained as the third station and Perfect Movement as the second.

Target level 12, as Major Virtue 21 (allows characters in high auras to not eat, drink, or sleep and replaces the longevity ritual), first Initiation after Major Ordeal -9

Script Bonus +6: Psychodramatic visions or conflict to secure a site (Quest) +3, special time and place +3

THE AVENUE OF THE TINIEST SEED AND THE STATION OF PERFECT ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT

Target level 15, as Major Virtue 21 (perfectly precise movement), second Initiation after Major Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +9: Major Flaw (Pious) replaces Minor Flaw (Vow) +6, Mystagogue's time +3

THE AVENUE OF THE SPHERICAL MIRROR AND THE STATION OF THE MICROCOSM

Target level 15, Major Virtue 21 (Arcane Connections to most things), first Initiation after Intermediate Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +9: Psychodramatic Quest +3, Mystagogue's time +3, special time and place +3

THE AVENUE OF REPOSE IN THE BODY AND THE THRESHOLD OF CORPOREAL REPOSE

Target level 17, Major Virtue 21 (purified of mortal frailties), second Initiation after Intermediate Ordeal -4

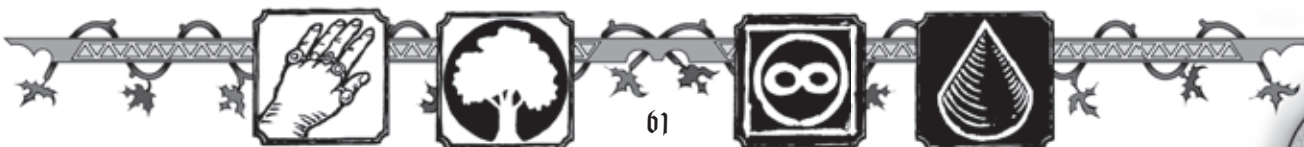
Script Bonus +12: Three Quests to legendary places +9, special time and place +3

painful mortifications, or fatiguing exertions, that last a year. A handful of magi have followed this avenue by being transformed into plants for a year. The avenue ends with a guide acting as midwife for a symbolic rebirth.

At the first station of the Path of the Body, the magus realizes that the body is the perfect tool for Hermetic magic because it is adapted for magic, and magic, in turn, is adapted for it. The magus's close inspection of the body allows the development of Minor Potency in an aspect of the Art of Corpus. Magi who have found this station see the intrinsic links between the body and the magical energies it wields, and so can use their understanding

of magical events to minister to the body. They may use Enigmatic Wisdom in place of Chirurgy and Medicine in rolls. They also know, instinctively, if their body is ill, and where, although they may not know the appropriate treatment.

Initiates of this station are bound by the lifestyle of the House (Vow) and find it more difficult to use their magic when their body is ill (Deleterious Circumstances). Some illnesses do not block certain mystical effects; the usual example given is that fevers do not restrict Ignem spells because they are caused by a surplus of fiery humors. Wounds do not prevent magic use, of themselves, but open the body to infections, which may.



Path Symbolism

Magi on this path often favor the Art of Corpus, and many are skilled in Intellego, Creo or Rego. The other magi on this path note that the body represents the universe, and the universe contains the other Arts, so one may follow the Path of the Body while studying another Art.

The stigmata of this path first appear upon the magus's back, over the lungs. They rapidly spread to the rest of the body, but remain most dense in their original location, and along the backs of the arms and the tops of the legs. The marks are usually have mirror symmetry, that is, they are a mirror image divided along the spine. The sound of the breath plays an important role in the labyrinth meditations of followers of this path.

Unlike the other paths, there is no discernible motif in the stigmata of the

body. This may be because the body represents itself in the design. It might instead mean that the motif is very simple, and is disguised by multiple, seemingly random, expressions. The oldest magus on this path claims that the stigmata are dozens of randomly superimposed images of the constellation of Virgo, but he cannot prove it to the satisfaction of his sodales. Each mark seems to be made of darker skin, in Caucasian magi, or paler skin, in others. Newly emerged stigmata look pink and raw, but are painless.

Followers of this path often have apes or monkeys as familiars. It is considered particularly auspicious to have an Egyptian baboon, because the being known as both Thoth and Hermes took this shape when he descended into time to train the progenitors of human magic.

in an inappropriate spiritual state, having performed inapt actions. Spiritual nourishment is affected badly by venturing into areas under the influence of non-magical realms.

The age-resisting properties of this station are countered by two of the other realms. Characters who venture into Arcadia may retain their longevity effects by eating a pawn of Creo vis from the mortal world, per week, while there, but must also eat, drink, and sleep as normal folk must. They still do not breathe, but aren't sure why. Characters venturing into the Dominion or Infernal areas find that they begin to age again after (Enigmatic Wisdom + 1) days. They are required to breathe, drink, eat, and sleep in these areas; they gain one need back each day. A character who ages, for any length of time, during a year must make an Aging roll at the end of that year, even if he has regained spiritual nourishment before the winter, which players use as a tallying point for aging. A character whose ceases to be spiritually nourished can regain her previous state with a labyrinth meditation once the reason for failure has been remedied.

THE AVENUE OF DRINKING THE WINDS OF INSPIRATION AND THE STATION OF SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

A process of purification that involves abstinence reveals the second station of the Path of the Body. The magus travels to an area with a Magical aura of at least 7, and secures safe use of the site. Beginning on the first day of the solar sign of Virgo, the magus begins progressively deeper degrees of fasting, avoids spellcasting, and performs labyrinth meditations. During this time, the magus is usually unable to perform other useful work, as he is only half-conscious of the mortal world. His feverish hallucinations, representing his addictions to flesh and grain, hound him. Magi may leave their trance-like state for emergencies, but then need to begin the process of purification afresh.

Characters Initiated to this station have drawn themselves away from the universe sufficiently that their bodies are sustained by the flux of harmony and strife within the Inspirato. Characters Initiated into this station gain a Warping Point each year, but do not age. While

in magical or mundane areas, spiritually nourished characters may eat, drink, and breathe, but they do not need to. They must engage in elaborate, delightful labyrinth meditations that take six hours every day, but do not sleep.

The delightful mental exercises required to feed mystically engage the magus's mind. The magus is still aware of his surroundings, and can cease meditating if events threaten, but cannot perform other useful work while feeding. Characters do not gain additional seasons of study due to this station.

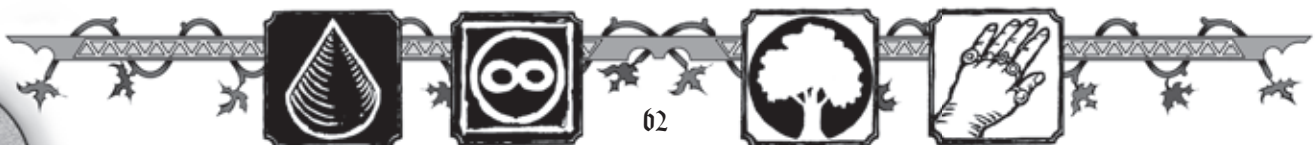
Magi feeding on the Inspirato's flux require six hours of meditation per day in total, regardless of interruption. Those failing to finish their meditations must either eat mortal food or lose weight. Many Criamon magi on this path fast occasionally, by refusing either meditation or food, and often meditate for more than six hours a day if they are recovering from illness.

Spiritual nourishment can fail for a variety of reasons. It cannot be found in places lacking sufficient magical energy, which includes Faerie or Infernal auras of three or more, or anywhere in the Dominion. It also fails if the character is

THE AVENUE OF THE TINIEST SEED AND THE STATION OF PERFECT ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT

The third station on the Path of the Body allows the magus to use the mechanical force of his muscles with incredible precision. The investiture requires a season of complicated training in focus and movement from a guide. Magi who develop perfect economy of movement are supernaturally graceful. Given preparation time, they are able to use labyrinth meditations and the Virtues granted by this station to perform one action of perfect precision each day. To those inspired by such things, these movements appear beautiful.

Once per day, following a labyrinth meditation, the character automatically succeeds on single Dexterity-related Ability roll with an Ease Factor of 21 or less. This theoretically includes the use of missile weapons and aimed spells. The



Criamon lifestyle limits the usefulness of this, since these magi are pacifists.

A magus reaching the third Station of the Path of the Body is certain, in his innermost self, of the correctness of the path. This certainty is represented by the Pious Flaw, which replaces the Vow Flaw gained earlier on the path.

THE AVENUE OF THE SPHERICAL MIRROR AND THE STATION OF THE MICROCOSM

The insight at the heart of the fourth station of the Path of the Body is one of which most magi are, intellectually, aware. The human form and the universe have identical underlying structures: the body is a microcosm. The usual method of awakening the instinctual, reflexive connections between the magus's body and the universe is deprivation. The magus is encased in quartz or glass then left in darkness, as if dead, for a season. The magus's ability to feed from the Inspirato provides sustenance, while the magus learns to sense corporeal connections to the universe, isolated from all distractions.

It was usual, in the early history of the House, for magi to undergo this ritual alone. It was discovered in North Africa, and the perfect site for it is a cave complex in Ethiopia. The extreme difficulty of reaching the complex has made necessary the use of substitute places, with a guide interceding to allow the completion of the ritual. Some of the travelers on the Path of the Body wish to return to the older way, which they believe is more likely to lead to novel insights concerning the Enigma. Others say that the newer ritual, which takes one quarter the time of the original, is itself a wonderful breakthrough.

The microcosmic insight shows the magus that he is connected to all mundane things in the universe. This allows the magus to cast spells as if he held an Arcane Connection to any mundane place he has visited, or any mundane thing he has touched that is currently in a mundane place. People, who are themselves maps of the universe, may not be targeted by spells using this ability. Some Criamon of religious bent insist this is because the soul contains a spark of the Divine

and so people are not mundane. This station allows Criamon magi to travel freely about Mythic Europe using *Leap of Homecoming*.

A limitation on this power is that the magus is only able to use his connections to things or places that he distinctly recalls. The Criamon magus's player makes an Intelligence roll to determine what he distinctly recalls, with the difficulty increasing as the magus's contact with a place or thing becomes increasingly tenuous. The troupe may agree that there are certain places the character sees so regularly that the player need not roll, for example the road outside his covenant, the bridge just outside the nearest village, or his childhood home. Similarly, places where the magus has faced death, or performed great acts, may be burned indelibly in the memory, at the troupe's discretion.

- Places that the magus has visited regularly require a roll against an Ease Factor of 6.
- Places the magus visits yearly require rolls against an Ease Factor of 9.
- Places the magus visited a long time ago require rolls against an Ease Factor of 12.

Magi may add up to three to their rolls if they have something that evokes their memories of a place, like a souvenir, tattoo, or scar. A botched roll means the magus has recalled the wrong place entirely, but does not know it.

THE AVENUE OF REPOSE IN THE BODY AND THE THRESHOLD OF CORPOREAL REPOSE

A magus prepares for the final station of the Path of the Body, its repose, by making his spirit ready to move from the microcosmic body into its, parallel, macrocosmic form.

The ritual is performed at a place and time where the connection between the body and the universe is strongly apparent. The Axis Magica may serve instead, but the House prefers its members to experience less well-understood connections between the body and the universe.

A popular one, historically, has been the meeting of the White and Blue Nile at the moment of the flood, which represents the first division of arteries from the heart.

At the ritual, the magus consumes mystical representations of the four bodily humors. One of these representations is found at the initiatory site. The other three must be obtained through Quests to places that are, themselves, so exceptional as to be suitable as Initiation sites. The ghostly Primi remember the sites used by previous travelers on the path, but encourage magi to find at least one novel site.

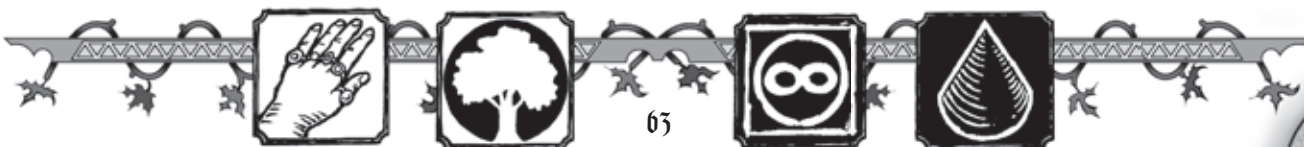
Storyguides should ensure that these legendary sites are of interest to other player characters. The representations of the humors contain vis, and can assist original research. They are found in strange locales linked to ancient civilizations. Bizarre monsters that served ancient magicians guard some sites.

Those who have gained this station but choose not to depart from the world do so because they believe that their ability to change the physical structures of the universe is seriously diminished when they enter repose. Magi choose to remain behind to work on projects requiring their physical presence, like training apprentices, resisting tyrannical rulers, fighting demons, and penning books.

While they linger, these magi dwell in bodies purified of all mortal frailty. The magus regains any attributes lost to aging and no longer uses the Aging Point system. Any negative physical Characteristics the character has are raised to 0. Short of death, the magus's body reforms itself if damaged, healing completely at full moonrise. This process causes all of the magus's mundane disfigurements to fade away, including his umbilical scar. The magus retains his stigmata and continues to gain Warping Points, however.

REPOSE IN THE BODY

Magi repose from this path by being reborn as the universe itself. They become one with necessity, and so seek to change it, allowing the cycle of falling and rising harmony to end.



The Path of Seeming

The Path of Seeming draws upon the insight that the secrets of the Enigma are hidden within the distracting details of the world. The path provides tools that permit magi to examine the world. When the magi comprehend the design of their prison, they see where its walls crack. The Path of Seeming searches for weak points in the circle of time.

AVENUE OF GRUEL, WATER AND STARLIGHT AND THE STATION OF DIFFERENTIATION OF SEEMING

Young magi commencing the Path of Seeming are flooded by sensation. This makes noise cacophonous, light garish, and food fulsomely rich. These magi perform labyrinth mediations while eating the blandest gruel and drinking only water until they undergo a series of investitures that teach them to tune their senses. These trials, under the guidance of teachers, are traditionally performed in a series of caves. Appropriate sites have been established in three Tribunals.

Travelers on this path come to understand, intellectually, the difference between truth and seeming: what is, and what appears to be. Each magus develops the Clear Thinker, Common Sense, and Keen Vision Virtues, although the player may trade Keen Vision for a similar effect in any other sense. Criamon magi on the Path of Seeming are those most able to communicate with outsiders, because they are lucid conversationalists schooled in a fierce logic. They cannot, however, successfully discuss the magical insights of the House with those lacking the frame of reference that Enigmatic Wisdom provides.

AVENUE THAT ASSAULTS THE MODESTY OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE STATION OF TRUE SIGHT

Magi seeking this station can sense the underlying structures of the world, but have difficulty understanding these new perceptions. They sometimes develop

The Path of Seeming, Depicted in Digits

The Path of Seeming includes the following Initiation Scripts:

AVENUE OF GRUEL, WATER, AND STARLIGHT AND THE STATION OF DIFFERENTIATION OF SEEMING

Target level 21: Package treated as a Major Virtue (Clear Thinker, Common Sense, and Keen Vision)

Script Bonus +15: Minor Ordeal: Disfigurement +3, Mystagogue's time +3, psychodramatic Quest representing subduing the senses +3, special site and time (a certain cave complex during the dark of the moon) +3, sympathetic bonus (deprivation) +3

AVENUE THAT ASSAULTS THE MODESTY OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE STATION OF TRUE SIGHT

Target level 18, as Major Virtue 21 (may use Enigmatic Wisdom as if it were Magic Sensitivity and Second Sight), first Initiation since Minor Ordeal -3

Script Bonus +12: Ordeal (Vow) +3, Quest of insane wanderings +3, special time and place +3, Mystagogue's time +3

THE AVENUE OF THE UNEXPECTED PAGES AND THE STATION OF VIVID MEMORIES FROM OBJECTS

Target level 18, as Major Virtue 21 (may read the memories of objects), first Initiation since Minor Ordeal -3

Script Bonus +12: Ordeal (Major Flaw Pious replaces Minor Flaw Vow) +6, special time and place +3 (or possibly Loss of Talisman +3), psychodramatic Quest +3

THE AVENUE THAT IS A CROSSROAD AND THE STATION OF PASSING THROUGH SEEMING

Target level 15, as Major Virtue 21 (spirit traveling), first Initiation since Intermediate Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +12: Mystagogue's time +3, special time and place +3, sympathetic bonus +3, Quest +3

THE AVENUE THAT LEADS TO TRANSCENDENCE AND THE STATION FROM WHICH TO IGNORE THE REAL

Target level 17, as Major Virtue 21 (may briefly ignore mundane objects), second Initiation since Intermediate Ordeal -4

Script Bonus +12: Ordeal (Major Flaw Twilight prone) +9, Mystagogue's time +3

imaginary friends and enemies, and have odd escapades. These are much like psychodramatic adventures, except they do not occur solely in the mind of the magus. The magus's companions, and eventually his guide, must defend the traveler on the path from dangers he cannot understand, while he wanders in madness. The magus usually recovers after a season, but requires intervention by, and training from, his guide during the final weeks.

A magus who recollects himself is confirmed in his faith concerning the path and develops the Vow Flaw. Magi invested in this station learn to instinctively strip the universe of its illusions. They may use their Enigmatic Wisdom score as if it were both the Second Sight and Magic Sensitivity Abilities.

THE AVENUE OF THE UNEXPECTED PAGES AND THE STATION OF VIVID MEMORIES FROM OBJECTS

Magi who seek this level of Initiation fall into a coma as their minds flit through the memories of the objects that surround them. The magus takes a role in these narratives, seeking to push them to the point where the magus acquires the object in whose memories he has become lost. The magus needs to recognize the object, then step into one of the roles in its memory, to press the story forward until the magus acquires the object.

The magus, playing the role of another character in the object's memories, rarely finds it simple to deliver the

Path Symbolism

Many magi on this path study Intellego magic paired with any Form, although Imaginem and Mentem are the most popular choices. Most have some skill in a second Technique, because knowledge must guide action. Some of the path's Mentem specialists have relegated Intellego to their secondary technique.

The stigmata of this path first appear on the bridge of the magus's nose. They rapidly spread to the rest of the body, but are most prevalent on the head and along the spine. The marks are usually have radial symmetry. The sound of the magus's heartbeat is vital to the labyrinth meditations of followers of this path.

The stigmata of this path are more prone to movement than those of any other path. When the magus is concentrating or performing magic, his stigma may swim through mystically significant patterns. Thematically, the stigmata gained on this path are linked to the element of water, and to reflective things.

Followers of this path often have familiars that dwell at the border of two elements. Waterbirds are popular, particularly the sacred ibis. This was the form taken by Thoth, also called Hermes, when he instructed early humans in magic. Beavers, otters, and crocodiles also have surprising prevalence.

object to himself. These visions are not metaphorical, and the roles magi play tend to be people of low social class, who have little legitimate contact with magi. This process forces the magus to see himself through foreign eyes. This engenders a more accurate sense of self and makes the magus a devotee of the path.

If the magus fails to deliver the object, he becomes lost in a new vision from the memories of another object, and must try again. When the ritual is concluded successfully, the magus must bind the delivered object as his talisman. The object is usually symbolically suitable for the magus, but if it is impractical, the magus may transform it with Hermetic magic before enchantment.

A magus Initiated into this station can handle a mundane object without magic resistance, concentrate, and recall its history as if the object had human senses. A magus handling a silk handkerchief could remember the Byzantine bazaar where it was sold, the Italian merchant who purchased it, the hold of his ship, the lady to whom he sold it, and the servant to whom she gave it, as if the magus had been the handkerchief. This ability cannot read the memories of humans or other self-aware creatures.

A magus seeking a particular memory makes a Perception + Enigmatic Wisdom roll. The Ease Factor is six for details the item encountered daily, nine for details

the item encountered every week, 15 for events that happened occasionally in the item's presence, and 18 for unique events. The item's memories of an event are particularly vivid if the event altered the spiritual quality of the item. The moments of an object's creation and breaking are always vivid. Sins, crimes, or charitable acts performed using the item are also recalled vibrantly. Add +3 to the Perception + Enigmatic Wisdom roll for vivid events.

It is possible to recall a city as though touring it with an appropriate object, and some Criamon get very nostalgic for places they have never seen. They warn that there is a lifetime of memory in every cup, stone, and apple, which is why the solution to the Enigma is so difficult to find.

EXAMPLE: AVENUE OF THE UNEXPECTED PAGES

Antigone, a follower of this path skilled in Imaginem magic, falls into coma with a silver candlestick between her hands. Within her psychodramatic Quest, she awakens in the body of a swineherd named Tobias, who lives five miles from the covenant. He awakes holding the candlestick and knows he must deliver it to an oblivious Antigone. Antigone-as-Tobias must complete an arduous trek, face robbers seeking the stick, negotiate

with surly guards (who are versions of grog PCs), and deal with a patronizing maga (controlled by another player) to complete the Quest.

THE AVENUE THAT IS A CROSSROAD AND THE STATION OF PASSING THROUGH SEEMING

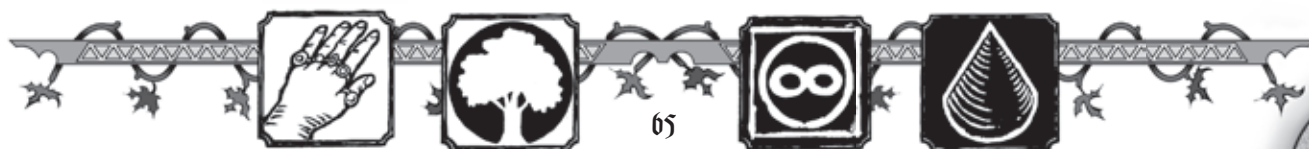
This avenue allows the magus to approach a station that permits his to send his spirit traveling through the world's ocean of magical energy. A magus who liberates his spirit in this way finds it drawn, sequentially, to the four Edges of the World. These are regiones corresponding to the four elements and humors. The magus must escape each of these lands, coming eventually back to his body.

Initiates of this station can ignore the world, accepting that much of it is an illusion. They seek a place by swimming through the Inspirato to view it. The part of the magus that travels is that which becomes a ghost after death. The ghostly magus ignores gravity, and so may swim through the air. The magus can see at his destination, and speak audibly, but may not handle mundane objects except in auras of eight or more. He may touch enchanted items and other ghostly beings, because they also have a magical nature.

While the spirit of a magician is absent, the body appears to be a fresh corpse. The magus's body can starve or die of thirst. Its automatic reflexes allow it to swallow soft foods or water placed in its mouth. Caring for the body is a task often given to an apprentice. Magi traveling spectrally — or "passing through seeming" — have limited ability to cast spells. At their destination, they may cast spells at Arcane Connection range. They cannot sense their body's surroundings, but if they wish to cast spells ranged Personal, they may do so normally.

THE AVENUE THAT LEADS TO TRANSCENDENCE AND THE STATION FROM WHICH TO IGNORE THE REAL

The Axis Magica, on New Year's Eve, is the only suitable investiture site for this



Passing Through Rules

A magus's Pass Through Seeming Total is a simple die + Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom + the magical aura of his destination.

A magus can always find the Cave of Twisting Shadows: it is the center of the world to a spiritual traveler.

A magus may find very familiar places with a total of 6 or more. For example, if the magus's body has been moved, he requires this total to find it again. Places in the magus's covenant usually also have this Ease Factor, with possible exceptions such as the sancta of other magi, or the chapel.

If a magus is attempting to return to a place that he has visited before, he must total 12 or more to arrive. Magi who fail this roll wander lost for an hour before either returning to their body, which they can always find provided it hasn't been moved, or re-rolling with a +1 bonus for each hour wasted.

If the wanderer is attempting to visit a place he does not know, he needs a strong physical connection, emotional

connection, or Arcane Connection to it. For this journey, he needs to total 15 or more to arrive successfully. Failure indicates he travels in the wrong direction for up to an hour. The magus may then return to his body, provided it has not been moved, or re-roll gaining a +1 bonus for each failed roll.

Some travelers seek out strange places, like Arcadia. This requires a roll of 18, or more for particularly distant places.

Each journey takes about an hour; this is why magi realize they are lost after around that amount of time. Particularly distant places take longer, at the troupe's discretion.

Characters in this spectral form may be seen by those with Second Sight, and are hindered by an *Aegis of the Hearth* as if they were creatures with a Magic Might score of five times their Enigmatic Wisdom. They may be harmed by Mentem spells, and cannot protect themselves with the Parma Magica.

Mystery, but magi who already dwell at the Cave of Twisting Shadows are required to venture spiritually to the other regio, where the Axis emerges from the other side of the Earth's sphere. Few magi know what lies in these lands, which they call Hypernestoria. Magi who follow this avenue discover that the mundane world is merely a frame of reference. It becomes difficult to differentiate consensual reality from all the other illusions the magus encounters.

A magus who has attained this station may ignore mundane objects, briefly. With a Stamina + Concentration roll against an Ease Factor of six, and a round of preparation, the magus can act as if a single solid object was spectral for a number of minutes equal to the magus's Enigmatic Wisdom score. The magus may affect as many objects at once as he can concentrate upon. The Ease Factor increases by one for every object after the first. Groups of objects add three to the Ease Factor. This means that, for example, the droplets of a rainstorm, or the shafts of a hail of arrows, pass through the

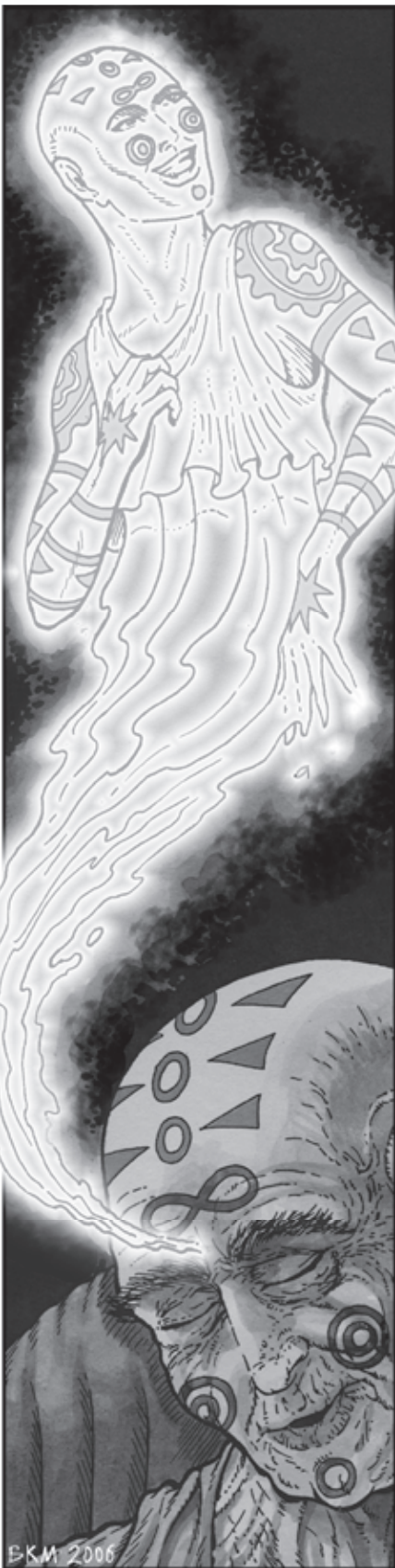
magus on a roll of nine or more. People cannot be ignored because they have souls, and so are qualitatively different from mundane objects.

Characters who achieve this station do not clearly differentiate the mundane world and the Hypostasis. This makes them more likely to suffer Twilight experiences, as their ability to navigate back to the mortal world is impaired.

NO REPOSE

Magi on this path do not find repose. They simply cease to distinguish between Twilight and reality, and so fade away, like illusions. Some have suggested that these magi have withdrawn into prolonged, temporary Twilight, and will return to the world when they wish, probably to hear the answer when it is discovered, but any of them might, theoretically, return at any time.

Some magi of this path flee death or Twilight by wandering through an infinite



number of memories in moments, living untold lifetimes in mere weeks. These magi descend into comas and eventually float into Final Twilight. What happens to the minds of these magi afterward is unclear, but many suggest that they will live in psychodrama until awakened by the answer to the Enigma.

The Path of Strife

The Path of Strife is the path of worldly magic. It transgresses the morality of the House. The House has only a few servants of strife, who, since they know they are incapable of spiritual purity in this lifetime, take upon themselves the tasks that might pollute their housemates. They do not indulge in immoral actions needlessly, but they are prepared to kill, lie, and destroy things if it assists the House. They usually do not tell their housemates what they are doing to avoid causing the moral contamination of being accessories to sin.

The followers of this path see demons as revelers in a kind of strife, creatures from near the end of this half of the cycle of time. By destroying demons, then, they prolong the life of the universe, allowing their sodales more time to solve the Enigma. They fight demons, not because they are evil, but because the servants of strife are not willing to share the remaining harmony in the universe with them. They would waste it, while Criamon magi might instead use it wisely.

THE AVENUE OF FAITH IN STRIFE AND THE STATION OF THE EATER OF SIN

The Prima and other senior mages counsel young magi against seeking this path. If they cannot be dissuaded, they are directed to the Initiation site, which is maintained far from the Cave of Twisting Shadows. There the Keeper of the Path tests them: they must negotiate the Labyrinth of Strife, a tangled structure of tunnels which magi can only escape by performing feats that violate the usual Criamon tenets of apt action. When magi

The Path of Strife, Portrayed With Figures

Strife takes many forms, but has these Initiation Scripts:

THE AVENUE OF FAITH IN STRIFE AND THE STATION OF THE EATER OF SIN

Target level 21: Treated as a Major Virtue (may sense magic and use a weapon with Enigmatic Wisdom score)

Script Bonus +15: Ordeal (Blatant Gift) +9, special Ppace and time +3, sympathetic bonus (commit transgression by eating meat, having sex, and engaging in other profanities) +3

As an alternative Script, those magi who kill the Primus during the House's succession ritual are Initiated into the first station of this path. They cannot continue on the path until they study House Criamon Lore and may not know that the House has granted them this gift until their mystical sense begins to manifest. Followers of the second script do not develop the Blatant Gift. In this ritual, the genius of the House acts as Mystagogue (Presence + House Criamon Lore of 15).

Script Bonus +6: Special place and time +3, sympathetic bonus (transgression of murdering the Primus) +3

THE AVENUE THAT SPLINTERS AND THE STATION OF BLOOD AND BRONZE

Target level 12, as Major Virtue 21 (can destroy things by meditating around them and do extra damage with weapons), first Initiation since Major Ordeal -9

Script Bonus +6: Minor Ordeal (Higher Purpose to eat sin on behalf of the House) +3, special time and place +3. Characters who slew a Primus on the first avenue suffer an additional Ordeal

on this avenue, which gives them the Blatant Gift +9 (offsets loss of -9 modifier in target level for first Initiation since Major Ordeal).

AVENUE OF CHARM AND SCORN, AND THE STATION THAT REPELS AND ATTRACTS ELEMENTS

Target level 15, as Major Virtue 21 (may attract or repel a single element at a time), second Initiation since Major Ordeal -6. (The latter is -9 for those who slew a Primus, but the House doesn't take advantage of this. Characters on the path might discover that the special time and place isn't required for Primus-slayers.)

Script Bonus +9: Quest (seek lover) +3, special time and place +3, sympathetic bonus (marriage as metaphor for love and strife) +3

THE AVENUE OF BEFRIENDING THE SILENT AND THE STATION THAT CHARMS THE ELEMENTS

Target level 21, as Major Virtue (speak to elementally-pure objects)

Script Bonus +15: Ordeal (Major Flaw Pious replaces Minor Flaw Higher Purpose) +6, Ordeal (equivalent of Supernatural Nuisance) +3, Ordeal (Disfigured) +3, Mystagogue's time +3

AVENUE OF DEATH AND THE STATION OF GOLDEN CIDER

Target level 15, as Major Virtue 21 (make some mystical things mundane), first Initiation since Intermediate Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +12: Ordeal (four pairs of Incompatible Arts) +12

reach the end of the process of degradation, they discover the first station on the path, and are infused with the power of strife.

Magi on this path have aligned themselves with strife. They can sense the increase in strife that occurs when magic is used. They, in turn, are so attuned to strife that they radiate it. They may use their Enigmatic Wisdom as the Magic

Sensitivity Ability, but they do not subtract it from their Magic Resistance. They develop the Blatant Gift.

Members of this path perform their labyrinth meditations while armed with weapons. The associated movements — a series of strikes, blocks, and feints performed with exacting slowness — seem graceful and dance-like to those unfamiliar with this path. A magus on this path





may use his Enigmatic Wisdom score as if it were a score for a single type of weapon. The magus may change his weapon type when his Enigmatic Wisdom score increases in level. A weapon, in this case, refers to a single-line entry from the tables found on ArM5, pages 176–177, excepting any type of armor or shield.

THE AVENUE THAT SPLINTERS AND THE STATION OF BLOOD AND BRONZE

Those seeking the second station on the Path of Strife are attempting to gain the ability to do tremendous damage at will. They are guided only after a representative of the Prima is given a final opportunity to dissuade them from this path. A committed magus is invested at a place saturated with strife, on the anniversary of the greatest number of deaths that strife has caused. The ruins of Herculaneum, destroyed in ancient times along with Pompeii by the eruption of Mount Etna, are traditionally used for this ritual.

A magus who has performed these rituals has committed himself to the Path of Strife, and may take no other path, save the Mirror path restricted to the Primus. He cannot enter Final Twilight. Any situation that would usually result in Final Twilight instead kills the magus, reducing him to a collection of particularly nasty adulterations.

The magus's ability to sense strife allows him to sense and promote weakness or decay in objects. A labyrinth meditation around an object without Magic Resistance causes it to rot or rust until it is little more than powder. A labyrinth meditation around a space, which can be no wider than 500 feet across per level of Enigmatic Wisdom that the magus possesses, kills every mundane thing within that area, in a way suiting the magus's sigil. This station cannot harm humans directly, because they possess souls, which protects them.

Strikes with the magus's meditation weapon precisely exploit tiny flaws in the victim. They have four times the usual Attack Bonus, and can injure creatures immune to non-magical attacks. This power's Penetration is (magus's Enigmatic

Wisdom x 5), taking the Form of the weapon's striking edge. Creatures aligned to the Divine realm never have these flaws that enable such potent attacks, and are immune to this power. Similarly, a creature made up of an undifferentiated mass of matter, like some elemental spirits are, does not have exploitable flaws.

AVENUE OF CHARM AND SCORN, AND THE STATION THAT REPELS AND ATTRACTS ELEMENTS

This avenue is completed by finding a lover, whom the magus marries using a mystical rite. The lover must be a perfect symbolic complement to the magus. The lover may represent the element that opposes the magus's specialty, for example. The marriage must occur at an auspicious place that represents a joining of the two opposing principles expressed in the lovers. The Mystagogue acts as the celebrant to the perpetual joining of the couple. Magi who lose these spouses often develop the Lost Love Flaw.

At this degree of skill, a servant of strife may repel or attract mundane objects using strife and harmony. The magus may only attract or repel a single Form at a time. The magus can employ this ability at will. He may switch objects and Forms once per round, and the ability does not require fatigue or concentration. The magus may affect multiple objects, provided their combined weight does not exceed the magus's weight multiplied by three. The magus must be aware of given objects to use this ability upon them, but does not need to be able to discern them precisely. It is, for example, possible for the magus to repel the metal heads of a cloud of arrows fired from cover, through scrub. This power lacks a Penetration score and fails against warded objects.

This skill is often used to make objects float to, or fly swiftly from, the hand of the magus, but it has other uses. For example, a magus attracting a wall to his hands cannot slip while climbing it, and a magus repelling water finds it comfortable to walk through flooding rain. Many magi with this ability can levitate; they claim to be repelling the ground. Other magi note that this makes no sense at all.



THE AVENUE OF BEFRIENDING THE SILENT AND THE STATION THAT CHARMS THE ELEMENTS

To begin this avenue, the magus is taught the symbolic language of elemental spirits by the Mystagogue. This allows the magus to speak with, and form friendships with, the animating spirits in all elementally pure objects. These bonds are reciprocal. Magical beasts and faeries act as messengers for many natural features, and they ask the magus for assistance with their problems. Servants of strife are the Cramon magi most likely to preserve the natural world.

A magus of this degree of Initiation can convince the spirits of objects to perform actions, using their ability to attract elements. The magus may speak to any object that is non-organic and elementally pure (that is, of a single Form. He may, for example, speak to a rock, but not a leaf, or a clear lake, but not a turgid one. Objects of human artifice can be spoken with if they are of a single elemental Form, physically continuous, and smaller than five feet and eight inches in any dimension. Servants of strife theorize that this was the height of the pioneer of their path. This power has a Penetration score of 0.

A magus using this power does not control the mind of the spirit, and in exceptional cases may find the spirit uncooperative. Although elemental objects think the magus charming, some have sentimental attachments to nearby humans, and these are generally unwilling to do anything that might cause their humans harm. Many other spirits dislike nearby humans, though; many towns have a river into which they pour sewage, and many fields have stones that resist the plough.

With a Presence + Charm roll against an Ease Factor of 9 a magus can convince a spirit to give information, or to move in minor, useful ways. The animating spirits of objects do not react negatively to The Gift. Most objects can sense what has occurred near them, and can report it in some fashion to the magus, although their senses are sometimes limited, and their grasp of human time poor.

Objects usually move by a slithering action, but objects that naturally move simply travel as if they have motive

Path Symbolism

Magi on this path specialize in the Art of Perdo, but temper this with secondary interests. Those who wish to hunt demons also study Vim. Travelers on this path do not study Creo beyond the minimum required to train apprentices. They are aware that the capacity to use it will be severely damaged by their Initiations.

The stigmata of this path first appear on the magus's hands. They rapidly spread up the arms and across the chest before reaching up the neck to the chin. The marks usually have a style of curved edge called rayonny by heralds.

There is no sound associated with the meditations of this path's followers; they are almost eerily silent.

The stigmata of this path tend to reflect flame and radiance. Magi engaged in mystical combat often report that their stigmata glow, and sometimes melt together. A few remove the garments from their upper torso before vigorous magic use because the heat from their stigmata ignites the cloth it touches. These magi report that their stigmata are tender, like sunburn, after these incidents.

power. Most elemental objects are capable of movement at a human rate — they simply choose not to do so under normal conditions. This movement can appear slightly unnatural. For example, a fire can travel as if being pushed by a wind despite its absence, or a river can push a boat despite the usual absence of a current. The objects cannot, however, perform actions that are deeply supernatural: the fire cannot burn through stone, the river cannot flow noticeably uphill. Acts requiring great effort on the part of the elemental spirit — for example, convincing a river to ignore its usual path and wash through a town on its floodplain — require higher Charm rolls.

Magi who have progressed this far on the Path of Strife find themselves, despite many deep spiritual transgressions, in loving relationships, with communities of friends. They usually come to feel that if they were forced to live in such a fashion over and over for eternity, that'd be pleasant. This cheery view is considered weird by other Cramon magi, and makes such magi devotees of the path.

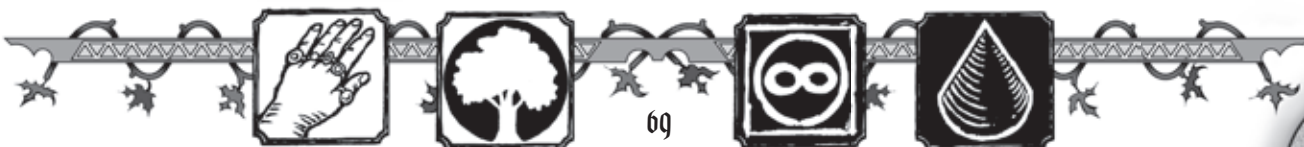
AVENUE OF DEATH AND THE STATION OF GOLDEN CIDER

Magi who choose investiture via the Avenue of Death undergo a ritual, supervised by the most senior magus on this path. They lose the ability to use the Creo Art in conjunction with any Forms

save Corpus and Vim. They have drawn themselves so far from harmony that they simply cannot use it any longer. The creation of magical energy channels strife, and concern with the well-being of the bodies of others, particularly the magus's spouse, is transgressive to this path. The details of this ritual are kept private, and not all supplicants survive it.

This extreme degree of investiture in the power of strife allows magi to draw the capacity to manipulate strife out of objects, creatures, and some people. Magical items become mundane when this power is used upon them. Vis becomes a natural example of whatever shape it has. This power does not affect mundane items that are the targets of spells, so while it can destroy an enchanted sword that burns on command, it cannot harm a normal sword made to burn by a spellcaster. For warded objects, this power has a Penetration score of (Enigmatic Wisdom x 5), with a Form of Corpus.

Some creatures have no mundane equivalent, and these are transformed into symbolic objects. A giant might become a hill that looks vaguely like a sleeping man. A dragon might become a storm, or a ring of standing stones, or a volcanic fissure, depending on its type and powers. Powerful demons lose the body they are using to appear in the world rather than being destroyed. Faeries become natural objects, dreams, or memories. Representatives of the Divine realm lack strife, so this power cannot affect them.



This power requires a preparatory labyrinth meditation, before combat, and the magus must have an Enigmatic Wisdom score at least one-fifth of the victim's Magic Resistance. The magus must touch the victim with bare hands and maintain uninterrupted contact for three minutes. This requires at least part of the victim to remain immobile, which may be accomplished with physical traps, magic, or grappling.

Characters must meditate on their victim's weaknesses before battle. They must have sufficient information about the enemy for their meditation to be accurate. They cannot meditate repeatedly to allow multiple attempts in the same battle, and cannot store generic meditations for later use.

This power can destroy many supernatural talents. The Gift itself is tied, in some fashion, to the soul, which links it to harmony. A magus of strife cannot sever The Gift, except with the active, knowing assistance of the Gifted individual. If The Gift is severed, the magical air that causes people to distrust most magi fades.

REPOSE

Followers of the Path of Strife cannot ascend into Final Twilight. They are so impure that if they attempt to do so, they die and create terrible adulterations. Many choose, near the end of their lives (or as a Twilight experience begins), to use the Golden Cider upon themselves. They relinquish The Gift and choose to die, beginning a new cycle of redemptive reincarnations. Many believe this selfless act makes good much of the fault of their lives.

