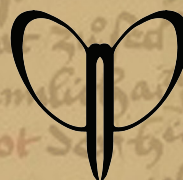


GOËTIA

BY KENNETH HITE



GUMSHOE
ZOOM



Pelgrane Press

GUMSHOE ZOOM: INTRODUCTION

Not everything can support a game of its own, or even a big sourcebook. For those things, we present the GUMSHOE Zoom, a sort of supplement focused on a key game mechanic and its possible applications. In general, Zooms are interesting potential hacks, or intriguing adaptations of the main rules. Some apply to one specific topic or sub-sub-genre. Others cross all manner of GUMSHOE turf; you can slot them in and adapt them to tales of Cthulhuoid investigation, mean superpowered streets, or alien colonies alike.

Zooms are experimental. That does mean that they haven't been playtested, necessarily. (If something in here is really really broken – and it's not, as this ain't our first rodeo – we'll fix it in post.) But that also means we encourage you to experiment with them. Changing the cost, or prerequisites, or point effect, or other mechanical parameters of a given Zoom changes how often it shows up and how much drama it drives. The dials are in your hands.

Zooms will change the focus of your play if you use them. Putting a mechanic on the table puts it into your game. Adding a Zoom means more actions, possibly even more scenes, using those rules. Since the Zoom mechanics are intended to encourage specific actions or flavors, to force a card in your storytelling hand, they aren't "balanced" against "normal" actions or rules. In general, if you don't want to see more of it, don't Zoom in on it.

Zooms are optional rules. You can and should ignore them if you don't want them, or change them at will. After all, if a given Zoom turns out to be crucial to an upcoming GUMSHOE game, we'll change it to fit that specific genre or form of storytelling.

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Goëtia

INTRODUCTION

“ALL MAGIC – I REPEAT, ALL MAGIC, WITH NO EXCEPTIONS WHATSOEVER – DEPENDS ON THE CONTROL OF DEMONS.”

– JAMES BLISH, *BLACK EASTER*

Bifrons. Glasya-Labolas. Marchosias. Names to conjure with – literally! This GUMSHOE Zoom takes you inside the pentacle and introduces you to the hierarchy of Hell. Historical European demon-summoning magic just got easier and more realistic. Which may or may not be a good thing ...

From the mid-13th century to the early 20th century, Western European magicians summoned, bound, and commanded demons using the Names of God, Jesus, and various angels. Some were black magicians seeking power and poison; others thought of themselves as white magicians investigating the laws of Nature and the deeds of Man.

Their art, **goëtia**, is the subject of this Zoom. In goëtic magic, there are no fireball spells. If you want to toss a fireball at someone, you have to summon a demon and command it to go toss a fireball at your foe. Same thing if you want to reconcile two enemies, or learn astronomy overnight. It's demons all the way down.

THE ART'S HISTORY

The word “goëtia” comes from the ancient Greek *goeteia* or “sorcery,” itself from *góes*, meaning “sorcerer.” That likely derives from *goáou*, “to

howl or wail,” and either comes from the practice of Greek priestly mourners using wails to guide spirits into the Underworld, or from the howls of demons.

The practice also comes from the Greeks of late antiquity, who blended Jewish, Babylonian, Egyptian, and their own magical and religious traditions into a sorcerous stew powered by the names and invocations of gods, spirits, saints, and demons. Major magical texts like the *Testament of Solomon* (c. 300 A.D.), the *Picatrix* (c. 1050), and others added character and detail to this ongoing body of lore.

In the Renaissance, goëtia gradually separated itself from theurgy (angel-summoning magic) and even “natural magic” (usually powered by the planetary spirits or by the stars themselves). A purely demonological strain of magic emerged, ironically drawing from the writings of Johann Weir, a Dutch lawyer whose *De praestigiis daemonum* (1563) denied the reality of witchcraft while providing the best list of demons in print.

Shortly thereafter, the goëtia as we know it came into full bloom, eventually becoming part of the *Lesser Key of Solomon*, or *Lemegeton Clavicula Solomonis*, a 17th-century compilation of various magical arts. Witch-hunters found that text more often than any other in black magicians' collections, and it spawned imitations and copies. By 1700, French publishers and copyists began inventing and importing new grimoires to sate the growing market

of would-be demon-summoners. Occultists of the Golden Dawn translated medieval manuscripts and reprinted goëtic texts (Mathers in 1888 and 1897, Waite in 1891 and 1911, Crowley in 1903), inspiring another wave of demonolatry in its membership and eventually, in popular culture at large.