The Path of Walking Backwards

The Path of Walking Backwards is one of the newer paths: it entered the House after Abdkypris spent time among the Sufi. It is not a form of Islam because it does not embrace Mohammed as the Prophet. It is, however, a form of complete surrender to the harmonic force,

which draws the magus into spiritual unity with the universe. At that time of complete harmony, a doorway opens through which the magus can flee back to the Spahrios. Many such magi often choose not to walk through the doorway for a time, however, so that they may aid others.

The labyrinth meditation of members of the Path of Walking Backwards is often a dancing or spinning technique learned from Sufi Muslims, although the European labyrinth form also persists. Spinners and dancers use Dexterity rather than Intelligence when making Enigmatic Wisdom rolls during Labyrinth meditations — their meditation empties the mind of thought so that the body can act in the correct way, unfettered by distraction. Characters commencing this path choose which method suits them, either the reasoned labyrinth walk or the instinctual, ecstatic dance. They may only change their method after story events that lead to a profound transformation of their philosophy.

One school of Sufi, Abdkypris was surprised to discover, reveres Empedocles as a hierophant. Their interpretation of his teaching, which is different from yet reflects the House's understanding, fascinates many Criamon magi. This has led the House into a more active, conciliatory political role in those Tribunals where Islam and Christianity clash. An increasing number of Criamon magi are Muslims, or come from the Muslim lands, which the House has explored with the assistance of its "cousins."

Members of this path are the Criamon magi most likely to be religious. Some have become monotheists; they accept a creator who embodies harmony. There are many interpretations among them for the existence of the universe, although Islam, Origenism (the belief that the universe exists to allow all things to reconcile to God), and Manichaeism (the belief that God has been shattered into pieces and every living thing holds a portion of the Divine) are popular. Empedocles believed that the immortals worshiped a goddess called Cypris — a variant of Aphrodite — who incarnates love, and some Criamon claim to have met with her.

THE AVENUE OF SURRENDER AND THE STATION OF SERVICE TO HARMONY

Magi begin this path by forswearing their destructive past. They purge their aggressive and greedy natures from their souls with meditation, fasting, ritualized flagellation, or other techniques. The magus then goes on pilgrimage to a site that he considers spiritually meaningful, and participates in rites of purification with the aid of a Mystagogue. The younger magus, by accepting the Mystagogue, accepts subordination to her greater wisdom. This path is strongly hierarchical, compared to the others that the House follows.

After purification, the Mystagogue trains the supplicant for a season in lore to aid him in following the path further. In the Islamic variant of the path, this is Muslim theology. Once the magus's desire to harm and covet has faded entirely, the odor of The Gift leaves his soul.

The Gift of most characters on this path becomes Gentle. Those with the Blatant Gift lose that Flaw, and take on the standard penalties for The Gift instead. If the character suffers a Warping experience that would restore the odor of The Gift, or restore the Blatant Gift, select an alternative Warping effect.

THE AVENUE OF HEALING AND THE STATION OF RICE AND HONEY

A magus who has walked this far along the backward path may restore damaged things to wholeness without the use of vis. This requires a labyrinth meditation while carrying, or circling, the object. For example, a magus holding a cracked emerald can dance it to wholeness. Items made imperfect by human artifice cannot be made whole, so while a gemstone bored into a bead could be restored into an unscratched and unfractured bead, it could not be restored to the state of a whole stone. This power heals animals and plants, except when they have been injured by human tools, but cannot return life to dead things. The object usually cannot be more than ten

The Path of Walking Backwards, Illustrated Arithmetically

The Path of Walking Backwards is constructed from the following Initiation Scripts:

THE AVENUE OF SURRENDER AND THE STATION OF SERVICE TO HARMONY

Target level 21, Major Virtue (Gentle Gift) or elimination of Flaw (Blatant Gift)

Script Bonus +15: Major Ordeal (Pious) +9, special time and place +3, Mystagogue's time +3

THE AVENUE OF HEALING AND THE STATION OF RICE AND HONEY

Target level 12, as Major Virtue 21 (may meditate around mundane objects

and restore them to wholeness), first Initiation since Major Ordeal -9

Script Bonus +6: Ordeal (Noncombatant) +3, Ordeal (equivalent to a Vow to help the injured) +3

THE AVENUE OF ADULATION AND STATION OF EXPRESSION

Target level 15, as Major Virtue 21 (Free Expression, Inspirational, may use Enigmatic Wisdom in lieu of one artistic skill), second Initiation since Major Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +9: Mystagogue's time +3, Quest to a place of unspeakable beauty +3, special time and place +3

THE AVENUE OF A THOUSAND BEAUTIFUL FACES AND THE STATION OF EXALTATION

Target level 18, as Major Virtue 21 (may meditate around objects to give them a single, positive property), third Initiation since Major Ordeal -3

Script bonus +12: Ordeal (4 x Incompatible Arts) +12

IMMORTAL ASCENSION AS REPOSE

Target level 15, Major Virtue 21 (may choose apparent age and gender), second Initiation since Major Ordeal -6

Script Bonus +9: Mystagogue's time +3, Quests to deal with psychic residue +3, special time and place +3.

yards across, but gatherings of those with this Virtue can form dancing circles about proportionately larger objects to repair them. This power has a Penetration score of the magus's Enigmatic Wisdom multiplied by five.

The special nature of humans, as creatures responsible for their own destinies, makes them difficult to manipulate. The magus may not heal humans instantly without vis. By performing labyrinth meditations around a dying person, however, the magus may hold her upon the threshold of death, allowing others time to stabilize her injuries or provide magical healing. A magus may safely continue performing meditations for a number of hours equal to his Enigmatic Wisdom score. This process is exhausting, but not dangerous. The magus can even continue past his Enigmatic Wisdom score in hours for an additional period equal to any positive Stamina score he has, but to do so triggers a Twilight experience.

A character who has become a healer cannot choose to harm; he gains the Noncombatant Flaw. These magi also attract injured, mystically-sensitive creatures. Healing such beings sometimes requires addressing the underlying, mundane problems that their wounds reflect. For example, a dryad with gnawing cramps in her stomach may be experiencing the pain of part of her forest, invaded by magical termites.

THE AVENUE OF ADULATION AND STATION OF EXPRESSION

Harmony is beautiful. The splendor of harmony is so great that, for the uninitiated, it is inexpressible. This is why, followers of the path believe, Criamon magi cannot discuss Enigmatic Wisdom with outsiders. This avenue forces magi to learn ways of expressing the beauty of harmony by so filling their lives with magnificence that they have no choice but to evolve into finer creatures, capable of communicating that beauty, or die in rapture. Each magus travels to a place of unimaginable profoundness, then meets the Mystagogue and attempts to express what he has seen and done. The Mystagogue coaxes him into articulation, often by expressing her own impression of harmony.

Each magus who completes this avenue gains the Virtues Free Expression and Inspirational, and may use Enigmatic Wisdom in lieu of one artistic skill, which-ever he uses to express the beauty of harmony. Following Initiation into the station, magi may use their new abilities to communicate complex concepts to others in metaphorical form, through artworks of devastating insight. Poetry and dance are traditional choices, but this is a reflection of the Muslim influence in the School. Other choices are certainly possible; Westerners often choose music or

painting, and other members of the path would welcome new media of expression.

Mundane viewers of an artistic expression created by one who has achieved this station grasp, in a way they cannot describe, the message that the magus is attempting to convey. They find it persuasive, but are unable to articulate it in any detail unless they have Enigmatic Wisdom. Those who are artists can communicate it in their own works. Followers of this path who gather can have complicated arguments and consultations without exchanging a word.

THE AVENUE OF A THOUSAND BEAUTIFUL FACES AND THE STATION OF EXALTATION

A magus who achieves the fourth station on the Path of Walking Backwards may draw objects and things closer to their perfect state. By performing a labyrinth meditation while carrying or circling an object, the magus draws the virtues of its nature to the surface. The magus does not usually know the higher nature of an object, and so cannot be sure which virtues will appear, except with an extremely difficult Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom roll (Ease Factor 21 or more). The magus cannot select virtues for an object, only draw out those that already exist. This power has a Penetration score of the



Path Symbolism

Magi on this path specialize in the Art of Creo. Supplicants on this path do not study Perdo beyond the minimum required to train apprentices. They do not desire to use it, beyond teaching, following their Initiations into the deeper stations of the path.

The stigmata of this path first appear on the soles of the magus's feet. They rapidly spread up the legs and buttocks, before curling up the sternum and throat. The marks are angular, often being comprised of triangles. The sound associated with the meditations of this path's fol-

lowers is the footstep at lower degrees of Initiation, and the cry of wonder for those further along the path.

The stigmata of this path tend toward hazy, bright colors. The images these stigma form are uplifting, and reflect the element of air. The followers of this path appear to be followed by a cool breeze as they travel. The magus's stigmata also have a pleasant scent, which varies between magi. The scent soaks into those things they touch. The familiars of these magi are always herbivores or, occasionally, magical plants.

Twilight and Walking Backwards

The threshold of repose on the Path of Walking Backwards grants no immunity to Twilight. However, magi who abstain from all use of magic and stay out of powerful supernatural auras can avoid entering Twilight by avoiding gaining two or more Warping Points at once.

magus's Enigmatic Wisdom multiplied by five.

A player trying to conceive how this power works should think of it this way: each use of the power adds one plausible, positive adjective to the description of any mundane object. The magus may make a horse swift, or a gemstone beautiful, or a field fertile. These advantages are always positive from the spiritual perspective of the magus, so they can rarely make weapons sharp, or goods valuable. They cannot give new or magical properties to things, only draw out potential hidden within them already.

A magus may not draw virtues out of humans using this process — their souls make their fates a matter of personal determination, and their virtues matters of spiritual choice. Magi can, however, act to allow choice, so an unwelcome demon can be drawn from a person using this technique.

A magus who walks this far upon the Path of Walking Backward may never again use the Perdo technique combined with any Form except Vim or Imaginem. The magus sees the harmonic force, or the face of the divinity he reveres, in everything, and is unwilling to use the power of strife to shatter that face. The magus offers up the ability to do so to the harmonic forces of the universe for destruction.

AVENUE OF SILENCING DISCORDANT WHISPERS AND THE THRESHOLD OF REPOSE

Characters who come close to the final station on the Path of Walking Backward must contest with a series of spiritual obstacles. These are created — some say — by the last remnants of strife in the magus's mind, by the strife-ridden universe, or by a deity who is the incarnation of strife. The obstacles take the form of temptation to seek material power, comfort, sensual experiences, and eternal life.

A magus may gain repose by ascending to rejoin the Spharior, using the great secret of this path. The Spharior is conscious, and remains so throughout its dissolution and recohension. Magi who do so become one with the mind of the universe, and may carry with them those deserving the same revelation, or evil things to be absorbed and nullified by the sphere. This can include people and

creatures, but also the traits of individuals and places. A magus who chooses not to ascend lives as a creature of perfect harmony in a world of strife.

A magus of this station may select his age, gender, and species as often as he wishes, taking only the time of a breath to change. The magus's human forms appear to be blood relations to each other and there is only one form for each combination of age and sex. Each time the magus chooses, for example, to be a European female in her old age, the magus has the same form. If that magus then chooses to appear as a younger woman, he appears as a younger version of the older form, rather than as a completely different person. Wounds persist regardless of form.

Each magus of this station is permitted to choose the time of his own death. It is impossible for a magus who is proud or afraid of death to reach this state of enlightenment. If the magus does risky things, like engaging in warfare, that is considered a free choice that may lead to death. Magi who achieve this ability usually remain alive for only brief spans required to finish symbolic tasks, or else they withdraw to an isolated place and wait — sometimes for centuries — to deliver a particular piece of information or solve a particular problem before ascension. During this delay, they act as teachers.

Some magi dwell on the threshold because they believe their personal role in the great narrative of creation, which the Spharior whispers to itself, is incomplete. Most believe that by acting aptly they can shorten the period of the dissolution, and so cause everything and everyone to have a smaller burden of pain to share through time. These magi believe that their presence in time allows the Spharior to learn to tell its autobiography in a different way than the tale told in the last cycle. The Spharior is learning with each cycle of time, purifying itself, finding a way not to fall into strife, and these magi believe their work is vital to that.

Islamic magi tend to dwell on the threshold because they believe they have an appointed task to complete. Their Sufi faith is based on the love of God, not on the rewards he offers after death, so

they see no hurry to die. They just live on in the simple way approved by their faith, perhaps for centuries, until they complete their assigned task.

Other Paths

The House currently has magi active on nine different paths, including the Winding Path. Each path, except one, motivates the life of a clutch and each clutch is centered in a separate Tribunal. The Path of Beacons lacks a clutch, because it teaches Mysteries that allow each individual magus to create a sanctuary from the strife of the world. Its eldest magus lives in a regio of his own creation on the Isle of Arran. Each clutch, except one, includes magi from paths other than the one that motivates it. The Clutch of Ebony Eggs, which is filled with the servants of the Path of Strife, has no followers of other paths. The Cave of Twisting Shadows is the Clutch for the Path of the Mirror, which is followed only by Primi.

There are four paths that no longer have living travelers. Each is represented by at least one spectral Primus, who waits for an appropriate time to revive his tradition.

New Virtues

DANCE THAT HEALS

Major, Supernatural

Characters from some Sufi traditions have the ability to dance objects to wholeness, much as magi on the Path of Walking Backward do.

GUEST OF THE HOUSE

Minor, General

Magi with this Virtue are, politically, members of House Criamon, but may be created using the rules for any other House. Guests are offered membership, which Criamon see as a political formality, for many reasons. The troupe and player should determine why the character found it necessary to find sanctuary with this House.

GORGIASTIC

Minor, General

These magi, or their ancestors, have rejected the teachings of House Criamon. These magi may have Enigmatic Wisdom and House Criamon Lore scores after character creation. The character's Enigmatic Wisdom Score cannot exceed 4 without the assistance of Criamon magi, or a magical breakthrough. House Criamon attempts to convince Gorgiastic magi to rejoin. Gorgiastic magi do not usually have Criamon stigmata, but develop them if they begin to delve into the causes of things.

SPEECH WITH THE SILENT

Major, Supernatural

The character has the ability to charm elemental objects into assisting him, as magi on the Path of Strife do.

New Flaws

INSCRIBED SHADOW

Minor, Supernatural

The character's stigmata are reflected by glowing symbols in the character's shadow. This causes alarm among non-

magicians and makes the character's stigma extremely easy for other Criamon magi to read (+3 on all rolls). The shadow's glowing symbols do not vanish when there is insufficient light to form a shadow, they burn brighter. Characters who use magic to hide their stigmata are not acting aptly.

STIGMATIC CATALYST

Minor, Supernatural

The character's presence causes symbolic marks to appear on the bodies of people without magic resistance nearby. The magus cannot control this process, but may make Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom rolls of 6 or more to tell those so afflicted what form or spiritual purification they must undergo for the stigma to disappear. Characters who are stigmatized may react violently toward the magus.

MALIGNANT MAGUS

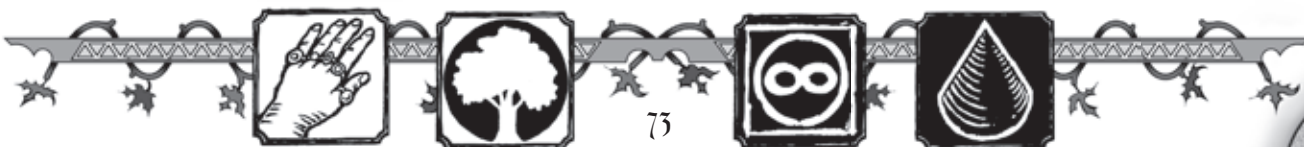
Minor, Story, Supernatural

A piece of the magus's psyche has been broken loose by a Twilight experience, and now manifests physically as an adulteration. This allows the magus to be a pleasant and upstanding person, because his negative impulses do terrible things out of the magus's sight. Eventually the character's adulteration must be resolved, but in the interim, his enemies are attacked by a magical monster of mysterious origin, without the magus's conscious consent or approval.

PREDICTIVE STIGMATA

Minor, Story, Supernatural

The character's stigmata predict future challenges in symbolic form. They move unpredictably, and if ignored may flee the magus's body and become adulterations.



Quindecim

On the path, sing praise

Sing, in the heart, praise to your brother
Final child of the primal shape
silent, grieving, as he fades.

Praise him for his vigor
that sustains, that enlightens
Laud his example, and yearn for him,
as does every flower.

Sing, in the heart, praise for your sister.
Modest, beautiful, flightily constant,
parasitic, demonstrative, as she waxes.

Praise her for her transience,
that draws and repels,
Laud her example, and fear her message,
as does every salmon.

Sing, in the heart, praise for your mother,
vast glass cradle
rocked by the stars

Praise her for her constancy.
Her firmness, Criamon's hope
that lies within her certainties.

Sing in your heart, praise for your father
deeper than mountains, the measure of age
Unchanged above tempests
Praise him for his implacability
The spur of his insistence
that forces upward, into Twilight

Sing, in your heart, praise that you can sing.
That aptness is discernable
That aptness is beautiful

Praise aptness for transparency
and for the delight of translucency
and the joy of opacity

On the path, cherish those who travel with you.

Cherish the brute that carries
the weight of expiation
both his, and yours.

Cherish the girl that refreshes
with her laughter
with her kisses

Cherish the girl that whispers,
she embraces you,
and fills your chest

Cherish the shoes that trudge
Their scuffs and wrinkles
are yours

Cherish the stick that supports
From it suspend your bag
of good food, that sustains

Cherish the girl that dances
She warms you as you sleep
and she cooks, too.

Cherish the things that adorn.
Don't be distracted
or you will see them again.

Cherish those who cherish you
Destinations need people
Carry those who fall

Cherish the girl that encloses
She bears your weight
Why complain?

Cherish the road,
It hurts your feet
but reciprocation is fair.

Chapter Three

House Merinita

When we admire nature, in fact we appreciate how her beauty resembles that of humanity. We admire a fine, healthy tree as we admire a stout yeoman of the forest; we see a face in the clouds and marvel at his moods. We see the nature of the world in human terms, and the Fair Folk are merely these fancies given form — the tree becomes the man, the cloud becomes the face — and to admire them is to admire the essential truth that is the foundation of their being. No, I have not abandoned nature: I simply visit her now through intermediaries.

—Quendalon, first Primus of House Merinita

Kill the traitor! Kill the imposter! Kill the changeling!

—Myanar, former Prima of House Merinita

Provocative, playful, secretive, sinister: like the beings with which they associate, House Merinita defies concise description. As no two faeries are exactly alike, no two members of the House are exactly the same. They learn magic to study and serve the fae, or placate and protect them, or perhaps command and coerce them. There is no unity in the association of these magi; they are a collection of individuals with a shared Hermetic history, little hierarchy or structure, and nothing but their wild assortment of Mysteries in common.

These magi essentially serve two masters: the Magic and Faerie realms. They have The Gift and they practice Hermetic magic; yet they are drawn to the faeries, and appreciate their unpredictable and inspirational nature. Merinita magi thus maintain a delicate balance between this raw power of the wild unleashed, and the subtle charms and jinxes of Arcadian wonder. These are the secrets of the many

Key Facts

Population: 68

Primus: Handri, a secretive man who shares his plans only with his most trusted advisers

Domus Magna: Irencillia, in the Rhine Tribunal

Favored Tribunals: The Rhine and Hibernia

Motto: *Natura veritas unica* ("nature is the only truth") — most Merinitae interpret this as concerning the essential natures of things, rather than nature as a place or state.

Symbol: Merinita's sigil, an oak tree within a circle



cults that make up their House: theirs are the Mysteries of magic and faerie combined.

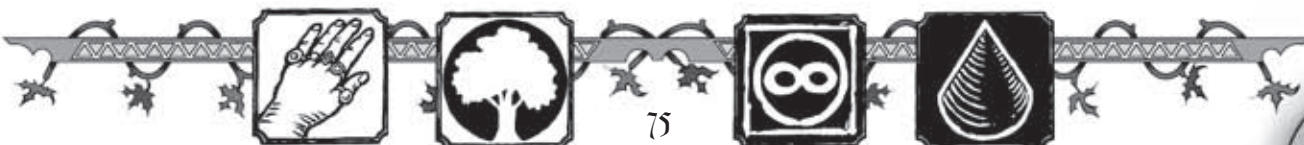
The House is named for Merinita, the woman who swore the Hermetic Oath to Bonisagus and joined the Founders when they first assembled, but many consider her follower Quendalon to be the true force behind its identity, and some erroneously refer to him as one of the original Founders. Most "Merinitae" are not given to keeping meaningful records or histories, but they do famously appreciate sto-

ries, and some that concern the Founder and the history of the House are still told among magi who have an interest, by those who claim to have them from others who were there. One with great currency reports that Quendalon normally wore a heavy cloak with a hood that covered his eyes, and many Merinitae affect this garb on occasion.

History

Before the Order of Hermes was formed, Merinita was already well known, at least by reputation. It was said among other wizards of the time that a white-haired woman dressed in green traveled alone through the wild lands of Europe, often vanishing into the great forests without a trace of her passing, a woman without equal in nature magic. She could see everything that happened in these places, she knew every bird and beast that lived in them, she could take any shape she chose, and she could command the spirits of the very trees themselves. Yet she was not savage, according to those who had met her, but wise; a woods-woman and healer at home in the forest and perfectly attuned to the wild. She was also intensely shy, and said to only speak when absolutely necessary.

Trianoma devoted an entire year to searching for Merinita, to invite her to come with her to meet Bonisagus and to join the Order of Hermes. Many times she approached one of the dark forests where Merinita was rumored to dwell and called out her proposal to the shadows of the trees, but never received



Famous Figures

Merinita, Founder, introduced the enchantment that binds a familiar
Quendalon, first Primus, discovered the faerie Mysteries
Myanar, second Primus, disgraced, her line exiled
Alsia, invented the ritual for temporary familiars
Ambrosius, brought folk Mysteries to the House
Pendule, helped his followers develop the illusion Mysteries
Farrago, discovered three additional familiar cords
Mendalus, argued for a return to Merinita's ways
Merinugalaudabila, renewed House interest in certamen

an answer. Yet in 767, as the Founders gathered to discuss Trianoma's vision, Merinita emerged from the forest and quietly joined their circle. Her reasons for joining were never clear; her followers say that she herself did not know why, but felt compelled by a will greater than her own, as if the forest itself required it of her.

Merinita's oath to the fledgling Order was binding, and she timidly went to Bonisagus to teach him some of her powers in return for his *Parma Magica*. According to the few surviving accounts, this was a tedious process, for though Merinita obviously knew a great deal, especially about healing and nurturing plants and living creatures, there was little that she could find to teach Bonisagus, either because she was unable to communicate her mystic understanding, because he had already adapted the ancient healing rituals she practiced into Magic Theory, or because she was unwilling to share all of her secrets.

She eventually demonstrated the ability to join her mind, body, and spirit with an animal, and this was integrated into Hermetic teaching as the enchantment that binds a maga to her familiar. The first ever such creature was a great stag, summoned to Durenmar by Merinita. This beast, the maga tersely explained, was her kindred spirit,

whose thoughts and feelings she shared. Magical cords bound him to her and her to him, and joined their hearts and minds as surely as if they were one person. She identified three cords that created this bond, though she indicated that there could be others.

After the Founding, Merinita did not immediately seek out followers as other Founders did. She became very close to Birna, the Founder of House Bjornaer, for the two of them shared similar philosophies. Where Birna had a deep, spiritual connection to the wild through her heartbeast, Merinita had a comparable relationship with nature through her familiar. Together they adapted rites from many ancient wilderness cults, creating the Initiation ceremonies that Birna and Merinita used to teach others their secrets.

As word of the new Order spread throughout Mythic Europe, many would-be wizards traveled to the Rhine from distant lands in search of the lady in green, to study her Mysteries and learn from her wisdom. She eventually accepted these disciples as her followers, and taught them what she could of Hermetic magic. She encouraged them to spread out and settle in many different parts of the world, and she often traveled among them, guiding and nurturing them as she had once done for the forests. In time, however, the duration and frequency of these visits dwindled.

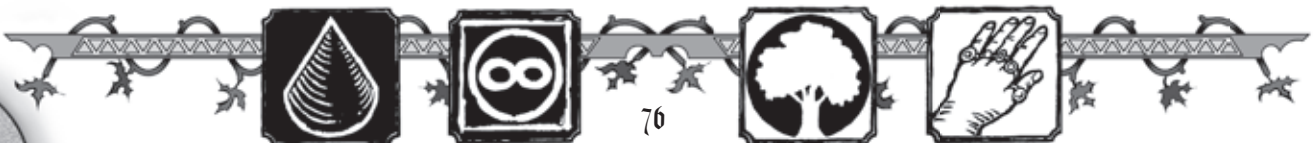
Then, sometime before the ninth century, Merinita simply disappeared. Her followers had expected to see her at the Grand Tribunal in 799, but she never arrived and left no word, and it was only later that some of them recalled her having spoken about being on the verge of a discovery, what she called "the mystery of the eternal spirit of the wild." She was last seen 14 years previously near Bohemia, and many guessed that she had gone south into Hungary or east into Poland, though others speculated that she had lost herself in one of the many great forests in the area.

In her absence, the House was to be guided by her eldest follower, a magus named Quendalon (*Cuin-dallán*, "little blind sovereign"), one of the first who had sought out the Founder to become



her disciple. He was originally from the Ulster region of Ireland and had been raised among the fae, and believed that his Hermetic magic could be dramatically improved with their gifts. He had spoken with the Founder about this, and after the Grand Tribunal, he declared his intention to visit the faeries that lived in a certain forest in Bohemia. He announced that until he returned, Merinita's next-eldest follower, Myanar, would be Prima.

Myanar took up governance of the House from her own covenant, also in Bohemia, at the site of Merinita's first home. Several other magi joined her there, including three hunter-priestesses of Artemis who had traveled from Asia Minor to join the House, and a Roman master of shape-changing. Myanar herself came from Bulgaria, and was descended from a mythic lineage known as the Line of Muj; one of her ancestors had made a pact with a magical guardian spirit of the Balkans, which blessed him and his children with supernaturally great strength and power over storms.



The House Divided

What happened then is very difficult to piece together, as the next few years included some of the strangest events in Hermetic history, filled with terrifying violence and upheaval uncharacteristic of the House. What few details survive from firsthand accounts are contradictory and garbled, and even the dates are confusing and do not always make sense. Yet as far as can be determined by those who have carefully studied the House Divided (as Merinitae have come to call it), the sequence of events proceeded as follows.

Two years after Myanar became Prima, a stranger arrived at her covenant, announcing that he was Quendalon and had returned to resume control of the House. He did resemble the former magus, but he was obviously not human, having two bright rubies instead of eyes. Myanar questioned him about his supposed transformation; he claimed that he had become a faerie in Arcadia, trading his useless human eyes for faerie sight. He also said he had uncovered deep mysteries on his long journey that would revolutionize the Order of Hermes. This knowledge required him, he said, to guide House Merinita in an exciting new direction.

To Myanar, it seemed that this faerie being was an imposter, a changeling who had replaced Quendalon and sought to take over the House, and she refused to comply. This angered him, and he warned that she would suffer dire consequences if she did not obey him. Their conflict escalated into a magical battle, but Myanar was unable to prevent him from escaping. According to letters that Quendalon wrote afterward, Myanar opposed him on ideological grounds, recognizing him full well and swearing that "she would not allow him to deform the House with his distorted visions of the future." Yet Myanar told her followers that the false Quendalon had bragged about having found and killed Merinita, and had threatened to kill all of them if they did not accept him as hierophant of their cult.

War broke out between the two factions. The faerie Quendalon traveled throughout the region, gathering support from Merinitae and others against Myanar

The Line of Muj

Before Quendalon introduced Faerie Magic to the House, Myanar and her followers focused entirely on Merinita's Mysteries of nature and life, and many of these secrets came easily to Myanar, for she had a special affinity for nature through her family's ancient tradition. Other magi descended from this ancestral Line of Muj still live in the Transylvanian Tribunal, and belong to House Tremere. To represent their hereditary magical powers and background, such characters should choose Close Family Ties, Affinity with Auram, Great Strength, and Mountain Lore (see *Nature Mysteries*, below) during character creation.

A rivalry has developed between a group of these Tremere and a nomadic family of Merinitae, led by a Novgorod maga named Merinugalaudabila. She

takes great delight in certamen as a sport, and especially enjoys variations on "the game," as she calls it. Because of her efforts, interest in magical competition is growing within the House, and a few of her followers have developed the magical focus in certamen that is typically only found in Tremere's lineage. Together they have invented two unusual dueling styles (see *House Tremere, Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, for details). These were designed mostly to embarrass the staid Muj, many of whom know the events of the House Divided and bear a familial grudge against faerie Merinitae on Myanar's behalf. The two groups often fight for no obvious reason, spuriously challenging each other on what seem very flimsy pretenses whenever they happen to cross paths.

A Faerie Fraud?

Suspicious that the faerie Quendalon was not who he claimed to be seem more likely when considering the evidence of other instances when faeries have taken human shapes and tried to pass themselves off as magi. In the 1100s, for example, an unremarkable magus named Zurenzialle disappeared from his covenant in the Greater Alps suddenly and without warning, and when his sodales decided that he was dead and entered his laboratory, they discovered evidence that he was never human at all, but a faerie being who had been pretending to be a magus.

To this day, the magi of House Merinita still speculate about whether it really was Quendalon who returned to govern the House. It is a moot point now, whether he was the former Primus or a faerie in disguise, as his legacy remains an integral part of their magic, for good or ill. In fact, it could be detrimental if it were to come to light that he really was an impostor; such a revelation might tarnish all they have done since, and undermine everything his followers have used his Mysteries to accomplish.

and her followers. Most of them were curious about his new powers and anxious to learn what he had to teach, and so pledged to accept his leadership. He established a covenant called Irencillia near the faerie forest he had entered, and Myanar led a hasty strike against them. Her force was routed, and it appears that she was slain during the battle. Supposedly, those of her force that remained surrendered to Quendalon in 802. He cast them out of the House, but they were later accepted into House Bjornaer. All this was reported

at the Grand Tribunal of 817; Quendalon came with two of his followers who supported his story, and while many questioned him, no one contested his description of events.

Other accounts suggest that the war was not so easily won. Some of Myanar's followers later claimed that Myanar did not die, but rather was transformed into a snake during the first assault, and that in that form she led other attacks on Irencillia in 804 and 806. Some say that faeries participated in the defense of the covenant. It



History Story Seeds

- If Merinita is still alive, perhaps her familiar also lives. A group of hunters tells a story of a magnificent stag they could not fell in a nearby forest, and this might lead to an investigation, perhaps to track down the Founder by following the cords that bind her to the great beast.
- Some say Quendalon went mad and tore out his eyes before disappearing, but that these precious stones were lost. They were invested with great magic, but also cursed to slowly transform the possessor into a

faerie over time. Perhaps a companion purchases one of these gems from a jeweler who is anxious to be rid of it.

- The grogs find a serpent hiding in one of the covenant buildings, but they cannot kill it. Hermetic investigation reveals that it has great power, but does not have any Might. Its thoughts make no sense but it burns with vengeance. Those who know the history of House Merinita might wonder: could this be Myanar?

is also said that Myanar was distantly related to Tytalus the Founder, who came to Bohemia in 807 with the public intention of challenging the Queen of the Faeries, and who disappeared into the Maddenhofen Woods that same year. Some speculate that Myanar sought him out and asked for his aid against Quendalon — they reason that his presence in the turbulent region could hardly be a coincidence — and that she went with him into the forest to confront the false Primus and the faeries behind his bid for power.

Quendalon caused great ill-will between Houses Merinita and Tytalus at the 817 Tribunal by laughing loudly during their account of their Founder's disappearance. He later explained that he was not mocking Tytalus's ambitious attempt to defeat "the Queen," but found it amusing that his followers would perceive his end as tragic. He gave them the impression that he knew more than he was saying, but would not speak of it further. Since then, House Merinita and House Tytalus have often been at odds, their poor relationship aggravated by the possibility that Quendalon might have known what happened to their Founder, or even been somehow responsible for their loss.

200 Years After

Quendalon returned his attention to adopting faerie ways within his House,

teaching his followers and others who came to learn from him the secrets of Faerie Magic. For years he acted as lead Mystagogue, performing hundreds of Initiations and teaching many promising apprentices throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. Sightings of him became much less frequent in the mid-900s, and he sent delegates to the Grand Tribunals of 931 and 964, though none of them could say what had become of him. There were many rumors that he had gone mad, and most suspected he had returned to Arcadia forever.

At the Grand Tribunal of 997, the assembled Merinitae finally decided they would have to choose one of their number to take his place, though they did not all agree that Quendalon was dead. By surprising consensus the leaders of the various groups named a timid young maga named Rhiannon as Prima; she was four generations descended from Quendalon, and they believed she would best represent the House's interests. She hesitantly accepted the position, moved to Irencillia, and for the most part avoided other magi.

The outbreak of the Schism War came only a few years later. Rhiannon was not a strong orator, but spoke many times in defense of House Diedne, and openly voted against their Renunciation. Many think that she invited a number of Diedne to join her House to escape destruction, and during the war some Merinitae actually fought with the Diedne in battle. They did not ever join with Diedne officially,

however, and the Order was anxious for peace during the aftermath, so House Merinita never suffered official retribution for these acts.

Rhiannon reputedly died of old age, and her bones were returned to her Hibernian homeland to be buried. The Primacy eventually passed to Vinaria of Irencillia, said to bear a striking physical resemblance to the Founder. She was much more politically active than her predecessor, and was most famously concerned about the Magic realm fading with the spread of the Dominion. She believed that wild places of power were becoming increasingly smaller and weaker as civilization encroached upon them, and often argued that House Merinita is as much magical as it is fay, that its members would surely feel the negative effects of the loss of the wilderness as keenly as other magi.

She made many overtures of friendship to House Bjornaer, as the relationship between the two Houses had been sour since Myanar's exile, but she could give them no support for their actions during the invasion of Rügen in 1168, and much of the progress she had made toward reconciliation was undone. The next Bjornaer Primus, Urgan, declared that she was senile and useless, and refused to grant her an audience. Vinaria disappeared in 1202, much the same way as Merinita and Quendalon had done, giving control of the House to Handri, senior magus at Irencillia. Mystifyingly, she later returned in 1209, but has since made no attempt to resume the primacy.

More information about these magi and their *domus magna*, Irencillia, can be found in *Guardians of the Forests: The Rhine Tribunal*.

The Future of the House

By 1220, Merinitae have become a contrary crowd of disparate groups, rarely agreeing on anything and hardly interacting with one another at all. Outsiders suspect that this lack of unity is a front for other, secret goals and machinations. For example, they may be establishing good relations with faeries so that they

may one day slip away to Arcadia, leaving the Order and Europe forever. Or perhaps they intend to side with the fae when they inevitably war against humanity, and so buy a place in the new faerie hierarchy.

Many Merinitae think that Faerie is permanently slipping away, that the golden age of the faeries is past, and that the Dominion's slow encroachment over all human civilization is unstoppable. Others stridently protest, and rebuke those who say this, for if believing makes it so, those who proclaim Faerie's ruin are themselves destroying it with their predictions. It is no wonder there is little agreement among them on these matters, since they are very quick to turn on themselves, and like the faeries do, often fight with each other more than outsiders.

If there is anything that the members of the chaotic House can agree upon, it is that in order for the faeries to survive, the Merinitae must preserve and protect the few remaining places given over to Faerie, or help those who dwell there to adapt to the landscape of the rapidly changing world, or else quit its boundaries entirely and accompany them to the lands beyond living.

House Society

House Merinita is a single Mystery Cult made up of many different groups, each of which has its own ideas about magic and how it relates to the Faerie realm. Besides their Mysteries, they have little in common; about the only thing they agree upon is their interest in faeries, though even then that is not always the case, for Merinita herself had nothing to do with them, and others similarly eschew their alien ways and focus on other types of magical study. Yet every member of the House usually undergoes some sort of test involving the fae as part of her Initiation, so all Merinitae have some experience with them.

Four different aspects of Faerie are described below, to help players define their characters' attitudes toward the realm. These include the land of Faerie, belief in faeries, what faeries want from

humanity, and the relationship between the Faerie and Magic realms. This section is intended to give an idea of the sort of things Merinitae do, and so provides minimal information about faeries in general, instead describing them from the perspective of Hermetic magi and the House. (Faerie society from the faeries' viewpoint will be addressed in future *Ars Magica* supplements.)

Each section also describes a dedicated group of Merinitae who pursue common goals and Initiate followers into certain of the House Mysteries (see *Mechanics of Initiation* for details on this process, and *Merinita Mysteries*, below, for descriptions of the new Virtues, Flaws, and Abilities they may Initiate). All those who join one of these groups must first Initiate Faerie Magic to join the House, and must have at least House Merinita Lore 1 to proceed into the Inner Mysteries.

The Search for Arcadia

Arcadia is the highest manifestation of the Faerie realm, and for many magi it is the focus of their faerie magic. It is why they belong to the House, and the purpose that occupies their spare time. Merinitae know more about Arcadia than any other magi, and some guard this knowledge jealously while others share it with anyone who takes an interest. For many, it is a rite of passage: they cannot truly appreciate the fae until they have visited their home.

There are many conflicting beliefs in the House about what Arcadia actually is. That is, magi know it exists, they know it is associated with Faerie in the same way that Heaven is associated with the Divine and Hell is associated with the Infernal, and many of them know how to get there. But where did it come from, and why does it exist, and what is its relationship to the mundane world and the other realms?

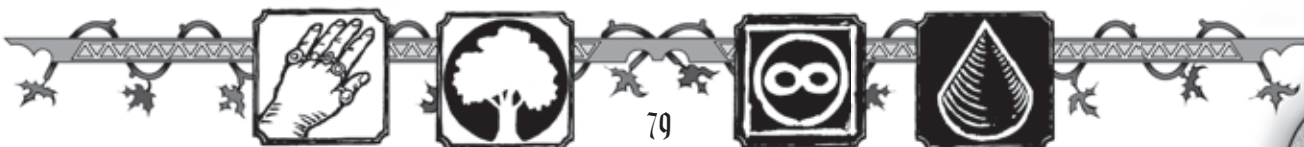
Some say that Arcadia is a reflection of Mythic Europe, and that the faeries who live there are merely distorted versions of reality. Yet it is also part of Mythic Europe, they say, in that the things one does in Arcadia have an effect on reality, and are reflected back upon the



inhabitants of either realm. Arcadia is said to be a nexus of possibilities, a temple with a thousand doors, where it is impossible to return to the exact same place you left. For this reason, Merinitae caution visitors to "travel lightly:" to take nothing and leave nothing, lest their journey have repercussions and consequences for which they are not prepared.

Others emphasize that Arcadia is only what travelers believe it to be. It is a land of wishes and dreams, they say, that responds to their direction and changes to accommodate their hopes and fears. A person can only navigate Arcadia by moving from one desire to another, they say, and the nature of the place absorbs these desires and makes them its own, stealing them from the traveler and changing in response. For an expedition to succeed, visitors must discover what it is they truly want. Yet, having attained it, they must also have a powerful reason to return, or they will have no desire to leave.

Another theory is that like Heaven and Hell, Arcadia is an afterlife, a place where faeries go after they leave their



Arcadian Experiences

Arcadia is a fantastic place that can have a powerful influence over magic and faerie powers alike, but the mechanics of it are beyond the scope of this book. However, Merinitae will almost certainly seek it out, and for those of them who find their way there the storyguide should prepare an adventure, describing the experience in any way that seems appropriate to the journey. It might be an otherworldly vision, a dream, or even a nightmare; perhaps it resembles Wizard's Twilight; perhaps it seems the complete opposite of the real world, or it might only differ from the real world in very subtle but important ways.

physical bodies. Instead of a place of eternal punishment or eternal reward, it is where beings that do not have souls must remain forever. Thus, it is populated by the spirits of living things in exile. Some suggest this includes forgotten beasts of legend, lost children who died unbaptized, and even gods who are no longer worshiped. Those mortals who die in Faerie, it is said, join this group; their souls go elsewhere, but their spirits remain in Arcadia.

There are many ways to reach Arcadia, usually by traveling through faerie regiones. There are also gateways scattered throughout Mythic Europe, usually at places where reality and fantasy have blurred together. These points are almost always watched by guardians who patrol the borders of Faerieland, perhaps ensuring that outsiders are turned away, or perhaps preying upon them before others do. Initiates into the Mystery of Arcadian Travel can make temporary gateways to Arcadia, and these places are not necessarily guarded, although they are not necessarily safe, either.

THE WAYFARERS

Some Merinitae reason this way: Arcadia is a physical place, they say, therefore it must exist on earth. Perhaps it is a regio that overlaps Mythic Europe,

stretching above and below it, only accessible at certain places or certain times; or perhaps it is a continent on the other side of the globe, with portals connecting corresponding points between the two lands; or perhaps it is a microcosm, a world within a world that is completely contained in every individual thing. Wherever it is, by plotting the connections between the two worlds, Merinitae believe they can achieve greater insights into Faerie and Earth.

The Wayfarers are a group of Merinitae who style themselves as Arcadian experts. They record the locations and destinations of earthly gateways, act as guides for travelers to the realms of Faerie, and sometimes lead expeditions into uncharted regions of the world in search of alternative routes. They might be ambassadors, diplomats, or guardians. Some of them might write guides to Faerie customs, travel, and inhabitants, while others might seek to destroy these gateways to ensure that no one stumbles into them accidentally.

These Merinitae typically teach Hermetic Initiates Arcadian Travel. They have no specific progression of Mysteries after that, instead favoring secrets that will help their followers on their adventures. These might include Independent Study, Ways of the (Land), Spell Timing (spells that endure while the target is traveling), or Symbolic Magic (with an emphasis on names and places). They tend to seek out characters who are already Well-Traveled, and often integrate a fantastic expedition of some kind into their Initiation ceremonies.

The Wayfarers have been known to associate closely with House Mercere, as Redcaps also engage in exploration and travel, but more commonly the two groups work against each other. There is a kind of unspoken rivalry between them as they race to be the first to discover new parts of the world, unusual new species, or even simply new sources of vis. Those who discover them typically name these finds, a source of great honor and occasional jealousy among the participants. Wayfarers may also compete in this way with magi from other Houses, other Merinitae, or even fellow Wayfarers.

This practice has led to a strange phenomenon in the world of Faerie. Names have great importance to the fae, as they are essentially a part of the individual (and a common source of sympathetic magic). In places that have been named after something, occasionally a faerie version of that thing will appear. For example, if a faerie dell were to become widely known as Victor Valley (after Victor of Mercere from Semita Errabunda), a faerie named Victor who shared many of Victor's reputed qualities might come to inhabit it. For this reason, some Wayfarers have adopted the practice of naming their discoveries after famous magi or legendary places of old. Who knows what they might subsequently discover in Merinita Grove or the Arcadian Sea?

SAMPLE WAYFARERS INITIATION:

ARCADIAN TRAVEL

Ease Factor: 18 (Minor Virtue unknown to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +14

Script Details: Working on her own, the Initiate must discover all the entrances at every level to a faerie regio with an uppermost level of at least 5 (+3). Then, on the eve of the last full moon of the season (+1), she must travel to the center of the regio, beginning at a landmark outside that will mark her route. She must travel alone, without aid or comfort, and may not cast any Hermetic spells or use any magical devices to find her way, relying only on her Faerie Lore and other mundane skills to guide her. She may not eat or drink on her journey, or interact with any of the inhabitants (+3). She gains the Minor Personality Flaw Fear (+3), as she begins to dread something that she encounters on her path, and arriving at the center, she must retrace her steps and exit at the same place she entered, completing her journey before dawn (+1). Because of its mystical association with her Ordeal, the landmark becomes a permanent Arcane Connection to her (+3).

Belief & Mythic Europe

Many followers of Merinita seek to encourage appreciation of the fae, not

Faerie Tales

Most fairy tales with which players are most familiar became widespread in relatively modern times. However, they often concern medieval characters, and in fact contain many themes that can be found in folk tales going back to ancient times. Recognizable versions of such stories as "Cinderella," "Beauty and the Beast," "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and even "Little Red Riding Hood" can be found in early Roman histories, and other related concepts have their roots in antiquity, such as the Roman host newly come to wealth who described himself with the phrase *qui fuit rana nunc est rex* ("the man who was once a frog is now king").

Thus, "modern" fairy tales can be a good source of inspiration for medieval faerie stories. Do not feel that you cannot incorporate these elements into your game because they are somehow out of period. Most faerie stories are based on folk tales, and everyone in the game should be at least dimly aware of the most common characters and situa-

tions associated with these tales, since their characters would probably have heard them as children. As most players are more likely to be familiar with the Grimms' versions than, say, the tragedy of Cupid and Psyche or the fabulous *lais* of Marie of France, you should feel free to rely on their knowledge of the modern stories for faerie elements that make for a better gaming experience.

It should be noted that the attitude of early chroniclers was one of condescension and disapproval for such *aniles fabulae* ("old women's tales"), and they often changed the stories to downplay their fantastic elements. By the Middle Ages, many of these fanciful stories have instead become accounts of holy saints and evil demons, rather than innocent maidens and monstrous beasts. Perhaps players can infer from this that the Faerie realm as a whole suffered with the expansion of the Dominion, losing many of its inhabitants to the Divine or the Infernal, and that it has only just begun to recover its former status.

just in the Order of Hermes, but among the people of Mythic Europe at large. It is an accepted fact among many in the House that faeries come about from widespread belief in them; that within the Faerie realm, things are what people believe them to be. This is not demonstrably true, of course, since it is difficult to measure when someone truly believes in something and whether there is a corresponding effect in Faerie, but the theory is that when someone invents a story, that story will come to pass, either in Arcadia or somewhere in the real world.

Extending the idea of a direct relationship between Faerie and storytelling, many believe that faeries can never die, so long as their stories are still remembered. Each time the tale is told, the characters perform their parts as described, perhaps altering slightly from the framework as the narrator embellishes, but always acting as they are defined by their characters, and returning each time the story is begun again.

Other Merinitae hold that the stories are created by the fae, that the events of

famous "fairy tales" are simply chronicles of history, having actually happened at some point in the past. These themes have seeped into the collective subconscious of the people, and thus have a ring of truth about them that makes them compelling. Or perhaps they are visions of the future, since time has no little meaning in Faerie; these stories may be glimpses of events that will someday come to pass, resonating through the years to influence medieval thought.

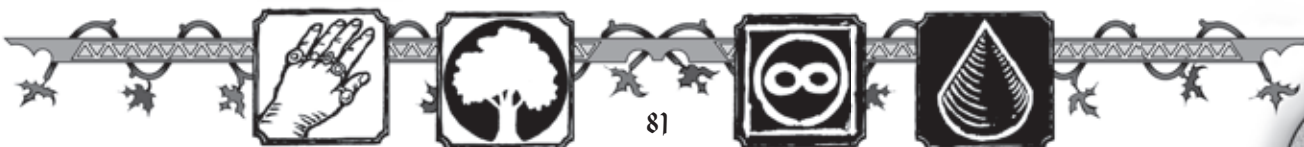
In any case, stories are very important to those with an interest in the fae, and House Merinita has a strong oral tradition. Recording stories is almost as important as participating in them. It is not seen as bragging or putting oneself forward to tell one's sodales about an experience with the faeries, and many magi in the House employ minstrels to create popular songs or poems about their adventures. Not only for Merinitae, in fact, but for the faeries themselves, as such accounts have great value in their courts.



KEEPERS OF THE THOUSAND TALES

The Keepers of the Thousand Tales are a group of Merinita magi and their companions who originally formed in the Holy Land with the goal of collecting, cataloging, and distributing the greatest stories of their time. This began with the beginnings of *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights* sometime in the ninth century, and as the society grew, their scribes added to the collection. They also translated many Greek texts into Arabic, and then from Arabic into Latin, and spread these books throughout the Order while their Hermetic leaders sought out more stories to tell.

Essential to their philosophy is the idea of faerie immortality through legend. By ensuring that the tales are easily available, they believe that they keep these stories alive in Faerie. In this regard, they maintain that what a significant number of people believe directly affects the inhabitants of the Faerie realm. Therefore, all



Faerie and Dreams

Many Merinitae believe that there is a connection to Arcadia in every person's mind. This is because they think dreams somehow influence and are influenced by the Faerie realm, which they consider to be the collective dreams of all humanity. Thus, faeries may occasionally be found to inhabit a person's imagination, accessible with Mentem magic and the specialized Dream Virtues of *The Mysteries Revised Edition*.

Characters with the Merinita Mystery Arcadian Travel can open trods into Arcadia through their dreams, if they wish. The maga produces a charm designed to lull the travelers to sleep, and they then journey to a dream-based Arcadia in spirit instead of flesh. While away, sleeping characters do not age or suffer ill effects of going without food or water, though they can die through other means — and if they do, their spirits remain in Faerie.

those who belong to their society must do their part to see that the tales spread. Some of them are scribes, copying books of lore for other covenants and magi, and some of them are wandering storytellers, performing re-enactments of adventures for those who are interested in hearing.

Some of the magi have begun to carry their philosophy a step further. By acting out famous stories using their magic, themselves taking the part of a character in the story, they believe they take on that character's identity and so ensure their own immortality. Over time, they actually become the character in the story, and so become faeries themselves. These magi believe that several characters in the Thousand Tales are magi who have passed into Arcadia.

While originally there were only a few magi devoted to the group, since their founding they have spread throughout Mythic Europe, and have dedicated covenants in both the Levant and the Iberian Tribunals. Many of them have the Outsider Flaw. Elder members often trade Initiation into the House Mysteries in exchange for seasons spent serving the society. These Mysteries might include Enchanting (Storytelling), Charm Magic, Story Magic, and Becoming.

SAMPLE KEEPERS INITIATION: STORY MAGIC

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +14

Script Details: The Initiate must learn a new poem or story from a culture that she isn't familiar with. It must be over

5,000 lines in length and memorized in the original language (+3). She must then seek out a similar work from a different culture and memorize it (+3). Combining the overlapping elements of both, the Initiate must create an original piece, one that both cultures would recognize, but that changes the ending or overall meaning (+3). (These tasks could be tested with two Intelligence + Language rolls and a Communication + Language roll against Ease Factors of 12, though the storyguide might prefer to roleplay the process instead.) With this new tale, the Initiate must visit a powerful faerie in a Faerie regio on the longest day of summer, and perform her work. This must please the faerie enough that it rewards the Initiate with a treasure (+3). The Initiate must take this prize to her Mystagogue, and at an auspicious time based on their horoscopes (+1), they must sit upon a hilltop with a Faerie aura, taking some sort of intoxicating substance with them. The Initiate and the Mystagogue partake of this while telling each other stories until they fall unconscious. When they awake, the treasure will have vanished (+1).

Do Faeries Dream of Counting Sheep?

Faeries are defined by their interest in humanity: they want to interact with things of the mundane world, and they enjoy the company of people. But if faeries are the realization of human imagination given life, what do they actually

want from them? What can followers of Merinita give the Fair Folk, while appreciating, studying, or interacting with them for their own reasons?

Creatures of Faerie can take any imaginable form, but have great difficulty reproducing. They cannot invent anything new. Some Merinitae believe the faeries admire (or envy) humanity for their ability to create, and seek them out to experience the miracle of this for themselves. Many of the fae cannot resist a good story, or a treasure of their very own, or even a new name, since these are all things that contain the spark of originality. Thus, the House often encourages such artistic endeavors on the faeries' behalf.

Other faeries fear that they will be forgotten. If they recognize that they owe their existence to human belief, they can ensure their continuation by encouraging the people to honor them, perhaps even worshipping them like the gods of old. Libations poured over Faerie stones, prayers intoned in sacred groves, men and women dancing around ceremonial fires, young children abandoned in dark places — many faeries recognize these as ancient rites of respect, and reward those who perform them.

Some faeries perceive Mythic Europe as a place of forced exile from Arcadia, and want nothing more than to return to their fabled homeland. The means of accomplishing this are not clear; some Merinitae think it requires an invitation from a sovereign of Faerieland, others imagine that it requires a fundamental change to the faerie's nature. One school of thought suggests that death allows the faerie to escape the confines of reality and return to Arcadia, but it seems impossible to prove this for certain.

THE SHADOW-MASTERS

The philosopher Plato once described a cave where a group of prisoners sit chained in front of a wall. Behind them, shapes of people and animals pass in front of a great light, casting their shadows where the prisoners can see them. As far as the prisoners know, these shapes are real. They know nothing of the figures

that cast the shadows; they only know them by how they appear upon the wall. Plato used this idea to describe humanity's imperfect understanding of the realm of forms: like the prisoners, they cannot see the things that cast the shadows; they only see the shadows themselves.

The Shadow-Masters are a troupe of Merinita magi who teach that the elements of this allegory correspond to the four supernatural realms. The light comes from the Divine, and the darkness is the Infernal; the light creates the images, while the darkness tries to envelop and destroy them. Men and animals step into the light, and this is magic: imperfect copies of their forms are projected against the wall that represents the mundane world. Yet it is also possible, these Merinita say, to fashion false figures and move them into the light, casting gray shadows that convince the prisoners that they see something that isn't real at all, and this is Faerie's role in the allegory: shadow-puppets with substance.

Members of the society learn to play with these philosophical illusions, in a sense constructing shapes from dross and scraps and leading them to a new existence before the light of creation. The whole world is their theater: they conjure heroes and villains and set them against each other in great set pieces, enacting and re-enacting famous stories and legends, or inventing completely new tales of wonder and fear. By observing how humanity responds to these stories, the Shadow-Masters gain insight into the nature of the world, while simultaneously reinforcing belief in the strange and imaginary.

It has become a tradition within the group to host a tournament every few years, called the Great Play. A Shadow-Master builds a labyrinth, castle, or other intriguing setting for the event, which she fills with illusory obstacles, traps, puzzles, or people. It is usually built around a theme, such as Homer's *Odyssey*, the Crusades, or "Beyond the Lunar Sphere." When it opens, other Shadow-Masters, hopeful Initiates, faeries, and even a few unwitting passersby descend upon the field and do their best to answer the challenge. The only formal prize for succeeding is the responsibility to host the next

event, though the leaders of the Great Play often reward the participants in other ways, and those who attend but do not belong to the group are almost always invited to join.

Society elders typically Initiate new members into the Mysteries of Glamour, Anima Magic, and Perpetuity. Many of them have a Major Magical Focus in illusions, and they most commonly live in the Transylvanian and Theban Tribunals, though they come from all over Mythic Europe. Anyone can join by proving herself in the Great Play, and in fact it is said that even a few members of House Tytalus have set aside their grudge and joined House Merinita through this society.

Shadow-Masters enjoy the simulation of reality even more than reality itself, and hold that over time, the fiction *becomes* truth. Many swear that the creatures they have created have begun to reproduce, or have been found in places where Shadow-Masters have never been. For them, this is the pinnacle of achievement; it shows that their creations have taken on lives of their own, which they believe is ultimately what all faeries truly desire.

SAMPLE SHADOW-MASTERS

INITIATION: GLAMOUR

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +15

Script Details: The Initiate must pursue a faerie that is skilled in powers of illusion, staying in close pursuit with it until she receives a Warping Point (+3) through magical mischance. From this point on, until the completion of the Initiation, the Initiate feels slightly odd, as if drunk, and suffers a -3 on all of her Perception and Intelligence rolls (+1). Then, on the date of the manifestation of her Gift, which she must discover if not known (+1), she and her Mystagogue must fight a Creo or Muto Imaginem certamen, reciting ritual insults at each attack, until one of them falls unconscious from loss of Fatigue (+1). She also acquires the Major Flaw Vulnerable Magic (+9), which is often associated with the circumstances that caused her Gift to manifest. Participation in the Great Play may be substituted for the duel, though she still gains the Flaw.



The Sundered Realms

Many Merinitae ponder the relationship between the Magic and Faerie realms, since through their House Mysteries they must often straddle the divide, with one foot on either side. Some seek ways to unite the two, others to further separate them, and a few explore their mystic origins in search of new insights into both.

One popular theory within House Merinita is that the four supernatural realms were once only one realm — Faerie — and that Arcadia is the Garden of Eden. Then the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to taste the fruit of knowledge, and their eyes were opened; they received The Gift, but at the cost of their immortality. The one realm became two — Magic and Faerie — and they were all of them sent from the fabulous Garden, exiled to the mortal world where they became subject to Twilight and death.

When the angels rebelled against Heaven and fell, they divided the realms into two others: the Divine and Infernal.



Society Story Seeds

- On a particular day of the year, the entrance to a faerie regio becomes a trod leading directly to Arcadia, as the characters happen to discover, though they do not recognize the difference at first. They soon discover that in this part of Faerie, all of their custos can work magic, but that the magi have temporarily lost their powers.
- The characters discover a young woman in an underground cavern, undisturbed for centuries, who appears to be asleep. Her finger has been pricked with a pin, which is lying nearby and marked with the symbol of the goddess Juno. Players might recognize this variation on the "Sleeping Beauty" myth, and thus figure out how to wake the girl.
- A Merinita archmagus resents the attention given to Roman deities by the Order, and seeks instead to revive the Norse gods of war and destruction worshiped by his ancestors. Is this something with which the characters should interfere? How can they stop one pantheon from regaining strength, while encouraging another?

Pagan Glory

Gods and goddesses of the ancient world can be associated with either the Faerie or Magical realms, though those that have a magical aspect tend to be focused on themselves more than on their worshipers, and many of them are thought to have taken physical forms or retreated far from human society. Those who still seek followers and have an interest in mortal affairs are considered

powerful faeries, and it may be difficult to distinguish them from other great lords and ladies of the faerie courts. Still, dedicated ceremonies designed to gain their attention and favor could plausibly have an effect, and many pagan Merinitae have claimed to have the blessings of their ancient deities at one time or another.

However, at the same time, some of the angels chose to remove themselves from the conflict, choosing neither God nor Lucifer, and these beings remained separate from Heaven and Hell. Not being entirely human, they traveled freely between earth and Garden; these are the pagan gods and monsters of the ancient world. Thus, it is said, magic is associated with those who possess the knowledge of the Tree of Life — the children of Adam and Eve, the descendents of the serpent, and the named beasts of Eden — while faeries are the others who guard the edges of terrestrial paradise, who because of their otherworldly nature remain outsiders in human society.

Other Merinitae suppose that the division between Magic and Faerie is a more recent phenomenon, having occurred at or soon after the birth of Christ. The physical incarnation of God in the human world was too much for

most of the pagan gods and ancient heroes to withstand, they say, and caused the Spirit realm from which they originated to divide into two parts: those who returned to earth in natural forms joined the realm of Magic, and those that passed away forever became Faerie. The Merinitae who favor this idea maintain that the ancient gods and goddess remain in Arcadia as ghostly shadows of their former greatness, capable of only limited interaction with the physical world. They also suggest that they could be returned to power via concentrated worship or other human devices.

THE CULT OF VESTA

In the later years of the Roman Empire, many of the pagan cults began to band together, combining the characteristics of many gods into cults nominally

associated with only one of them. The original Cult of Mercury was one of these, uniting most of the original pantheon under one god's name. The rites of Vesta, a relatively minor goddess of hearth and home, were eventually integrated into the practices of Diana, and her cult outlived the Fall of Rome by retreating into the barbaric wilderness outside of the empire, surviving beside the pagan practices of the German invaders. Some believe that Merinita was a high priestess of this struggling Diana cult.

After Quendalon transformed the House, a pair of young magae from Brittany began to experiment with combining what they knew of Merinita's nature magic with the new secrets that Quendalon had taught them. They discovered that the childlike innocence of Faerie could mimic wild and unspoiled nature, even in domesticated areas, so long as there were some among the community who remained chaste.

Since faeries can generally adapt to any realm, these magae made it their task to encourage the fae to settle within their lands, and dedicated their cult to that objective. They adopted Vesta as their patron, reasoning that since she, a domestic goddess, had survived in the wilderness as part of the Cult of Diana, perhaps so too could Diana, the goddess of nature, survive in the home as part of the new Cult of Vesta.

They resurrected many old Roman rites of the Vestal priestesses, venerating faeries as household gods and encouraging the practice of leaving gifts for them in exchange for their services. They also took vows of chastity, for they believed that their unusual focus would fail if their sexuality were ever "tamed." Through their Initiation rites, members of the cult gained special powers from the faeries in exchange for this sacrifice, but swore that if they ever broke their vows they would be punished — buried alive, to give back to the earth the bounty that they had taken from it.

The Vestals do not involve themselves much with the politics of the Order of Hermes at large, though they are known to the Hermetic Cult of Mercury, and might be considered their kindred spirits. While they do not typi-



cally Initiate outsiders into their secrets, they might share insights into Magic or Faerie Lore with them in the hopes of further narrowing the distance between the two realms.

Followers of Vesta are traditionally women, though there have been men represented. They usually take Gifted children between the ages of six and ten as apprentices, indoctrinating them with the ideals of the society and Initiating them into Faerie Magic. There are two formal levels of Initiation after the Gauntlet, however, and any Merinita can join if they are willing to dedicate themselves to the cult.

The first level is the Vestal virgin. A Vestal serves for thirty years, and there are no more than nine Vestals at any given time. When one of them leaves, she or one of her sisters chooses a worthy replacement. The new Vestal Initiates the Nature Lore Mystery with the unique focus of *lares* ("household spirits," also called *penates*); these are essentially a type of domestic faerie associated with the home and community. With Lares Lore, Vestals interact with the faeries of a settlement in the same way that nature magi interact with the denizens of the wilderness.

The second level of Initiation comes after thirty years, when the maga leaves the priesthood. She generally settles down in a small village or covenant and gives herself over entirely to its care. She learns either Becoming or Guardian of Nature (she may join her spirit with a Faerie aura so long as she remains a virgin), and uses her powers to transform herself into a sort of civic deity. Within her community she may endure for as long as her faeries flourish, guiding the common folk of the area to ensure that the old ways survive.

SAMPLE VESTALS INITIATION: NATURE LORE

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +10

Script Details: The Initiate must prepare a cake using ritual ingredients. The grain must be from ears of wheat gathered on the three days of Lemuralia, which are the 7th, 9th, and 11th of May (+1). She

must pound and heat brine in a jar within the hearth until it forms a salt rock that she cuts with a saw; she carries water from a sacred spring in specially crafted jugs whose bottoms taper to a point and whose water must not touch the ground (+1). She bakes the cake on Vestalia, June 9th, and places it on her hearth to attract the faeries (+1). On the Ides of June (June 15th), the Initiate must then thoroughly clean her dwelling, burning the refuse in the fire and scattering the ashes into the nearest river (+1). She must then meet the Mystagogue in her clean home. There, she swears to honor the faeries and takes a Vow of chastity (+3), which the faeries covertly witness (+3).

Merinita Mysteries

This section describes the secrets that define the House, which Merinitae may Initiate in exchange for appropriate sacrifice and study. They are broken into **schools**, groups of Mysteries primarily associated with the magi who introduced them to the House. Merinitae recognize three schools associated with Faerie Magic, and there is also said to be a peripheral school about which little is generally known. Characters raised in the House usually belong to a lineage associated with one of these schools, Initiating the Mysteries from their parentes. Those who join the House after apprenticeship usually enter the Mysteries through Initiation into a group of like-minded Merinitae instead (see above).

Initiating a person into a Mystery is much like taking an apprentice, and formally joining House Merinita is considered a necessary part of the process. They maintain that if you have Initiated the Outer Mystery, you belong to their House. This implied threat doesn't carry much weight, since on the whole Merinitae are not very aggressive or even politically active. Still, all of them know that they should formally introduce potential Initiates to the House

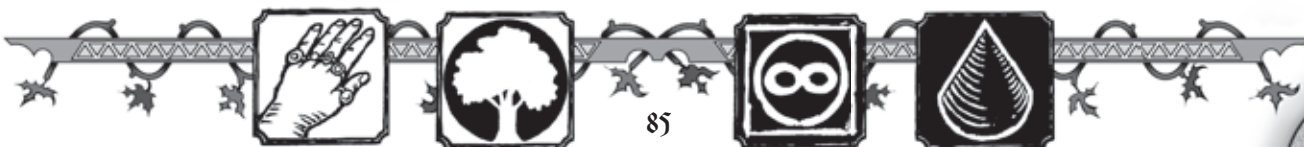


before teaching them their secrets, and that there should be consequences for those who indiscriminately share their Mysteries with outsiders.

Below are some of the more common kinds of magic within the House; many of these are Virtues available to all characters during character creation, which Merinitae often Initiate later through their Mystery rites. Most are referenced by the lineages that are found throughout this section. A few are even appropriate for companions without The Gift who share the House's interest in the fae and faerie things.

New Virtues

These Virtues explore the supernatural and Hermetic differences that make followers of Merinita unusual, especially where the Faerie or Magic realms overlap, or where characters are extraordinarily inspired by otherworldly ideas and places.



Merinita Mysteries Overview



ALLURING TO (BEINGS)

Minor, General

This Virtue is associated with one of three classes of beings: mundane animals, faeries, or magical beings. These last two include characters associated with Faerie or the Magic realms, respectively, through Supernatural Virtues or Flaws, as well as beings with Faerie or Magic Might.

These beings are strangely drawn to the character, and generally trust or obey her without thinking. She gets +3 on Communication and Presence rolls to affect them. Characters who are Offensive to beings of this sort cannot take this Virtue, including those who have The Gift or Magical Air, though characters who are Inoffensive to them or have the Gentle Gift may.

Note that while Alluring to Magical Beings can affect Hermetic magi, the Parma Magica protects against this effect as part of resisting the social penalties of The Gift. Might and other forms of general Magic Resistance do not hinder this effect.

ENCHANTING (ABILITY)

Minor, Supernatural

Like Enchanting Music (ArM5, page 65), this Supernatural Ability applies to a particular type of artistic expression:

dance, drawing, storytelling, even craftwork. Those with this Virtue may find that in Faerie auras this Ability allows them to change or control events based on how well they depict them with their art.

FAERIE-RAISED MAGIC

Major, Hermetic

The character's experience with faeries and the Faerie realm has conditioned him to invent spells very quickly; to him, formulaic spells seem like inherent powers that you can learn through observation and experimentation. Because of this, he can teach himself spells outside of the laboratory. You may spend experience points from Exposure, Adventure, and Practice on spells that mimic faerie powers or other supernatural effects your character has observed that season.

To invent a spell in this way, the magus's Technique + Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory must at least equal (the spell's level - 10), and you must spend a number of experience points equal to (the spell magnitude + 4). Spells of level 5 or less cost their level in experience points (but always at least 1). For example, a level 2 spell costs 2 experience points, and a Level 15 spell costs 7 experience points. The magus cannot invent Ritual spells in this way.

If the magus already knows a spell that is similar to one he wishes to invent (see Similar Spells, ArM5 page 101), any experience points you spend towards learning that spell are increased by one-half. This means that a level 25 spell would cost 6 experience points instead of 9, for example.

This Virtue also includes Spell Improvisation (see below). That is, you may add the magnitude of a known formulaic spell as a bonus to your character's Casting Total when spontaneously casting a spell that is similar to it.

If you take this Virtue during character creation, you should also take the Faerie Upbringing Flaw. Because the magus's master also had to teach him about human society, he probably had less time to teach him Hermetic magic. It is possible that the apprentice invented formulaic spells quickly enough on his own to compensate for this, but you might take the Weak Parents Flaw to suggest this limitation of his apprenticeship.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Minor, General

The character develops new skills extremely quickly on his own. When he is studying through Practice, add two to the Source Quality, and add three to the Source Quality of his Adventure experience.

INOFFENSIVE TO (BEINGS)

Minor, General

This Virtue is associated with one of three classes of beings: mundane animals, faeries, or magical beings. These last two include characters associated with Faerie or the Magic realms, respectively, through Supernatural Virtues or Flaws, as well as beings with Faerie or Magic Might.

The character's Gift does not bother beings of this sort, although it still has the normal effects on others. For example, Inoffensive to Animals makes it easier for her to get along with mundane beasts. Animals who react positively to The Gift still react positively to her, since she does have The Gift, but those that do not are not disturbed by her presence.

You may not take this Virtue more than once; characters who are Inoffensive to more than one type of being should

take Gentle Gift instead. UnGifted characters may take this Virtue only if they have the Flaw Magical Air.

Some Merinitae refer to these Virtues with special terms that suggest the three cords of the enchantment that binds a magus to his familiar. Inoffensive to Animals is called "The Bronze Gift," Inoffensive to Faerie Beings is "The Silver Gift," and Inoffensive to Magical Beings is known as "The Golden Gift."

SPELL IMPROVISATION

Minor, Hermetic

The magus may add the magnitude of a formulaic spell he knows as a bonus to his Casting Total when spontaneously casting a spell that is similar to it (see Similar Spells, ArM5 page 101). This includes fast-casting a spell that is the same as or very similar to one of his formulaic spells, though he does not get this bonus if he has the Fast Cast Ability for a mastered spell, since in that case you add his Mastery Ability instead. This bonus does not stack with other bonuses to his Casting Total, nor does it stack with itself if the magus happens to know several similar spells.

New Flaws

These Flaws are designed primarily as Ordeals for Initiatory rites. However, players of characters who belong to House Merinita or who have similar interests might also consider taking these Flaws during character creation.

HARMLESS MAGIC

Minor, Hermetic

The character's Perdo spells cannot permanently destroy anything; they temporarily disrupt the target, like Perdo Imaginem magic, but as soon as the duration has passed the target returns to its natural state as if nothing had happened, like a Muto effect. This means that a version of *The Wound that Weeps* (PeCo15), for example, briefly causes a painful, bleeding wound that immediately closes again. Likewise, *Fist of Shattering* (PeTe10) causes an object of stone or weaker material to briefly break apart, but then

fuse itself together again. The character's Ritual Perdo spells function normally, however.

This weakness can be a boon to a crafty character. A maga might invent a spell to destroy a heavy rock at Concentration Duration; she could then cast it and lie in wait. When her enemy walks into the vacant space, she could release her concentration and crush her victim beneath it when it reforms. However, in most cases this limitation is a minor hindrance, as useful Perdo magic requires longer Durations.

INCONSTANT MAGIC

Minor, Hermetic

The character's magic is easily distracted, it stutters and starts. Spells that require his guidance (e.g. concentration, or aimed spells) after being cast are not immediately responsive, as if the character must focus the spell's attention, and spells that are triggered by a condition (such as *Waiting Spells* or enchanted devices) take about two minutes to activate, as if the magic had wandered off when the caster was not watching it carefully. Any magic items he creates with constant effects are interrupted at sunrise and sunset; the magic is not seamless. The character suffers a -3 penalty to all Finesse rolls.

OFFENSIVE TO (BEINGS)

Minor, General

This Flaw is associated with one of three classes of beings: mundane humans, demons, or divine beings. These last two include characters associated with the Divine or the Infernal realm, respectively, through Supernatural Virtues or Flaws, as well as beings with Divine or Infernal Might.

Beings of the chosen category react badly to the character, as if he had The Gift, which makes them very uncomfortable around him and gives him a -3 to all social interaction rolls with them.

You may not take this Flaw more than once; characters who are Offensive to more than one kind of being should take Magical Air instead. Characters with The Gift may take this Flaw only if they have the Gentle Gift, which makes this type of being react to them negatively while others are unaffected.

UNBEARABLE TO (BEINGS)

Minor, General

This Flaw is associated with one of three classes of beings: mundane humans, demons, or divine beings. These last two include characters associated with the Divine or the Infernal realms, respectively, through Supernatural Virtues or Flaws, as well as beings with Divine or Infernal Might.

These beings are extremely disturbed, frightened, and possibly enraged by the character's presence. She suffers an additional -3 penalty on all social interactions with them, which adds to the -3 penalty normally associated with The Gift. Only characters with The Gift or Magical Air may take this Flaw, and it cannot be combined with the Blatant Gift.

The Flaw is sometimes known by different names among Merinitae, depending on the type of being it affects. Offensive to Humans is called "The Tin Gift"; Offensive to Infernal Beings is called "The Iron Gift"; and Offensive to Divine Beings is called "The Lead Gift." These Flaws are thought to balance the similar Inoffensive Virtues; it is very common for characters with one of the positive versions of The Gift to have one of these negative versions as well.

You may not take this Flaw more than once; characters who are Unbearable to more than one kind of being should take the Blatant Gift instead.

UNNATURAL MAGIC

Major, Hermetic

Because of the unreal and illusory nature of your magic, none of the character's Creo rituals have a permanent effect. Wounds magically closed with *The Surgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo20), for example, reopen again as soon as he finishes casting the spell, as the magic truly lasts only a moment. He also cannot extract vis from an aura using Creo, since his version of that Art is too unstable for it to remain in a lasting physical form.

VULNERABLE MAGIC

Major, Hermetic

The character's magic is automatically dispelled in certain uncommon circumstances. Examples include: when touching



Charms

Charms are casting aids that all magi who study Faerie Magic learn how to make, which identify a specific magical effect using sympathetic magic. They can be physical objects, like sculptures or drawings; or performances, like songs or stories; or even arcane pronouncements or ceremonies, like prophecy or naming.

A **temporary charm** takes about ten minutes to design, and must be used right away, typically with spontaneous magic. More lasting charms, or **permanent charms**, take several hours, and must involve a special object that the maga wields when she activates the charm, incorporating the object into the effect; if this object is damaged, the charm must be remade.

A maga who has a score in Faerie Magic and an Arcane Connection to her target may use a charm as a

sympathetic representation, increasing her Penetration multiplier by two. This requires a roll when the charm is made: composing a song might use Communication + Music, while a drawing might be Dexterity + Craft. The maga produces an effective charm on a roll of six or more, or nine or more for a permanent charm. Other magi can do this without Faerie Magic, but it takes them longer and they need a higher total on the roll (see Sympathetic Connections, ArM5 page 84).

Temporary charms may only be used once, as they always include unique properties associated with the effect, though a permanent charm associated with a special object may be used whenever it is applicable. A maga may prepare any number of charms in advance, but may only incorporate one charm into a given spell in this way.

iron, when under the influence of the Divine, when crossing over running water, when his name is spoken three times, or when he is not touching the ground. This condition immediately ends the duration of a spell when it is applied to the target, or all of your active spells when applied to you.

This Flaw may be taken multiple times, so long as a different condition is specified for each.

New Abilities

These Abilities are only taught to magi who have Initiated the Mysteries of House Merinita.

FAERIE MAGIC

Faerie Magic is an Arcane Ability learned after Merinitae Initiate the Outer Mystery of Faerie Magic (see ArM5, page 92), which represents how their magic differs from normal Hermetic magic. This includes the ability to apply faerie thinking to arcane activities, usually by drawing out sympathetic connections between magical and mundane things.

These mystic relationships may be integrated into casting tools that Merinitae often use with their spells, called **charms** (see sidebar). These are symbolic representations designed to highlight a particular quality of the target that always involve some sort of artistic ability. They may be used to increase Penetration, but are also used with many of the Inner Mysteries to produce other interesting effects.

Merinitae can integrate the principles of charms into their laboratory activities, making use of their knowledge of symbols associated with the Faerie and Magic realms in their work, and this is represented by three additional effects of the Faerie Magic Ability:

- Faerie Magic may be substituted for Magic Theory when experimenting, when using faerie vis, or when practicing magic associated with the Faerie realm.
- The amount of vis you can use in a single season is equal to your (Magic Theory + Faerie Magic) x 2, so long as all of it is faerie vis.
- Add your score in Faerie Magic to the number of botch dice you roll in these conditions, but the effects

of these additional dice tend to be more annoying than dangerous; it takes two of these botches to produce the negative effects of a normal botch die. The character still gains a Warping Point for each 0 rolled on these extra dice, though they do not force you to check for Twilight. (This is because integrating faerie power into magic warps the character more quickly, but does not increase her chances of being overcome by it.) Two or more botches on the standard botch dice require a check for Twilight as normal, however.

Faerie Magic might also represent the union of Faerie Lore and Magic Lore, the knowledge of similarities between the two realms. Often this combination can inspire surprising insights, especially when dealing with entities traditionally associated with both realms, like pagan gods, ghosts, and chimerae. It is also an appropriate Ability to use when trying to distinguish between Magic and Faerie, as it can address differences between the two realms.

Specialties: faerie vis, experimenting, inventing spells, charms, lore (Arcane)

HOUSE MERINITA LORE

This is the Ability that Merinitae use to Initiate their House Mysteries, and thus it is the one thing that they all have in common. It represents knowledge of all the secret rites, mysteries, and legends associated with the House, including all three schools of Faerie Magic Mysteries, and even the nature Mysteries taught by Merinita to her followers before she disappeared. Magi who wish to Initiate the Inner Mysteries should have at least a score of 1, and Mystagogues of the many different House cults typically have scores of 4 or 5.

Specialties: Initiating others, Initiating self, modifying an Initiation Script (Arcane)

Familiars

Merinita introduced the ritual that allows a maga to bond with her familiar,

and many of her followers have developed a special affinity for them. In fact, within the House it is far more respected to take a familiar than it is to train an apprentice, and those who do the latter before the former tend to be looked down upon by their peers. Merinitae who are interested in this direction might take a Major Magical Focus with Familiars, which applies to all spells and laboratory activities that affect familiars, either their own or those belonging to other magi.

ENCHANTING A FAERIE FAMILIAR

If a character has been Initiated into the Outer Mystery of Faerie Magic, she may bind as a familiar any living thing that is inherently faerie by nature. This is almost always represented by having a Faerie Might score, though it can also apply to people and animals that have become fay by close association with the Faerie realm. The being must be somehow attuned to the maga in order for the enchantment to succeed, exactly the same as with magical beasts, requiring mutual admiration and a compatible nature. The character then enchants the faerie as normal, using the Familiar Bonding Lab Total (ArM5, page 104).

There are three special powers inherent in the enchantment of a faerie familiar. These are:

- **SHARED POWERS:** The maga may activate any of the familiar's powers as if she possessed them herself, much like casting formulaic spells, by using her Fatigue Levels in place of Might. Each Fatigue Level she spends is worth a number of Might Points equal to (familiar's Might Score / 5). Thus, if her familiar had a Might Score of 10, the maga could spend a Fatigue Level as if it were 2 Might Points.
- **SHARED SENSES:** The maga can tell when the familiar perceives something with its faerie senses that she cannot, or when she can see some-

thing that her familiar cannot. Since most faeries have Second Sight, this is often useful information, and the familiar receives the same insight. This gives each of the couple at least a general idea of the direction and distance to the irregularity.

- **SHARED FATIGUE:** The familiar may regain (its Might Score / 5) Might Points by resting, just as the maga regain Fatigue Levels. For example, if a familiar with Might Score 10 had spent 2 Might Points, it could regain both of them by resting for two minutes. If it were down 4 Might Points, it would take it ten minutes of resting to regain the first two points, then two minutes more for the last.

The familiar may also spend Might Points when the maga would lose a Fatigue Level, allowing her to draw upon its tirelessness instead of expending her own energy. This costs it a number of Might Points equal to the value of the Fatigue Level the maga would reach, with each Level worth (familiar's Might Score / 5). Thus, for a familiar with Might 10 to give the maga a Fatigue Level when she is Fresh would cost it 2 Might Points, Winded would cost 4, Weary 6, and so on.

The three cords still function as normal, but as it is part of the nature of faeries to chafe against bindings, the cords grow weaker over time (unless they are reinforced by the faerie cords described below). Every year one of them degrades, usually the one with the highest value. This is handled in a manner similar to the way Characteristics are affected by aging, so that each year one of the cords receives an Aging Point. After four years of Aging, a +3 cord would become +2, three years later it would become +1, and after two more years it would be 0. If all three cords have scores of 0, the bond degrades completely at the end of the year and the enchantment is broken. The faerie is released, and all powers that have been invested into the bond are lost.

Followers of Merinita have always been disappointed by this limitation of faerie familiars, but they have decided that it is part of the nature of Faerie, and

have come to accept it. Because of this, many members of the House advocate not becoming too deeply attached to their familiars, and in fact recommend avoiding lasting personal commitments in general. Deep, abiding relationships cannot be forged with the faeries, they warn, and so they suggest that magi take an interesting succession of temporary faerie familiars instead, experiencing a wide variety of companions throughout their lifetimes.

Other Merinitae are troubled by this practice, especially as it seems to be the exact opposite of what their Founder believed, and distorts the whole purpose of her enchantment. Thus, many of them do not take faerie familiars at all, preferring to bind a magical animal for life using the standard method that has been integrated into Hermetic magic theory. It is also generally held that Merinitae who are extremely fay in personality should bind magical familiars, not faerie ones, to help balance their two natures, and so there is no stigma associated with this choice — in fact, a Merinita maga might even bind a magical familiar simply to increase her reputation as faerielike.

THE THREE FAERIE CORDS

In the late 1000s, a maga named Farrago Bonisagi discovered a solution to the dilemma of faerie familiars. She belonged to House Bonisagus, but she was very interested in integrating faerie powers with Hermetic magic theory, and she Initiated the Mystery of Faerie Magic many years after swearing the Oath, joining House Merinita to further her research. Her earliest project involved trying to find a way to learn faerie powers from a faerie familiar, Initiating them through the bond, but she was entirely unsuccessful at this, and she attributed her failure to the temporary nature of the enchantment. Soon she became obsessed with discovering a way to permanently bind herself to a faerie.

Her studies led her to investigate cryptic comments attributed to Merinita, about additional cords in the familiar enchantment. She could not find a description of these cords, but she theorized that they were somehow connected to the



Temporary Familiars

One of Merinita's first apprentices who later joined Quendalon, a maga named Alsia, developed a spell that allowed those with Faerie Magic to approximate binding a familiar, though of course the effect is only temporary. This unusual application quickly spread throughout the House, and it is particularly appreciated by those who favor taking many different familiars. Thus, it may be invented by anyone who has been Initiated into the Outer Mystery of Faerie Magic, and since it is old and popular, there are likely to be Lab Texts of it found in Hermetic libraries throughout Mythic Europe.

The idea of the spell is surprisingly acceptable within the House, as it is a common bargain for faeries to agree to serve a maga for a specific length of time, and this effect helps enforce the arrangement. It is the maga's responsibility to care for her slave, while it is expected to serve its master and do what she tells it to do. Those who abuse their familiars lose respect in the House, and may even find that some of their sodales are willing to help faerie slaves escape the terms of their service.

FAERIE CHAINS OF THE FAMILIAR SLAVE

CrVi Gen

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

Requisites: see below

This ritual binds a supernatural creature to the caster as her familiar, until a condition incorporated into the

spell comes to pass. The level of the ritual must be no less than (the creature's Might + 15), though she may also need to penetrate its Magic Resistance if casting on an unwilling target. It has no effect if the target is already bound as a familiar to another.

Casting requisites of a Technique and Form appropriate to the creature's nature and physical form may be included. These two Arts are used to determine the Lab Total for any subsequent improvements to the bond. The cords connecting maga and familiar have initial values of 0, and the vis cost of this ritual does not apply towards these improvements. The maga can strengthen the bond in the lab, but the effect is still inherently temporary. If she casts this on a faerie, she gains the three special powers (Shared Powers, Shared Senses, and Shared Fatigue) associated with a faerie familiar, but the cords will decay as normal, though the bond is never completely broken so long as the spell's duration remains in effect.

Because the bond is often made under duress, the familiar is much more wild and independent than normal familiars, and typically must be subdued or guarded to ensure it does not try to escape. The two are probably at odds most of the time, and the faerie is likely to bear a grudge against the maga afterward if it is taken advantage of or treated badly.

(Base effect, +1 Touch, +4 Until)

others, and after many years of experimentation she was able to isolate three of them. She called these the leaden cord, the iron cord, and the tin cord, and she documented her discoveries well, so that anyone Initiated into Faerie Magic could take advantage of them. She also believed that there was at least one more cord still to be identified, but she did not speculate what it could do.

These three cords have negative effects, rather than positive. They hinder the maga's mind, body, and spirit in certain circumstances, offsetting the benefits of the other cords and making her more

vulnerable. This is because they do not bring the maga and her familiar closer together, but rather bind the familiar more securely to the maga, preventing its faerie nature from eroding the cords that connect them. In a sense, these negative cords strengthen the positive cords, while at the same time limiting their power.

The cords are purchased exactly the same way as the others, by dividing the maga's Lab Total for a season into points that are allocated among them. The cords serve to balance each other, and so long as the sum of the values of one set of cords does not exceed the sum of the scores for

the other, the cords do not degrade, and the maga does not need to apply Aging Points to them. This means that one negative cord increased to +3 can offset three positive cords at +1, or vice-versa. If there is a discrepancy, the highest-value cord on the side with the greater total, negative or positive, will receive an Aging Point each year as normal.