GOËTIA

“CIRCLES AND PENTAGRAMS LOOMED ON EVERY HAND, AND TOLD INDUBITABLY OF THE STRANGE BELIEFS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THOSE WHO DWELT SO SQUALIDLY HERE.”

– H.P. LOVECRAFT, “THE HORROR AT RED HOOK”

As befits a scholium extending over half a millennium (at least) and engaged in primarily by desperate weirdos (at least), there are plenty of different rituals, ingredients, and variations in historical goëtic practice. In most cases, this Zoom treats the “Ars Goëtia” chapter of the *Lemegeton* as the “default” source for goëtia, although between Eliphas Levi's romanticism and A.E. Waite's cussedness, this Zoom has a huge fondness for Waite's translations of Levi and other grimoires as “near-defaults” despite their academic sloppiness. Finally, the term karcist, meaning “goëtic practitioner,” comes from the *Grand Grimoire*.

That said, in the name of game-mechanical suitability some details have been drifted or elided. Need it be emphasized, do not try this at home.



THE MAGIC ABILITY

Magic is a General ability. It refreshes at the end of the adventure. It can also be refreshed once per session, after four hours spent in a magician's laboratory, place of power, or other similarly eldritch spot.

If your game has more than one kind of magic, it's up to the GM to decide whether Goëtia and Voodoo, for example, or Goëtia and Cthulhu Mythos magic, all draw from the same "mana pool" and skill set, or whether they are at least as

different as Chemistry and Biology or Intimidation and Interrogation.

MAGIC AT CHARACTER GENERATION

The GUMSHOE default for special abilities such as Magic is as follows: you buy such abilities out of your pool of General ability build points. Buying the *first rating point* in a special ability costs a **premium**: 5 build points for the first rating point. After that, build points for that ability become rating points as normal.

*Janice wants to buy Magic. She spends 7 build points, and gets Magic with a rating of 3. The first rating point costs a **premium** of 5 build points; the next two each cost 1 build point.*

The GM may always refuse to allow players to buy Magic abilities during character creation.

LEARNING MAGIC

Outside of character generation, there are only two ways for characters to learn the Magic ability: studying grimoires, or being taught magic by demons.

Studying Grimoires: Grimoires, or books of magic, contain not just lists of demonic names and weird rituals but fundamental insights into the nature of sorcery. Each grimoire has an associated Magic rating (usually equal to its "Magic potential points" in games using the potential point rules) of 1 to 3, or even higher. After a suitable period of study (years or months in a more realistic or low-powered game, weeks or even days in a more cinematic or high-powered game) a character can attempt to add the rating of that grimoire to his own Magic rating. (Studying a grimoire requires a rating in the grimoire's Language.) He must successfully summon, bind, and dismiss one demon from that grimoire to do so. This summoning may have another goal; it needn't be entirely dedicated to his improvement. Only one character in a single PC party can ever add the rating from any given copy or manuscript of a grimoire to his Magic ability: learning and maintaining it requires constant study. Black magicians don't share well.

GOËTIA

Demonic Teaching: Some demons can teach Magic like any other ability. The GM decides which demons have that capacity, and what they expect in return. A given demon can teach any number of magicians, though not in the same conjuration.

Etc.: That said, the GM can always introduce one-off methods of adding 1 Magic rating point (especially the first) to a character: demonic possession, handling a powerful magical item, deep psychic shock or wounding (Stability drops below -5), sleeping under the Black Stone of Stregocavar, telepathic stain, hereditary gift, etc.

GOËTIA MECHANICS

"FREQUENTLY HE NOTED PECULIAR THINGS ABOUT; LITTLE WAX IMAGES OF GROTESQUE DESIGN ON THE SHELVES OR TABLES, AND THE HALF-ERASED REMNANTS OF CIRCLES, TRIANGLES, AND PENTAGRAMS IN CHALK OR

CHARCOAL ON THE CLEARED CENTRAL SPACE OF THE LARGE ROOM. AND ALWAYS IN THE NIGHT THOSE RHYTHMS AND INCANTATIONS THUNDERED..."

— H.P. LOVECRAFT, *THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD*

Every goëtic conjuration requires lengthy ceremonial work. Some texts call for months or even years of repeating a single ritual to summon a powerful entity – the GM should keep this possibility in mind for NPCs and season-arc cult projects. More gameable “on screen” demon summoning, by contrast, needs dramatic tension and assumed preparation.

By and large, and for the same reason, these rules apply only to player-character goëtists: NPC necromancers mostly summon (or fail to summon) their demons “off screen” and succeed (or not) based on narrative rhythm or perhaps a single die roll. The major exception to this is an NPC working

infiltrated or party-crashed by the player characters – those should follow the pattern for a standard goëtic conjuration.