Mirroring the positive cords, each negative cord also has a varying effect that penalizes both the maga and her familiar.

- **THE LEADEN CORD:** The maga is more susceptible to the Divine, and more prone to magical errors in its presence; add the value of this cord to the number of botch dice you must roll when the maga uses her powers in the Dominion or when touching a holy object. You must also subtract this score from her attempts to resist Divine influence, including Personality Trait and natural resistance rolls.
- **THE IRON CORD:** The maga cannot stand the feel of iron. When she is touching it, you must apply the value of this cord as a penalty to all of her rolls, and subtract it from her Soak when she is hit with iron weapons. She is also much more susceptible to the Infernal realm, and must increase the number of botch dice you roll by this amount when she uses her powers in an Infernal aura.
- **THE TIN CORD:** The maga is more vulnerable outside of supernatural auras, and being cut off from a mystic realm makes her very nervous and uncomfortable. When she is not within a supernatural aura of some sort, you must subtract the value of this cord from all of her Personality Trait rolls, natural resistance rolls, healing rolls, rolls to withstand deprivation, and Aging rolls. You also subtract this value from her Soak.

Faeries bound with these negative cords often come to resent their masters, and begin to feel a terrible yearning to escape. It is against the nature of the fae to be fettered; if the bonds do not degrade naturally, the familiar begins to desire freedom more powerfully than anything

else, and becomes increasingly uncomfortable with the arrangement. Some faerie familiars commit suicide to break away from their bonds, while others choose to act out in strange and spiteful ways, and some simply bear their imprisonment in quiet despair.

BINDING THE GIFT (MINOR HOUSE MYSTERY)

Merinita knew how to unlock an additional property of the cords that bind a maga to her familiar: she learned how to share the supernatural quality of her Gift that affects social relations with others, and in so doing could moderate some of the penalties. This is said to have helped her overcome her legendary shyness. She taught this secret to many of her followers, including some who later joined Quendalon, and thus it is still taught in her House.

After Initiating this Mystery, the magus's familiar is afflicted with the same social penalties that the magus himself suffers because of The Gift — most people and animals can sense that there is something different about the familiar, and are made uncomfortable by its presence. If the magus has the Gentle Gift, or if his Gift is inoffensive to a specific kind of being, his familiar is similarly protected by these Virtues. If he has the Blatant Gift, or is otherwise offensive to some, his familiar also inherits these Flaws.

The three cords that bind the magus and his familiar also serve to lessen the penalties for both of them, and as they become closer to each other they can even overcome them altogether and become more alluring to certain kinds of people or creatures. The familiar acts as a soothing influence on the magus's Gift, and helps to put other beings with similar backgrounds at ease. Each cord thus has an additional effect, as described below.

- **THE GOLDEN GIFT:** The storyguide should add the value of the golden cord to social rolls that involve interactions with all magical beings, meaning those that have a Magical Might score or who have a supernatural background associated with

the Magic realm. This includes Hermetic magi, though they are usually immune to social effects of The Gift because of the Parma Magica.

- **THE SILVER GIFT:** This strengthens the magus's relationship with faeries and faerie creatures. Add the value of the silver cord to all social rolls involving people and creatures with Faerie Might, or who have a supernatural background associated with the fae. Magi with Faerie Virtues and Flaws are included in this category, but again they are usually shielded from the effect by the Parma Magica.
- **THE BRONZE GIFT:** The magus's Gift is less aggravating to mundane animals; the storyguide should add the value of the bronze cord to all rolls that deal with social interactions with them. Some animals — usually those with a supernatural nature — do not react negatively to The Gift, and in that case this cord does not improve the magus's relations with them, since there is no penalty for the cord to offset.

Bonding with a faerie familiar usually involves forging three additional cords, as described above, and these cords are also negatively affected by this Virtue. The value of the cord is added to the penalty for having The Gift, making the magus and his familiar even more despised in certain circumstances related to the cord.

- **THE LEADEN CORD:** The magus becomes less alluring in the Dominion, and Divine beings or people associated with the Divine realm are made more uncomfortable by his presence. The storyguide should subtract the value of the leaden cord from all social rolls made under these conditions, including whenever the magus is touching anything that is associated with the Divine realm.
- **THE IRON CORD:** The Infernal realm brings out negative qualities in the magus and his familiar, enhancing the discomfort caused by his Gift. Subtract the value of the iron cord from all social rolls you make in Infernal auras, when dealing with



beings who have Infernal Might or an Infernal background, or when touching things that are tainted with evil. The magus is also similarly penalized whenever he is touching iron.

- **THE TIN CORD:** The magus's Gift is particularly aggravating to normal people, those who do not have any sort of supernatural background at all. The storyguide should subtract the value of the tin cord from all of his social rolls governing mundane human interaction.

In circumstances where more than one cord applies, use the one with the greater value. For example, when interacting with a person who has both faerie and magical aspects, apply either The Golden Gift or The Silver Gift, whichever is stronger. If both a positive and negative cord apply, use both, adding the bonus and subtracting the penalty.

This Mystery is considered a strange artifact of the House from before Quendalon, and most of the established Initiation Scripts for it are very nature-oriented, often involving Ordeals where the magus must live in the wilderness or on the fringes of society for a time.

Arcadian Mysteries

These are the Mysteries that were allegedly discovered by Quendalon, and which were responsible for the dramatic change in focus for his House. They concern faeries and the Faerie realm, making it possible for magi to travel through Faerie, summon faeries from Arcadia into the physical world, and to actually become faeries themselves.

ARCADIAN TRAVEL (MINOR ARCADIAN MYSTERY)

This Mystery allows the maga to travel between Faerie and the mortal world with relative ease, via special pathways called **trods**. Trods are roads that lead into and out of Faerie; they are what connect the different levels of regiones to each other and to the mundane world,

and can even lead to Arcadia. These paths occasionally occur naturally, as those who are familiar with regiones know, but with this secret magic Merinitae can cause them to appear at will.

Opening a trod requires that the maga first design a charm (see above) that depicts the trod's destination. It is possible to create a charm for a place to which she has never been — the Ease Factor is 12 for a mundane place, 15 for a regio level, and 18 if the destination is part of Arcadia. Note that while human beings can make trods to visit fantastic places they can only imagine, faeries cannot; they can only travel to places they know.

Once she has an appropriate charm, the maga must concentrate upon it; she must be able to perceive the charm, and if it was made in advance, she must touch the object associated with it. This process usually takes about ten minutes, though if she is designing the charm on the spot, she can combine this time with the time it takes to make it. Then the maga must roll her scores in Perception + the Ability used to make the charm.

ARCADIAN TRAVEL TOTAL: stress die + Perception + (Ability) + Aura

A mundane destination can only be reached by first traveling to a level of a regio above it, and the more removed from reality the destination, the more difficult it is to open the trod, as shown in the following chart. However, if the maga has an Arcane Connection to the trod's destination, she may subtract 6 from the Ease Factor. For the purposes of evaluating the modifier for a supernatural aura, you may treat this as either a Faerie or Magical power, taking the more beneficial effect.

DESTINATION	EASE FACTOR
Regio Level	destination level x 3
Leave Regio	current level of regio x 3
Arcadia	(13 – current aura modifier) x 3
Leave Arcadia	(13 – destination aura modifier) x 3

Besides the maga, a trod can affect a number of other people equal to her

Faerie Magic score, so long as they all participate in the activation of the charm, concentrating upon it as the maga does. While they are immersed in the experience, the maga leads them through the trod, and they immediately appear at its destination beside the maga. It is impossible for a person to enter a trod unwillingly, though it might happen unwittingly.

ANIMAE MAGIC (MAJOR ARCADIAN MYSTERY)

This Mystery allows the maga to bring out faerie properties of everyday things, transforming inanimate objects into living beings and producing faerie creatures at will. These temporary faeries are called **animae**, "artificial souls." This includes a number of new spell guidelines that only magi with this Virtue can use, described below.

Animae are essentially alive, and like most faeries they are intelligent and can interact with their environment. They often have powers appropriate to their Might, and while they are not necessarily friendly, they are usually willing to bargain with the maga for their aid. In exchange for such mortal pleasures as a full wineskin, roasted meat, or a kiss, they might fight for the maga, scout out the area, carry her over obstacles, or ensure a good harvest.

While they usually resemble humans and can often be affected by Corpus and Mentem spells, animae are also part of the Form appropriate to their nature, and magi may use that Form to target them in the same way that they would use Animal to affect beasts. Thus, animae can be warded away by Rego effects of this Form, but note that they can appear inside an *Aegis of the Hearth* if summoned from within its boundaries.

Merinitae often argue about the origins of animae. Some say they are simply a sleeping aspect of nature brought forth by Faerie Magic. Others say that a faerie spirit is summoned from Arcadia to animate the target. Some think that the magic actually creates a new faerie from the caster's belief. No one knows for sure if any of these theories are correct, though.

BECOMING (MAJOR ARCADIAN MYSTERY)

This Mystery teaches the maga how to become a faerie, as Quendalon was reputed to have done (though some secretly think it actually destroys the maga and summons a faerie to take her place). It is an irreversible process with many strange effects, both beneficial and otherwise, and the character must be prepared to undergo dramatic changes to her magic and her being that alter her very nature.

There are three primary transformation rituals associated with Becoming, each one changing a different part of the maga: her body, her mind, and her spirit. This is done through a special kind of laboratory activity that only Merinitae who have Initiated this Mystery can attempt. The maga must perform all three rituals to become entirely fay, in any order, and each requires a season of effort, wherein the maga's Lab Total must equal or exceed the level of the ritual.

The Technique and Form used determine what sort of faerie the maga becomes, and these may differ for each part of the enchantment: Transformation of the Body changes her appearance, Transformation of the Mind changes her personality, and Transformation of the Spirit changes her magic. After the enchantments are finished, the maga finds her being fundamentally altered to conform to these Arts. For example, *Creo Ignem* might cause her to look younger and swarthier, *Intellego Animal* might make her more prone to act on her instincts and curiosity, and *Perdo Auram* might associate her Might with the destructive properties of the weather.

Each transformation ritual has its own criteria for determining the level of the effect, but until she has a Might Score, the maga's Lab Total cannot exceed her Warping Score multiplied by her Faerie Magic score. Prior to that time, she must use the lesser of the two formulas as her total. After her Transformation of the Spirit, she no longer has this limitation. For this reason, Merinitae often devote themselves to magical experiments and adventures that cause them to gain more Warping Points before performing these rituals.

BECOMING LAB TOTAL LIMIT: Warping Score x Faerie Magic

Like Initiating Mysteries, all of these transformation rituals are affected by Ordeals, either from previous Initiations or undertaken during the season of the transformation. Multiply the appropriate bonus for the Ordeal by five, and subtract it from the required level of the enchantment. For example, gaining a Major Flaw during a ritual would reduce the level of the first enchantment by 45, the next by 30, and the next by 15. This also counts as having Initiated a Mystery when applying that Ordeal to subsequent Mystery Initiations or rituals.

ORDEAL MODIFIER: Level – (Initiation Modifier x 5)

Transforming the Body: The maga does not age and never suffers Fatigue. She no longer has Fatigue Levels, and cannot exert herself as others do, either in combat or to cast spontaneous spells, though she may simulate this exertion by spending a Confidence Point. As part of the enchantment, her apparent age and appearance become fixed on the cusp of two different phases of life: this is usually either her youth, right after puberty; or adulthood, when her hair first begins to turn gray; or old age, when her hair has become completely white. The level of the enchantment is the character's true age (the number of years that have passed since she was born) minus 35, plus five times her Decrepitude Score.

TRANSFORMING THE BODY: (Character's Age – 35) + (5 x Decrepitude Score)

Transforming the Mind: The maga needs no sleep. This means she has two additional free seasons each year, though she cannot perform laboratory activities during them. She can study or adventure, however, and can save up her extra time for the beginning or end of a season, so that she may finish lab projects in two months instead of three, and may spend up to sixteen days away from the lab with no penalty. However, she cannot learn any new Abilities ever again — she can improve Abilities she already possesses,

Becoming and Familiars

When a maga becomes a faerie, she is affected by Merinitae's enchantment in exactly the same way as a faerie. The cords begin to feel like heavy chains, and the bond becomes a hateful form of oppression by her familiar. Unless she has forged the balancing negative cords, the connection between them decays as normal, even if both of them are faeries. Some Merinitae theorize that there must be another ritual to transform the magical cords into faerie cords, which could allow two faeries bonded together to suffer no ill effects, but if that is possible it has not yet been discovered.

but she cannot gain new ones — and she cannot invent spells or magical effects that are not at least similar to spells she already knows (see *Similar Spells*, ArM5 page 101). This limits her spontaneous magic and her laboratory inventions, though she can still master the spells she has learned. The level for this enchantment is the total of her scores in all of her Abilities.

TRANSFORMING THE MIND: Total Score in Abilities

Transforming the Spirit: The maga sacrifices The Gift and becomes a faerie creature. This makes her immune to Warping and gives her Faerie Might, which she may use for Magic Resistance and Penetration. She may still cast spells and perform laboratory activities, but doing so costs her one Might Point for each magnitude of the effect. She is also affected by wards like *Aegis of the Hearth* and other powers that affect faeries. The level of this enchantment is the total of her scores in all of her Arts, and once it is completed she gains a Might Score equal to half her Becoming Lab Total.

TRANSFORMING THE SPIRIT: Total Score in Arts

FAERIE MIGHT SCORE: Becoming Lab Total / 2



Animae Guidelines

Animae spells are Creo or Muto. A Muto spell transforms a mundane thing into a faerie, usually something appropriate to its nature, while Creo simply summons a faerie associated with the Form, and the maga has very little control over what. Since all faeries have Might, and since their Might is added to the level of the spell, Animae spells must always be designed at a level greater than that given in the guidelines. For example, to summon a faerie insect with a Might Score of 1 is a base level 11 Creo Animal effect, and to change a pool of water into a water faerie with Might 10 requires an effect of base level 20.

ANIMAL

Faerie animals are just like mundane animals, except that they can usually talk, walk like people, and often have other human qualities. Animals or animal products changed into animae usually retain beastlike properties, though they are still intelligent. For example, a goat changed into a faerie would be hairy, with horns and goat's feet, and appropriately goatlike Personality traits; a fish might become a mermaid or some other sort of part-human, part-sea creature.

CREO ANIMAL

Level 10: Create a faerie insect.

Level 15: Create a faerie bird, reptile, fish, or amphibian.

Level 20: Create a faerie mammal.

Level 25: Create a faerie with animal parts, like wings or gills. Create a faerie that is a combination of multiple animals.

MUTO ANIMAL

Level 10: Change an animal into a faerie.

Level 15: Change something made of animal products into a faerie.

Level 20: Change something made of multiple animals or animal products into a faerie.

AQUAM

Water faeries can be capricious, but are often deep and unfathomable. They have powerful desires, and can be incredibly destructive when unleashed.

CREO AQUAM

Level 10: Create a water faerie.

MUTO AQUAM

Level 5: Change liquid into a faerie.

AURAM

Faeries of the air are typically sanguine and flighty, though note that they are also associated with thunderstorms, wind, and lightning.

CREO AURAM

Level 10: Create a faerie of the air.

MUTO AURAM

Level 5: Change a weather phenomenon into a faerie.

CORPUS

Faeries of the body may appear human, but are definitely not. They are usually deformed in some way. It is

impossible to change a living person into a faerie with Animae Magic.

CREO CORPUS

Level 10: Create an obviously nonhuman faerie (a walking skeleton, a head without a body).

Level 15: Create a faerie that appears basically human (a corpse, a hunchback).

MUTO CORPUS

Level 15: Change a skeleton, corpse, or other human remains into a faerie.

Level 20: Animate human remains in an unusual shape, or a combination of multiple bodies.

Level 25: Combine human and animal remains into a faerie (Animal requisite).

HERBAM

Faeries of the wood are probably the most well-known faeries in Mythic Europe. They generally behave very similarly to trees whose consciousness has been awakened.

CREO HERBAM

Level 5: Create a faerie of the wood.

MUTO HERBAM

Level 4: Change a plant or item made from plant products into a faerie.

IGNEM

Light, flame, and heat are properties all fire faeries share. While Ignem also covers darkness and the absence of heat, faeries of coldness or ice are typically

Animae Guidelines, Continued

produced with Aquam or Terram spells, and faeries of shadow are considered part of Imaginem.

CREO IGNE

Level 15: Create a faerie of fire, heat, or light.

MUTO IGNE

Level 10: Change fire, heat, or light into a faerie.

IMAGINEM

Animate images do not usually gain additional properties outside their idiom; for example, a faerie echo can only repeat what she hears, and an animate portrait cannot leave her frame. An illusory copy of a person may look and sound like the original but does not necessarily inherit her memories or knowledge. Two notable exceptions are reflections and shadows: when changed into faeries, since they remain tied to their originator and only appear under certain conditions (in mirrors or light), they often retain a part of their source's identity, and know things that only the original would know otherwise.

CREO IMAGINEM

Level 3: Create an illusory faerie that can affect one sense. Additional senses add one magnitude each.

MUTO IMAGINEM

Level 3: Change an image that affects one sense into a faerie. Each additional sense the original image affects, or each additional sense that the faerie image can affect (giving a portrait a

voice, for example), adds one magnitude to this effect.

MENTEM

Mentem faeries are dangerous to experiment with as they live in the mind and can sometimes take it over. They are typically associated with stories and the imagination, and their host might find herself thinking about friends no one else sees, or interacting with these creatures in dreams.

CREO MENTEM

Level 10: Create a faerie in a person's mind.

Level 15: Create a faerie ghost.

MUTO MENTEM

Level 5: Change an emotion, memory, or thought into a faerie.

Level 15: Release a faerie from a person's mind (with requisites appropriate to its new form).

TERRAM

Faeries of the mountains tend to be gruff and slow, though like avalanches they can sometimes move with surprising speed. Those associated with earth are often warm and soft-hearted, while faeries of stone can be cold and passionless. Iron faeries are usually wicked and demonic.

CREO TERRAM

Level 3: Create a faerie associated with sand, dirt, mud, or clay.

Level 5: Create a faerie associated with stone or glass.

Level 15: Create a faerie associated with base metal.

Level 25: Create a faerie associated with precious metal.

Level 35: Create a faerie associated with gemstone.

MUTO TERRAM

Level 4: Change dirt, sand, mud, or clay into a faerie.

Level 5: Change stone or glass into a faerie.

Level 10: Change metal or gemstone into a faerie.

VIM

Vim faeries are the most unpredictable of all, essentially raw magic given life. They are associated with supernatural effects and especially Warping, and are drawn to auras, spells, and enchanted devices. They have powers similar to daimons (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, Theurgy). Note that spells changed into faeries only last as long as the original spell, even if the transformation spell has a longer duration.

CREO VIM

Level 4: Create a faerie daimon.

MUTO VIM

Gen: Change a spell or effect of level less than or equal to (this spell's level + 5) into a faerie.

Level 2: Change vis into a faerie, with (number of pawns x 5) Might Points, using up the vis in the process.

After the maga has become a faerie, she may strengthen her connection to the Faerie realm by performing lesser transformation rituals, further empowering the enchantment. In this way, the maga can give herself faerie powers or better imitate aspects of humanity that she has given up in the Becoming ritual. Here are three examples of lesser transformation rituals, though other rituals that impart faerie powers may exist, and could be discovered through experimentation or original research.

Altering the Enchantment: The maga can make herself appear older or younger, and can choose a different Technique and Form to determine her physical appearance; or she can alter the Arts that determine her faerie personality; or she can increase her Might Score and change the associated Form. The level of this enchantment is the same level as the transformation ritual she is altering.

Inspired Knowledge: The maga can give herself a score of 1 in a new Ability, so long as she could learn it if she were human and has set aside 5 experience points for it. She can also master spells in this way, assuming she knows the spell she wishes to master. The level of this enchantment is the sum of her scores in all Abilities that belong to different categories. For example, when learning a Martial Ability she would add up her scores in non-Martial Abilities, including spell mastery Abilities, to determine the effect level.

The Empowered Faerie: The maga can learn a new spell, essentially a faerie power that she can activate with her Might. The level of the enchantment is equal to the level of the spell she will gain, which costs her a number of Might Points equal to its magnitude to cast. Exceeding the level by five reduces this Might cost by one, so that doubling it makes the spell cost nothing. She can also reduce the cost of spells she already knows with this same ritual. Likewise, she can increase the number of Might Points a power costs to activate in the same way, if she wishes to increase her Penetration Total.

THE LINE OF QUENDALON

After the House Divided, Quendalon took many new apprentices, desiring to share the knowledge he had gained from Faerie with his loyal followers. He also taught other magi his secrets, without requiring anything from them in return, in order to spread his magic throughout the Order. These magi came to be known as the Line of Quendalon. In return for his fantastic powers, Quendalon asked only that they join his House, and pledge their loyalty to him as Primus. Since then, the leaders of the House have all descended from this line, including Rhiannon, Vinaria, and Handri.

Quendalon Initiated his followers in all three Arcadian Mysteries, and characters descended from his lineage may Initiate Arcadian Travel or Anima Magic through one of many well-known Initiation Scripts. Having himself been raised by faeries, Quendalon was said to have encouraged all of his followers to place Gifted children in their care, and so many of his line have Faerie-Raised Magic. Others commonly have a Major Magical Focus with Faerie. When they believe they are ready, having mastered the other Inner Mysteries, the elders of the line Initiate their filii into Becoming, and assist them in the transformation from human to faerie.

Quendalon never took a familiar, and so these Merinitae are less critical of those who choose to forgo the Founder's ritual, though they often have faerie friends and maintain complex relationships with the fae. The most popular Arts in this lineage are Vim, Muto, and Creo, and most Merinitae study a Form that represents the type of faeries in which they are most interested. Quendalon is said to have particularly favored Terram.

These magi are sometimes associated with the name "The Last Commission," in reference to a legend that Bonisagus himself smiled upon Quendalon's efforts, charging him with the task of making the power of the Faerie realm more accessible to all magi. For this reason, Quendalon's followers occasionally Initiate magi from other Houses, particularly Bonisagus. Many of them are Seekers, and more than any other Merinitae they devote

themselves to experimental research and exploring the frontiers of Hermetic magic.

SAMPLE LINE OF QUENDALON

INITIATION: ANIMAE MAGIC

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +16

Script Details: The Initiate must spend a season visiting a Faerie aura, studying its inhabitants, and taking detailed notes on their behavior and relationships (+3). Then she must find and befriend the faerie that is most appropriate to her highest Technique and Form (+1), taking the Faerie Friend Flaw (+3). To secure its lasting friendship, she must make a bargain with it, giving up a uniquely human quality that cannot be replaced, such as the color of her eyes, all memory of her parents, or her firstborn child (+6). She also receives a Prohibition never to break her word, or she will suffer a faerie wasting sickness (+3).

Folk Mysteries

The common people have collected a great deal of wisdom about faeries over the years, and Merinitae have adapted that folklore into a unique set of Mysteries. These explore faerie magic associated with charms (see above), including charms that focus spells on particular targets, charms that invoke archetypal events, and charms that harness the power of symbols and sympathetic magic in the lab.

CHARM MAGIC (MINOR FOLK MYSTERY)

This Inner Mystery allows a Merinita to incorporate charms into her spells, making them more potent through sympathetic magic. This requires that she first invent a spell that incorporates a specific charm; this can be done with spontaneous, formulaic, or ritual spells. She must decide how the charm applies to the target and include this in the spell description. For example, if the name "Darius" were integrated into a spell, she

could use a "Darius" charm when casting it on a target named Darius. Likewise, a spell might involve "winter," "an axe," or something "red."

A single charm imparts a +2 bonus to the Casting Total of the spell. The maga may incorporate the charm specified by the spell into her actions whenever she casts it; she must either create the temporary charm at the time of casting or have the object associated with a permanent charm at hand. When casting spells with the charms described above, she might tell a story about a person called Darius, or draw a picture that depicts winter, or whittle a stick into the shape of an axe, or play a song that suggests the color red.

Example: Mari Amwithig of Merinita has Initiated Charm Magic, and modified her spell Slay the Innocent (PeCo[An]30) to include an "enemy" charm. She spends three hours composing a poem about an enemy, inscribing it on a fine piece of tanned vellum, and succeeds at her Communication + Language roll against Ease Factor 9. Whenever she reads this poem from the scroll while casting her spell on one of her enemies, she receives a +2 bonus to her Casting Total.

A spell can also incorporate several charms at once: when she invents the spell, the maga specifies all the charms it involves, up to as many as her score in Faerie Magic. There are also several categories that can be used to describe charms. These help to explain in what way a charm applies to the target, and are noted next to the charm like so: "Darius" (character), "winter" (event), "axe" (item), "red" (aspect). The maga receives a +1 bonus to her Casting Total for each charm incorporated into the casting, and an additional +1 bonus for each category represented by these charms. For example, a spell designed to affect a "magus" (character) named "Darius" (character) in "winter" (event) would give the maga a +5 Casting Total bonus; +3 for three charms, and +2 for two different categories.

CASTING TOTAL BONUS: +1 for each charm, +1 for each category represented

The maga can also use charms to improve the effectiveness of her Penetration using an Arcane Connection to the target. This increases her Penetration Multiplier

by one for each category beyond the first represented by the spell, in addition to the normal +2 for a symbolic representation (see Sympathetic Connections, ArM5 page 86). A spell designed to affect "Darius" (character) in "winter" (event) would give the maga +3 to her Penetration Multiplier when cast with an Arcane Connection.

SYMPATHETIC CONNECTION BONUS: +2, +1 for each category beyond the first

When casting a spell associated with several charms, the maga can design a single charm that incorporates all of the different concepts at once. For example, instead of writing three different songs, one about a "magus," another about "Darius," and a third about "winter," she can write a single song about "Darius the magus in winter." However, each additional concept adds 3 to the Ease Factor for making a charm, so that the song "Darius the magus in winter" would require a Communication + Music roll against an Ease Factor of 12 to compose.

Spells may be designed so that the target is itself the charm, if the effect produces an artistic or poetically satisfying result. This requires about ten minutes of preparation and an Intelligence + Finesse roll against an Ease Factor of 6 to succeed. For example, a spell intended to turn a person into a lion could play upon the fact that both the warrior and a lion are brave, and so the spell could be designed to incorporate a "brave" (aspect) charm. However, the charm would have no effect if the target were not particularly Brave.

At the storyguide's discretion, charms that are absurdly broad — such as "a person" (character) or "Mythic Europe" (place) — give no bonus. Charms that the storyguide thinks inappropriate to the situation at hand may also fail. Anyone might be an "enemy," for example, and so it may be necessary for the player to adequately explain how the charm distinguishes the spell's target from other possible targets in order to receive the bonus.

A spell incorporating charms may be cast without the charms being at hand, or



Charm Categories

Adage: "There is truth in wine," "Power corrupts," or "Out of sight, out of mind."

Aspect: A particular quality of the target, such as small, drunk, lazy, or rough.

Character: The target's name, occupation, title, bloodline, nickname, age, or birthmark.

Event: What the target is doing: a chase, seeking justice, in love, a rescue, or a quest.

Item: The target's shape or material, or an object strongly associated with the target.

Place: The location of the target: a forest, mountain, covenant, village, or ship.

on a target that does not correspond to the charms. However, the bonuses only apply if the maga has the charms and the target is appropriate.

Instead of increasing her spell mastery abilities, a maga may devote mastery experience to associate additional charms with her formulaic spells. For each charm, this costs her 1 experience point per magnitude of the spell being modified. Any of the charms associated with a spell may be used when casting that spell, though the total number of charms incorporated into a spell's casting can never exceed her score in Faerie Magic.

STORY MAGIC (MAJOR FOLK MYSTERY)

Folk magicians know that things must always happen a certain way in a medieval story, and believe that they themselves are taking part in an unfolding story. This Mystery allows the maga to influence the story of her own life, by using a kind of folk magic that alters the course of events by inspiring particular circumstances, as they should happen in a medieval story. She brings about conditions that match the way that things would be in a myth or legend, just as faeries come into being according to popular beliefs and stories.

Story Magic requires that the maga first design a **story charm**. This is a special kind of charm that cannot be designed spontaneously, as it draws upon a unique quality of an event. For example, to make a "magus" story charm, she might need a connection to a particularly impressive magus. Perhaps to create a "winter" story charm, she would need to remember lying in a snowbank on the coldest night of the year. An "axe" story charm might require an especially fine axe, once used to chop down an entire forest. Finding an appropriate object to associate with a story charm might be part of a special quest, like locating a compatible animal for a familiar. Without this legendary frame of reference, a maga cannot make an effective story charm.

Once inspired, the maga prepares the charm as normal: she obtains an appropriate object to hold the charm and spends several hours designing it. Then she rolls the associated Characteristic + Ability against an Ease Factor of 9. Like Charm Magic charms, the charm should be given a descriptive term associated with a category (adage, aspect, etc.) to which the story event applies. After enduring a memorable siege, for example, she might make a "castle" (place), "battle" (event), or "haste makes waste" (adage) charm.

A story charm may be used at any time, though it is most appropriate when the character is on an adventure of some sort. Activating it requires the maga to spend a Confidence Point. Afterward, the idea of the charm manifests at some point during the session: an event takes place, an object turns up, another character is affected, or a theme is emphasized, usually to the maga's benefit. The player may give suggestions for what she wants to happen, but the storyguide determines the actual results, somehow incorporating the concept of the charm into the narrative. This story element is entirely at the storyguide's discretion; it must come into play, but does not necessarily come about as the player expects, and it is even possible for the effect to escape her notice.

Example: After Initiating Story Magic, Mari Amwithig manages to trick a faerie lord out of his birthright, and she represents this experience with a silver crown. She writes a poem about her cleverness, choosing a "sbrewd" (aspect) charm, and

beats an Ease Factor of 9 on her Communication + Language roll: the crown becomes a story charm. Later, before entering a faerie market, she puts on the crown and spends a Confidence Point, quietly reciting her poem to herself. Because of this, the storyguide rules that she bargains particularly well, and shrewdly trades a cask of wine for a goblin servant who will obey her for a year and a day, or until she asks it a question it cannot answer.

Generally, a story charm should be applicable to the current situation, manifesting as a clue to a mystery, or an ally with a useful bit of aid. Perhaps it could be represented as a temporary bonus to certain rolls. It is not miraculous or even very powerful, but should make the player feel as if she has some additional control over the direction of the scene. Think of it like a Minor Story Flaw that applies to the adventure as a whole, which the maga can take advantage of if she watches for it. If a clear mechanical benefit is needed, assume the character has a +3 bonus on all rolls associated with the charm for the entire scene.

The maga may also substitute story charms for charms in Charm Magic spells. In this way, story charms are like "wild cards" for their particular charm category. A story charm can be used in place of any charm from its same category: a maga could substitute a "guide" (character) story charm for a "magus" (character) or a "Darius" (character) charm when casting a spell that incorporates one of those charms, since they all affect characters. This still costs the maga a Confidence Point to activate the charm.

SYMBOLIC MAGIC (MAJOR FOLK MYSTERY)

Symbolic Magic encompasses several laboratory activities associated with charms and the symbols used in sympathetic magic.

A maga with Symbolic Magic may use charms when designing invested devices, up to as many charms as her score in Faerie Magic, adding double the charm and category bonuses to her Lab Total instead of her Casting Total. If used with an Arcane Connection, this also increases the Penetration Multiplier for the device, which is only useful if

some levels are set aside for Penetration. As the charms are built into the effect at creation, the effect cannot affect a target that is not covered by the charms, unlike a spell using charms, which merely loses the bonus. The trigger action must also incorporate these charms, so the effect cannot have an environmental or linked trigger, though the maga may still restrict who can use the device.

Example: Mari Amwithig's parens builds her an enchanted flute with several invested effects using Symbolic Magic. One of them is an effect that allows her to speak with animals (InAn20). This incorporates three charms: "this animal can fly" (aspect), "dark" (aspect), and "one hears only what one wants to hear" (adage), which gives him a +10 bonus to his Lab Total (three charms and two different categories, doubled). This limits the effect to dark animals that can fly, and neither she nor the animal will hear something they do not wish to hear. If she has an Arcane Connection to the animal, she receives a +3 bonus to her Penetration Multiplier. To activate the flute, she must play a song about flying, darkness, and hearing what one wants to hear.

A maga with this Virtue can also add charm bonuses to her talisman. Like attuning it to an effect associated with its shape or material, the maga can modify her talisman to act as a charm in particular circumstances, increasing her Casting Total whenever those circumstances apply, as with Charm Magic. A talisman may be attuned to as many charms as she likes, but only one charm may be attuned each season, and no more charms than her score in Faerie Magic may be incorporated into a single effect.

A maga with Symbolic Magic may design permanent charms that other characters may use, creating symbolic representations or integrating the effects of Arcadian Travel or Story Magic into objects that characters without those Mysteries can carry. The wielder activates the charm instead of the maga who designed it, and so must spend the necessary Confidence Point, or concentrate upon the trod's destination, when the charm is used.

Finally, the maga gains the ability to design ritual spells that use a new Symbol Range, Duration, and Target, described below. Each ritual requires that she make a symbolic representation that identifies

Symbol Range, Duration, & Target

Symbol (Range): You can affect something represented by a symbol as if you had an Arcane Connection to it, essentially allowing you to create an Arcane Connection to your target. This spell must be a ritual, but is otherwise equivalent to Arcane Connection range. If the symbol does not uniquely describe the target, the spell fails, since an Arcane Connection must be specific to a single target (unless cast with Target: Symbol).

Symbol (Duration): The effect lasts as long as the symbol does (and the symbol must be a physical object, so that a poem or song, for example, must be written down). If the symbol is broken,

erased, falls apart, dies, or is otherwise damaged, the spell ends. If the target changes so that any of the qualities of the symbol no longer apply, the spell is interrupted, but the effects return once these qualities are true again — unlike the Until (Condition) Duration, this effect can outlive the caster. It is the same level as Year, and requires a ritual to cast.

Symbol (Target): You affect all targets represented by the symbol within range of the spell. It is calculated at the same level as Boundary, though it is essentially a large Group, and modifiers according to the size of the target apply. It must be cast as a ritual.

the target through at least three different charms (this requires Faerie Magic 3 and a Characteristic + Ability roll against an Ease Factor of 12 to design the symbol). For example, a portrait designed to affect the Faerie Queen of Irencillia at Symbol Range might include a "queen" (character) charm, a "winter" (event) charm, and a "faerie" (character) charm. To use Symbol Range, Duration, and Target together in one spell would require a total of nine charms (requiring Faerie Magic 9).

If any of the charms do not apply when the ritual is cast, the spell fails; if any of the conditions associated with these charms cease to apply while the spell is still active, the effect ends immediately.

Each use of a symbol requires a unique ritual spell. However, if the charms are described broadly enough, the same ritual can be used again in different circumstances. For example, the ritual spell described above could affect a human queen with faerie blood when cast in winter, so long as new "queen," "winter," and "faerie" charms were fashioned to identify her.

HEIRS TO MERLIN

At the inauguration of House Ex Miscellanea in 817, there was a great party of non-Hermetic wizards from the British Isles who accompanied Pralix to

the Rhineland and participated in her welcoming ceremony as the thirteenth House. Among these were a Welsh seer named Emrys and his six-year-old son Ambrosius. Emrys had foreseen that his son would die while still a child, but made a pact with the faeries of his homeland to trade his own life instead. He had long served as a magical advisor to a faerie court, and by order of the faerie king he was granted a stay of seven years and a day (the remaining time his son would have lived) to see to the boy's future before taking his place in the Halls of the Dead.

Emrys was interested in his son's joining House Merinita: at the same Tribunal that Emrys swore the Oath, Quendalon announced his House's new dedication to Faerie. The jewel-eyed Primus listened to the seer's story, accepted his charge, and took the boy back with him to Irencillia. Emrys went with them, remaining long enough to see his son settled and formally adopted as Quendalon's apprentice, before returning to Wales to face his end. It was said that afterward, those with Second Sight could sometimes see the spirit of Emrys watching over the boy during the summer months.

Ambrosius of Merinita obviously had strong faerie heritage (his mother was a faerie enchantress, or so it was said) and had already demonstrated signs of potent supernatural abilities before Quendalon



Recurring Spells

Use the frequency that most closely matches how often the spell recurs, rounding up to the next greater magnitude. For example, a spell that recurs every ten minutes adds five magnitudes. Spells cannot recur more often than once per minute.

FREQUENCY	MAGNITUDES
minute	+5
day	+4
month	+3
year	+2
decade	+1

Initiated him into the secrets of Faerie Magic. As he grew, he began to demonstrate an instinctive knowledge of other Mysteries, magic associated with charms and symbols, and with fortune and fate. He had a remarkable affinity for making symbolic predictions, and wrote many of these on long scrolls in poetic couplets.

He took apprentices of his own, and by his example they learned to perform similar feats of prophecy, though each of them used a different medium. One of his followers carried a set of carved stones with symbols on them, which he would throw and consult when casting his spells. Another was a musician, who would compose a different song for each charm. A third was interested in heraldry, and made charms based on colors and devices.

This Hermetic lineage still survives as the "Heirs to Merlin," for many claim that Ambrosius's father was descended from the great wizard of old. Their followers often act as advisors to faerie courts — magi are not supposed to serve as court wizards to mundanes, as that is considered beneath their dignity, but there is no reason a magus cannot swear fealty to a faerie king or queen, so long as he does not invite their wrath upon the Order as a whole.

The Heirs may Initiate Charm Magic or Story Magic, and typically learn Symbolic Magic later in life, usually after their masters retire and they take over their positions at court. Many of them have Faerie Blood and often develop

Premonitions, Second Sight, or a Major Magical Focus with charms. Binding The Gift is also common. Intellego is by far their most popular Art. They often swear fealty to faerie lords or ladies when Initiating Faerie Magic, and their Initiatory Quests for the Inner Mysteries might involve serving their will, protecting their realms, or making war against their enemies.

SAMPLE HEIRS TO MERLIN

INITIATION: CHARM MAGIC

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +8

Script Details: The Initiate must choose a particular kind of charm Ability and spend a year as an apprentice to a master of the art (+1). She must then design a charm for a faerie noble using very expensive materials (high quality wood, an exceptional instrument, a rich costume, or gold ink) (+1) that depicts a special symbolic quality of her patron (+3), first seeking out and obtaining a unique object of myth or legend to associate with the charm (+3), such as an artifact that once belonged to a famous magus or historical figure of old.

Illusion Mysteries

These Mysteries deal with illusions and images, including aspects of the physical world that faeries can see but most humans cannot. These include unusual durations for Faerie Magic spells that can last nearly forever.

SPELL TIMING (MINOR ILLUSION MYSTERY)

This Mystery gives a maga access to several new Durations for her spells. Only those who have Initiated this Mystery may cast or invent spells and effects that use them.

Three of these new durations allow the maga to cast a spell but keep it dormant, "holding" it for a specified length of time. The effect and its Penetration are evaluated when it is released, as if she had

just cast the spell. If the parameters are no longer applicable (the target has moved out of range, for example, or dramatically changed size), the spell has no effect.

- **HELD (DURATION):** This duration is the same level as Concentration. The maga may cast the spell as normal, but the effect is delayed for as long as she concentrates. When she releases it, treat it as if cast with Momentary duration.
- **MIDDAY/MIDNIGHT (DURATION):** This duration is equivalent to Sun, but does not manifest until dawn, dusk, noon, or midnight. It then lasts until the next dawn, dusk, noon, or midnight. For example, a spell cast just after dawn would not manifest until noon, and would then last until dusk.
- **SEASON (DURATION):** This duration is held until the start of the next equinox or solstice, and lasts only until the following equinox or solstice. It is the same level as Moon, but requires a ritual spell like Year.

Three other durations have conditions that must be built into the spell when it is designed, similar to the Until (Condition) Duration.

- **WHILE (CONDITION) (DURATION):** The target must perform some activity, such as a musical performance or reading a book, or fulfill some common and temporary physical condition, such as sleeping or being drunk. As long as that condition lasts, the spell remains in effect. This is the same level as Concentration.
- **NOT (CONDITION) (DURATION):** The spell lasts for as long as the target does *not* fulfill some common physical condition, such as sleeping or speaking. It is equivalent in level to Sun duration, but cannot last longer than a month.
- **IF (CONDITION) (DURATION):** This effect triggers if the target fulfills a specific condition. It has an additional Duration, which determines how long the triggered spell lasts after it takes effect. To determine the level, add four magnitudes to the level cal-

culated based on the Duration that the spell has when it takes effect, and it must be cast as a ritual spell. The spell expires without triggering if the caster passes into Twilight (even temporarily), if the caster dies, or if a year passes.

In addition, this Mystery allows the Merinita's spells to have **recurring** effects. Such spells are designed so that from their casting onward, they always trigger in response to an environmental or physical condition, increasing its level as described on the chart below. A recurring spell must be cast as a ritual, and effects that require a ritual because of their unusual effects or non-Hermetic origins (not because of their level or spell parameters) cannot recur. For example, a ritual with Year duration can be made to recur, but a lasting effect like *Chirurgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo20) or a unique effect like *Breath of the Open Sky* (ReAu40) cannot.

Recurring spells may be given triggers, using the special (Condition) durations above. The cost for making them recur is based on how often they can be activated; if a daily-recurring effect is activated twice in one day, the second trigger has no effect. Also, spells cannot stack; when a spell recurs, it cancels before starting again. This is not a noticeable interruption; as with an enchanted device, the transition usually appears constant.

GLAMOUR (MAJOR ILLUSION MYSTERY)

Glamours are illusions with a significant amount of reality. They are Muto or Creo Imaginem spells that only magi with this Virtue may invent or cast.

A glamour seems to have all the properties of an actual thing of the same type, including substance. Thus, a glamour bridge can support weight, a glamour fire can ignite parchment, and glamour wine can quench thirst. They are essentially real for the spell's duration, which means that they can have lasting effects on their environment.

Since glamours are more "solid" than other illusions, they are resisted by the Parma Magica and other forms of Magic

Glamour Guidelines

Particularly intricate glamours, such as those that mimic a recognizable subject, or those with complex sensory components such as clear words or moving parts, add an additional magnitude to the spell. To produce a glamour that can move or act under the caster's mental direction adds two magnitudes.

Changing an animate target (something that can move under its own power) into an inanimate object is also more difficult, and requires two additional magnitudes. Over time, however, the target begins to regain its mobility unless the caster regularly concentrates on the effect. For example, a person may be changed into a tree, but if ignored for a few days that tree may begin to move and resemble a person, as its essential nature begins to reassert itself over the glamour.

The final form of a target changed into glamour will usually have recognizable properties in common with its true shape. For example, a person transformed into an animal might be extremely expressive and possibly retain other human qualities such as the ability to speak or walk upright. Size modifiers also apply to the spell level if there is a significant difference between the original shape and the new shape.

CREO IMAGINEM

Level 10: Create a glamour.

MUTO IMAGINEM

Level 10: Change a target into glamour.
(Requisite of the Form of the target required.)

Spell Glamours

A curious application of Glamour has developed among the Merinita branch of the Followers of Pendule, inspired by the stories of their namesake. Instead of using metamagic to change spells into other spells, they use glamours to change spells into other spells. These spell glamours must conform to the guidelines for Muto Vim, in that they cannot affect spontaneous magic, must target a spell cast by another, must be fast-cast, and must penetrate the spell's Penetration Total. They must also specify the Form of the affected spell, as well as the type of magic (Hermetic, Faerie Magic, hedge tradition, etc.).

Spell glamours are excellent for countermagic, but when used deliberately on an unsuspecting magus, they are considered to deprive him of his magical power, and magi whose pranks have destructive effects could find themselves taken to Tribunal on this

charge. Pendule's followers are loathed by most magi of House Flambeau, and may also find themselves embroiled in Wizard's Wars with them as a matter of principle.

BALL OF ABYSMAL MUSIC

Mulm 20

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

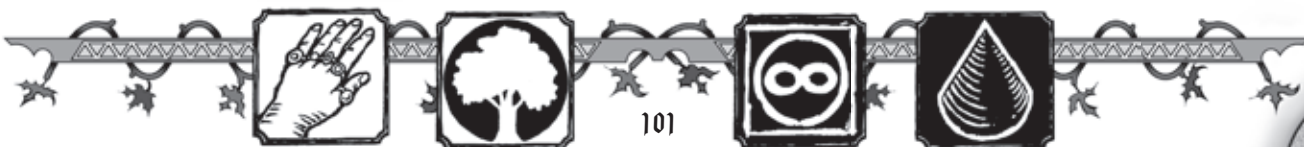
Req: Vim

This spell targets a formulaic Ignem spell while it is being cast, changing it so that instead of creating fire, heat, or light, it produces a harmless burst of color and sound. This was reputedly Pendule's favorite spell, and he taught it to all of his Merinita followers after Initiating them into the Inner Mystery of Glamour. Note that since the spell must be fast-cast, it cannot be cast formulaically unless it has been mastered for that purpose.

(Base 10, +2 Voice)

Resistance, unlike the images produced by other Imaginem spells. This is because glamour does not simply make the target emit changed species, it actually magical-

ly modifies the species themselves. They are, however, still species, and are only affected by the Imaginem form; a glamour of a stone is not affected by Terram, but



can be destroyed by Perdo Imaginem. Glamours are also illusions, and characters with Second Sight can see through them if they look carefully. Knowing that something is a glamour does not protect the character against it, though; after all, a fire glamour is still a fire and burns those who touch it whether they can see through it or not.

Merinitae always gain the Vulnerable Magic Flaw when they Initiate this Mystery. Because of this, many believe that people cannot be killed by glamours, since each one has a particular vulnerability that can undo its effects. It is said that when killed by a glamour from a maga vulnerable to iron, for example, a person touched with an iron nail might return to life. Some think this might be because a faerie that resembles him comes to take his place, or because his body comes to be possessed by a faerie spirit, and some think it means that the ghosts of people killed by glamours remain in Arcadia until they truly die.

PERPETUITY (MAJOR ILLUSION MYSTERY)

This Mystery gives access to three spell durations that can potentially last forever. All three are the same level as Year, and always require a ritual to cast.

- **MIGHT (DURATION):** Either the target or the caster must have Faerie or Magic Might, and must be alive; the spell fails if this condition is not met, including by passing into Wizard's Twilight, Arcadia, or some other otherworldly state.
- **AURA (DURATION):** The spell lasts for as long as the target remains within a supernatural aura. If the target leaves the aura or the physical world entirely (dies, goes into Twilight, or goes to Arcadia, for example) the spell ends. This does allow moving from one aura to another, so long as the two auras overlap — as long as the target never leaves a supernatural aura of some kind.
- **HIDDEN (DURATION):** The spell lasts as long as the caster or target (or a significant part of the caster or

target) is hidden — buried in the earth, placed inside a box, covered with a curtain or disguised by a costume — anything, even another spell, so long as the effect with the Hidden duration does not itself hide the target. If anyone other than the caster discovers it, the spell ends immediately.

Merinitae who learn Perpetuity usually gain the Unnatural Magic Flaw during their Initiation.

MYSTERY CULT: THE FOLLOWERS OF PENDULE

Pendule is regarded as something of a legend within the Order; no one knows how much of his tale is true and how much is fanciful. According to the stories, the Provencal wizard was discovered by Flambeau and refused when given the choice to "join or die." He was powerful enough to evade the fiery Founder and his followers who sought to destroy him, and many comedic tales depicting Pendule as a trickster defeating the mighty and blustery Flambeau with wit and illusions have become part of Hermetic lore.

Eventually, it seems, Pendule tired of these games and adopted four Hermetic magi as his followers. No one knows exactly why he did this; perhaps he simply wanted to share his secrets with others before he died, or perhaps he desired to learn Hermetic magic theory from them. Two of these followers were from House Merinita, and having Initiated Faerie Magic from Quendalon they were able to master the illusion Mysteries Pendule taught — the others could not comprehend them. Afterwards, these Merinitae continued to teach the secrets to their followers as part of a special House lineage.

Pendule's magic was very sensual and personal, and he especially believed in the use of color and sound in his spells. He expected magic to transform the wielder, rather than yield submissively to him, and while he was oddly sensitive to the passage of time, he seemed to have great difficulty with standard Hermetic durations, preferring spells that relied upon strange conditions or that triggered after being

cast. He also practiced other Mysteries which his Merinita followers did not master, and other lineages dedicated to his magic still exist in other Houses and cults within (and perhaps without) the Order.

Followers of Pendule usually Initiate Spell Timing and Glamour from their masters. Imaginem is almost always their primary Art. A common weakness in the lineage is iron — both of the Merinitae who studied Pendule's secrets were especially susceptible to it — and Pendule Merinitae often learn Spell Improvisation or a Major Magical Focus in counterspells.

Pendule quietly succumbed to death in 854, but not before imparting one last magical secret to each of his followers. To maintain this tradition, the Inner Mystery of Perpetuity is usually kept from a maga until her master is dying, Initiated as a final lesson from teacher to student.

SAMPLE FOLLOWERS OF PENDULE

INITIATION: SPELL TIMING

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +12

Script Details: The Initiate undergoes a ceremony wherein she must go an entire day and night without sleeping, casting a non-Fatiguing Imaginem spell every round to count how many individual moments pass (+3). After this rite she gains three Minor Flaws to represent how her magic becomes more illusionary, and her way of thinking about time becomes more rigid: Harmless Magic (+3), Poor Memory (faces) (+3), and Social Handicap (+3). Because of this Ordeal, the Initiate is said to begin to more closely resemble Pendule, and many of his followers adopt wild, multicolored clothing, dye their hair, or radically alter their physical appearance soon after their Initiation.

Nature Mysteries

Merinita knew a very different kind of magic from that which the rest of the House practices. It dealt with the power of untamed wildlands and drawing out the magical qualities of nature. Her Mysteries fall outside the bounds of Faerie Magic and are not usually available to members

Sample Nature Lore

LORE	DESCRIPTION
Animal	All wild creatures living in a region
Water	Rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans
Weather	The sky and wide open spaces
Forest	The spirit of trees and other flora
Desert	Dry, non-arable land of extreme temperatures
Mountain	Earth and stone, found in hills, peaks, and valleys

of her House. They can sometimes be found among magi from other Houses, especially Bjornaers from the lost line of Myanar, and one or two nature magi supposedly remain in the House to show the way to others, teaching the nature Mysteries alongside the House Mysteries of Faerie Magic. For the most part, however, the nature Mysteries are mysteries to members of Merinita's House.

NATURE LORE (MINOR OUTER MYSTERY)

As an initial step into the nature Mysteries, a maga must choose a type of nature with which she is associated. This represents her supernatural connection to the natural world. The character gains a Supernatural Ability, called Nature Lore, which is associated with this form of nature. For example, a character interested in forests would learn Forest Lore, and a maga who is interested in animals would learn Animal Lore. This Mystery gives her a score of 1 in this Ability. Merinita's interest was reputedly Forests, and thus that is the most common version — characters who have learned Forest Lore as described in *Guardians of the Forests: The Rhine Tribunal* effectively possess this Ability.

The character's score in Nature Lore serves many purposes. For one thing, it

Using Nature Lore

The following describe the effects of various Nature Lore scores. Negative scores have no useful effect. Always treat a maga's score in Nature Lore as three less outside of her home region.

- 0 An elementary understanding of the area; the maga merely has to spend a few hours in such a place to locate its important sites and know its major dangers.
- 1 A basic understanding of the place, its denizens, and important locations. Limited communication is possible.
- 2 An awareness of the supernatural elements of the area; the maga can detect when they are nearby, or whether a person has been affected by them; she can perceive the boundaries of magical regions within the area.
- 3 The maga can locate vis in the area, once per season, by spending only a few days searching.

- 4 An understanding with the area's supernatural residents; they tend to act neutrally towards the maga. Through signs and their behavior, the character can recognize when danger is near or there is a disturbance in the normal way of things.
- 5 The maga can communicate fluently with nature in the area. The maga is respected by most of the denizens.
- 6 The maga is respected and acknowledged as an ally by the area and its denizens. Residents usually come to the maga's aid when called for.
- 7 The maga can mentally communicate with the denizens of the area, simply by thinking about them. The maga has only to concentrate to summon help.
- 8 The maga can target any part of the area as if she had a permanent Arcane Connection to it.
- 9 All the denizens of the area feel compelled to obey the maga, and follow her commands faithfully.

can be used as Area Lore for the place in which the maga learned it. This includes knowledge of supernatural beings and places with an association to the area, especially what would please or anger them. As this understanding grows, the maga develops a rapport even outside of this familiar territory, allowing her to commune with nature in other places. To represent this, always treat her score in Nature Lore as three less outside of her home region.

In this same way, Nature Lore allows the character to communicate with all nature associated with her Ability. For many aspects of nature, this communication is slow going and many concepts are difficult to convey, since the character is limited to the senses and sounds possessed by the subject. A character with Mountain Lore 5 can interrogate a rock by simply touching it, though this process probably takes several hours.

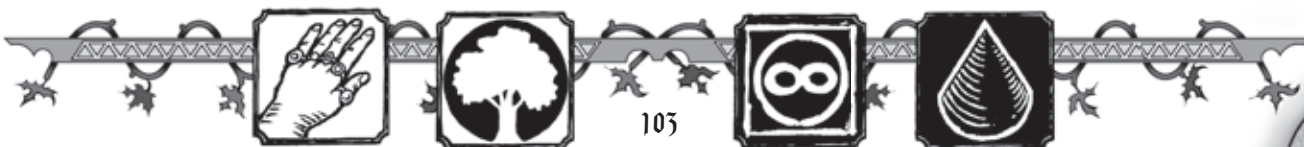
Nature Lore can only be increased through Adventure, Practice, or Exposure experience, and the Source Quality is equal to the aura of the area. Nature magi

Area Size Modifiers

SIZE	AREA	EXAMPLE
+1	One pace in diameter	A well or spring
+2	Ten paces in diameter	A great boulder
+3	100 paces in diameter	A grove of trees
+4	1,000 paces in diameter	A frozen plain
+5	10,000 paces in diameter	The North Wind

usually develop a deep attachment to this place and spend a lot of time there.

The character may Initiate other Mysteries by communing with the supernatural aspects of nature. This process is called "walking the path." The character must find a magical being associated with her Ability that is willing to teach her its secrets. In game terms, the character gains



a Flaw (the "sacrifice"), performs a task assigned by the teacher (the "quest"), and at the conclusion gains a special Virtue (the "fruit"). A Minor Flaw yields a Minor Virtue, and a Major Flaw grants a Major Virtue. More information on this process and several sample paths may be found in *Guardians of the Forests: The Rhine Tribunal*.

AWAKENING (MINOR NATURE MYSTERY)

Nature magi may learn to bring forth a natural intelligence within subjects associated with their Nature Lore Ability. In a sense, they "awaken" the spirit of the area, making it self-aware, and such beings are typically devoted to the care and safety of their region, connected to it by their very nature. Merinita's ritual for binding a familiar is said to be based partly on this Mystery.

Awakening takes at least a season, and requires a naturally fine specimen that is representative of the area, but which is not already awakened. For animals, the creature should have Magic Might, or embody the area in some capacity (the leader of a pack of wolves, for example, or the largest fish in the pond). For other beings, the area must have a magical aura, and the subject should be the focus of the aura, such as the great tree in the center of the forest, or the spirit of the mountain deep in the heart of the rock. One spirit per aura can be awakened; for animals with Magic Might, similar standards to those for finding and befriending a familiar apply, though not quite as strictly, since the results are more akin to a parent-child relationship than a bond between lifelong companions.

The maga then generates a total based on a Technique and Form that will determine the personality of the awakened being, though she must use Nature Lore instead of Magic Theory and she does not include the aura of her lab, since she performs the ritual in the wild and uses that aura instead. The base level is 25 plus the subject's Might plus or minus five times the being's Size, or five times the aura plus the area's Size modifier (see sidebar). This is similar to the formula for enchanting a familiar; a creature with

Might 5 and Size -3 would require a modified lab total of 15, while the spirit of an aura of 5 with an area modifier +5 would be level 50.

**AWAKENING TOTAL: Intelligence +
Nature Lore + Technique + Form +
Aura**

**AWAKENING LEVEL: 25 + Might + (Size
x 5), or (Aura + Size modifier) x 5**

As when binding a familiar, the character's total must equal or exceed this effect level to complete the ritual, which costs one pawn of vis of an Art associated with the maga's Nature Lore Ability for each five levels of the total. Once the enchantment is complete, the being gains a Magic Might score if does not already have one, equal to the (aura x 5), and if it is an animal it gains Intelligence instead of Cunning.

**AWAKENING COST: 1 pawn of vis per
five levels or fraction**

A maga may also spend additional seasons to imbue the newly awakened being with special powers, which it can activate with its Might. This is similar to crafting an invested device, for the subject has been prepared for enchantment as part of the awakening ritual. Note the amount of vis spent to awaken it, because this limits how many powers the maga can give it.

Determine each effect you want to enchant, just as if you were designing an effect for an invested device. If it matters, the being is considered both the wielder and the device for these powers. Then, invest the effect as normal, calculating your lab total based on the level of the invested effect. The total level of all effects cannot be greater than ten times the number of pawns of vis invested in the awakening ritual. That is, if awakening a creature cost three pawns of vis, it cannot possess more than 30 levels of magical effects.

You do not have to spend vis to invest these powers. Instead, each power will cost the spirit 1 Might Point for every 10 levels of the effect. However, you may spend vis to reduce the cost: five

pawns associated with any of the Arts in the power reduces the activation cost by 1 Might Point. This can only be done at the time the power is instilled; you cannot make the power cheaper later.

**POWER LAB TOTAL: Technique + Form
+ Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura
Modifier**

**POWER LEVEL: as an effect instilled in a
device**

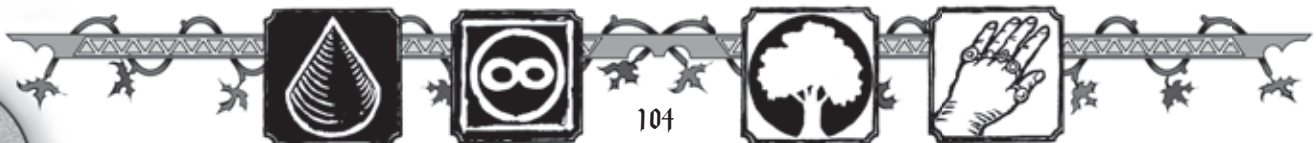
**POWER COST: 1 Might Point per ten
levels or fraction of the effect, minus
1 for every 5 pawns of (Technique or
Form) vis**

Instead of imbuing it with powers, the maga may bind an awakened being as her familiar, and may invest the bond with powers as normal. Once the process of instilling an awakened being with magical powers is begun, however, it can never be undone, and it leaves the being unsuitable as a familiar ever after. Imbuing a being with magical powers causes such dramatic changes to it that the cords can no longer bind it.

WILDING (MAJOR NATURE MYSTERY)

Through this Inner Mystery, the maga learns to bring forth the power of nature in physical things. This is similar to extracting vis from a magical aura, in that it requires a season of time and effort, and produces a number of pawns of vis, though this vis's physical form is temporary and must be used immediately, within a few days. Thus it cannot be used for seasonal activities or study; most nature magi use Wilding to make vis for their ritual spells.

The maga chooses a vessel appropriate to her Nature Lore Ability, which determines the Form of the vis produced: a stone might produce Terram vis, a plant Herbam vis, and a beast Animal vis. To be eligible for this process, the object must be completely natural, never worked through artifice or craft. For example, a stone must have broken naturally from the mountain, a plant must be growing





where its seed fell, and an animal must be untamed.

WILDING: (Nature Lore x 2) pawns of (appropriate Form) vis

Only magi who have Initiated the Wilding Mystery may use this wild vis, or even identify it as vis without magic specially designed for that purpose. Other magi simply perceive its natural form.

GUARDIAN OF NATURE (MAJOR NATURE MYSTERY)

A nature maga may learn to join her spirit with nature and herself become a guardian spirit. She immerses herself in the surrounding area — an area with a magical aura and with which she can speak fluently using her Nature Lore Ability — and everything about the place becomes an extension of her being, called her locus. A maga who binds herself to a mountain can feel footsteps on the surface like a fly traversing her skin. Another who

becomes one with the animals of an area can guide them like a hive mind, flitting her consciousness from one to another to see what they see. Within the physical limitations of her locus, she may control nature as if it were an extension of her own body, guiding it how she thinks fit.

To become one with an area, the maga must perform a secret ritual believed to have come from Merinita herself. This takes at least an hour of concentration, costs her a Fatigue Level and a number of pawns of vis equal to the level of the aura, which must be of a Form associated with her Nature Lore Ability. It also requires a Presence + Nature Lore roll against an Ease Factor of (the aura x Size Modifier), using the Size Modifiers given under Awakening, above. The maga may also take over an area already protected by a guardian spirit so long as she overcomes its Magic Resistance (see ArM5 page 184); the spirit is subsumed into her being when the ritual is completed.

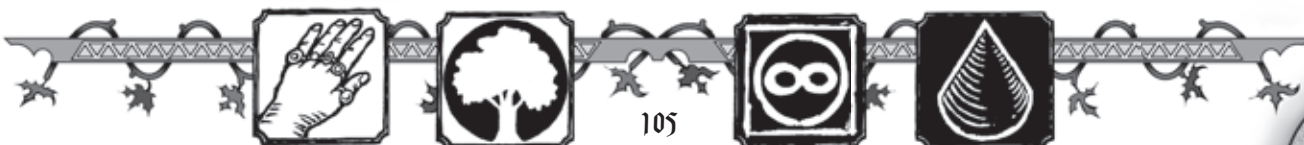
GUARDIAN RITUAL TOTAL: stress die + Presence + Nature Lore

GUARDIAN RITUAL VIS COST: (level of the aura) pawns of (appropriate Form) vis

GUARDIAN RITUAL LEVEL: level of the aura x Size Modifier

If the maga is successful, her body becomes ghostly and invisible, and like a ghost she can no longer interact directly with the physical world. Her body is like a living memory of her human form that can be damaged and even destroyed with Mentem-based magic, but while it remains she may control it as an extension of her locus if she wishes, and she may even choose to leave her locus and return to her living body, though doing so requires at least an hour of concentration and ends the effect of the ritual.

As a guardian spirit, the maga does not age, and does not need to worry about human needs for survival—she does not eat, drink, or breathe, and she is invulnerable to extreme temperatures and physical damage. She may fatigue herself and can even fall unconscious, and still requires rest



Mystery Story Seeds

- A faerie agrees to serve a maga as her familiar slave in exchange for the promise not to harvest one of the covenant's minor vis sources. When another covenant tries to gather the vis, however, the maga must protect it or break the bargain and lose her familiar.
- The folk hero of a nearby village was renowned for his skill as a healer, and his former possessions would be very useful to a Merinita with a similar interest, as they could be made into charms. Likewise, even mundane possessions of a famous magus like Ambrosius would likely fetch a high price among Merinitae folk magi.
- A pond is said to contain a magical fish that cannot be caught but speaks and has magical powers. The magi learn that it is the last of the descendants of an animal given intelligence many generations before by a lady in green. It threatens the magi, cursing them if they do not help it escape so that it can reproduce.

and sleep as normal. She cannot study, but she does gain Exposure. She may still cast spells, though she does so without words and gestures, and she must be able to perceive her target within the constraints of her locus. To cast a spell with Sight range, for example, she must possess an animal in the area that can see her target. She can still gain Warping Points and experiences Twilight as normal. She also gains one Warping Point every year for being under a constant mystical effect.

If any part of her locus is tamed, or destroyed in an unnatural way, the maga experiences great pain as part of her being is torn away from her. This translates to a Light Wound for an individual object in her locus (like an animal or a stone), a Medium Wound for part of the area that makes up her locus (a circle of earth, or water in a stream), and a Heavy Wound

for a group of objects in her locus (such as several clouds or a grove of trees), all of which give penalties to the maga's actions. If these injuries worsen, she gains an Aging Point and suffers a Crisis instead of dying. Time and appropriate Creo magic can eventually heal these wounds, so long as some of her locus remains unspoiled, but her locus is her essential nature, and if it is entirely undone, she dies a terrible death.

MYSTERY CULT: TRUE MERINITAE

During the first part of the twelfth century, a Merinita magus named Mendalus proclaimed that Quendalon had done the House a great disservice by abandoning Merinita's focus, and publicly sought to reconstruct the Founder's nature Mysteries. He was later slain in Wizard's War, but a few Merinitae sympathized with his purpose, and took up his work where he left off. They came to believe that Merinita still lived somewhere in Mythic Europe, and thought that if they could find her, she would teach them her secrets.

Then in 1158, a young apprentice named Agnes announced she had met a lady in green in the forests of Bohemia, and learned a special sort of nature magic from her. She finished her training at Irencillia, but was soon hailed by Mendalus's supporters as a "True Merinitae," believed to have learned Nature Lore directly from the Founder. In the years since, Agnes is said to have Initiated other nature Mysteries by communing with Merinita's spirit. She helped many of her elders learn these same secrets, often using ancient Initiation Scripts from before Quendalon's time, and by 1220 she has taught two apprentices of her own.

These followers, and the older magi that she Initiated into the Nature Mysteries, make up an unusual cult that is often considered a House lineage. However, the idea that Merinita herself could still be alive after so many years strikes many as absurd, and is thought by others to be a form of deliberately wish-

ful thinking. More sensible magi believe that someone must have impersonated the Founder as part of Agnes's Initiation, perhaps to symbolically suggest that her legacy endures. Distrustful magi have even suggested that Agnes could have learned her magic from disgraced Diedne wizards, not Merinitae at all, though the True Merinitae vehemently deny these allegations and refuse to listen to speculation on the subject.

True Merinitae always begin with Nature Lore, but they must also Initiate Faerie Magic if they belong to House Merinita. Over time, they may discover other Mysteries associated with their Nature Lore, usually by "walking the path" with a nature spirit. They tend to have less disturbing Gifts, often taking one or more versions of the Inoffensive and Alluring to (Beings) Virtues, and some learn a Major Magical Focus with the wilderness, affecting natural materials unworked by human hands. Since other Merinitae are suspicious of their origins, True Merinitae typically have poor reputations. They may even keep Dark Secrets from their sodales concerning the forbidden origins of their magic.

SAMPLE TRUE MERINITAE

INITIATION: WILDING

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +19

Script Details: This Initiation Script supposedly comes to the True Merinitae from the *galli*, a sect of nature worshippers once associated with the wild lands beyond the Roman Empire, by way of integration into the Cult of Diana. The magus must host a festival honoring Cybelle, a goddess of the wilderness, from the 15th to the 27th of March (+1). On March 24th, The Day of Blood, while revelers dance and play cymbals, drums, and flutes, he is ritually castrated (+6) beneath a pine sacred to Cybelle (+1), and enough of his blood collected to fill a bowl (+1). Through this Ordeal, he gains the Short-Ranged Magic Flaw (+9), and his Wizard's Sigil changes slightly to become associated with violets (+1).

Chapter Four

House Verditius

Other magi see these devices as tools, like a sword or a spade. They do not understand what it takes to make magical devices and that is why they cannot make them as well as we can. They do not understand that what they call tools are part of our minds, extensions of ourselves as surely as our hands and our words. The simple truth is that the crafter must put himself in what he creates if it is to be worthy of him.

— Verditius, the Founder

House Verditius is home to the master enchanters of the Order, magi who create uniquely powerful magical devices. They are craftsmen first and foremost, smiths, carpenters, jewelers, masons, shipwrights, bookbinders, and cloth-makers, who imbue their products with wondrous magic. United together under a common creed and trained in the Mysteries of their Founder, Verditius magi seek personal excellence through the crafting of enchanted items.

Combining the talents of Mediterranean artificers and Scandinavian mage-smiths, they have incorporated the most recent understandings of item creation into their magic. Verdi, the domus magna of the House, sits at a cultural crossroads, influenced by Christian alchemical tracts, classical philosophical treatises, Muslim academics, and Jewish scholars. These influences are noticeable in the House's members, magi who cross typical medieval biases of religion and race. Their desire to create binds them together.

House Verditius magi are also members of a secret cult, one of the Order of Hermes' Mystery Cults, and they guard their magical knowledge jealously. Verditius magi are Initiated into the House's Inner Mysteries through secret

Key Facts

Population: 74

Domus Magna: Verdi, in Sardinia

Primus: Stouritus

Favored Tribunals: Rome and Thebes Tribunals

Motto: *Omnia nostra instrumenta.* ("All things are our tools.")

Symbol: A hand with a ring on each finger; these are the five rings that Verditius made, perhaps the most powerful magic rings in Hermetic history.



rites and ceremonies. The basic process of enchanting items has been shared with the Hermetic public, but the more powerful practices of the House are secrets that remain well hidden among its closed-mouthed members. Verditius magi take oaths of secrecy to ensure the sanctity of these secrets, and the penalties for breaking these oaths are severe.

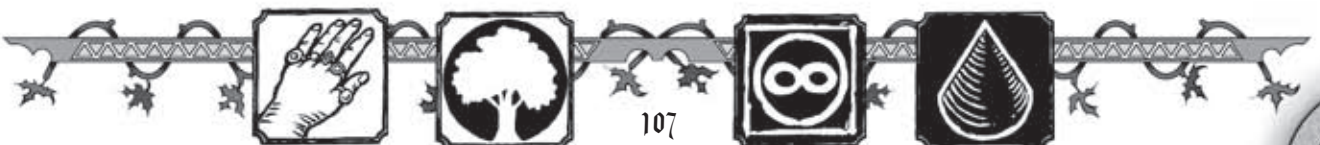
Within the following pages, storyguides and troupes will discover the inner workings of House Verditius, their history and current concerns, their culture and society, and most importantly, their magic.

History

The Cult of Hephaestus

House Verditius's legends trace its roots back to the ancient Greeks, who learned their smith craft from Hephaestus, the divine artificer and god of smiths. The legends say that he was the parthenogenetic son of Hera, who had little interest in the deformed god born lame. Zeus cast him out of Olympus and into the sea like so much refuse. The sea nymphs, Thetis and Eurynome, rescued and raised Hephaestus. They built Hephaestus a large forge beneath the sea in an underwater grotto. Hephaestus immediately began creating beautiful brooches and other jewelries for his foster mothers. One overly beautiful brooch caught Hera's attention, and she asked Thetis where she got it. The nymph revealed her secret, that Hera's son still lived and was forging these marvelous baubles. Hera retrieved Hephaestus and returned him to Olympus, building him a much grander forge and arranging his marriage to Zeus's daughter Aphrodite.

Hephaestus's stay in Olympus was brief. To punish his wife after a volatile domestic dispute, Zeus threatened to torture Hera. Hephaestus begged Zeus for clemency, which only angered the Lord of the Sky. Cast from Olympus a second time by his father, the god landed on the island of Lemnos, weak, wounded, and near death. The friendly inhabitants of the island nursed him back to health. Furious at his treatment at his father's hands, Hephaestus decided to remain on



Famous Figures

Verditius, Founder of the House, creator of magical devices nonpareil

Fenistour, filia of Verditius, inventor of casting tools

Himinis the Mad, 11th century magus who developed his own Inner Mystery, the making of cursed items

Milo, second apprentice of Verditius, combined Boethius' philosophy with Germanic runes to invent Verditius Runes.

Gelon, Verditius' first apprentice and the first Primus of the House

Tierent, a 12th century magus who developed a method to bind the power of faeries to magic items

Icilius the Traitor, a 12th century magus who released the secret of the Inner House Mystery Automata to the Order of Hermes

Lemnos. He took twelve forge-companions, individuals from the island who had an inclination for the god's industry.

The islanders worked dutifully with the god. Two of the twelve were Gifted, and Hephaestus taught them many of his magical secrets. While their created items were powerful, none matched those crafted by Hephaestus. While his followers made lesser items, Hephaestus continued to forge many of the famous magical items of legend, given to the other gods as gifts.

Hephaestus did not remain at Lemnos, traveling to other magical locations and creating other forges. He retained his fondness for the island and often returned to visit. His cult prospered and grew, continuing the tradition of including both Gifted and unGifted members. Only two of Hephaestus' other forges are known. He built one of them in Yanartas, near the Antalya Gulf in Asia Minor, on the site where the mythical Chimera fell and where fire still leaps magically from the ground. His second, a more famous forge, he built in a cave on the island of Sardinia. This site plays a dominant role in the history of House Verditius, and is still the site of the House's domus magna. Both of these locations were active centers for the worshippers of the Cult of Hephaestus.

The Cult of Vulcan

Several Mystery Cults changed during the hegemony of the Roman Empire, adopting different names and incorporating slightly new religious practices. The cult of Hephaestus was so transformed, despite resistance by several of its Greek members. Persuaded by pressure from the empire, the cult of Hephaestus began accepting Initiates more familiar with the Roman god Vulcan than the elder Greek artificer. These new Initiates slowly changed the nature of the cult; Vulcan's Mysteries placed a greater importance on the destructive power of fire over the natural wonders of the forge. While the cult wizards still produced magical items, the quantity of weapons produced soon overtook the number of non-lethal enchantments. Renamed the Cult of Vulcan, the cult rose in importance and power by supplying Roman Caesars and magi of the Cult of Mercury with enchanted items.

The fall of the Roman Empire and the Germanic invasions were particularly dreadful to the Cult of Vulcan, as were the dark years that followed. As other Mystery Cults broke up and their members began individual magical careers, the Cult of Vulcan desperately tried to retain their cult organization. They failed, discovering that they had invested too heavily in their enchanted crafting. None possessed the magical ability necessary to defend themselves in face-to-face confrontations, and many were destroyed or enslaved by powerful overlords. As more and more members fell, the leaders of the cult abandoned Rome and small groups of magi retreated to their various secret forges. Communication between the groups ceased and the unified Cult of Vulcan disintegrated.

The smaller groups refused to cooperate with other wizards. They still produced and sold magical items, but they invented a complex network of selling agents to protect their safety. This was not foolproof, and the crafters were still sometimes found and destroyed by avaricious wizards. The cult diminished in size as cult members became increasingly distrustful of each other and of the world at large.

The Founder Verditius

Verditius was born on the island of Corsica to the widow of a blacksmith. His mother's husband had been dead for a year prior to the boy's birth, and people wondered who the father could be. Coupled with his immediately obvious Gift, their speculations ran the gamut from a faerie prince to a demon. As the boy's craft skills developed, some speculated that he was a child of Hephaestus himself, returning to earth to resurrect the god's fading Mystery Cult.

Verditius was raised by his uncle, another blacksmith, who started the child working at the forge at a very early age. He took to the craft with unnatural alacrity, producing his first solo project at the age of five: a pair of knives so sharp that they could slice through raw iron. He was a moody and brooding child, prone to fits of rage that often escalated into violence. At seven years of age, he killed a fellow laborer over a workshop quarrel, which sparked a bitter blood feud between his family and the laborer's. Verditius's uncle sent the child to Sardinia, to another smith who secretly took the boy in to protect him.

Though diminished in size, the Cult of Vulcan was still active in Sardinia, practicing their secret rites in the hidden forge of Hephaestus. Within weeks of his arrival, Verditius drew the attention of the cult's leader, who recognized the incredibly potent Gift the youth possessed. He bought Verditius from the smith, trading an enchanted soup ladle for the boy. His new master took Verditius to the cult's hideout, and began his initiation into the Cult of Vulcan.

Verditius excelled at the secret rites and recipes of the cult, and by his 14th year, he had mastered all of the cult's Mysteries. The sheer number of magic items he invented was staggering, and no one had ever seen a mage-smith so skilled. Verditius was the only cult member who could understand the golden maiden of Hephaestus, an ancient automaton created by the god and left abandoned in his forge. Verditius dismantled and reconstructed the woman-shaped automaton, and even managed to make it function

for seven days before it fell idle. The cult declared that there was no more to teach the child, and that he should travel to the island of Lemnos and return Hephaestus's fallow forge to useful glory.

Always temperamental and head-strong, Verditius had other ideas. Instead of sailing east, he headed north, pursuing the legends of the northern barbarian smiths who could carve runes of power into their enchantments for even greater effect. The craft of the wizard-smiths of the Northmen had descended from Wayland (Völand), a legendary smith who had learned his craft from Mimer the Old, a minor deity in the Scandinavian pantheon. Wayland learned all of Mimer's techniques before coupling them with skills learned from the black elves and the dwarfs. Wayland also apprenticed under Regin, the evil-hearted dwarf who coveted the magic ring of the Nibelungs and played an integral part in the life of Siegfried the Dragon-Slayer. Wayland lived during the fifth century, but Verditius hoped that enough of his secrets survived in those who learned smith craft from him.

Verditius visited the sites associated with Wayland in the Scandinavian lands, Denmark, and England. Scattered through the northern climes, Verditius found a handful of practicing mage-smiths, but they refused to teach him. However, they implied that Wayland himself still lived, removed from the mundane world and living in the otherworld. The only way to this enchanted area was through a sacred glen located in the far reaches of the Black Forest. Hoping that this might be true, Verditius traveled to the Germanic lands.

His search was unsuccessful until he met a raven, perched on a dying yew tree. The bird spoke, saying that the only way to reach Wayland in the otherworld was for a wanderer to inflict a permanent wound upon himself, one reminiscent of Wayland's wounding in legend. Driven by desire, Verditius maimed himself, removing his left foot with one deft stroke of his hatchet. Pain washed over him and he fell unconscious. When he awoke, he was lying in a bed in a large wooden lodge. Wayland had tended and dressed his wound. The master smith agreed to take

Verdi: Domus Magna

The domus magna of House Verditius is Verdi. Found on the island of Sardinia, it consists of a squat stone tower surrounded by six taller stone towers. The main tower is a patchwork affair, initially built over the sacred Forge of Hephaestus and repaired regularly as it ages. Six towers stand in a rough circle around the main tower, each named after the Primus who created it. A vast network of caves and tunnels runs underneath the site, connecting the towers and leading to a number of laboratories and chambers. Within this rocky labyrinth is the Forge of Hephaestus, where the god forged many of his wondrous devices. While this chamber could be used as a laboratory, it primarily functions as an Initiation chamber for Verditius magi entering the Inner Mysteries.

The entire complex is nestled in a wooded valley, surrounded by *nuraghi*, slender towers made of closely stacked stone, built by an unknown race in the distant past. Although only stacked

stones, these are complex structures composed of inter-connecting walls and multiple-turreted towers. These abandoned "proto-castles" dot the landscape of northern Sardinia. Each also occupies a minor Magic aura, making Hermetic historians wonder about the identity of the builders. Whether the *nuraghi* created the magic auras or were built on existing auras, the fact remains that northern Sardinia is dotted with magical auras.

Verdi is a thriving community, home to just over one hundred people. Six Verditius magi make Verdi their permanent residence, including the Primus. There are at least ten other laboratories available to Verditius magi who might wish to study at Verdi for extended periods. Each laboratory includes a forge, necessary for many of the Verditius crafters, and other tools of production are available for those who engage in various trades. Even with this large number of inhabitants, many of the towers remain vacant most of the time.

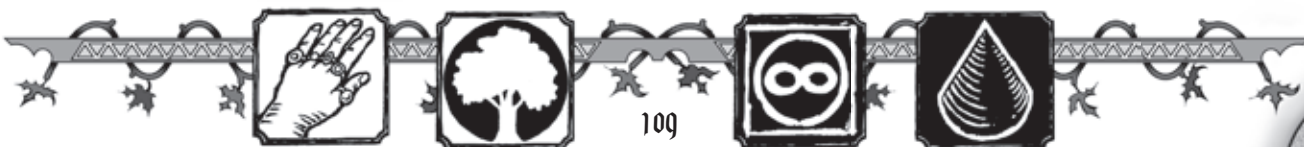
Verditius as his apprentice, and within two years he taught him all he knew about smith craft and rune magic.

During this time, Verditius constructed five rings of magic, one for each finger and the thumb of his right hand. Using all he had learned from the Cult of Vulcan and including the runic Mysteries Wayland taught him, these rings surpassed in power anything he had ever made or seen.

Verditius returned to Hephaestus's forge in Sardinia and started producing enchanted items. Keeping with tradition, he gathered twelve forge-companions to assist him. He taught the Mysteries of his magic to his Gifted apprentices, slowly reforming the old Cult of Vulcan, and grandiosely renaming it the Cult of Verditius. It was during these early stages that Trianoma found him and invited him to join Bonisagus's burgeoning order of magi. The thought of a peaceful coalition of magi appealed to him, as he remembered his master's stories of rapacious wizards robbing the Cult of

Vulcan. Learning the Parma Magica was a powerful incentive, and its efficacy impressed Verditius. He accepted, providing Trianoma promise that he would be the only item enchanter in the group, and that none of the northern smiths would be offered entrance. Trianoma hedged on the bargain, having already agreed to a similar condition with another Founder, but finally agreed based on the reputation and quality of Verditius's enchantments.

At Durenmar, Verditius taught Bonisagus how to enchant items, while Bonisagus taught Verditius Hermetic magic. Caught up in the rapture of their shared instruction, Bonisagus wanted to know more of the smith's magic, but Verditius refused, claiming that he had shown the elder magus enough. Verditius quickly learned Bonisagus's Hermetic magic, but he was never a very good spell caster. While he could cast spontaneous spells, he was unable to cast formulaic magic, despite having memorized the enchantments. Verditius stayed at



Story Seed: The Rings of Verditius

Verditius history is contradictory when referring to the rings that the Founder made. Some sources state they were lost in Corsica, while others say Gelon recovered them. They are not in Verdi, where they properly belong.

A Verditius character learns that a Seeker has recently claimed to have found the rings. She is boldly announcing her accomplishments and taking the rings to Durenmar, after studying them herself in her sanctum. The Verditius character most likely wants the rings, either for personal research or to return them to their proper place in Verdi. This story could take several paths. The character could find others of his House and wage a political campaign to have the

rings returned. He could offer to help the Seeker research the rings. He could simply attempt to steal the rings.

The rings themselves should be of more than historical interest. In their day, they were the supreme enchanted items, and may surpass anything crafted by contemporary Hermetic magi. Alternatively, they might be weak in absolute terms, but with capabilities that break the limits of Hermetic magic, such as the ability to heal permanently without vis. Storyguides must decide for themselves whether the Founders really were more powerful than contemporary magi, or have simply grown in the telling, and allow this decision to shape the powers of Verditius's rings.

Durenmar for only a short time, leaving soon after he participated in the founding oath. The forge that he built and used during his stay still survives. In Sardinia, Verditius decided that Hephaestus's Forge would serve as the foundation for his new House. He built the first tower on the site and named it "Verdi." Verditius never returned to Durenmar, instead sending his first filius, Gelon, to attend the original Grand Tribunal meetings.

The Early Years of House Verditius

Verditius's cult grew rapidly. He accepted more Gifted people as forge-companions and taught them the Mysteries of his magic. His first apprentice was Gelon, who attended formal Hermetic functions in lieu of his parens. Fenistour, his second filia, invented casting tools, which allowed Verditius magi the ability to cast formulaic spells. Until Fenistour's breakthrough, Verditius's apprentices were as unable as their master to cast formulaic spells. Milo, another notable filius, scoured the abandoned sites of the ancient world looking for magic items created by Hephaestus. The House grew, spreading from Sardinia to Lemnos and other Mediterranean isles, the north coast of Africa, and Greece.

While rummaging through ruined Ravenna, Milo made an important discovery. He found several notebooks of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, noted Roman statesman, philosopher, and author of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, a text he wrote while in prison before his execution on charges of witchcraft and treason. Boethius was also an inventor, and the texts Milo recovered described the construction of an ingenious water clock and sundial, whose unnatural accuracy was based on planetary magic rather than any nascent seeds of logic or science. Sharing these texts with Verditius, the pair discovered that Boethius's philosophical ideas explained some of the failings of the rune magic Verditius had incorporated into his Mystery. They also discovered a tangible link between the benefit of the carved runes and the intrinsic philosophical understanding of the carver. Seemingly, the better the enchanter understood the philosophical connection of the runes to their symbolic object, the more magical power they could imbue in the item. Just as Bonisagus had denuded ancient magic of its prayers and supplications to pagan gods, Verditius and Milo removed the pagan implications of the runes, connecting them to philosophical principles and dubbing them Verditius Runes.

The House After Verditius

During his years as leader of the House, Verditius rarely left Verdi, traveling only to secure magical components and other necessary resources for his projects. At the beginning of the ninth century, his ship foundered in a storm off the coast of Corsica and his hereditary enemies, the sons and nephews of the man he had slain many years ago, captured him. Typical of a Corsican vendetta, the murder had not been forgotten. Dragging the bound Verditius to the family's patriarch, the magus was slain, his head and heart removed and his body fed to the crows.