STANDARD GOËTIC CONJURATION

For center-stage player karcists, calling up a demon takes anywhere from an hour to a night, and calls for five successful tests of the Magic ability:

- **Inscribe (S)** the pentacle (usually Difficulty 4): physically draw or otherwise prepare the magic circle
- **Invoke (I)** the demon (usually Difficulty 4): call on the specific demon to be summoned
- **Evoke (E)** the demon (usually Difficulty 5): summon that specific demon
- **Constrict (C)** or bind the demon (usually Difficulty 6): force the

WHAT ARE DEMONS?

The entities summoned by goëtia might be any number of things – or goëtia might actually and unknowingly summon or attract many different types of entities.

Fallen angels: In the standard Christian mythos, demons are fallen angels (and sometimes their offspring) who rebelled against God and now serve the cause of evil.

Outside entities: Demons might simply be beings from outside Creation, or from previous, broken or tainted, creations: the qliphoth of the kabbalah, the ab-human entities from Hodgson’s Carnacki stories, or the Outer Dark Entities of *The Esoterrorists*.

Diminished gods: Demons might be former gods now forced to serve necromancers, and perhaps ticked off about it. Some Christian demons such as Moloch, Baal, Astaroth, etc. are explicitly former gods as well as fallen angels.

Enhanced spirits: Contrariwise, demons might be exalted former spirits, or tulpas given strength by belief and evil acts. A demon might have begun long ago as the ghost of a murderer or black magician, or the spirit of a dangerous forest or pool.

Fragments of the super-self: In modern magick, demons are often considered the magus’ own sins, distractions, or negative facets, “bound” and “exorcised” in his quest for pure power and will.

Dead Mythos beings: Particularly powerful, dangerous, or willful Mythos entities – Mi-Go engineers, Serpent Folk archmagi, Iloigor, Yithian librarian-torturers – may have left psychic impressions outside time. “Summoning demons” allows humans to perceive these shadows.

demon to obey your command, and prevent it from attacking you

- **Abjure (A)** the demon (usually Difficulty 5): send the demon back to Hell, and ritually remove any lingering demonic energies or traps

The letters in parentheses are abbreviations of these five tests used in the rest of this Zoom: +2S, for example, is +2 to the Inscription roll; +1CA is +1 to either the Constriction or Abjuration roll.

The sum of the karcist's rolls and spends on the middle three tests (Invocation, Evocation, and Constriction) is the conjuration's **Power**, which must equal the demon's Aberrance rating.

Like other repeated tests, the karcist must spend more points than on her previous effort to re-try any Magic test. Failed tests do not add to the conjuration's Power.

Each test during the working, successful or not, takes one "round," whether that be a few seconds or several hours.

At the end of the working, the karcist must spend a mix of Athletics, Health, and Stability points totalling the number of rounds taken. Assistants must spend half that.

No karcist with a current Stability pool lower than 1 can perform any part of a conjuration. Iron will and self-control are mandatory while summoning demons.

INSCRIPTION

A pentacle traditionally has two major components: a Seal (or Star) of Solomon into which the demon is to be summoned (despite the name, often a triangle or square

Inscription Total (Roll + Spend)	Pentacle Might
4	16
5	25
6	36
7	49
8	64

in shape) and a Circle of Solomon (ideally 9 feet in diameter) in which the karcist stands. (The Circle often has a pentagram inside it, and is sometimes a square or hexagon.) Other participating or assisting karcists (see p. 9) or companions stand in secondary circles or stars inside or tangent to the Circle of Solomon.

In theory, each pentacle must be measured and drawn freshly for each conjuration. Even the grimoires realized this was unlikely, and by the 18th century usually substituted the incorporation of a virgin parchment (or fresh goat-skin) inscribed with the specific demon's name into a pre-painted Seal of Solomon. The karcist can "open" and "close" a pre-painted or chalked circle with her sword or similar implement, rather than with paint or chalk.

The pentacle is an absolute barrier to any physical attack (including hurled furniture, summoned rats, etc.) by a demon with an Aberrance rating lower than the pentacle's Might, which is the *square* of the total of the karcist's Inscription total: his roll plus his spend on the Inscription test.

If a karcist with the Occult ability fails this test, she notices her failure before going further. She can attempt to redraw or re-close

the pentacle and try the Magic test again. If the karcist does not possess the Occult ability, anyone else present may spend 1 point from their Occult pool to notice the error.