Gelon assumed the role of Primus of the House, beginning the long tradition of the eldest living filius of the Primus assuming the role upon the leader's demise. Gelon unwisely sought Verditius's killers and slew them, unknowingly continuing the blood feud. This was Gelon's greatest failing, as it perpetuated the vendetta that could have ended with Verditius's death. It also began a terrible legacy that still poisons the House, although in a much subtler way. Gelon realized his mistake when a group of Corsican assassins penetrated Verdi and tried to kill him. Slaying the assassins only worsened the feud, and Gelon realized that it would only end after the Corsican family had the upper hand. The vendetta lasted for 30 years, flaring up every five years or so, until Gelon magnanimously bestowed the title of Primus on his first apprentice and surrendered to his enemies.

Turnis, the second Primus of the House, did much to foster the growth of the House. He developed the arcane ritual that allowed other Hermetic magi to join House Verditius, set and enforced the current rules of the Contest (see below), and provided a free-spirited atmosphere that allowed individual magi to follow their own paths through the House's Inner Mysteries. Perhaps in response to Verditius and Gelon's notorious interactions with others, Turnis focused on the relationships between House members. He encouraged Verditius magi to cooperate with each other, sharing Verditius Cult

Lore and Initiating each other into the House's Inner Mysteries. This introspective approach of the House is still popular, and the Primi who followed Turnis continued to concentrate on House Verditius itself rather than its connection to the Order of Hermes. While the exchange and selling of magic items is regulated, interactions with magi of other Houses are left to individual Verditius magi. The House as a whole does not manage such interactions.

Crises in the Order

House Verditius has always been an introverted line, focused on individual Verditius magi, their magical growth as a whole, and the specifics of item enchantment. Its members appreciate the peace and prosperity the Order has brought, but they have little interest in contributing to the overall scheme of its progress. House Verditius viewed events that shook the Order with little regard. House Verditius

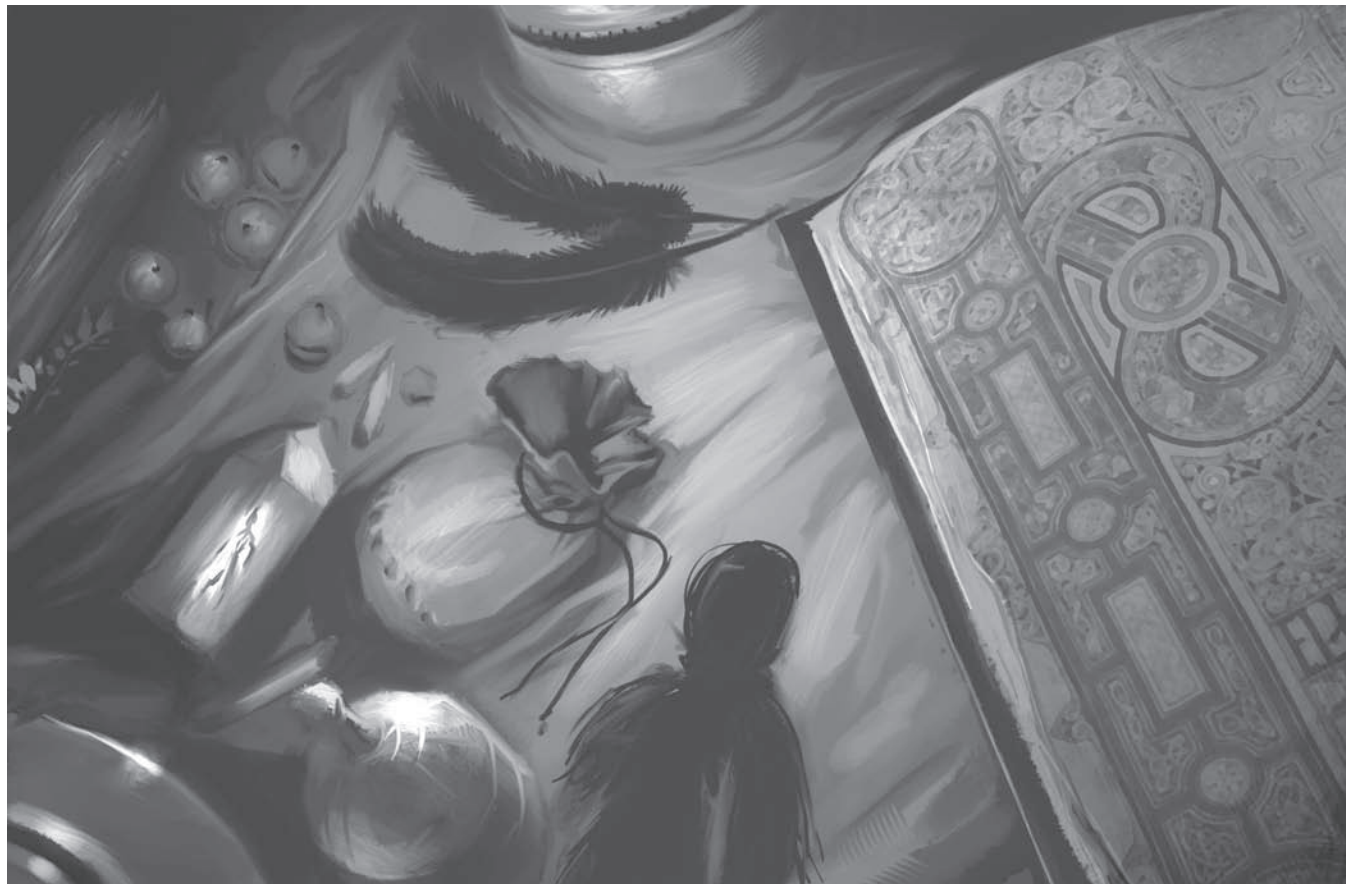
did not participate in the Sundering of Tremere or the diabolical depredations of House Tytalus. During the early years of the Schism War, a handful of Verditius magi were accused of selling magical weapons to both sides of the conflict, but these accusations remain unproven. If some Verditius magi did sell magical items to House Diedne, they seem to have ceased immediately after charges were brought against them.

To Verditius magi, the biggest threat came in 1061, when the Order ruled that Hermetic magi could no longer sell their created devices directly to mundane society. They could, however, use unGifted intermediaries to continue these sales. Already having a substantial group of underling workers and craftsmen, the House quickly adapted members of its staff to facilitate future sales. To avoid legal repercussions, House Verditius decreased the number of items a member could sell to mundanes. The number was set at one magical item per year, and the selling maga must use her network of intermediaries during the exchange. This limit only

applies to mundane buyers; any number of magic items can be sold to members of the Order of Hermes. Individual tribunals have modified this over the years. The Roman Tribunal, for example, allows the sale of one magical item per mundane race. A Roman maga can avoid censure by selling to a single Jew, Muslim, Genoese, or Milanese, among others.

Conflicts in the House

Unlike other Hermetic Houses, House Verditius has not suffered any major internal strife during its history. While conflicts certainly arise between members, no particular situation has polarized the House into uncooperative factions or groups of dynamic opposition. Personal conflicts are often settled through "vendettas," a term stolen from the Founder's blood-feud with the Corsicans, but watered down to mean a long-lasting, non-violent, grudge waged between individual House members. The Primus rarely



stops these prolonged squabbles, and the House prefers this to the legal practices of House Guernicus or the lethal practice of Wizard Wars. Vendettas are explained in detail in the Verditius Magi section.

Near the middle of the 12th century, the House was mortified to discover that Icilius, a Verditius magus living in the Normandy Tribunal, was teaching the secret of making automata to any Hermetic magus who had a mind to learn it. This secret was one of the House's most prized, and releasing this lore to the Order was an affront they could not ignore. Icilius insidiously disseminated the secret of automata by clandestinely teaching other Hermetic magi, and then augmenting their learning with books he had written. The House ruthlessly dealt with Icilius; nearly a dozen Verditius magi declared Wizard's War against the traitor. Icilius was hunted down and slain, but the damage was done, and automata have become much more prevalent in Mythic Europe.



Current Concerns

In September of 1219, Prima Imanitosi succumbed to Final Twilight while experimenting in her laboratory. Next in line for Primus was Stouritus, a personable man whose main interest is to increase the amount of goods House Verditius can sell to mundanes. He lives in the Verditius covenant of Ingasia on Lemnos,

and refuses to relocate to Verdi as tradition demands. Since the Primus must live in the domus magna, he desires to make Ingasia the new domus magna. The House does not know how to respond to this unprecedented situation, and there are no House means to override a Primus's decision. The next scheduled Contest is in 1234, and it will be interesting to see how this relocation unfolds, and where the House will flock for the next Contest.

Verditius Magi

Like all Hermetic magi, Verditius magi are magi first and foremost, steeped in magic and reveling in the power of their Gifts. Yet there is a duality to their natures that is not found among magi of other Houses, and as much as Verditius magi are magi at heart, their souls crave to create. They are as much craftsmen as magi, and both of these aspects are inherent in every member of the House. A Verditius magus without his forge, loom, or saw is like a bird without wings or a dragon without fiery breath. Depriving a Verditius magus of his tools of production is tantamount to depriving him of his Gift, emotionally if not legally.

A Verditius magus's creations are precious, each produced by the sweat and toil of its maker. Some go so far as to claim them as children; an enchanted sword is a son of its creator, while a magical brooch might be referred to as a daughter. Even a low-powered bauble, an earring that enchants its wearer with a pleasant image or a fork that spices every morsel of food, is a coveted treasure and proudly displayed until it is sold, traded, or given as a gift. Powerful items are more precious than all the gold in Spain and are jealously retained and guarded. If these items are for sale, the price is quite high. Though the item might be gone, the emotional attachment lingers. It is not unheard of for a Verditius magus to engineer the theft of a coveted item previously sold for an enormous sum.

Despite their skill, Verditius magi are still stigmatized within the Order because they lack the ability to cast formulaic

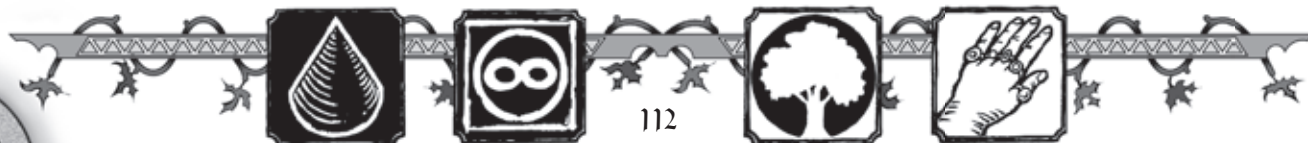
spells without using their casting tools. While many magi see their crafts as ingenious, they still laugh into their sleeves at the thought of a Verditius magus casting a spell, fumbling away with casting tools over the simplest Hermetic spell. Several critics even claim that Verditius magic items weaken the Order, since many of them are sold to mundanes.

Apprenticeship

Verditius magi find apprentices much like any Hermetic magus does, seeking Gifted children from all sorts of lives and stations. Besides being interested in the apprentice's Gift, Verditius magi also look for children who might have a natural inclination for their specific crafts, since much of what they teach their protégés is craft. Sometimes Verditius magi find individuals who have learned some basic techniques of a particular craft, somehow finding a way to counter the social suspicion inherent in their Gift. However, most apprentices start their new careers without any previous craft experience.

Once selected as an apprentice, a child must be initiated into the Outer Mystery of Verditius Magic. This initiation takes place in the same season that the apprentice's Arts are opened. It has been standardized over the years, allowing any Verditius magus who has the required skill to initiate a future apprentice. Like other Hermetic magi, the magus must have a score of 5 in all their Hermetic Arts. Verditius magi must also have a score of 2 in Verditius Cult Lore. The actual Initiation process is described in the Mysteries of Verditius section.

Apprentices are taught Hermetic magic over the usual 15-year time span. They are also taught their parents' craft. While the emphasis is placed on Hermetic training, an apprentice is still expected to excel in his parents' craft. While the apprentices of other Houses might have time to learn from books — if they can gain their parentes' permission — Verditius apprentices spend any available time in the workroom, honing their craft skills as they explore their own understanding of the mystical connection



between Hermetic magic, Verditius mystery, and the creation of items.

During this time, apprentices are also introduced to other Verditius magi. Verditius magi like to display their creations in **studios**, rooms constructed to display their items and personal affects. Studios usually lie adjacent to sanctums. It is very unusual for a Verditius magus not to have a studio, since so much of a member's reputation is based on the enchanted items he has constructed and the wealth he has amassed from their sales. Studios are often opulent chambers, with richly decorated and ostentatiously arranged plush chairs, drapes made from exotic fabrics, scented incense, and magically enhanced visual stimuli. Apprentices witness their parentes' interactions with other House magi during the lavish dinner that accompanies these grandiose displays.

As apprenticeship ends, apprentices work on the "masterpiece," a lesser enchanted item that exhibits their understanding of Hermetic magic, the Outer Mystery of the House, and their skill at crafting the item. This masterpiece is their Gauntlet, and every Verditius magus is Gauntleted in this way. The parens supplies the necessary vis, and gives the apprentice a season to work unaided in his laboratory. This is in addition to the regular 15 seasons of instruction required by the Order. If the enchanted item meets the parens' expectations, which is often the case, the apprentice has passed his Gauntlet. The enchanted item is given as a gift to the parens, who then bestows upon the apprentice a new name, his voting sigil, and welcomes him as a full member of House Verditius.

Gauntleted Magus

After completion of her Gauntlet, a Verditius maga is fully accepted into House Verditius and included under all of the House's auspices. She may compete in the Contest and is eligible for future Initiations into the House's Inner Mysteries. Having already sworn at the beginning of her apprenticeship to keep the Mysteries of House Verditius secret,

she must also promise never to pass the secrets of the House's Mysteries to any magus outside the House, swearing to never copy a text of Verditius Cult Lore for any purpose other than personal study. This measure was enacted in response to Icilius's treachery, in hopes of maintaining the House's secrets. This prohibition decreases the number of volumes in circulation, and encourages Verditius magi to cooperate with each other to increase their knowledge of Verditius Cult Lore. Once Gauntleted, a maga may begin her individual study of Verditius Cult Lore.

Verditius magi readily cooperate with their fellows when it comes to teaching each other Verditius Cult Lore, exploring together the mystical connections between crafting and creating, enchanting and imbuing magical energy into readied items. They enjoy long philosophical discussions that are lost upon magi of other Houses, not because they are overly elaborate, but because they ultimately center on making things. They happily serve their fellows as Mystagogues for future Initiations.

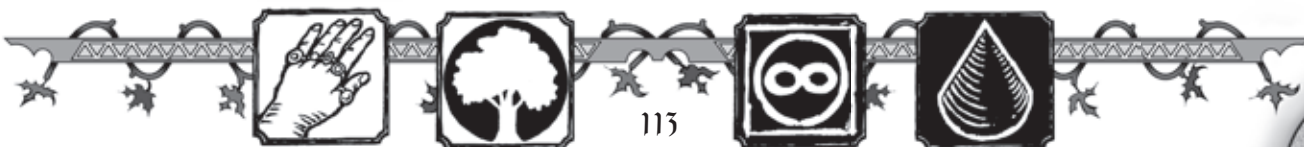
Most Verditius magi join covenants that include magi from other Houses. They appreciate the strengths that members of the other Houses offer a covenant, hoping to grab as much laboratory time as possible while their sodales focus on the covenant's other concerns. They prefer the less remote covenants, since they so enjoy visiting with their House fellows. Young Verditius magi like to check in on each other, viewing the various devices on display in their studios, and sharing Verditius Cult Lore sources. The more isolated a covenant is from Hermetic society the less likely it is that a Verditius magus would wish to join it. On the other hand, covenants in the hinterlands of Mythic Europe typically have access to more vis, which is a strong motivational factor for a Verditius magus to join. Access to large amounts of vis could override a Verditius magus's social desires. Sometimes a pair of Verditius magi reside in the same covenant, living as amici and helping each other as they mature. This proves problematic as they grow in power and arrogance, and many Verditius vendettas are started between cohabiting magi.

Verdi, the domus magna of the House, and the covenants on Mount Olympus and Lemnos, are exceptions to this rule, and are inhabited only by Verditius magi. These three sites are similar in appearance; they all have a number of towers standing above ground, built over a forge of Hephaestus and an underground complex of tunnels, chambers, and laboratories.

Journeyman and Masters

Verditius magi sometimes identify themselves using titles borrowed from the craft guilds: apprentice, journeyman, and master. An "apprentice" is a Hermetic apprentice, a "journeyman" is a Gauntleted magus, and a "master" is a maga who has learned at least one major Inner Mystery. This is a wishy-washy ranking system, though, since no Verditius magi has any real political power over the rest, and they are mainly used during the Contest to segregate magi into competition categories. The rest of the time, rather than these borrowed mundane titles, Verditius magi measure themselves against their fellows by their wealth, fame, and material property.

Verditius magi tend to have large staffs, which can be a problem at times. Verditius magi have **forge-companions**, unGifted individuals who help them in the day-to-day activities of their craft. Forge-companions collect wood and keep the forge going, spin wool and dye cloth, or prepare manuscripts for illumination. They know nothing of the magical secrets of the House, nor any of the arcane processes of enchanting an item. Forge-companions often have Supernatural Virtues, odd backgrounds, or other complications that inhibit them from successfully interacting with regular society. In game terms, each forge-companion may add +1 per 5 levels of Craft Ability score he possesses to the maga's Lab Total. Forge-companions must have the same Craft Ability that the magus has and is using during a season to contribute their benefits to his Lab Total. A Verditius magus may have a number of forge-companions equal to his Leadership score. An apprentice is



not a forge-companion, since he is more involved with the magical process, and does not count toward the limit on the forge-companion assistants.

Verditius magi also have **venditores**, or "selling agents," men and women who interact with the mundane world to distribute the items enchanted by the magus. Each magus has a single venditor, someone he trusts implicitly with his creations and who will wrangle the best price for the devices. These agents are typically the flotsam and jetsam of the noble and merchant classes, people who have been excluded from the regular stations of medieval life for reasons of their past or personality. They live in the Verditius magus's household, enjoying his prosperity and avoiding his wrath when a deal falls through. Since a given venditor only negotiates the sale of one item per year, he spends much of his time sifting buyers' interests and traveling far and wide to find the most lucrative deal for his employer. Venditores who illegally sell more items than the imposed Tribunal limit are much busier, and more careful. Verditius magi do not need a venditores for interactions with other magi, although one is often used if distance and travel time are problematic.

The Code of Hermes covers neither forge-companions nor venditores. While they are members of covenants, they view themselves as servants of the Verditius magi for whom they work. They are protected by their patrons' magic, fame, and reputation. They are particularly susceptible to other Verditius magi, however, who may target them in vendettas or attempt to make them spies, leaking information about their master's activities and magical predilections. The Peripheral Code makes little mention of them. Most tribunals have ruled that a Verditius magus's staff is neither covered by the Code of Hermes nor considered mundanes, but that they reside in a gray area without legal protection. This suits House Verditius just fine.

Most Verditius magi spend almost two-thirds of their lives in their laboratories, working on creations and perfecting their magical innovations. They must leave their laboratories for a number of reasons, and many spend more time than they wish traveling. They usually

engage with others to learn the House's Inner Mysteries. Mystery Quests to find ancient magical items also occupy much of their time. Visiting other members' studios takes time, certainly several weeks of travel. Finally, they tend to gather their own magical components, especially vis, refusing to allow others to gather these valuable ingredients for their creations.

The Primus

The Primus sits at the head of the House, the political leader and sole arbitrator for personal matters between House members. Since the House does not have a political infrastructure, this is the only position of authority. For important matters that affect the House, the Primus may ask his fellow Verdi magi their opinion, using their wise counsel to guide him, but the final decision is his. Most decisions concern price-fixing and ending personal vendettas that have grown too violent for the House's good.

The Primus is chosen through a strict system of primogeniture. The Primus is always the eldest living filius of the previous Primus, regardless of his rank, knowledge, or maturity. The Primus can trace his personal lineage directly to Verditius, and gains his authority over his fellows due to his line. The House fully accepts this method, which removes most of them from succession concerns and allows them to concentrate on their craft.

The Primus is concerned with the longevity of his House. He sets prices for magical items, deciding if he should change the current price structure to accommodate the many demands that it is too low. He has no control over what other Hermetic magi might charge, and often hears his fellows complaining about this fact. While the Primus cannot decide to raise the limit on the number of magic items members can sell to mundanes, his support would be essential to any campaign to convince the rest of the Order to do so. He participates in the politics of the Order of Hermes, the only Verditius magus who must attend the Grand Tribunals and the regional gatherings of the Rome Tribunal, although he

may send another Verditius magus to act as his legate. The main goal of past Primi has been to keep their House removed from the major decisions of the Order, preferring independent isolation to supporting any of the political agendas of the other Houses.

The Primus has a limited sphere of authority over his fellows. In cases of suits of reparations between one magus and another, he can set fines or demand that one pay the other a set amount of vis in compensation. Few magi bring such suits, as many prefer to work the situation out between them, usually with a short-term vendetta until one party submits to the other's wishes. The Primus makes sure none of the vendettas overtly break the Oaths of Hermes of the participants. He may declare that the feuding parties must either declare formal Wizards War against each other or cease their squabbling. His ultimate threat is to turn the participants over to House Guernicus for their judgment, which has always been effective in quelling the animosity between the feuding parties. Finally, he decides the winners of the Contest in the case of voting ties.

As mentioned earlier, the current Primus of House Verditius is Stouritus, who lives in the covenant of Ingasia on the island of Lemnos, and desires that Ingasia replace Verdi as the domus magna of the House. Other than that, he seems, so far, to be a fairly typical Primus.

Prices for Enchantments

There is always a price for a Verditius maga's work, either a barter of goods or services, or a straightforward payment of vis. The standardized price of an item is twice the vis necessary to make it, in addition to the vis required for the project. If the project does not require vis, the Verditius magus figures out how much vis he could extract during the time that it takes to finish the project, and doubles that amount as the price. The client must also include any necessary ingredients in the bargain. The House regulates prices charged to mundanes as well. The Primus has decreed that 15 Mythic Pounds times the vis cost of an item is a suitable price.

The Primus, who has attempted to keep the price of magical items universal throughout his House, has fixed these costs. Prices fluctuate over time, influenced by such banal economic factors as supply and demand, availability of raw materials (vis), and inflation. Magi who charge more or less than the current price may incur the anger of other House magi, who typically complain that aberrant prices affect the market as a whole, devaluing their items and hindering their prosperity. The typical response is for an offended magus to declare a vendetta against the price-gouger.

The price of a magic item is also dependent upon your saga and the cost in Mythic Pounds of a pawn of vis. Many "standard" sagas set the price of a pawn of vis at 10 Mythic Pounds. The official House price of an item sold to a mundane buyer should be 1.5 times the amount of Mythic Pounds equal to a pawn of vis. Verditius-enchanted items should be expensive, and only the wealthiest mundanes should be able to afford them.

These prices only reflect House Verditius' attitudes toward selling enchanted items. Other magi may charge whatever they wish for their enchanted devices, if they wish to charge for them at all.

Vendettas

Vendettas are personal grudge matches that two Verditius magi wage against each other. The term itself is stolen from Corsica, where it means a protracted, lethal blood-feud between families. While Verditius and Gelon participated in such a feud, Verditius magi do not. The term "vendetta" is flashy and suits House members' grandiose conception of their own identity. Verditius vendettas are not lethal, nor always hereditary, meaning that a magus's apprentice does not necessarily continue the vendetta once being Gauntleted.

The House views vendettas with a certain sense of honor. When two magi engage in a vendetta, they commit to

antagonize or outdo each other until one submits and declares the other a more powerful magus. While the participants bristle at their wounded pride, the House beams as these two engage in such an honorable tradition.

Vendettas arise when one magus feels insulted by the actions of another Verditius magus. Both magi are most likely elder magi, grown swollen with pride through their accomplishments. Any perceived loss of personal honor, social slight, misunderstanding, or seeming insult can trigger a vendetta. The magus beginning the vendetta initiates a malicious or vengeful move against his opponent, openly declaring that he is responsible and daring his opponent to respond. Refusing is a sign of weakness, and any magus who refuses a vendetta gains a bad Reputation of Dishonorable 4 in the House, as well as losing enough experience points to lower his Hubris score (see below) by one point. He can lose this Reputation by regaining Hubris experience points until he regains his original Hubris score, and waging a vendetta against the magus who he originally refused.



Feuding magi seek to undo the good name or reputation of the other by interfering in his life through subtle means. They do not seek the other magus's death, far from it. They view the other as an honorable opponent. Magi typically seek to prevent the delivery of sold items, delay the arrival of raw materials, contaminate personal vis sources located outside the other's covenant, or even make inferior magic items and sell them in the other's name. Vendettas can last for years, each magus subtly and patiently trying to undermine the other.

Verditius magi do not commit High Crimes during a vendetta, although many "attacks" could be considered Low Crimes. The participating magi, who would rather wage the vendetta than seek proper legal recourse, do not take these crimes to Tribunal. Occasionally feuding magi attack each others' forge-companions or venditores. This is rarely done directly, but rather, is usually executed by a feuding magus's own assistants. Vendettas have resulted in the deaths of forge-companions and venditores, because the Peripheral Code holds that killing forge-companions and venditores is not "depriving a magus of his magical power" nor "interfering with mundanes".

The Primus stops vendettas that threaten to grow beyond this level of violence by threatening to turn the matter over to the Quaesitors. Vendettas are not secret affairs in the House; many Verditius magi delightfully discuss the specifics of a vendetta happening between two magi. They only exist within House Verditius, between Verditius magi; magi of most other Houses take attempts to start them straight to Tribunal, and the other members of House Verditius do not recognize them.

The Contest

In 802, Verditius's filius Milo discovered one of the treasures of Hephaestus, the mechanized torture chair used by Zeus to interrogate his wife Hera. Returning it to Verdi, Milo and Verditius's first filius, Gelon, quarreled over who should possess the chair. Verditius decided that owner-

ship would be awarded to the filius who could invent the most wondrous magical item, giving them a year to complete the task. He summoned all the Verditius magi in the Order to judge the event. Gelon won the contest, and benevolently gave the chair to Verdi rather than accepting the item himself. This was such a well-received event that Verditius decided to hold it again, eighteen years later, this time allowing all of his line to participate. This tradition has lasted throughout the centuries; even the Schism War did not interrupt the Contest of 1018.

Every eighteen years, all able-bodied Verditius travel to Verdi for the Contest. Verdi fills with magi, apprentices, forge-companions, selling agents, and other hangers-on, stuffing the unused towers of the previous Primi with guests. Magi bring their most fabulous magical item to enter in the competition. Those without an entry still come to participate in the judging, meet old friends, make new contacts, and cast sour glances at rivals. The event begins on Midsummer Eve and lasts for a week. The first half of the week is reserved for feasting, House meetings, Initiations, and other Verditius business. The judging of items occurs during the last three days.

The actual Contest takes place in a Greek-style temple built in a Magic regio that lies just outside Verdi, accessible through one of the ancient *nuraghi*. Only Verditius magi are allowed within the regio, which is protected by guards and magical wards to prevent others from entering. The Contest has three categories of competition: items crafted by apprentices, journeymen, and masters. All of these entries are on display throughout the week. The apprentices' devices are judged on the fifth day, the journeymen's on the sixth, and the masters' on the final day. The assembled Verditius magi serve as judges, casting their voting sigils for the entry that they deem most unique or clever. The magical power of the device is not the only criteria for winning, and items are judged according to their usefulness, inventiveness, beauty, cost in construction, and innovative nature. Majority vote wins, with the Primus deciding in the case of a tie. All of the entries become the property of Verdi.

Winners are lauded with acclaim and respect. Each category winner selects an item from the vast stores of Contest entries as her prize. The master category winner selects first, choosing three items for himself, the journeyman winner chooses two, followed by the apprentice winner who chooses a single item. None of the winning devices may be selected as prizes until the next Contest.

The Mystery Cult of Verditius

The House of Verditius is a Mystery Cult and has much in common with the many smaller, esoteric Mystery Cults of the Order of Hermes. Troupes familiar with *The Mysteries Revised Edition* will recognize familiar features from the Cults described in that supplement.

The process of gaining knowledge of the Cult's Inner Mysteries is structured, but not formalized. House Verditius has four Minor and four Major Inner Mystery Virtues. Magi are allowed, even expected, to learn the House's Inner Mysteries in any order they wish, matching their individual needs and goals to suit their tastes. Some Verditius magi band together in **confraternities**, small groups of like-minded individuals who follow a path formed by an earlier, charismatic magus. Naturally, it is easier to learn some of the Inner Mysteries than others, and many Verditius magi follow similar paths toward their achievement of deeper Initiation.

Verditius magi usually learn Inner House Mysteries from other House members, rather than serving as their own Mystagogue. The House is gregarious enough within itself for this to occur easily. This is an effective way of spreading the Cult and accounts for the initial rapid growth of the House. Magi may also Initiate themselves into Inner Mysteries, acting as their own Mystagogue and following typically more difficult Initiation Scripts.

Progressing through the Inner Mysteries bears a price. As Verditius magi

learn more Mysteries, growing in power and abilities, they also grow arrogant and egotistical. Hubris is the mark that scars Verditius magi, an unavoidable consequence of learning the Founder's magic. Magi Initiated into the Inner Mysteries gain a **Hubris** Personality Trait, which affects both their interactions with others and their created devices. Hubris is explained in detail below.

Initiation into the Mysteries of Verditius

House Verditius has been an open Mystery Cult of the Order of Hermes since the Founding, and their Cult Initiations have been thoroughly contemplated and organized. The process of Initiation grants the Initiate a new Mystery Virtue, as explained in the Introduction, The Mechanics of Initiation. The Initiations of House Verditius follow these rules, with a few minor exceptions and Script bonuses particular to the House.

A Verditius Initiate does not need a score in Verditius Cult Lore to be initiated into the Outer Mystery of the House. This Initiation happens during apprenticeship. You do not need to retrofit a Verditius Cult Lore score to existing Verditius characters.

The formula for Initiation is derived from the Mystagogue's Initiation Total, which is repeated here.

$$\text{INITIATION TOTAL} = \text{Presence} + \text{Verditius Cult Lore} + \text{Script bonus}$$

Initiation Target Levels are the same as for the other Mystery Houses, and are listed in The Mechanics of Initiation section.

VERDITIUS INITIATION SCRIPTS

House Verditius has several specific Script components that generate certain bonuses:

- +3 The Initiate must travel to one of the Forges of Hephaestus or another specific place at a specific time.

New Ability: Verditius Cult Lore

Just like the members of other Mystery Cults, Verditius magi must have intimate knowledge of their Mystery, including its history, operations, practices, lore, and legends. The Ability **Verditius Cult Lore** covers all of the secrets of the House, including the arcane rituals and formulas necessary for the actual practice of Verditius magic, as well as information about the House, its current members, appropriate methods of finding and instructing Initiates, and correct social behavior when interacting with peers. This is an Arcane Ability, usually learned by a maga after her apprenticeship.

Verditius Cult Lore is increased just as any other Ability, through the regular methods of study available to characters. The most common method of instruction is Teaching, one Verditius member pass-

ing his knowledge down to others, often in a single student-teacher combination. Good teachers may teach more than one student at a time, but the preferred method is to teach a single student.

Since House Verditius is so focused on crafting items, other members of the House may also Train Initiates in Verditius Cult Lore. This is a more hands-on approach than Teaching, and the Initiate goes through the secret practices and arcane rites alongside her instructor. Training allows every Verditius magus who has at least a Verditius Cult Lore score of 2 to instruct the lower Initiates in the House's secrets, which helps to propel the House members as a whole deeper into the Inner Mysteries. Training Initiates is the most popular method of instruction for House Verditius.

- +3 The Initiate must perform a specific Quest, often locating and retrieving a magical item. These magic items, made by famous Verditius magi, have become lost through mishap, theft, or even sale. Locating a dead Verditius maga's talisman is a common specific Quest.
- +6 The Initiate must perform a unique Quest, usually finding one the world's unique magic items that have been lost since antiquity. Often these are magic items made by Hephaestus or Wayland Smith, but other legendary treasures are also included in this category.
- +3 The Initiate undergoes an Ordeal that inflicts a Minor Flaw during the Initiation.
- +9 The Initiate undergoes an Ordeal that inflicts a Major Flaw specified during the Initiation.
- +1 The Initiate Sacrifices time, performing specific functions or serving another House member (one bonus only).
- +3 The Initiate Sacrifices a lesser enchanted item whose combined powers are of at least the fourth magnitude.
- +6 The Initiate Sacrifices a greater enchanted item whose combined

- powers are of at least the seventh magnitude, or his talisman.
- +3 The Mystagogue Sacrifices time, usually specialized teaching or training.
- +1 The Mystagogue Sacrifices material wealth, typically one Mythic Pound per point of the Initiate's Hubris score (one bonus only).
- +6 The Initiate is taught the Outer Mystery at the same time as her Hermetic Arts are opened.

The Outer Mystery of Verditius Magic

The first step in becoming a Verditius magus is to be inducted into the Outer Mystery of the House: Verditius Magic. The Initiate does not have any knowledge of Verditius Cult Lore at this time. The Initiation happens during the season that the apprentice is opened to the Hermetic Arts. Master and apprentice spend a season together, preparing for the Initiation. During this time, the apprentice serves as the master's student and must work slavishly at the tasks assigned. This is a foreshadowing of his life as an apprentice, but is much more severe, considering



Magic Items of Hephaestus

Hephaestus made many enchanted items for the Greek gods. Your troupe might know of some of them, like the armor of Achilles. Since quests for these items play a significant role in House Verditius Initiations, a list of Hephaestus' treasures follows.

- A mechanical torture chair that was used by Zeus on his wife, Hera
- A bronze hunting net that Hephaestus used to catch his wife, Aphrodite, and her adulterous lover Ares
- An assortment of ornamental brooches and combs
- Golden leg-supports that Hephaestus needed to walk

- Twelve golden mechanical women (automata)
- Twenty stools with three legs each, that moved and assisted Hephaestus at the forge
- The weapons and armor for Athena
- "Pandora," a clay woman for Zeus
- A golden ferry boat
- Talos, the bull-headed bronze statue that guarded Crete
- Dionysus's crown, made of fiery gold and gems from India
- A golden mastiff (automata)
- Bronze greaves and a stout shield for Hercules
- Tin greaves for Achilles
- The golden urn that was used to collect Achilles' ashes

the usually young age of the apprentice. Coupled with the difficulty of the introduction to the Hermetic Arts, this is an especially arduous three months for the apprentice.

As the season ends, master and apprentice journey to one of the sacred sites revered by the House, one of the three Forges of Hephaestus, which are located at Verdi, the island of Lemnos, and the shoulders of Mount Olympus. Depending on where the pair reside, this journey might extend into a second season. The master acts as the Mystagogue, guiding the apprentice through the Initiation. The master casts an amount of money and jewelry into the forge, beseeching the legendary powers of Hephaestus, Wayland Smith, Boethius, and Verditius himself to accept the apprentice. The forge consumes the money and the apprentice falls unconscious. He rises anew, a legal apprentice to his parents and an Initiate to the House. He gains the Minor Hermetic Virtue Verditius Magic. Mechanically, the Initiation Target Level is 15. The Mystagogue needs a Presence + Verditius Cult Lore of 3. The Initiation Script has a bonus of +12 (special place, Sacrifice of Initiate's time, Sacrifice of Mystagogue's time, wealth Sacrifice, and Arts opened during Initiation).

Learning the Inner Mysteries

Progressing from the Outer Mystery to the Inner Mysteries depends upon the Mystagogue's knowledge of the House's secrets, reflected by his Verditius Cult Lore score. The House has set requirements for a Mystagogue before he can Initiate others, and all agree to this wise course of action. Understanding the responsibility that comes with teaching more Inner Mysteries is vital.

Verditius Cult Lore is more important for the Mystagogue than the Initiate, since the Initiate's score is not calculated into the Initiation Total formula. Nevertheless, the House deems it essential that the Initiate understand enough of the House's Cult Lore to fully appreciate and responsibly engage in the magic each Inner Mystery confers. The House also expects its members to act as Mystagogues to each other, passing the Mysteries from one generation to the next. Receiving Initiations without leading others through them is perceived as being selfish, and such magi receive a bad House Reputation of Selfish 4. Other magi are reluctant to act as Mystagogues for such members. This Reputation can lessen over time if the magus changes his selfish ways.

A Verditius Cult Lore score of 1 covers the basic tenets of the Cult, primarily its history and philosophical foundation. A magus must increase his score to 2 before Initiating an apprentice whose Arts he wants to open at the same time. When his score is 3, he may receive Initiations into the House's Minor Inner Mysteries. A magus may be Initiated into as many Minor Inner Mysteries as he wishes, in any order, regulated only by his time, desire, and completion of the detailed Initiation Scripts. He should have a Verditius Cult Lore score of 5 before he is Initiated into any of the Major Inner Mysteries. In addition, with such a score he is considered a master and may compete in the highest level of competition at the Contest.

Scripts exist within the House to guide the magus's path. Exact Scripts are left to the troupe and storyguide to develop, following the suggested bonuses listed above. The most common method for learning new Inner Mysteries is to find a Verditius magus who already possesses the Inner Mystery the Initiate desires and follow the predetermined Script to learn the Inner Mystery. The less common approach is for the magus to Initiate himself. He loses the advantage of a Mystagogue's Verditius Cult Lore score, and the Initiation Target Level is increased. Magi following the path of self-Initiation tend to create and sacrifice several enchanted items to achieve their goal.

Hubris

Regardless of the particular Minor Inner Mystery a magus learns, his first Initiation into an Inner Mystery is always accompanied by an Ordeal that gives him the Minor Flaw Hubris. Every Verditius magus who seeks knowledge of the Inner Mysteries is plagued by this psychological shortcoming, the growth of exaggerated self-esteem. The magus realizes the worldly benefits he can reap from his magical creations, and his prideful image of himself blossoms. At first this is just a slight personality shift, but as the Verditius magus profits from his magical craft, his estimation of himself grows. This trait,

Initiating Hermetic Magi

During the tenth century, a handful of Hermetic magi, recently Gauntleted in other Houses, wished to enter House Verditius and learn its Mysteries. The House was reluctant and initially refused these infrequent requests. Traditionalists from the House thought it irreverent to the old ways, when members worshiped the gods. House politicians thought including other magi would undermine the equality of its current members. The overriding concern was that Hermetic magi could already cast formulaic spells without the need of casting tools, and if they were accepted into the House, it would put the other House members at a severe disadvantage.

However, by studying the House's Outer Mystery, exploring Boethius's philosophy, and building upon his vast knowledge of Perdo magic, Primus Turnis developed a ritual that would change the Gift of the probationer. Upon recovering, the probationer's Gift would be permanently altered, with the mystical connection between her heart, head, and hands destroyed. Forever after she would be forced to use casting tools and would never be able to evoke a formulaic spell thereafter without these required components.

There are dangerous side effects to this ritual. The probationer gains Warping Points and usually falls into temporary Twilight. He also develops the Personality Trait Proud 1, and an ava-

ricious obsession with wealth, equaled by few in the House and reminiscent of the Founder's desire for monetary gain.

The process of Initiating a magus from another House is long and arduous, and involves more than merely casting the ritual spell on the probationer. Applicants must first prove their loyalty to House Verditius. They must sever ties with their old House, losing any commitments, goals, or political advantages they may already have. They must meet with the Primus, who selects a Mystagogue from among those members of the House who know the required ritual spell. It is the probationer's responsibility to convince a reluctant Mystagogue to Initiate him. Very often probationers must serve the House for a period of time, helping Verditius magi outside the laboratory, aiding in the various tasks and endeavors that interest House members. Probationers are not allowed to work within a Verditius maga's laboratory. Accompanying a Verditius magus on a dangerous journey, retrieving a stolen artifact, destroying an enemy, and slaying a mystical beast for its vis are all methods used to test the probationer's loyalty.

Once accepted as a future Verditius magus, the probationer spends a season with the Mystagogue, preparing for the ceremony, undergoing the ritual spell *The Embrace of Boethius*, and recovering from its effects. Once the season ends, the magus is an Initiate of the Outer Mystery of

Verditius and a member of the House. He receives the Minor Hermetic Virtue Verditius Magic and gains a Reputation, Convert 1, in the House, a slightly disparaging title to older members of the House. Lastly, the effects of a possible temporary Twilight must be calculated.

This is a unique Initiation and does not follow the rules of regular Verditius Initiations. Only a few Mystagogues know the necessary spell to complete the Initiation, although copies of it exist in the major covenants of the House. Characters undergoing such a transformation start their new career with a clean slate regarding future Initiations, and do not receive a bonus for undergoing this specialized Ordeal.

EMBRACE OF BOETHIUS

PeMe 35

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

Req: Vim, Corpus

This spell damages the target's mind, heart, and Gift, destroying a part of his understanding of formulaic spell casting and forcing him to rely on casting tools. This highly irregular spell was developed to initiate Hermetic magi of other Houses into House Verditius, and is only used in that rare instance. Because of the bizarre nature of this spell, the target receives 7 Warping Points and must check to avoid temporary Twilight.

(Base 15, + 1 Touch, +1 Part, +2 necessary requisites)

which afflicted the Founder, is inherent in the magic of the Inner Mysteries. In game terms, characters receive the Minor Personality Flaw Hubris and the corresponding Personality Trait Hubris 1.

Hubris is more than merely a Personality Trait. While it contains all the game aspects of a Personality Trait, it is also a measure of the degree that a character has succumbed to the curse of pride that plagued the Founder. A propensity for pride is part and parcel of the Mysteries of House Verditius. The intrinsic magical link between Verditius' arrogance and his arcane crafting carries through to his descendants. A Verditius magus's pride is

mystically coupled with his Gift, and as his Hubris increases so does his ability to instill greater amounts of magic in items that are similarly connected to him. A Verditius magus can add his Hubris score to his Lab Totals for creating a talisman, enchanting casting tools (Minor House Inner Mystery), binding magical animals, making automata, and creating attuned items (Major House Inner Mysteries).

For roleplaying purposes, the specific flavor of a magus' Hubris should be noted in parentheses after the Personality score. Hubris does not manifest in all magi exactly the same way. Some are overly proud, some arrogant, some pompous.

Characters that already have the Minor Personality Flaw Proud have their Hubris score automatically increased by 1, and those with the Major version of the Flaw increase their Hubris by 3.

Hubris increases over time, building like an Ability. Hubris cannot be deliberately changed by the player, unlike other Personality Traits. Specific situations grant experience points that are applied to a character's Hubris score. If a Verditius magus receives recognition, fame, money, or vis for his magical efforts, his Hubris score increases. While a degree of pride is inevitable for every Verditius magus, a completely conceited nature is avoid-



Increasing Hubris

BEHAVIOR	EXPERIENCE POINTS
Selling or manufacturing for another a charged item or an item of quality for pay in either money or vis.	1
Repairing or re-forging an item for another for pay.	1
Selling or manufacturing for another a lesser enchanted device.	1
Selling or manufacturing for another a greater enchanted device.	3
Selling or manufacturing for another an attuned item.	6
Selling an automaton.	1/magnitude of Might
Winning the apprentice category of the Contest.	1
Winning the journeymen category of the Contest.	3
Winning the master category of the Contest.	6
Learning a new Minor House Inner Mystery.	1
Learning a new Major House Inner Mystery.	3
Declaring a vendetta.	1
Winning a vendetta.	3

able. Those wishing to keep their Hubris score low need merely avoid many of the behaviors (see the insert) that increase that score.

The higher a magus's Hubris score grows, the harder it is for him to resist situations likely to further increase it. A magus with Hubris 4 will be quite tempted to continue to sell magical items, for example. If a character wishes to resist such temptations in hopes of maintaining a low Hubris score, you can make opposed Personality Trait rolls. This assumes the character has a Personality Trait that she can use against her Hubris score. She can also spend a Confidence Point to walk away from the situation.

Magi with Hubris scores of 6 and higher are extremely self-centered. These are the magi most prone to engage in vendettas with other Verditius magi, usually with those as self-centered as themselves. Resisting a declared vendetta is difficult. If the maga wishes to resist, you must make an opposed Personality Trait + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of your maga's Hubris score + her challenger's Hubris score. You may substitute her Intelligence if she does not have a Personality Trait that works opposite Hubris.

Demons and other Infernal agents are quite aware that Verditius magi are susceptible to the great sin of pride, and many lick their chops in anticipation as a maga advances through the Inner Mysteries. Some offer seemingly innocuous assistance to young magi to propel them on their arrogant path: anonymous gifts of vis, coincidental deliveries of Verditius Cult Lore texts to copy, and accidental meetings with wealthy clients willing to pay large amounts for minor magical gewgaws.

Ordeals

House Verditius has developed several Ordeals to assist Initiates in achieving additional Inner Mysteries. The first Ordeal, undertaken to learn the first Minor Inner Mystery, always grants the Minor Flaw Hubris. Further Ordeals may be used in ways that best fit your saga. They may be connected to specific Inner Mysteries, necessarily undergone in a specific order, or available in any combination for any Inner Mystery. Verditius magi have successfully used the following Ordeals to

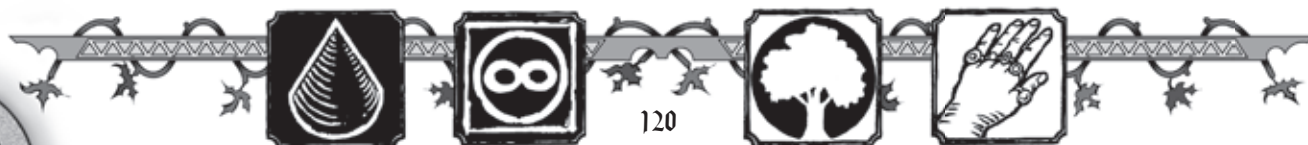
Initiate their fellows. Each Ordeal may only be used once by a single magus.

SEVER THE TIES THAT BIND (Major or Minor Ordeal): The Ordeal causes the Initiate to lose whatever emotional bonds he had to his family and friends, and prohibits him from reforming such familial attachments. This can impart either a Minor Flaw or a Major Flaw, depending upon the severity of the attachments severed. The Minor Flaw causes a Verditius magus to expel his family and his forge-companions from his life, and includes any friendly attachments he may have had to mundane people. The Major Flaw causes the Verditius magus to completely withdraw into himself. He must destroy his familiar, if he had one, and cannot bind a new one. He also must abandon his apprentice. This Ordeal should be rare, as it undermines many of the communal tenants of House Verditius, but it is very appropriate for magi wishing to learn the Inner Mystery Bind Curses. Verditius magi in the line of succession of the Primus may not undergo this Ordeal.

SELF-MUTILATION (Major or Minor Ordeal): Following the precedent of Verditius himself, many Verditius magi perform acts of self-mutilation, usually of their legs, scourging their bodies in an effort to elevate their souls. Three Flaws can result from this Ordeal: Crippled, Hobbled, or Lame. The wounds resulting from this self-mutilation cannot be healed, either by physical or magical means. While the initial bleeding and breaking of bones can be remedied, the long-term damage cannot. The bonus received depends on if the mutilation results in a Minor or Major Flaw.

PRONE TO CHANCE (Minor Ordeal): This ordeal changes the magus's personality, making him extremely keen on risk-taking and experimentation. After undergoing this Ordeal, he must experiment on every laboratory activity that allows experimentation, loving the thrill of the unknown and its unexpected outcomes. He receives the Minor Ordeal Flaw Prone to Chance. This Ordeal is incompatible with the Ordeal Averse to Risk.

AVERSE TO RISK (Minor Ordeal): This Ordeal alters the magus's personality, making him excessively reluctant to undertake laboratory activities that



involve risk. While he may still practice the skills of the Minor Inner Mystery Reforging Items, he may never experiment on laboratory activities. He receives the Minor Ordeal Flaw Adverse to Risk. He may not undergo the Ordeal Prone to Chance.

INCREASED HUBRIS (Minor Ordeal): This Ordeal makes the magus more proud, pompous, arrogant, or whatever form his Hubris Personality Trait takes. He willingly becomes more self-centered and prideful, knowing that this has the potential to distance him from his fellows. You gain enough experience points in your magus's Hubris score to increase it one level.

Confraternities

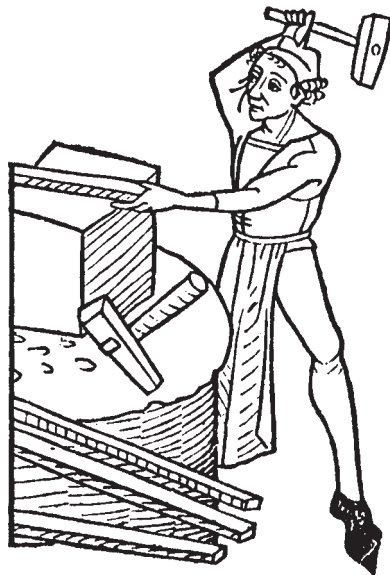
The life path of a Verditius maga is filled with individual choices. Most pick and choose the Inner House Mysteries they want, disregarding those that do not suit their private goals. Some Verditius magi have chosen otherwise and follow prescribed paths built by an earlier magus, based upon specific crafts and Inner Mysteries. These sub-cults within the House are called **confraternities**, and are like-minded groups, usually parentes and their filii, who have a set agenda for their magical careers.

Confraternities have few members. House Verditius is one of the smaller Houses of the Order, and these subsets of magi only contain four to eight followers at any given time. They readily assist each other through the Initiation rites, and it is rare for members to have vendettas against other members.

Each confraternity has a unique Inner Mystery available to its members, a less specialized Virtue that mirrors a common Hermetic Virtue, sometimes with an accompanying Flaw received through the Initiation. Those accepted into a confraternity are Initiated into this specific Mystery, as well as taught any Craft Ability that might be the focus of the confraternity. Each confraternity described below — from which troupes may pick and choose, in addition to creating new confraternities — is provided with one example Inner Mystery Initiation Script.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF ROLAND

Description: Roland was a great Frankish knight, one of Charlemagne's 12 peers, who was slain in a Saracen ambush in the Pyrenees, at the Battle of Roncesvals in 778. He slew hundreds of Saracen enemies with his magic sword, Durendal, before succumbing to his wounds. Wayland Smith, with Verditius serving as his apprentice, forged this sword. Charlemagne took Durendal after



the battle, but the blade was later stolen by Verditius' filius Roscius and taken to Verdi. By studying the sword repeatedly, Roscius and his filii became famous makers of magical swords. Each blade is engraved with a miniature "R," which initially stood for "Roscius" but is now taken to mean "Roland" in memory of the original owner. Swords made by this confraternity spread widely in the ninth and tenth centuries, but were more restricted after the Tribunal rulings of 1061.

Production: The Confraternity of Roland makes swords, as well as other handheld weapons of war. All of the members have the Craft Ability Blacksmith, with specializations in sword crafting. They produce swords of quality attuned to harming humans (see Items of Quality, below), as well as a range of other enchanted blades. These swords are discretely sold to Christian knights, often crusaders.

Initiation Mystery: Confraternity members have developed an Ordeal to impart the Minor Hermetic Virtue Minor Magical Focus (Swords).

Mystery Path: Initiates learn the Outer Mystery, then Minor Magical Focus (Swords), Reforging, Items of Quality, Verditius Elder Runes, and Item Attunement.

INITIATION OF MINOR MAGICAL FOCUS (SWORDS)

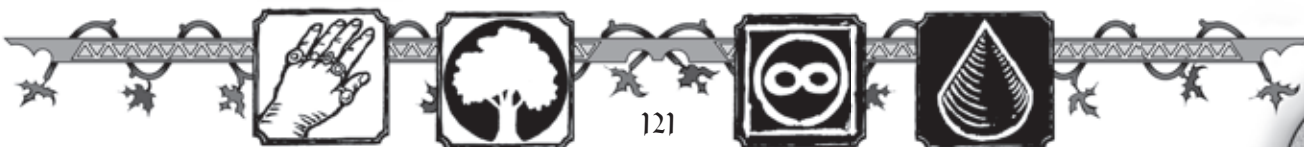
Ease Factor: 15

Script Bonus: +12

Script Details: The Initiate must steal Durendal from the confraternity member who currently has it, secretly penetrating his studio in the dead of the night and making off with the sword (+3). The confraternity member expects the sword to be stolen, and keeps it under minimal safeguards. The Initiate must then enter an Infernal regio and recite the Christian Creed one hundred times without failing, despite whatever distractions the Enemy may provide (+3). Afterward, he must engage in a bout of mortal combat while bearing the sword, although he does not have to fight alone, and slay an enemy in the field (+3). He and the Mystagogue then travel to site of the Battle of Roncesvals and, on the anniversary of Roland's death, the Initiate enters a catatonic state during which his soul is in peril from the devils he has offended (+3). He then keeps Durendal in his studio, waiting for the next Initiate to steal it from him.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF BALENTO

Many magi of House Verditius accept Christianity, but not all do. Balento was a ninth century magus who was convinced he was a direct descendent of the god Vulcan. He focused his energies on learning the magic of fire, and taught his apprentices the destructive art of the burning flame. During the Schism War, this confraternity produced hordes of items that hurled fire, particularly wands and staffs. Once the war ceased, so did demand for these fiery weapons, and the confraternity membership diminished to its current small size. Confraternity mem-



bers spend as much time casting fire spells — they call it “field research” — as they do in the laboratory crafting items.

Production: The members of the Confraternity of Balento are wood carvers who imbue their devices with potent fire spells. Each member has the Craft Ability Woodcarver. Their finished devices are sold throughout the Order, especially to magi of House Flambeau, who have a natural fondness for such things. This confraternity has few mundane agents acting as sellers, since the majority of their devices go to other Hermetic magi.

Initiation Mystery: Undergoing the Ordeal to enter this confraternity imparts the Minor Hermetic Virtue Affinity with Ignem to the Initiate, who also incurs the Minor Hermetic Flaw Deficient Form Aquam.

Mystery Path: Confraternity brothers learn the Outer Mystery, followed by Affinity with Ignem, Enchanted Casting Tools, Verditius Elder Runes, and Bind Magical Creatures.

INITIATION OF BIND MAGICAL CREATURE

Ease Factor: 21

Script Bonus: +15

Script Details: The Initiate must travel to the Tiber River, in the city of Rome, and on the festival of Vulcanalia (23 August), sacrifice ten fish on a fire that he has constructed to float on the river (+3). He must have personally retrieved five of the fish from a Magic aura and the other five from a Faerie aura (two Quests for +6). Following the offering of fish, the Initiate sacrifices her talisman and a pint of her own blood to the fire (+6). During the ceremony, the Initiate drinks a mixture of arsenic and wine while the Mystagogue recites the ancient prayers to Vulcan.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF IRENE THE YOUNGER

Description: Irene was a Byzantium princess before becoming a maga of House Verditius. She retained her love of religious icons throughout her apprenticeship and after, becoming one of the most famous inventors of magical paintings

and figurines. These items' powers subtly affect both the viewer and the room that contains the device.

Production: Confraternity members concentrate on the Arts of Imaginem and Mentem, instilling paintings, carved statues, and mosaics with powers to beautify their surroundings and beguile their viewers. Every member has either the Craft Ability Sculptor or Painter, which determines the medium they use. Items are sold to Christian churches, princes, town magistrates, and other wealthy individuals.

Initiation Mystery: Confraternity members receive the Minor Hermetic Virtue Puissant Imaginem or Puissant Mentem. The Ordeal also gives the Initiate the Minor Hermetic Flaw Slow Caster, as the Initiate's spell casting starts to mimic longer time it takes to paint or sculpt.

Mystery Path: Following the Outer Mystery, members are Initiated into Puissant Imaginem or Mentem, Verditius Elder Runes, and Automata.

INITIATION OF PUISSANT IMAGINEM OR MENTEM

Ease Factor: 15

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: Sculptors must acquire a piece of basalt from a fresh eruption and cool the stone with holy water. Painters must prepare pigments from soil found only in the peaks of the Carpathian mountains, and then prepare brushes with the tail feathers of a dove and canvas made from the belly of a newborn calf (+3). The Initiate must travel to a desert island off the coast of Tunisia, to a hidden cave that is filled with intoxicating fumes rising from the bowels of the earth (+3). Enshrouded in inky darkness, he must craft a portrait of his patron saint in his chosen medium, without the aid of light, beginning on the night of the new moon. The Mystagogue recites the Psalms during the Initiation. The Initiate must emerge with a flawless piece by the next full moon. If the Initiation is successful, the Initiate gains the Minor Virtue Puissant Imaginem or Mentem (player's choice) and the Minor Flaw Slow Caster (+3). If not, the piece turns to dust and the Initiate must try again later.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF HIMINIS THE MAD

Himinis, dubbed “the Mad,” was an 11th century magus who produced and sold many magical devices, enhancing his avaricious nature and making him one of the most greedy Verditius magi to have ever lived. He became paranoid that other magi were trying to steal his items, so he started creating trick devices, items that discharged dangerous spells at the wielder when triggered. Not satisfied with this chicanery, Himinis invented a Mystery that allowed him to instill powerful curses into his items. His apprentice continued this tradition, and the resulting confraternity still exists.

Production: This confraternity is less attached to a specific craft than other confraternities. Members make standard magic items, each continuing in a craft that he possessed before apprenticeship or learned from his parens. This confraternity has no specific Craft Ability associated with it.

Initiation Mystery: Himinis developed an Ordeal to teach his Initiates the Minor Hermetic Virtue Minor Magical Focus (Wooden Wands). They incur the unfortunate Minor Personality Flaw Envious.

Mystery Path: Initiates learn the Outer Mystery, followed by Minor Magical Focus (Wooden Wands), Verditius Elder Runes, Item Attunement, and Bind Curse.

INITIATION OF BIND CURSE

Ease Factor: 21

Script Bonus: +13

Script Details: The Initiate must remove the left hand from a corpse of thief. This must be done under a full moon and the Initiate must perform this task alone (+3). The corpse must not have had a proper Christian burial. Returning to his sanctum, the Initiate sends away his forge-companions and apprentice. The hand is placed in a jar full of vinegar and mixed herbs. As the hand soaks, the Initiate serves the Mystagogue, performing solitary tasks for him for a season (+1). On the fifth full moon after acquiring the thief's hand, the Initiate removes the pickled hand and dries it. On the seventh full moon, the Mystagogue visits



the Initiate. Together they burn the hand, and the Initiate inhales the fumes as the fire consumes it. The Initiate gains the Major Inner Mystery Bind Curse as well as the Major Flaw Severe the Ties that Bind (+9).

House Verditius Inner Mysteries

There are four Minor and four Major Inner Mysteries of House Verditius. Following the description of each Inner Mystery is a sample Initiation Script. Other Initiations for each Inner Mystery exist, and you are encouraged to develop other Scripts that suit the particular flavor of your saga. Since Verditius magi can learn these Mysteries in any order, the sample Scripts use standard Initiation Target Levels. Bear in mind that these Target Levels may be lower if the Initiate

has undergone a previous Initiation that included an Ordeal.

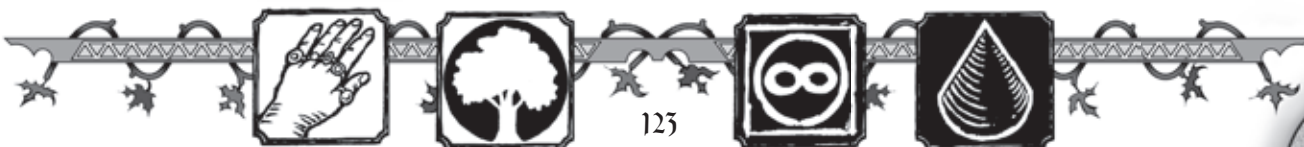
Enchant Casting Tools (Minor House Mystery)

Soon after Fenistour invented casting tools, allowing Verditius magi to cast formulaic spells, her filii sought to develop a method of enchanting them, hoping to further compensate their brethren for their clumsiness at spell casting. Achieving their goal in the ninth century, Verditius magi began sharing these secrets, developing Scripts for their fellows to more easily become Initiated into this Mystery. This is particularly useful for those adventurous Verditius magi who like casting spells outside of their laboratories. This is a very common Inner House Mystery among Verditius magi in the 13th century.

The magus may enchant his casting tools to mirror certain effects of mastered spells, as well as allowing casting bonuses when he uses them. This is a laboratory

process, requiring a season spent working in a Hermetic laboratory. Each casting tool can only be enchanted once, even if it has more than one property, and the magus must be able to finish the enchantment in a single season as if he were creating a lesser enchanted device. Enchanted casting tools cannot be instilled with other magical powers, and cannot be used as a base for a lesser or greater enchanted item.

To enchant a casting tool, compare the magus's Technique and Form Lab Total to the level of the spell that the casting tool is associated with. Since the magus is carving minor Verditius runes into his casting tool, you may add his Philosophiae score to the Lab Total. If the magus has a Craft Ability that could include making the tools, you may also add his Craft score. Because enchanted casting tools become permanent arcane connections to the magus, add his Hubris Personality score to the Lab Total. The magus also receives a bonus for knowing the spell in the first place, adding the magnitude of the spell to the Lab Total,



Enchanting Casting Tools Example

Hephaestion, a Verditius magus five years out of apprenticeship, wishes to enchant his casting tool for the spell *The Crystal Dart*. His Muto Terram Lab Total is quite high, 49, which includes his Philosophiae, Hubris, applicable Craft Ability, and the bonus for knowing the spell. The enchanted casting tools' base level of effect is 10, the level of the spell. Hephaestion enhances his casting tool with the Fast Casting effect, three Multiple Castings, and a +6 spellcasting bonus. The total effect level of the enchanted casting tool is 24. Hephaestion spends 3 pawns of Terram vis and completes the enchantment in a season.

much like the bonus received from knowing a similar spell (ArM5, page 101). The level for the effect is equal to the level of the spell plus the adjustment for any additional powers the magus includes, and the magus's Lab Total must be at least twice the effect level, so that he can perform the enchantment in one season.

ENCHANT CASTING TOOLS LAB TOTAL:

Technique + Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura Modifier + Philosophiae + Hubris + Magnitude of Known Spell + Craft (if applicable)

The base effect level of the casting tool equals the level of the spell it is used for. The effect level increases based upon the additional effects the magus wishes to enchant it with. There is no limit to the number of effects he can add, as long as his Lab Total plus bonuses is double the final effect level.

INCREASE CASTING TOOL EFFECT

+2	Fast Casting (as a mastered spell).
+2	Multiple Casting (as a mastered spell). This allows one additional spell, additional spells may be added for a +2 effect level increase each.

+2	Quiet Casting (as a mastered spell). This can be taken twice to cast the spell silently.
+ x	Increase spell casting roll by x.
+10	Summon casting tool. The casting tool appears in the magus's hand no matter where he stores it, although this is usually in his sanctum.
+10	Dismiss casting tool. The casting tool disappears from the magus's person, traveling to a place chosen at the time of enchantment. An Arcane Connection to this place must be bound into the item, and so is usually the magus's sanctum.

Enchanting casting tools requires vis. The magus must spend one pawn of Technique- or Form-specific vis per 10 levels of the final effect level total, rounded up.

INITIATION OF ENCHANT CASTING TOOLS

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The Mystagogue spends a season with the Initiate, creating casting tools one after another (+3). The Initiate must know the exact time and date that she was Initiated into the House's Outer Mystery. On an anniversary of that date, she ritualistically buries all her casting tools in a Magic regio (+3). If the Initiation is successful, the Initiate learns the Inner House Minor Mystery Enchant Casting Tools. The buried casting tools are destroyed and the Initiate receives the Minor Flaw Limited Magic Resistance to Vim (Ordeal +3).

Items of Quality (Minor House Mystery)

Many of the magic items first created by House Verditius to sell to mundanes were not enchanted devices, but were

rather items and tools whose inherent magical properties had been drawn to their surface through sympathetic magic and the inscription of runes. Certainly true enchanted devices were crafted and sold, but the majority of the items were these lesser items, tools, and artifacts of particular trades that helped mundanes in their day-to-day activities. Verditius magi still make these items and sell them, through their agents, to the population at large. Spring covenants also find them extremely helpful during their fledgling years.

Items of quality are easy to make, and any Verditius maga who knows this Mystery may successfully create one in a single season. First, select a tool or item that would be appropriately used by a professional in his trade. This does not have to be a craft trade, since everybody uses various tools and items to effectively perform activities in their daily life. A knight uses a sword, a king uses a scepter, a courtier uses refined clothing, an exchequer uses an abacus, a carver uses a knife, and a tavern keeper uses a broom. The item must have a Shape and Material bonus, as listed on ArM5 page 110, and in other books. If the item has more than one magical bonus, the magus must select only one for the enchantment. An item of quality may only have one latent magical property brought to its surface.

Once the magus has selected both the item and the magical bonus he wishes to retrieve from its essential nature, he spends a season in his lab and empowers the item with Verditius runes, spending a single pawn of Vim vis in the process. He succeeds regardless of what his Lab Total might be. Once finished, the empowered item of quality provides a bonus to the user's roll when it is used in an appropriate manner. This bonus is equal to the bonus derived from the Shape and Material Bonuses chart, and may be added to any simple or stress die roll in which that power would be useful. However, this bonus is limited by the magus's Philosophiae score at the time of creation, as this score measures his understanding of Verditius runes.

For example, swords are common items of quality, empowered with the magical ability of "+4 harm human and

animal bodies." When used in combat, this +4 bonus would be added to the combatant's Attack roll, over and above any situational or other Ability bonuses that he may receive.

Although produced through a magical procedure, items of quality are not magical devices per se. Weapons of quality are not resisted by Magic Resistance, and items of quality are not picked up by simple attempts to detect magic. Appropriate Intellego Vim spells do, however, indicate that an item has been magically aligned. Regardless of the bonus these items provide, they have a Lab Total of 10 if investigated. The House nevertheless views them as magical items and regulates their sale to mundanes.

INITIATION OF ITEMS OF QUALITY

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The Initiate spends a season enchanting a magic item, as well as making a mundane item similar in appearance. As the season nears its end, she journeys to a Forge of Hephaestus (+3). She and the Mystagogue sacrifice both items on the forge (+3). The Initiate gains the Minor Ordeal Flaw Increased Hubris (+3).

Reforging Enchanted Items (Minor House Mystery)

Either through mishap or malice, magic devices break. Verditius developed a method of repairing broken magic items while studying with Wayland Smith. Since his demise, the House has contributed to this practice, developing a Mystery that allows the repairing of magic devices, as well as the re-crafting of unbroken devices to enhance their magical potential. By using these techniques, Verditius magi can also deconstruct someone else's magical device into reusable pawns of vis. The Inner Mystery Reforging Enchanted Items allows the magus to **repair** and **smelt** magic items, as well as **reforge** them.

The basic practice of reforging compares the magus's Creo or Rego Vim Lab Total + a stress die to the level of effect of an item's instilled power. Items with multiple powers must be reformed one power at a time, by comparing his Lab Total to each individual power, from weakest to strongest. If his adjusted Lab Total is higher than the level of effect, he succeeds. If it is lower, he fails. If he botches, he gains Warping Points, with other possible consequences depending upon his specific reforging attempt. Reforging, repairing, and smelting enchanted items always takes at least one season of time.

REFORGING: Creo or Rego Vim Lab Total + stress die vs. level of effect of a power of an enchanted device

Reforging, like investigating a magic item, is one of the rare instances when a die roll is added to a seasonal event. This is due to the complexities of the reforging process and the capricious nature of magic.

REPAIRING ENCHANTED ITEMS

Magi Initiated into this Mystery can repair broken enchanted items, reuniting the magical energy that exists in the broken pieces to re-craft the device. It is immaterial how the item was broken, and as long as the magus has all the pieces, he may put it back together. The item itself actually helps him, as the magic within seeks to reunite into a whole. There is a difference between a broken item and an item whose magic has been drained by expanding any charges it might have had. The latter item is not broken, merely spent, and cannot be repaired.

The magus must work in a Hermetic laboratory to repair the item. It helps to have some knowledge of the particular Craft Ability that was initially used to manufacture the item, but this is not a requirement. He first physically repairs the item. You make a Dexterity + Craft stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9. If the item is of superior quality, your storyguide may increase the Ease Factor, but for most magical devices this is a relatively easy operation. If the item was made by

another Verditius maga, the Ease Factor is increased by the creator's Philosophiae score at the time of the item's creation.

Once physically repaired, the magus investigates the item before reuniting its magic. By using Creo magic, he rebinds the power back into its original enchantment. This begins much like investigating a magical device (ArM5, page 100). You make an Intellego Vim Lab Total + a stress die roll against the level of the weakest enchantment contained in the device. Many requests to Verditius magi to repair broken enchanted items come from other Hermetic magi, and since most Hermetic magi have some understanding of the enchantments in question, information they can provide often assists Verditius magi in their investigations. If a Verditius magus is accurately told the properties of an item, you may add +20 to your investigation rolls. But the offered information is not always accurate. If he is told disinformation about a device, your roll is compromised by a penalty of -5 to -20, depending on how untruthful that information is. Your storyguide is the final arbitrator of the exact penalty, basing her decision on how different the information is from the truth. If the magus is repairing a device he originally made or has a Lab Text for, he may skip the investigation stage. If the magus fails to successfully investigate a property, you may not make a repair roll. If you botch, the magus receives a number of Warping Points equal to the magnitude of the property he was investigating.

After the magus successfully understands a magical power of the device, you roll a stress die and add it to his Creo Vim Lab Total. If the total is higher than the level of effect of the power, the item is repaired and once again functions normally. If it is lower, he fails. If you botch, he receives a number of Warping Points equal to the magnitude of the power he was attempting to repair.

For items with multiple powers, the magus must understand one power and repair it before moving on to the next. The series of activities is to investigate then repair, investigate then repair. This can all be done in one season, as long as the magus is successful at each stage of the operation. The magus may continue



Reforging Example

Maga Mari Amwithig of Semita Errabunda has asked Hephaestion to reforge her lesser enchanted item, Wand of Bestial Agony (ArM5, page 100). Hephaestion agrees, charging her eight pawns of vis plus the four required for the operation. Hephaestion's Rego Vim Lab Total is 20, which is also the final level of effect of the wand. He adds a stress die to his Lab Total (rolling a three) and reforges the wand in a season. The wand now holds four more pawns of vis and can be enchanted again as a lesser enchanted item. If Hephaestion wishes to reforge the wand again, its adjusted final level of effect is 40 for its original power (base 20 + $[5 \times \text{Hephaestion's Philosophiae score of } 4]$). Twenty is also added to any additional powers Mari later instills in the wand for future reforgings.

in the following season if failure interrupts him and he wishes to do so. It is possible, therefore, to have a device with only some of its properties functioning.

REFORGING ENCHANTED DEVICES

By using the same principle techniques involved in repairing magical devices, those who have been Initiated into this Mystery can also re-craft an unbroken magical device, returning it to the workbench and compressing the magic in the item to make room for more enchantments. Verditius is said to have used this ability to great effect when making his magical rings, continually reforging them and then adding additional magical powers. Reforging enchanted devices allows a magus to surpass the limitations imposed on an item by its physical form. Most economically minded Verditius magi fill a magical device with enchantments, using all the available room a device may have based on the Material and Size table (ArM5, page 97). Reforging allows them to increase this limit. A magus may reforge a finished lesser or greater enchanted device that he originally crafted, an attuned item, or

a greater enchanted device that he has prepared for enchantment but has not had any powers yet instilled. He may also reforge others' devices, provided he has a Lab Text for the item.

To reforge a finished device, compare the magus's Rego Vim Lab Total + a stress die to the level of the weakest power of the device. If the total equals or exceeds the level of the weakest power, the magus may continue, and you successively make new rolls against any more powerful enchantments that the device may contain. If you successfully roll higher than the levels of all the device's powers, the magus has compressed the magic of the device within itself. The reforged item can hold a number of pawns of additional vis equal to his score in Philosophiae at the time of the reforging. New powers may be instilled in the device in subsequent laboratory seasons. If the reforged device is a lesser enchanted item, any new enchantments must be completed in one season. If the magus fails, he has only recreated the item as it was. If you fail your roll by more than ten, the magus has flawed the item during reforging, and the item loses its most powerful enchantment. If you botch, the magus destroys the item and receive a number of Warping Points equal to its total magnitude of spell effects.

Successful reforging requires pawns of Vim vis equal to the magus's Philosophiae score. The final instilled levels of effect of each of the reforged device's powers are increased by five times his Philosophiae score, so future reforgings are more difficult. There is no limit to the number of times a finished device can be reforged, but only the most powerful magi are typically able to reforge a device a third and fourth time.

A magus may also reforge a device before any powers are instilled within it. Since lesser enchanted items must be completed within one season, he may only do this to magic items that require a season spent opening them up to enchantment: his talisman, attuned items, or greater enchanted devices. After a device has been opened for enchantment, the magus returns to the lab during a subsequent season, dismantling and recreating the magic in the item and covering it with Verditius runes. Compare the magus's Rego Vim Lab

Total + a stress die to five times the number of pawns of vis necessary to open the item. If it is equal or higher, you may add the magus's Philosophiae score to the total pawns of vis the item can eventually hold. If you fail your roll by more than ten, you must subtract your magus's Philosophiae score from the number of pawns of vis the item can hold. Botching destroys the item and inflicts Warping Points.

If the magus succeeds in reforging an item that is only opened for enchantment, he can then instill powers as normal. Reforging does not alter this process. Items without instilled powers can only be reforged once, but can be later reforged after having powers instilled in them. Items that have been reforged, either before or after powers have been instilled, have each of their power's effect levels increased by five times the magus's Philosophiae score for future reforgings.

SMELTING ENCHANTED DEVICES

The third way this Inner Mystery may be used is to deconstruct or "smelt down" an enchanted device, using the method of reforging to extract vis from an item. This is a particularly insidious use of this Mystery, allowing Verditius magi — and only Verditius magi — to extract usable pawns of vis from Hermetically constructed magical items. Smelting an item takes a season.

To deconstruct an item a magus must first thoroughly investigate it, using the Intellego Vim Lab Total + stress die process described above. Total all the instilled levels of effect of the device to determine the level needed. If successfully investigated, compare the magus's Rego Vim Lab Total + a stress die to the total instilled levels of effect. If it is equal or higher, the item loses all its powers and the magus extracts the number of Form-specific pawns of vis used to instill those powers. The magus is limited in the number of pawns he receives, however, either by his Magic Theory times two or, if he knows the Inner Mystery Verditius Elder Runes, by his Magic Theory times Philosophiae. Excess pawns are lost. If you fail the roll, the item loses the power and the vis evaporates away. If you botch,

the item loses its powers and the magus gains 1 Warping Point per magnitude of the combined total of the instilled levels of effect.

Smelting is not 100% efficient. One pawn in ten is always lost, evaporating away during the smelting process. At least one pawn of vis is lost, regardless of the total number of pawns that could be drawn from the item. Only talismans, attuned items, and lesser and greater enchanted items may be smelted down.

INITIATION OF REFORGING

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +7

Script Details: The Initiate must make an item, usually something that he knows how to make with his Craft Ability. He must make as many of these as he can in the season, each as nearly identical to the others as the craft allows (+1). The Mystagogue sacrifices a season of her time assisting the Initiate (+3). As the season ends, the Initiate displays the items to the Mystagogue, who ritually burns them in a fire made of sulfur, cedar wood, and fish oil. Due to the repetitive process of the Initiation, the Initiate gains the Minor Flaw Averse to Risk (+3 Minor Ordeal).

Verditius Elder Runes (Minor House Mystery)

The rune magic that Wayland Smith taught Verditius was descended in part from the "elder runes" of the early Germanic people, which were called the *futhark* in the Scandinavian tongue. Many of their ideas of magic were very alien to the Mediterranean-born magus, as they were concerned more with Norse symbolism than practical use. As he learned each rune, he translated its mystical associations into terms more applicable to his magical craft, linking each rune to a particular tree. These unique runes were later modified and developed further by Verditius and his filius Milo, resulting in "Verditius runes," the symbols that all magi of the House use to shape their created devices. The elder runes from

Verditius Elder Runes

RUNE	MEANING	TREE	ART
ᚱ	"Health"	Birch	Creo
ᚦ	"Sight"	Yew	Intellego
ᚨ	"Pain"	Pine	Perdo
ᚱ	"Ice"	Alder	Rego
ᚷ	"Cattle"	Elder	Animal
ᚱ	"Water"	Willow	Aquam
ᚱ	"Hail"	Ash	Auram
ᚱ	"Man"	Holly	Corpus
ᚱ	"Harvest"	Apple	Herbam
ᚱ	"Sun"	Juniper	Ignem
ᚱ	"Loyalty"	Oak	Mentem
ᚱ	"Ogre"	Hawthorn	Vim

which they were derived are more potent, however, and while they do not allow the flexibility of Verditius runes, they enable the enchanter to use his Arts in a much more powerful manner.

Each elder rune is linked to a specific Hermetic Art, and magi Initiated into this Inner Mystery can use these runes when creating a magic item, inscribing the runes onto the item during the creation stage. The power contained in each rune makes the item more malleable to magical manipulations, allowing it to accept more magical power than it normally could. This effectively allows the magus to double his Art score for the purposes of enchanting the item.

The magus may inscribe an enchanted device with up to two runes, one representing the Technique used in the enchantment and the other representing the Form. He inscribes the elder runes during the season that he opens the item for enchantment, meaning that only greater enchanted items, attuned items, and talismans can be inscribed with elder runes. Each rune adds five to the final

level of effect of the power being instilled in the device, making it slightly more difficult to enchant the item. However, each inscribed rune allows the magus to double the Art that the rune represents, exactly like a magical focus. Theoretically, doubling his Art score compensates for the slightly harder final effect level of the item. If it does not (and it may not), he should wait to use the elder runes until his understanding of the Arts involved grows.

If the magus already has a Major or Minor Focus applicable to the enchantment, he may add his score in the lowest Art to the total again. If this is the same Art as that associated with the elder rune, he effectively triples his score in that Art.

Elder runes can be inscribed on devices that have multiple invested effects. When instilled, each effect has its final spell level raised by five or ten depending on how many runes have been inscribed on the item. If an additional instilled effect falls under one of the Techniques or Forms governed by an inscribed rune, the magus may double that Art score as

Elder Runes Example

Ten years out of apprenticeship, Hephaestion is commissioned to make a metal wand that casts *The Earth Split Asunder*. Hephaestion decides to make this wand a greater enchanted item. To hurry the process, he decides to inscribe the device with the "Ice" rune, which will double his Rego score. The wand will also maintain the concentration for the wielder, so the final level of effect is 40: 30 for the spell + 5 for the elder rune + 5 for maintaining concentration.

Hephaestion's regular Rego Terram Lab Total is 8 (Rego) + 19 (Terram including Puissant Art bonus) + 3 (Intelligence) + 6 (Magic Theory specialized in Terram) + 3 (Magic Aura), for a total of 39. The iron wand is a small base metal object and can hold ten pawns of vis. During the season spent opening the wand for enchantment, Hephaestion can deduct his Craft Ability Metalsmith from the necessary cost by inscribing the wand with Verditius runes (ArM5, page 93). His Craft Metalsmith score is 5 + 2 from Puissant Ability, specialized in iron. It only costs Hephaestion two pawns of Terram vis to open the wand for enchantment.

Hephaestion begins to enchant the device the following season. His Lab Total is increased by Verditius runes, his Craft: Metalsmith score, and the benefit from using the elder rune. His revised Lab Total is 16 (8 Rego times 2 for the elder rune) + 19 (Terram including Puissant Art bonus) + 3 (Intelligence) + 6 (Magic Theory 5 specialized in Terram) + 3 (Magic aura) + 5 (+4 shape and material bonus "control things at a distance" + 4 Philosophiae score, limited by Magic Theory 5) + 8 (Craft Metalsmith 5 + specialization in iron + 2 from Puissant Ability), for a total of 60. In the first season of the actual enchanting process, Hephaestion accumulates 20 points towards the item's completion (Lab Total 60 minus the final level of effect 40). He finishes it in the second season. The wand requires seven pawns of Terram vis, six for the final level of effect of the power and one for inscribing the "Ice" rune. Hephaestion charges his client 18 pawns of vis for his services, double the amount required for opening the item and enchanting it, plus the nine pawns that were necessary for the enchantment, for a grand total of 27 pawns.

mentioned before. If the instilled effect does not fall under the Art represented by the rune, the final level of the effect is still increased, but the magus does not get to double either the Technique or the Form.

Each elder rune is also sympathetically linked to a type of tree. If the magus inscribes a rune on a device made from the corresponding tree — probably a staff, wand, or other wooden item — he receives a +2 bonus to his Lab Total for enchanting it. This is in addition to any Shape and Material bonuses the item's form may provide.

It costs a pawn of Art-specific vis to inscribe each elder rune. This is in addition to the final cost of an instilled power, which has its final level of effect increased by the inscription of the rune. Vis used to inscribe elder runes counts toward the maximum amount an item may hold.

There are 24 elder runes, only half of which have been adapted to the

Hermetic Arts. Attaching meaning to the remaining three Arts would be a Minor Breakthrough for each rune, and a small number of Verditius magi are working on just such a breakthrough. (See *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 26, for details on the research necessary to make such a discovery).

Any Verditius magus can recognize elder runes, allowing him to easily distinguish between them and regular Verditius runes. A successful Intelligence + Verditius Cult Lore + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 allows him to identify the rune and its corresponding Art.

A second application of this Inner Mystery allows the magus to use his increased understanding of runes in combination with his understanding of Hermetic magic. This allows him to use more vis during his laboratory season when enchanting a device. When creating enchanted items, the limit to the amount

of vis he may use in a single season becomes his Magic Theory score times his Philosophiae score.

INITIATION OF VERDITIUS ELDER RUNES

Ease Factor: 15 (Minor Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The Initiate and Mystagogue must travel to Durenmar in the Black Forest, typically sacrificing a season for the journey (+3). On the shortest day of the year (the winter solstice), the Initiate must sacrifice a greater enchanted item, burning it in the forge created by Verditius (+6). As the Mystagogue recites Germanic poems about the old gods, the Initiate eats the flesh of a crow roasted over the burning item. As the sun rises, knowledge that allows him to harness the power of the Verditius Elder Runes enters the Initiate's head.

Automata (Major House Mystery)

For three centuries, the making of automata — mechanized beasts, birds, women, and men, creations designed for emperors and Caesars — was regarded as the greatest Mystery of the House. This changed in the 12th century, when Icilius the Traitor began teaching magi of other Houses how to make automata. Anyone prosperous enough to pay for an automaton could own one. By the 13th century, several powerful nobles and affluent clergymen have automata. Although still prized, the reputation of those building these devices has diminished.

Knowing this Mystery grants the Major Hermetic Virtue Craft Automata, an Ability with an initial score of 1. Verditius magi learn this through Initiation and Ordeal, but other Hermetic magi can learn this as a Supernatural Ability. Because this Mystery was developed with Hermetic magi in mind, magi wishing to learn it do not have to subtract the total of their Arts scores from the source's Study Total (ArM5, page 166), although they do have to subtract the total of any other Supernatural Virtues they may have. In theory, Verditius magi could also learn

it this way, but the memory of Icilius's treachery is still fresh, and any magus who does so can expect to be shunned by his House, if not formally cast out.

Automata are constructed facsimiles made from a base material, usually wood, stone, or metal, resembling beasts or humans and consisting of miniature gears, rope and pulley apparatuses, articulated joints, interior arrangements of strings, and carefully aligned weights and counterbalances. From a distance, they may appear real, but closer inspection reveals their manufactured nature. Imbued with magic, they normally perform tasks suitable for a servant or slave, but some can perform tasks that are more complicated and follow intricate orders. They do not have original thoughts, however, and even the most cleverly constructed automaton can only follow its master's orders.

There are three stages to constructing an automaton: creating the figure, preparing it for enchantment, and instilling spell-like enchantments into it. This process is figuratively called creating the body, spirit, and mind of the automaton.

CREATING AN AUTOMATON

The magus must first decide what form and material he wants his automata to have. The size of the automaton and its material are important. Choose a facsimile of a species, including man, and determine its Size, consulting either the Size Example Table Size (ArM5, page 192) or the Mundane Beasts section of the Bjornaer chapter. Next, choose a material using the Material and Size Table (ArM5, page 97) to determine the automaton's base points calculation. Automata are magic creations and thus have Magic Might. These numbers determine the thing's Magic Might score, a vital calculation that is used throughout the automaton creation process.