Demons will still appear when summoned if the pentacle is not secure. Oh, yes.

INVOCATION

The karcist calls on a specific demon to appear. The name of the demon must match the name in the pentacle. A given pentacle can "hold" the names of a number of demons equal to its Inscription total - 3: for example, a 7-point pentacle can hold 3 different names, allowing the karcist to perform two extra conjurations without redrawing the pentacle.

Even a successful Invocation is creepy; everyone in the ritual space (inside and outside the pentacle) must make a 2-point or 3-point Stability test (Difficulty 4).

A failed Invocation allows an impostor demon to take the place of the summoned demon; it must spend Aberrance equal to the pentacle's Inscription total to do so. The impostor may be a lackey of the summoned demon, or a specific enemy of the karcist waiting for his chance.

To notice a failed Invocation requires a successful Sense Trouble test at a Difficulty equal to 4 + the margin of failure. The karcist may then spend 1 point of Occult or Theology to re-try the Magic test. This spend does not add to the next test.

Any given demon can only be invoked once per night.

DEMONIC CONSTRICTION TABLE

Demonic Task	Constriction Points
Answer any question within the demon's purview	1 for yes-no, 2 for more complete answers
Reveal or scry out a distant target	2 for most targets, 3 for powerful targets
Teach an Ability	2 per Ability point granted
Kill, possess, or harm someone	2 per attempt (for powerful NPCs), per target (for weak NPCs), or per location (for mooks)
Grant a familiar	1 per 3 Ability points in familiar's Aberrance, Magic, Health, or Scuffling ratings; 1 for each +1 to damage from familiar's attacks (begins at -1)
Grant a supernatural power to the karcist	3; lasts until sunrise
Sign the karcist's Book of Pacts	4; allows that specific karcist to auto-succeed (total of 5+die) at next Constriction test against that specific demon
Perform some other service	2 or 3 at GM's discretion

EVOCATION

The karcist forces the specific demon to appear, or the demon heeds the call for its own purposes. The demon appears inside the Seal.

The demon may appear in a horrendous form, or tell horrifying truths (or horribly plausible lies) to the karcist or her companions. Such revelations often necessitate another Stability test (3-point or 4-point or worse), this time at Difficulty 5.

The demon may change form, or launch a similarly devastating psychological attack, or just tear up the inside of the Seal, each round until successfully bound.

On an unmodified result of 6 on the Evocation roll, the karcist can force the demon to appear in a specific form and refrain from Stability-harming activities for the time being.

A failed Evocation is always noticeable; it adds time and exhaustion to the working. The

karcist must make a successful Athletics or Health test at a Difficulty equal to 4 + the margin of failure before re-trying the Magic test. During this period the demon may appear for the purpose of horrifying the karcist, without being fully evoked.

CONSTRICTION

The karcist binds the demon, usually with the Names of God and its superior demons, to carry

out a specific task. A successful Constriction test can be assumed to include “and harm no person here present” or the equivalent.

The final total of the karcist's spends and rolls on the Evocation, Invocation, and Constriction tests is the conjuration's Power. It must equal or exceed the Aberrance rating of the summoned demon. If it does not, the demon changes form once more (4- or 5-point Stability test) and vanishes.

GOËTIA AND CTHULHU MYTHOS MAGIC

The goëtic magic in this Zoom isn't too different, mechanically, from the Cthulhu Mythos magic in *Trail of Cthulhu*. Both require success in a series of tests, although Cthulhu magic is (appropriately) much swingier. Given the precedents in “The Horror at Red Hook” and *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, goëtic magic may allow the summoning of some Mythos entities. Treat gods and titans' Inertia as their Aberrance for the purposes of this Zoom; for lesser creatures, double their listed Inertia.

Rat-things make excellent familiars, as might ghouls. Tsathoggua and his servants traditionally teach Magic; so might Yig and his folk. Theology is useless in conjurations involving the Mythos.



Not counting the free “don’t kill me” instruction, the karcist can command the demon to perform a number of tasks defined by the total roll and spend in the Constriction test.

Each task consumes a number of points from the Constriction total, as given in the nearby table.

The GM should rule liberally and let edge cases go to the karcist. Demons are tricky and horrible, but the player has worked very hard to command them. Let the karcist command the demon successfully; there’s plenty of time later to reveal that the demon’s faithful service still had dangerous or toxic consequences.

Most demons brag that they have not been bound if the Constriction fails, or simply vanish. More subtle demons pretend to be bound; noticing such pretense requires a successful Sense Trouble test (as with Invocation). The karcist must re-try the Constriction test immediately; otherwise, the demon is free for the night to wreak mayhem.

ABJURATION

If the karcist plans to summon more demons during this session, she returns immediately to Invoking the next demon; Abjuration is the conclusion of all goëtic work for the night.

The karcist gives the demon license to depart, and orders it to remove all demonic contamination (or at least all unwanted or unknown such effluvia) from her presence. At the conclusion of a successful Abjuration, the karcist can leave the pentacle safely.

The demon can leave spiritual or sorcerous traps, minor imps, or other troublesome effects behind if the Abjuration fails. In extreme cases, the demon may turn invisible (pretending to be dismissed) and remain to haunt the karcist’s chambers or even go out into the world to wreak havoc.

A Sense Trouble test (as with Invocation) is needed to detect a failed Abjuration.

The karcist may then spend 1 point of Occult or Theology to re-try the Magic test. This spend does not add to the next test.

OTHER ABILITIES

During the conjuration, the karcist or her assistants (with the karcist's permission) may use other abilities besides Magic to influence the action.

Spending 2 points of Stability equals 1 point of Magic spent, on any test in the conjuration.

Spending 1 or 2 points of other abilities provides modifiers to specific tests, which count toward the test's total result. Interpersonal abilities are especially useful: demons are elemental personalities, and roleplaying demon interaction adds zest to the conjuration play.

By and large, the player characters can only spend any given ability once during any given conjuration: if Armand spends Astronomy during Inscription, Callista cannot spend it during Invocation. The exceptions (*) are Stability, Occult, Notice or Evidence Collection, Interrogation, and Theology.

The GM may allow other creative spends if she wishes.

Spend 1 Point

- Anthropology (for other demon-banishing practices): +1A
- Astronomy (to have determined the proper astrological conjunction for the summoning beforehand): +1SI
- Chemistry, Outdoorsman, Pharmacy, or Streetwise (to have retroactively made or sourced extra-good incense or other materia): +1IEC

- Cryptography (to encode the demon's name into the seal): +1S
- Interrogation* (allows rephrase or take-back of a retroactively stupid question during Constriction)
- Notice* or Evidence Collection*: can be spent as Sense Trouble to spot failed ICA tests
- Occult*: +1SEA
- Theology* (for names of God): +1IECA

Spend 2 Points

- Bargain or Negotiation: +1C
- Bullshit Detector or Assess Honesty: +1C
- Bureaucracy (the infernal bureaucracy is the model for the earthly sort; the caster knows the demon's superiors, specific duties and regulations, etc.): +1IE
- Flattery or Flirting (with some demons, especially demons of Vanity and Lust): +1IC
- Intimidation: +1CA
- Law: +1C
- Physics or Mathematics (to incorporate vector values into the pentacle, or to comprehend its non-Euclidean truths, in certain games): +1S

MULTIPLE CASTERS

Casters can cooperate on Magic tests during a conjuration just like any other GUMSHOE test: spend 1 Magic point (or 2 Stability) to assist, and then spend any number of further Magic points that add to the total.

FAMILIARS

Familiars – magical or demonic animals given to the goëtist by a demon – never have to spend Magic to

assist at a test. Familiars usually have four ability ratings: Aberrance, Health, Magic, and Scuffling.

Aberrance powers any other magical effects the familiar can do: turning invisible, lighting fires, making a breeze or wind, changing to human shape, carrying the karcist through the air, etc. Minor effects cost 1 Aberrance, major effects cost 3 Aberrance.

Magic is the familiar's rating in the Magic ability – or at least that portion of its ability it chooses to reveal.

Health and Scuffling work like normal animals' abilities. Familiars have no special immunities to normal damage, and take double damage from enchanted weapons or silver. Holy water damages familiars like acid.

Familiars' attacks do -1 damage, unless the karcist bargains for increased damage from attacks.

Familiars may resent or even resist doing good deeds.

SACRIFICES

Blood must be spilled ceremonially inside the pentacle to count as a sacrifice.

Sacrificed animals provide +1 to the Power of the conjuration for every 3 Health points sacrificed.

Sacrificing the karcist's own blood provides +1 to the Power of the conjuration for every 2 Health points sacrificed. Assistant karcists provide +1 to the Power of the conjuration for every 3 Health points sacrificed.