AUTOMATON'S MAGIC MIGHT: 10 + Size + Material Base Points

Magic Might determines the Ease Factor needed to construct an automaton and the limit on pawns of vis that may be used to instilled spell-like effects in

it. Since this is a magical creation, Magic Might is also the automaton's Magic Resistance.

Having determined the form and material of the construction, the magus spends a season making it. Besides time, this costs money. Use the standard conversion you have set for the price of a pawn of vis in your saga, and multiply this base price by the automaton's Magic Might. Depending on your saga, your troupe might have to modify this cost, bearing in mind that this is an expensive project. You then make an Intelligence + Craft Automata + a stress die roll against an Ease Factor of the automaton's Magic Might score. If you succeed, the magus has constructed his automaton. If you fail, he has not, but he may immediately try again in the next season and you gain a +1 bonus to your roll for each season he has failed. Each attempt after failing costs him the same number of Mythic Pounds as a pawn of vis costs. If you botch, the automaton is ruined and the magus must start over from scratch.

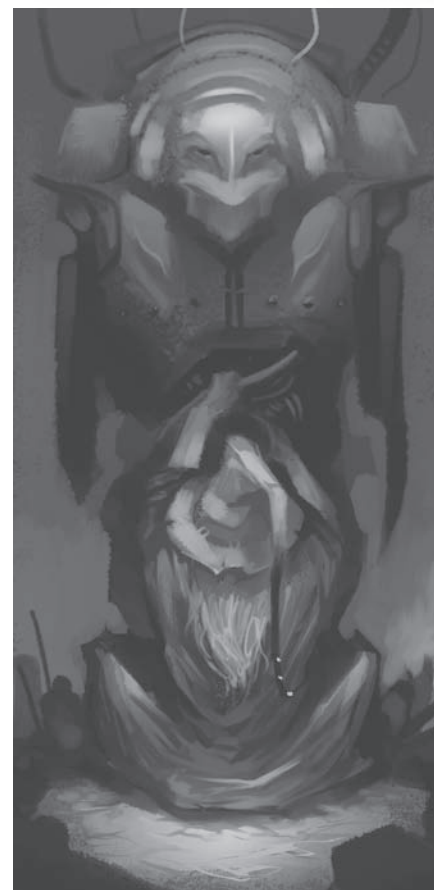
Verditius magi can inscribe lesser Verditius runes on the automata and add their Philosophiae score to this roll.

CONSTRUCT AUTOMATON: Intelligence + Craft Automata + stress die vs. Automaton's Magic Might

PREPARING AN AUTOMATON FOR ENCHANTMENT

After constructing the automaton, the magus must prepare it for enchantment. This takes a number of pawns of Vim vis equal to the automaton's Magic Might score. The magus must do this in a single season. He cannot fail at this part of the process, although the limit of vis that he can use in a season might not be high enough to accommodate the amount he must use. If this is the case, preparing the automaton for enchantment can wait until he can use the required amount of vis. The constructed automaton sits idle in his laboratory.

The nature of this Mystery is unique and many not be coupled with other Major Inner Mysteries of the House. Automata are greater enchanted items.



They may not be a magus's talisman. Verditius magi may use personal benefits derived from the Minor Inner Mysteries, especially Mysteries that allow them to use more vis in a single season.

This stage of construction is referred to as crafting the automaton's spirit. This is merely artificer's jargon and a use of colorful language, as no spirit is actually bound to the thing.

ENCHANTING AN AUTOMATON

Prepared and constructed, the magus then instills spell-like effects in his automaton. Since the automaton is a greater enchanted item, he may spend several seasons instilling these powers. Like regular enchantments, each power mimics a Hermetic spell, requires Art-specific vis, and is completed based on the magus's Lab Total. Verditius magi can add their Hubris score to their Lab Totals. Each power costs a number of pawns of vis to instill, and the maximum number of pawns an automaton can hold equals its Magic Might score.



This is a fixed limit, unchangeable through reforging or other Verditius techniques. Each power instilled requires one pawn of vis for every ten levels of the power's final effect, rounded up.

The Range for these powers is always Personal, and the Target is Part, since the magus is enchanting only one of the many parts that comprise the complicated automaton. Since automata do not have intelligence, he cannot instill powers that the thing can then cast on others. The Duration for each power is important, and most powers have Duration Sun or Moon. Lacking intelligence, automata cannot maintain concentration, so, unlike other magic devices, the magus may not instill Concentration Duration effects. The frequency of the powers is important, since it signifies the number of times a day the automaton can perform the power. Finally, each power needs a trigger, usually a spoken command word phrased as an order, but linked triggers can be instilled. A specialized effect developed for automata is "Cease," a command that stops the specific activity or power that an automaton is currently using. This effect adds +3 to the final level of the effect. All of these modifications affect the final effect level of the power instilled.

Besides spell-like effects, the magus can also instill powers that mimic Abilities, allowing an automaton to perform tasks for the entertainment of its audience. These Abilities are Craft or Profession Abilities, and while many are used for entertainment (dancer, juggler, musician), they can also copy useful labor skills (seamstress, blacksmith, scribe). The magus may instill Martial Abilities, including Brawl, but this can be dangerous due to the automaton's lack of individual thought. The magus must have intimate knowledge of the Ability he is instilling, meaning that he must possess a score in that Ability. His score is the limit of the score he can instill in his creation.

Instilling Ability-like effects uses the magus's Rego + Form Lab Total, with a Mentem requisite. The exact Form depends on the material of the construction. The base level of effect is 25 (move a material in a highly unnatural and specialized way 5, +2 Sun, +1 Part, +1 Mentem requisite). This gives the automata an

Ability score of 1. The magus may raise this Ability score by adding magnitudes to the base effect. Each additional magnitude increases an Ability by +1. The shape of the automaton must be adequate to the task; an automaton fish cannot dance, for example.

Automaton artificers have developed several common powers. Many of these powers use a Rego Herbam or Terram Lab Total, and several require a Mentem requisite if the automaton must somehow sense its environment.



Dutiful Movement: The automaton can walk and follow its creator around. Base effect 20.

Freedom of Movement: The automaton can walk towards areas pointed out to it. The magus must specifically select the destination while commanding the automata. Base effect 25, Mentem requisite.

Angelic Movement: The automaton can fly, following the magus's direction as he points his finger to where he wishes it to go. The automaton must have a form that would naturally allow flight. Base effect 40, Creo Auram Lab Total with a Rego requisite. Automata larger than Size 0 add +1 magnitude per additional Size.

Voice Like a Nightingale: The automaton can sing as pleasantly as a bird, chirping out bird songs through its mouth. Base effect 5, Creo Imaginem.

Voice Like a Bard: The automaton can masterfully sing a small repertoire of ballads selected during enchantment. Base effect 10, Creo Imaginem.

Increased Characteristics: Every automaton has the physical Characteristics

of an average member of the species it is a facsimile of (0 for humans). The magus may raise these, mirroring the effects of Creo Corpus and Mentem Magic. The required Form depends on the automaton's base material. The base effect is 10 for a +1 Characteristic, with each additional magnitude adding +1 to the Characteristic.

Simulacra: The automaton appears real. It looks, smells, and sounds like a real thing rather than a facsimile. Base effect 15, Creo Imaginem. Raising the magnitude one level allows the magus to make the automaton look like a specific animal or person.

THE CONSTRUCTION COMBINED

Once the magus has finished enchanting the automaton, he must unite all the magic into a cohesive unit. He casts the specially invented formulaic spell, *Tie the Threads that Bind*, onto the construction. This is a general level Rego Vim spell. This spell's level must equal or exceed the finished construct's Magic Might + 15.

TIE THE THREADS THAT BIND

ReVi Gen

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

This spell is uniquely used for the construction of automata. The base effect level of the spell level must equal or exceed the construct's Magic Might to be successful, meaning the final spell level must equal or exceed the automaton's Magic Might + 15.

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

AUTOMATA IN PLAY

Once completed, the automaton functions like an unthinking NPC, performing commanded tasks and services. If it is ever required to make an Ability check, the storyguide rolls this as normal: Characteristic + Ability + a die roll against a determined Ease Factor. Because automata are constructed to perform regular, routine tasks, they always use a simple die and never a stress die. Great successes and horrible blunders fall outside an automaton's capacities. Mental

Characteristics are ignored for Abilities that require them, and the storyguide just rolls a die + the automaton's Ability. Automata can only use Abilities that they have been designed for.

Automata are complicated machines and require constant maintenance. At the end of every year, roll a stress die and compare it to the automaton's Magic Might score. If it matches or exceeds the score, the automaton is fine. If it fails, some minor part of the automaton has broken. Lower the automata's Magic Might score by 1 point. The automaton suffers a -1 penalty on all Ability rolls for every 2 points of lost Magic Might. If it botches, the automata breaks, losing 5 points of Magic Might for every actual botch rolled. Once the automata's Magic Might score reaches 0, it is broken and no longer functions. It is a good idea to make this annual roll when other characters are making their Aging rolls.

Damaged automata can be repaired. A magus can make spot repairs on an automaton by rolling his Intelligence + Craft Automata score + a stress die against of Ease Factor of (6 + the magnitude of the automaton's Magic Might score). If you succeed, the automaton's Magic Might is increased 1 point back to its original score. If you fail, his attempt was unsuccessful. If you botch, the automata loses 1 point of Might per actual botch. Spot repairs take a number of days equal to the magnitude of the automaton's original Magic Might, rounded up. The magus may also spend an entire season and repair all the damage to an automaton. Compare his Rego + appropriate Form with a Mentem requisite Lab Total to the automaton's Magic Might + the number of instilled powers it has. His Lab Total must be higher than the automaton's adjusted Magic Might for the repairs to be successful. A magus must repair an automaton before its Might reaches 0, at which point it is absolutely broken and useless.

INITIATION OF AUTOMATA

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +13

Script Details: The Initiate must spend a season studying one of the ancient automata of Hephaestus, either

in Verdi or another Verditius location that possesses one (+1). She must then travel to the lighthouse in Alexandria, Egypt, where she must steal a brand of fire from the lighthouse's source. The brand must remain lit while she journeys to the Mystagogue (+3). During the Initiation, she undergoes a Major Ordeal that imposes the Major Flaw Necessary Condition (must be near an open flame to work magic) (+9).

Bind Curse (Major House Mystery)

Developed by the infamous Verditius magus Himinis the Mad, this Mystery allows the magus to instill dire Curses into enchanted items. While these follow certain spell-like guidelines, they are not spells and can only be housed in created devices. They can be instilled in lesser enchanted items, but are more commonly used to safeguard greater enchanted items and attuned items, when they are instilled among other (non-Curse) effects in such devices. Because of the enormity of their arcane might, they cannot be instilled in charged items.

Curses affect the target by inflicting either a Minor or Major Flaw, which is called a Curse and is similar to a Minor or Major Malediction Flaw. Minor Curses last a number of seasons equal to the item's creator's Magic Theory score at the time of enchantment. Major Curses last a number of years equal to the creator's Magic Theory score at the same time. The Parma Magica is helpful in protecting against the initial imposition of the curse, but if a magus's Magic Resistance fails, he is doomed to its effects.

Curses are bound to items much as spell-like effects are instilled in them. Curses have a base effect plus modifiers, much like regular enchanted items. Compare the magus's Lab Total to the final level of effect to determine whether he successfully binds the Curse to the item and how many seasons it takes. The basic enchantment effect level of a Minor Curse is level 25, and the basic enchantment effect level of a Major Curse is 50. The actual Technique and Form necessary

for binding the Curse depends on the type of Curse. Many are Rego, Muto, or Perdo Corpus effects, but you should use your common sense and the advice of your storyguide to ultimately decide the Arts, including requisites, each Curse requires.

Minor Curse base effect level: 25

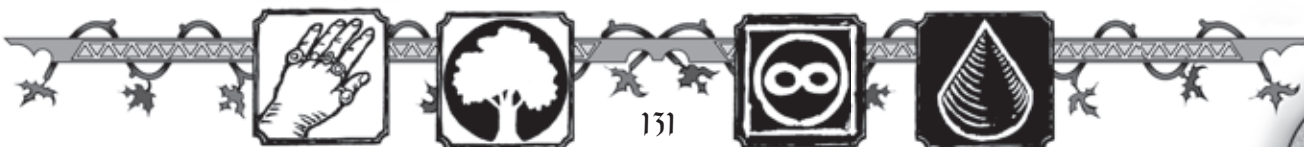
Major Curse base effect level: 50

The basic Range and Target of a Curse are Touch and Individual. The basic Duration is Momentary, meaning the actual magic that inflicts the curse only lasts a second, even though the consequences last a number of seasons or years. This contradicts the regular rules for Rego and Muto magic, and is a result of the particular magic involved with this Inner Mystery. The Range and Target of the curse may be increased, and for some Curses must be. Himinis was able to adapt his Curses to act in various ways depending on the Range of the curse. If the Range is increased, it means the Curse affects someone other than the holder of the item first, within the limits of the increased Range, before affecting the holder. Increasing the Target means that the Curse affects a greater number of people. These insidious alterations make Himinis's Curses even more frightening.

Each Curse needs a triggering action to release its magical power. The base effect is a physical trigger: saying a magic word, waving the item, or any of the common physical triggers for regular magic devices. A more common trigger is a conditional trigger, which triggers the Curse after a specific magical event happens. For example, investigating the item with Intellego Vim magic could be a conditional trigger, as could triggering the Curse after another power of the device is used. Each conditional trigger adds +3 to the final level of effect of the Curse. Creating a Curse that is triggered after a specific number of uses of another power adds +6 to the final effect level.

Curses have a base Penetration of 0. Like other standard enchanted items, the enchanter may increase this.

Each Curse is a single instilled effect, and the limit of such effects is determined by the shape and material of the item, or the powers and known Mysteries of the Verditius magus. Instilling Curses requires



vis, one pawn of Art-specific vis for every 10 levels of final effect of the curse, rounded up.

HIMINIS'S CURSES

Himinis developed a definitive roster of Curses for his Inner Mystery. However, there is no complete list here. Detailing every Curse would limit the creativity of the troupe, and players and storyguides are encouraged to develop Curses similar to those listed here. However, if a storyguide decides that a specific Curse a player wishes to create is too mean, she can regretfully inform the player that, while the Curse is awe-inspiring, it is not one of Himinis's Curses.

Minor Curses should be annoying, inflicting slight penalties in play and interrupting a season of work once every two or three years. Major Curses should be dire, severely penalizing a character in play and interrupting seasons of work once or twice a year. These Curses are nothing to scoff at, and it is with good reason that Hermetic magi fear them.

MINOR CURSES

Weakened Characteristic: The victim is instantly drained of his physical vitality. This curse lowers a target's lowest physical Characteristic by one point, dropping a -2 Strength to -3, for example. (Perdo Corpus effect)

Susceptibility to Magic: The victim loses whatever natural resistance she might have had against magic. She suffers a -3 to any roll used to resist a magic spell or supernatural effect. Many spells do not offer any chance of resisting them, but those that do affect the target more readily. Hermetic magi suffer a -3 to their total Magic Resistance and must roll an additional botch die when botching using Hermetic magic. (Rego Vim effect)

Twisted Spine: The victim's spine twists to a grotesque shape, bending him near double and prohibiting him from standing erect. The target suffers a -3 to any social roll he might make. Hermetic magic may return the poor victim to his proper posture, but only for as long as

Automaton Example

Fifteen years after his apprenticeship, Hephaestion's venditor finagles an extremely lucrative deal with Lord Guigues of Dauphiné, who wants a mechanized magpie for his bedchamber. Having only recently been Initiated into the Mystery of Automata, Hephaestion begins the enchantment process with trepidation. He decides to make a tin magpie. Its Magic Might is 11, base 10 + Size (-4) + material (5 for base metal).

Hephaestion attempts to craft the automaton in the first season. His Intelligence is +3 and his Craft: Automata is 2. His stress die roll is a 3 for a total of 8, not enough to match the bird's Magic Might. Failing the first season, he tries the next, with a +1 bonus for the previously failed attempt. His second stress die roll is 4, which gives him a 10 total (die roll 4 + 3 Intelligence + 2 Craft: Automata + 1 previously failed season). Trying a third time, he rolls 6 for a total of 13 (die roll 6 + 3 Intelligence + 2 Craft: Automata + 2 previously failed seasons) and successfully builds the automaton. Using the conventional vis price (one pawn of vis equals ten Mythic Pounds), the material cost of these three seasons is 130 Pounds (Magic Might 11 + 2 failed seasons).

In the fourth season, Hephaestion easily prepares the automaton for enchantment. Because he knows the Minor Inner Mystery of Elder Runes, the maximum vis he can use in a season to enchant an item is 20 (5 Magic Theory x 4 Philosophiae). Eleven pawns of Terram vis are required to open the magpie for enchantment.

Already a year into the process, Hephaestion enchants the magpie to sing. Singing is a base 5 Creo Imaginem effect. He specifies the trigger for the effect (saying "Sing,") includes the command "Cease," and gives it an effect frequency of three uses a day. The final effect level of this power is 10.

Hephaestion's Creo Imaginem Lab Total + Hubris is 22. The power is instilled in one season and costs a pawn of either Creo or Imaginem vis. The automaton can hold ten more pawns of vis.

Hephaestion would like the bird to fly, but that is beyond him. However, he can enchant it to hop. He instills the "dutiful movement" power, a base Rego Terram effect of 20. He gives this power a similar trigger, a "Cease" command, and three uses per day for a final level of effect of 25. His Rego Terram Lab Total + Hubris is 40, and he can complete this enchantment in two seasons for a cost of three pawns of Art-specific vis.

Finally, Hephaestion decides that he should enchant the bird to explode if necessary, although only another Verditius magus would understand why this might be "necessary." The power causes the bird to explode into pieces that fly out in a circular spray and do +5 damage to anyone with a pace of distance. Player and storyguide decide that this is a level 5 Rego Terram effect (base 3, +2 Group). The Target is Group rather than Part because it affects the entire construction. It can only happen once, upon a verbal command, so the final level of effect is 10. Hephaestion's Rego Terram Lab Total is still 40. He easily instills this power at the cost of one pawn of Terram vis.

Hephaestion has spent two years enchanting this automaton. As the last season ends, he casts a level 30 *Tie the Threads that Bind*, which is higher than the automaton's Magic Might 11 + 15. This completes the process and costs six pawns of Vim vis. The total vis cost for the automaton is 22 pawns. Hephaestion charges Guigues 460 Mythic Pounds, 330 for the vis used and 130 for construction expenses. This is half the cost of an entire castle! Guigues balks at the cost but accepts the bargain, much to the chagrin of his already overtaxed tenants.

the restorative spell lasts. The constant use of restorative magic certainly causes Warping Points over time. (Rego Corpus effect)

Warts: The victim is completely covered in warts, diminutive discolorations of the skin, and knobby protrusions. Social rolls that the target makes are penalized

by -3, due to his repugnant countenance. Imaginem spells may mask this condition and remove the penalty, but cause Warring Points if regularly used. (Rego Corpus effect)

Asses' Ears: The victim's ears change into donkey ears. Her hearing is not heightened, and social interactions are penalized by -3. (Muto Corpus [Animal] effect)

Crow's Voice: The victim caws throughout his speech. Communication rolls are penalized by -3, as is spell casting. (Muto Corpus [Animal] effect)

Cataracts: The victim's eyes become clouded and white, limiting his vision. Vision-based rolls, and Advancement Totals derived from reading, are penalized by -3. (Perdo Corpus effect)

MAJOR CURSES

Aging: The victim must make an immediate Aging roll, followed by an additional Aging roll for every season that the Curse lasts. (Perdo Corpus [Vim] effect)

Leprosy: A severe case of advanced leprosy overcomes the victim, whose nose, fingers, and toes immediately blacken and start to fall off. Roll a simple die for the number of fingers and toes that fall off, one per month. Aging rolls are penalized by -6. (Perdo Corpus effect)

Burning Flesh: The victim's flesh begins to itch as angry red splotches grow over her entire body. Any activity besides scratching requires a Stamina + Concentration + a stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to perform. Botching this roll means that the victim has scratched herself hard enough to cause a Light Wound. (Rego Corpus effect)

Brittle Bones: The victim's bones become as fragile as a bird's. Whenever the person falls down, lifts something heavy, or does any strenuous activity that might threaten a limb, he must make a Stamina + simple die roll of against an Ease Factor of 9 or break a bone. A broken bone is treated as a Heavy Wound and heals normally. (Rego Corpus effect)

Demon's Visage: The victim's head transforms into the shape of a demon's, appearing like a lion, dog, or boar head.

The victim does not gain any combat advantages from this change. Peasants are likely to run away from such a person. Communication and social rolls are penalized by -6, as is spell casting. (Muto Corpus [Animal] effect)

Lust for Life: The victim becomes obsessed with sensual pleasure, usually in the form of sex, but food and alcohol are also sought out. Each season, the victim must make a Stamina + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 6 to do anything besides follow his compulsions. Social interactions are penalized by -6, as it is instantly apparent that the victim is following a selfish agenda. (Creo Mentem effect)

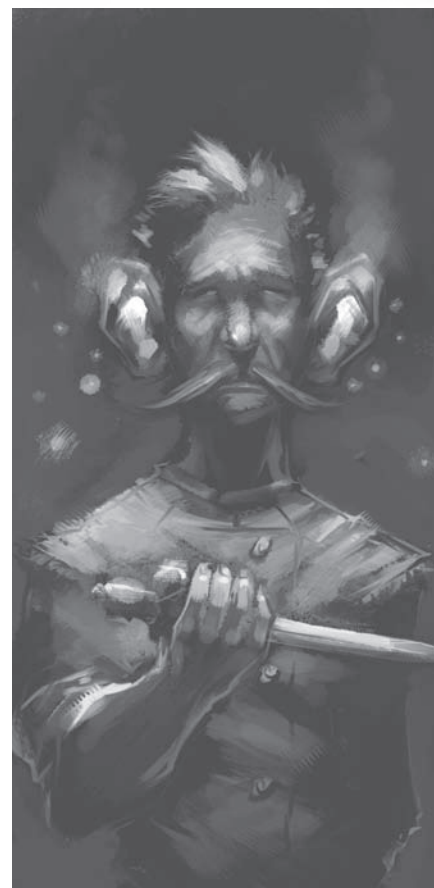
Doubt: The victim is filled with doubt and second-guesses himself constantly. Before undertaking any activity, the victim must make an Intelligence + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to proceed with his decision. Failing means that the victim must try again in the next round. (Rego Mentem effect)

REMOVING CURSES

Cursed characters have the option of merely letting the Curse run its course, ending after a few years or seasons. Unfortunately, they have no idea how long the Curse will last. This may prompt them to search for other means of removing the Curse.

The magical nature of the Curse acts as a leech, attaching itself to the cursed person. Perdo Vim spells targeted at the Curse can remove it. The level of the Perdo Vim spell must match the final effect level of the Curse. If the Cursed person has The Gift, the Range of the Perdo Vim spell must be increased to Part, so as not to harm the person's Gift. It is far easier to remove Minor Curses with Perdo Vim spells than Major Curses.

Minor Curses can also be removed if the item that bestowed the curse is destroyed. Merely breaking the device is inadequate; the magic of the device must be drained off and the item returned to its mundane nature. This is a good opportunity to find a Verditius magus who knows how to smelt the magic from an item. The search for such a magus should provide the troupe with a story.



Major Curses are harder to remove. Smelting the magic off the device that bestowed the curse only changes the curse's duration, from a number of years to a number of seasons. It does not make Perdo Vim spells cast against the Curse any easier. Magical and Divine creatures can remove the curse if their Might equals or exceeds the final level of effect of the curse. Through their inherent nature, such beings can simply breathe on the cursed person and the Curse will evaporate. This remedy should provide the troupe with a session or two of stories, as the cursed person seeks a cure from an appropriately powerful mystical being.

INITIATION OF BIND CURSES

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +12

Script Details: The Initiate must discover a unique item, a device made by the god Hephaestus or his counterpart from another pagan mythos (+6). He must take this item to his Mystagogue, and together they must investigate the



item (+3). When it is understood, the Mystagogue Initiates the Initiate, who develops a burning loathing for other magi not of the House who seek such items (Minor Ordeal Flaw Hatred for Seekers) (+3).

Bind Magical Creatures (Major House Mystery)

Knowledge of this Mystery allows the magus to bind the intrinsic essence of a magical beast to an enchanted device, drawing the necessary pawns of vis needed for the enchantment from the magical nature of the bound creature. Alternatively, the magus may bind a single power of a magical creature to his Gift, mimicking the effects of the Hermetic Virtue Mythic Blood. Developed by Verditius magi in the Thebes Tribunal, where vis is scarce and magical animals plentiful, this Mystery has permeated the House.

Magical creatures can be bound to greater enchanted items, including talismans and attuned items. The binding occurs simultaneously with whatever enchantment the magus is performing, either preparing an item for enchantment or instilling an effect into a prepared item. Any magical creature may be bound into a magic item as long as it has a Magic Might score. The creature must be present, contained in the laboratory for the whole period of enchantment. This usually necessitates magical wards or prisons, as few magical creatures are willing to live in a magus's sanctum without being beguiled or encaged.

Magical creatures typically have some form of vis that collects in their corpse at death. This process does not use that vis; rather, it uses the magical life force of the creature instead. This energy is measured in pawns of vis for convenience, as Hermetic magic has yet to develop another scale for measuring amounts of magic.

During the regular enchantment season, the magus uses the creature's Magic Might score instead of vis, slowly draining the essence of the creature as the enchantment occurs. Compare your magus's Rego Vim Lab Total plus his Hubris score to

the creature's Magic Might. The Lab Total must include a requisite Art based on the Art the creature is attuned to. For every point of Lab Total over the creature's Magic Might score, the magus gains one pawn of vis that is usable toward the enchanted device. The creature can only supply a number of pawns equal to its Magic Might. Thus, a magus could completely drain a creature and use all of its Might if his Rego Vim Lab Total were double its Might. The magus is still limited by the amount of vis he can use in a season.

The magic drained is not Form-specific, but can be used in any enchantment, regardless of the Arts required for the specific enchantment. The magus cannot store the drained vis to use at a later date. Any vis left over, either because the creature provided more than the magus could handle or it possessed more than the remaining points of Lab Total, is wasted. Power drained in this way is permanently lost from the creature, leaving it with a lowered Magic Might score. If all of a creature's Magic Might is drained, it retains a Magic Might of 0. While it is still a magical creature, it cannot invoke any of its magical powers that cost Might Points.

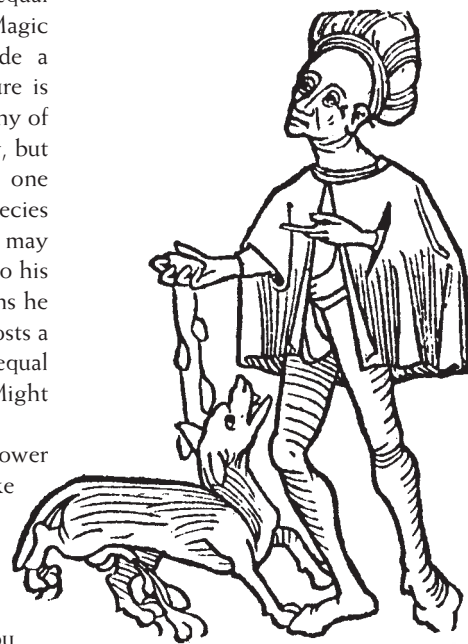
The magus may also bind a power of the creature to his Gift. This process must be completed in a season. To bind the power to him, the magus's Rego Vim Lab Total plus Hubris score must be equal to or exceed twice the creature's Magic Might. The Lab Total must include a requisite for the Art that the creature is attuned to. The magus may choose any of the powers the beast has for binding, but he may only bind one power from one creature. This limit applies to the species of the creature. For example, a magus may only bind one of a unicorn's powers to his Gift, regardless of how many unicorns he might have access to. This process costs a number of pawns of Art-specific vis equal to one-half the creature's Magic Might score.

The magus may invoke the power bound to him at will. It is treated like a Hermetic spell, translated from the creature's power into a formulaic spell with appropriate Technique and Form. The magus casts it like a spell, using voice and gestures, but you

do not make a die roll. The power has a Penetration of 0. If, however, the magus's Rego Vim Lab Total is double the creature's (Magic Might + 5), he may remove one of the verbal or gesture requirements. If his Lab Total is double its (Magic Might + 10), he may remove both. Unlike a Hermetic spell, the magus may not choose to create the effect without words or gestures if he does not make that decision at the time of binding. He may also include Penetration in his binding ritual. Chose a Penetration Total. If the Rego Vim Lab Total is double the creature's Magic Might + Penetration Total, he may add that Penetration Total to the power.

Binding a power from a magical creature permanently lowers its Magic Might. Its Might is reduced by 5 times the Might cost necessary for the creature to use the power.

In the 12th century, the Verditius magus Tierent adapted this Mystery to affect creatures with Faerie Might. That knowledge is included in this Mystery. If a maga does choose to bind a faerie creature, you must roll a stress die in addition to any other rolls you might make if she is experimenting. This roll does not add to her Lab Total. Instead, if you botch, she loses control of the capricious faerie magic and gains Warping Points equal to one-fifth of the faerie's Faerie Might score. Many Verditius magi are reluctant to use



this Mystery on faeries, mindful of their Hermetic Oath and fearful of the consequences of molesting the fae.

Rumors occasionally circulate that suggest this process has been adapted to include Divine and Infernal creatures, but no proof exists that this is the case.

INITIATION OF BIND MAGICAL CREATURES

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +8

Script Details: The Initiate must find the body of a dead magical creature, one whose death she did not engineer in any fashion (+3). She must return the corpse to a magic aura and ceremonially prepare it for burial. For a season, she must perform the ancient Greek funeral rites for the beast, eventually burning it on a pyre (+1). With the ashes of the creature's bones, she must create a magical urn with powers that resemble those of the creature. During the Initiation, she and the Mystagogue sacrifice the item (+3) along with copious amounts of wealth in another mock funeral (+1).

Item Attunement (Major House Mystery)

This Mystery lets a magus attune a greater enchanted item in the same manner that one attunes a talisman, after which he can sever the connection it has to him without damaging the item or its effects. These are mighty items, unlimited in their magical power by their shape or material, and able to hold large amounts of vis. Attuned items are coveted devices, both for their mighty effects and because the magus's lingering personality triggers greed for the device once it is in another's hands. These devices are the true "children" of Verditius magi.

A magus who wants to construct an attuned item spends the season in his laboratory preparing an item for this enchantment. He may disregard the limits imposed by the Material and Size Table (ArM5, page 97). The item can hold pawns of vis equal to his highest Technique + highest Form + Philosophiae score. If he prepares a device that pertains

to one of his Craft scores, he may add that score as well to the device's vis limit. This amount of vis must be instilled into the item before he instills any spell-like enchantments on it, but it does not need to be done in the preparatory season and may extend into other seasons.

Once the item has been prepared, the magus instills effects into it as normal. Because of the innate connection the device has to him, add his Hubris score to all Lab Totals used while enchanting the device. Since this connection is so strong, a magus may only work on a single attuned item at a time. This device is an Arcane Connection to him until he severs the connection, which happens at the end of the enchanting processes. Once he has filled the item with powers, or sooner if he chooses, he severs his connection to it. Compare his regular Perdo Vim Lab Total + a stress die to 10 + the maximum number of pawns of vis the device holds. If it is greater than or equal to the number, he has completed the attuned item. If it is less, the device remains linked to him just like a talisman. If you botch, he receives a number of Warping Points equal to the total number of pawns of vis in the item.

The item retains its magical power because the magus has left aspects of his personality within it. The device has a Covet Device Personality Trait equal to his Hubris score at the time of creation. This lingering desire makes the new owner crave the item. For each season that the possessor owns the device, he accumulates 1 experience point. Once he gains 5 experience points, he receives a new Personality Trait Covet Device 1. This trait builds like an Ability until the bearer's Personality Trait equals the device's Covet Device score. The bearer must make personality checks to be without the item, and struggles to retrieve it if it is lost or stolen.

Unlike a talisman, attuned devices do not extend the bearer's reach, nor are they affected by Personal Range spells. The bearer's Magic Resistance does not extend around the item. However, because of the augmented vis capacity that a Verditius magus can put in them, these are often considered more powerful than the talismans of other magi.

INITIATION OF ITEM ATTUNEMENT

Ease Factor: 21 (Major Virtue known to the Mystagogue)

Script Bonus: +10

Script Details: The Initiate must make a talisman. Immediately following, he must Initiate another Verditius magus into a Minor Inner Mystery that he knows (+3). The following season, he must serve the Mystagogue who will Initiate him, using the powers of his talisman in the task (+1). On one of the solstices, he sacrifices his talisman while the Mystagogue leads him through the Initiation (+6).

Virtues & Flaws

These Virtues and Flaws are for Verditius characters and their household members, and are not applicable to magi of other Houses.

New Virtues

MASTERPIECE

Minor, Hermetic

For some benevolent reason, the magus's parens has allowed him to keep the lesser enchanted item he made to prove himself a magus and pass his Gauntlet. This masterpiece must be a lesser enchanted item. You may design a lesser enchanted item that your character could make based on his Lab Totals at character generation, following the regular rules for construction of such a device. You ignore vis costs, as the magus's parens provided those from his laboratory stores.

FORGE-COMPANION

Minor, Social

The character is an unGifted craftsman attached to a Verditius magus and working for him in his lab. You receive 50 additional experience points, which you can use to raise the particular Crafts her master practices. As a member of his household, she receives protection and



support, but she is not protected by any of the legal codes of the Order of Hermes.

VENDITOR

Major, Social

The character is a venditor, a selling-agent for a Verditius maga, bartering her goods to other interested mundane parties. He is most likely a minor noble, ousted merchant-guild master, or defrocked cleric. He may select Academic Abilities at character generation. You also receive 50 additional experience points that you can put in Bargain, Charm, Folk Ken, Guile, Intrigue, or any Living Language.

CRAFT AUTOMATA

Major, Hermetic

The character knows how to make automata, mechanical men and beasts. He has a score of 1 in Craft Automata. See the Major Inner Mystery Automata for details.

New Flaws

SPONTANEOUS CASTING TOOLS

Minor, Hermetic

The character must use casting tools to cast spontaneous spells just as he does for casting formulaic spells. He has 15 individual tools, one for each Art, which he must use in various combinations to cast spontaneous spells.

CONSUMED CASTING TOOLS

Minor, Hermetic

The character's casting tools are magically consumed after he uses them. It takes an hour to make a new casting tool. Regular casting tools do not allow the magus to make multiple copies of

them, so he may not stock up on casting tools. Making a casting tool for a spell that already has a casting tool erases the magical connection from the existing tool to the spell. The magus does not need a laboratory to make casting tools.

BOUND CASTING TOOLS

Minor, Hermetic

The magus's casting tools are so personal that they become lasting Arcane Connections to him. Regular casting tools remain as Arcane Connections for a few weeks, his last years.

HOBBLER

Minor, General

Both of the character's legs are severely damaged. She may not walk unless assisted by crutches or other devices, with which she can only move a mere half mile per hour. Any roll that requires moving quickly is penalized by -9. Her Dodge and other combat rolls are penalized by -6, and you roll double the normal botch dice in combat situations.

CONFRATERNITY MEMBER

Minor, Story

The magus is a member of one of the smaller cults of magi in House Verditius. He is eligible for his confraternity's unique Inner Mystery and can easily find Mystagogues to lead him through the Inner Mysteries. His fellow members may occasionally ask him for assistance, which he feels obligated to provide. He may not engage in vendettas with confraternity members.

GRUDGE

Minor, Story

For some reason, based on a past event, the magus holds a large grudge

against one of his fellow Verditius magi. His feelings are so strong that they influence his lab work and extracurricular activities, although they are not strong enough to interrupt his lab work. He is constantly interested in what the other person is doing, what he is working on, and how he can outdo them.

PRIMOGENITURE LINEAGE

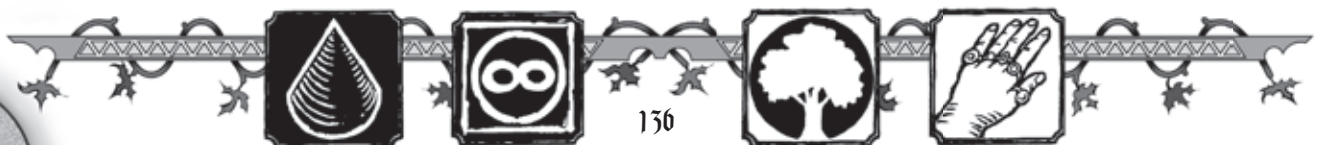
Minor, Story

The character is in line for Primus of House Verditius. Either her parens, or her parens's parens, is the Primus, and she is one of his descendents. She is at least three places removed from the Primus. She receives undue attention from the House, as they eye her as a prospective Primus. The other magi in the same line may also regard her poorly, hoping to somehow remove her from her heritage. Her ascension to Primus is far from guaranteed, and many events may transpire to prevent her from claiming the title. This should foster very political stories for her.

VENDETTA

Major, Story

The magus is engaged in one of House Verditius' vendettas, mostly likely carrying on his parens's vendetta against another Verditius magus. This vendetta stops just short of physical injury to him or the other. Neither of them will bring this feud to the Quaesitores, wishing to finish it themselves. The magus with whom he is feuding must be an NPC, who regularly takes some sort of action with which the character must contend.



Appendix: Expanded Form & Material Bonuses

TOOLS

Auger	+2 shape wood, puncture wood
Adze	+2 beautify wood structures
Basket	+2 collect and preserve items
Billhook	+2 pruning
Cask	+3 induce drunkenness
Cleaver	+2 butchery, +3 Perdo Animal
Cloth Shears	+2 shaping fabrics
Crowbar	+2 moving stone
Dividers	+2 measuring
Flail	+3 harvesting grain
Hatchet	+4 destroy wood
Handsaw	+3 delicately shape wood
Mallet	+2 precision
Manacles	+4 binding
Mason Chisel	+2 shape stone
Pitch Fork	+2 gathering reaped grain
Scales	+3 weighing goods and money
Sharp Blade	+2 shape leather
Shearing Shears	+2 fleecing
Sickle	+2 harvesting
Scythe	+3 reaping, +3 year-duration effects, +4 effects expressly causing death
Small Hammer	+2 building
Snip	+2 shape metal
Trowel	+2 building
Tongs	+2 controlling metal
Spade	+2 move earth

TREES

Almond	+3 Creo Herbam
Blackthorn	+6 guardians, +2 dark fey
Cedar Tree	+2 binding spirits, +5 any effect with Mentem and Herbam requisites
Chestnut	+4 honesty, +3 justice
Cherry	+4 bloodshed
Cypress Tree	+3 spirits, +3 necromancy
Dogwood	+5 pixies
Fig	+3 sex magic, +3 gambling
Hickory	+4 Ignem, +2 majesty
Hornbeam	+6 strength, +6 Vim on hostile magic

TREES, CONTINUED

Lemon	+5 hearing
Lilac	+2 travel
Orange	+5 Sight
Palm	+3 animating wood
Plum	+2 blood
Poplar, White	+3 divination
Walnut	+4 mind

TREES UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Dead	+3 affect living wood, +4 affect dead wood
Struck by Lightening	+2 Auram
Twisted Tree in a Field	+4 disfigure, +3 disguise

MINERALS

Alabaster	+2 forgiving, +4 mental acuity
Alexandrite	+2 regeneration, +5 horses, +3 long life
Amethyst	+2 wealth, +2 hearing, +3 poisons, +7 drunkenness
Basalt	+3 Ignem, +3 Perdo
Brass	+4 demons, devils, and angels; +3 music; +3 Ignem
Bronze	+3 Terram, +5 darkness
Cinnabar	+5 dragons, +4 wealth, +4 language, +3 long life
Copper	+4 deftness, +4 effects that change its own shape, +2 sex magic
Electrum	+3 scrying, +4 Muto Terram, +3 deception
Garnet	+3 bonds of commitment, +2 vigor, +2 navigation
Glass, Clear	+4 invisibility, +5 seeing through something
Granite	+2 wealth, +3 Terram
Ivory	+5 healing
Marble	+5 wards, +3 Beauty
Mercury	+3 Terram and Aquam, +5 Muto
Platinum	+4 Air
Sulphur	+2 preserving or decaying, +4 demons
Turquoise	+4 necromancy

Contributors

About the Authors

ERIK DAHL lives and works in Davis, California, where he and his darling wife share blissful moments of ridiculous contentment on a regular basis. While writing his chapter of this book, he occasionally indulged his overdramatic tendencies by walking around the house in a heavy cloak with the hood covering his eyes. Fortunately, he didn't break anything.

Dedication: T. and Danielle, thanks for your brilliance, creativity, enthusiasm, and friendship. These shadows are cast in your likenesses.

TIMOTHY FERGUSON is a librarian, who lives on the Gold Coast, in Australia. He became a vegetarian while writing the Criamon chapter, to see how it changes

the way you think about animals, and has decided to stick with it. He collects succulents, but hasn't found a way to include magical cactuses in *Ars Magica* yet. He'd like to dedicate this book to Linda, for being the sort of person people dedicate books to.

MATT RYAN lives and works in the Finger Lakes region of Central New York. He drank a lot of coffee and listened to a lot of old Pogues records while writing this piece, his second major contribution to *Ars Magica*. He also received great support and many helpful comments from the line editor, the other authors of this book, and the authors of *The Mysteries*

Revised Edition. A special thanks goes to Mario Cerame, fellow friend and gamer, who helped design the Expanded Shape and Material Bonuses chart.

Dedication: To Wallace Michael Lumb and Stephen Cobb, who helped me through an extremely difficult stretch of the journey.

MARK SHIRLEY: According to his job description, Mark is a 'Biomathematician' which is a fancy way of saying that he gets paid for counting badgers. He lives in the north-east of England with his ferrets, and complains about how grim it is up north.

Dedication: Andrew and Camo, who've had to endure endless worries, rants, and one-sided discussions. Your forbearance is a lesson to us all.

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standing between me and the evil person I really am."

From *The Lord of the Rings* to the World of Darkness, KIERAN YANNER (www.kieranyanner.com) has crept into award-winning publications for the past six years. Recent clients include DC Comics and The Upper Deck Company.