Profaning a consecrated Host (3 maximum) provides +2 to the Power of the conjuration (and requires a 4-point Stability test for Christian

SOME GRIMOIRES

The grimoiric tradition runs from the first century A.D. (Josephus mentions a demonological book of Solomon) to today's New Age bookshelves. Here are some of the traditional great books (with languages and Magic ratings):

The Black Pullet: Treasure-finding magics; pact with Satan. Late 18th century; first ed. 1820. (French; 1)

Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin: Includes 12 demon summoning rituals using mathematical magic squares instead of sigils. Possibly 15th century; earliest ms. 1608. (German, French, Hebrew; 2)

Grand Grimoire (a.k.a. *Le Dragon Rouge*): Instructions for summoning Lucifuge Rofocale. Mid-18th century. (French; 2)

Grimoire of Pope Honorius: Used by Paris Satanist poisoner ring in late 17th century. (French; 2)

Grimorium Verum: Includes 27 goëtic summonings, not least Lucifer and Belzebuth. Based on the 17th century *Grimoire of Armadel*; likely ca. 1817. (French, Italian; 2)

Hygromanteia (a.k.a. *Magical Treatise of Solomon*): Byzantine magic text on binding demons into cauldrons or urns. May date to 6th century; earliest ms. 14th century. (Greek; 3)

Key of Solomon: Core text of Western magic. Of the 144 known manuscripts, the earliest dates to ca. 1500. (Latin, French, English, Hebrew, Italian, Greek; 3)

Lemegeton (a.k.a. *Lesser Key of Solomon*): Main source for Goëtia. Possibly 1570; first ed. 1657. (French, English; 3)

Munich Manual: One copy exists, from c. 1430; its first chapter is missing, so its title and author are unknown. (Latin; 2)

Petit Albert: Hedge magics, Hand of Glory. First ed. 1704. (French; 1)

Sworn Book of Honorius (or *Liber Juratus*): John Dee once owned a copy. 13th century. (Latin; 3)

Every one of these books exists in many variant texts, titles, manuscripts, and editions. The given Magic ratings for them could easily increase or decrease by 1 depending on the copy.

karcists); acquiring it requires a brutal Interpersonal threat, a Difficulty 5 Filch test, etc.

Truly evil magicians can gain +3 to the Power of the conjuration for every 3 Health points of a human sacrifice. Characters who commit human sacrifice make an immediate 10-point Stability test.

OTHER MODIFIERS

The GM may enforce or allow other modifiers as she sees fit, to suit her own notion of the campaign's themes or potential. Some other modifiers to all goëtic Magic test Difficulties might include:

Location: *In battle or other distracting setting* (+4); *in a graveyard or crossroads* (+0); *in a demonic temple, magical laboratory, or similar ritual space* (-1)

Time: *Daytime* (+3); *new moon* (-1); *during an eclipse* (-3).

Time spent preparing the conjuration, fasting (lose 1 Health per 2 days), etc: *ad hoc* (+3); *one day* (+1); *three days* (+0); *one month* (-1). Make a Preparedness test to "have already been preparing this working" all day (Difficulty 4), for the last three days (Difficulty 5), all month (Difficulty 7).

IMPEDIMENTIA

The various grimoires describe all manner of impedimentia and utensils as vital for goëtic magic. All these items carry specialized inscriptions or embroidery. Often, each item must be prepared by the karcist himself with ridiculously specialized ingredients: forged at the hour of Venus from melted coffin nails and cooled in mole's

blood, for example. The GM can require or handwave such things as she wishes.

Such impedimentia become the "magic items" of a goëtic RPG campaign. The various tests most associated with each item appear in parentheses. Using a goëtic sword, staff, or blasting rod might actually damage demons in physical combat (+1, or more if demons can be damaged by normal weapons), if it's that kind of game.

Arthame: A black-handled knife, used for cutting magical cords and similar symbolic work. Represents air (or fire). (SI)

Blasting rod: A forked wooden rod (hawthorn or hazel) with two magnetized steel caps, used to scourge demons. Use Shooting to hit

demons; increase damage by +1 per Magic point spent. (IEA)

Bolline or sickle: A horn-handled curved knife, used to cut actual things and sacrifices. (IE)

Brazier or censer: Used to burn specialized incense, perfumes, metal powder, herbs, drugs, etc. customized for each demon. Also used to burn paper or parchment containing demon names, instructions, etc. (IEA)

Burin or graver: A tool for carving inscriptions into the other impedimentia. (SIECA)

Candles: Perhaps of human fat; one at each vertex of the pentacle is recommended. (IE)

Chalice or kylix: Used to hold water or blood. One chalice may hold charged water for drawing the pentacle, while another holds blood, ink, or other scrying liquids. Represents water. (IE)

Crystal or paten: Used to focus energies, draw the pentacle, or for scrying or safely viewing demons. Represents earth. (SIEC)

Lancet: For drawing blood. (IE)

Ring: Worn to protect the karcist and symbolize her command of demons. Karcist may spend 1 Magic point as 1 point of armor against demonic attack while wearing it. (SCA)

Robe: Black, without seams or sleeves. May be goat-hair, wool, or silk. (ICA)

Skull: Of a human, goat, or previous karcist. Provides a connection to Hell and a mouthpiece for some demons. (IE)

Staff: Often capped with two horns of metal or with antlers or animal

horns. Held by the karcist or by an assistant. (IEC)

Sword: Used to close and open the circle, and for magical defense against demons. Often white-handled. Represents air (or fire). (SCA)

Wand: Used to direct energies and commands. Represents fire (or air). (IEA)

BONUSES FROM IMPEDIMENTIA

A goëtic tool might provide a bonus for any number of reasons. The most common bonus comes from the karcist making her own tools from virgin materials on the right nights and at the right hours, and so forth.

To hand-build a goëtic tool takes one month, \$1-6000 (or the equivalent), a successful Mechanics test (Difficulty 5), and finally the spend (during a session) of 4 points total from Magic (1 minimum), Occult, Theology, or the appropriate Craft ability. (If Craft is available in the game, a minimum of 1 point is also required from that ability.) This tool then provides +1 to one kind of goëtic test: Inscription, Invocation, etc.

For each 70 years of continuous magical use, a magical tool might contribute +1 to a conjuration's Power.

Impatient karcists may try to steal powerful items from museums, rival cults and orders, or the like. This sounds like a game session to me.

No single item should contribute more than +3 to any test, although the amount of Power it can add can be as high as the GM wants.

EFFECTS OF GOËTIA

See the *Demonic Constriction Table* on p. 7 for the possible services rendered by demons. Most of them are fairly self-explanatory, but one or two require some attention.

DEMONIC TEACHING

Many demons teach various lore and knowledges. This reflects the Enochian tradition in which fallen angels taught mankind their arts, bringing about the Flood. Demonically taught abilities are just like other abilities, except the points come "for free." The GM may wish to track which abilities the character gained from demonic instruction, to suitably color or darken the information gained through them. However, even demon-taught abilities still get core clues for free.

SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Demons can grant supernatural powers to the karcist for 3 Constriction per power. The power lasts until sunrise the next morning. Normally, the power simply works automatically. If the GM decides the power requires a test, either because it's opposing a player character or major NPC, or because its effects need to be quantified somehow, the karcist tests the most closely related General ability, at +3 to his roll. For example, a karcist with:

- Flight tests Athletics or Fleeing.
- Invisibility tests Shadowing or Stealth.
- Protection from bullets or Armor tests Athletics or Sense Trouble.
- Shapeshifting tests Disguise.
- Fiery breath tests Shooting (damage +3).

GOËTIA



- Magical lust-inspiration tests Shrink or Psychoanalysis.

And so forth.

CUSTOMIZING GOËTIA

The Zoom mechanics above are designed to fit conceptually into the “standard game space” of GUMSHOE: capable characters, with action modeled on common storytelling conventions. But an individual GM may want to blow up or (comparatively) de-emphasize the role of goëtia in her game. This section helps her customize the rules to fit exactly the kind of story she wants to tell.

DIALS

These options change the Zoom mechanics. The GM may want to tinker with these dials until the flavor fits the table as a whole, as well as her notions of genre and drama. Use as many or as few of these dials as you wish for your preferred, specific flavor.

DIALING IT UP

The following changes make goëtia **more powerful**, prevalent, or prominent in the game. A full-fledged medieval demonology game might wind up using all of them! In some games, the GM might restrict these

dials to karcists with ratings of 8+ in Magic. Each additional 6 (or 4) points in the ability activates one more dial.

- Karcists with Preparedness can “have already told a demon to do that” with a Preparedness and a Magic roll against the same Difficulty.
- Total result of Invocation, Evocation, and Constriction tests and spends must equal the demon’s Aberrance *pool*, not rating.
- Any karcist with Languages (Enochian) may add +1 to up to three tests during any conjuration.
- Any karcist with Languages (Hebrew) may add +1 to up to two tests during any conjuration.
- Karcists can spend other abilities besides Stability multiple times during a single conjuration.
- Only three rolls needed: Invocation, Evocation, and Constriction. The pentacle is either pre-drawn or drawn as part of Invocation; abjuration is incorporated into Constriction (“to depart this place when your task is finished”). The GM may combine this with the regular five-step working, applying the quicker conjuration only to minor imps, succubi, or other low-level entities.
- Any assistant can make the Abjuration test; the primary karcist then becomes an assistant for that test.
- An unmodified roll of 6 on the Inscription test allows the karcist to apply the margin (the remainder of his roll + spend – 4) to the conjuration’s Power.

- Karcists may spend Stability for Magic at 1 for 1, as in **Trail of Cthulhu**. This is a double-edged advantage, at best, but it does potentially vastly increase the players' available pools for conjurations.
- Even a failed test adds 1 to the conjuration's Power.
- Demonically taught abilities cost 1 Constriction per point taught, not 2.
- The cost of an entry in the Book of Pacts is 3 Constriction, or 2.
- Demons might provide magic items: a breastplate that stops bullets, for example. Such items cost 3 Constriction each, and impose a 3-point Stability test when they work, along with the regular General test if any. Items remain under demonic control, and cannot be carried onto holy ground.
- The karcist's ring provides -2 Armor against demonic attack per Magic point spent, and -1 anti-demonic Armor per Athletics point spent.
- In the *Lemegeton*, many demons can be summoned by day; there is no Difficulty modifier for daytime summoning. Powers, etc. still end at the next sunrise.

DIALING IT DOWN

These changes, by contrast, make goëtia **less powerful**, or less useful for players. They don't make it worthless – if you don't want goëtia in the game, don't use this Zoom at all! – but they do raise the cost of dealing with demons.

Once you've chosen which dials to use, the GM might remove one of them for a karcist with a rating of 8+ in Magic.

Each additional 6 (or 4) points in the ability removes one more dial.

- Learning the Magic ability requires Potential Points (as in **Rough Magicks** or **Voodoo**)
- A demon can only be summoned at its proper astrological hour. Every Invocation requires a 1-point Astronomy spend that does not add to the total.
- The Languages Hebrew, Greek, or Latin are required to summon demons. More restrictively yet, the Language Enochian is required to summon demons.
- Another player (the GM or a suitably poker-faced fellow player) makes all rolls during a conjuration; the karcist does not necessarily know whether she has succeeded at any given test during the working. This option requires more subtle demonic strategies than the old scream-and-leap if the karcist fails somewhere.
- A pentacle's Might equals 5 x the total of the karcist's Inscription roll + spend, not the square of the total. Lowering the Might to 4 x the total makes goëtia even more dangerous and costly.
- Evocation and Abjuration tests default to Difficulty 6 instead of Difficulty 5; Constriction defaults to Difficulty 8 instead of 6.
- Demonically taught ability points must come from build points, experience points, or points already allocated to other abilities. They do not come "for free."
- There is no Book of Pacts. Each demon must be Constricted for each conjuration.

- Every conjuration *requires* the sacrifice of a cat-sized (Health 3) or larger animal. This does not add to the conjuration's Power.
- Hand-built goëtic tools only give +1 for one specific demon.

DEMONS

The standard goëtia incorporates 72 named demons, although the specific lists shift depending on the grimoire. These 72 don't include other big-name demons like Baphomet and Lucifuge Rofocale, demoted or usurped gods like Moloch, or the vast armies of sub-demons working for the 72 "upper management" types.

If this Zoom does well, we may produce a follow-on supplement with nothing but demon statistics and descriptions and weird powers and such, along the lines of **Voodoo 2: The Invisibles**. Until that happy day, extrapolate from this write-up using the demonic descriptions in the *Lemegeton* (available many places online; see Sources) or elsewhere.

DEMONIC DESCRIPTIONS

The grimoires arrange the demons in ranks, from knight to king. These ranks provide the basis for the demon's game statistics. Presidents, princes, and kings increase the Difficulties for Constriction and Abjuration.

ABERRANCE

A demon has only this ability while on earth. It takes damage, powers its feats, and improves its chances on other abilities using only this pool. A minor demonic power (poltergeist effects, small fires, verminous infestation)

DEMONIC RANKS TABLE

Rank	Aberrance	Damage Modifier	Armor	Notes
Knight	13	+2	-1	-1 Difficulty CA; may only perform one task per conjuration
Marquis	23	+3	-1	
Earl/Count	31	+5	-2	
Duke	43	+7	-3	
President/Praeses	53	+8	-4	+1 Difficulty CA
Prince	61	+9	-4	+2 Difficulty CA
King	73	+12	-5	+3 Difficulty CA

costs only 1 Aberrance point. A major demonic power mentioned in its grimoiric description, or a traditional sort of demonic ability (fire, dank wind, possession) costs 2 Aberrance. An un-demonic or grandiose power costs 3 Aberrance. All demons have Hit Threshold 4 unless they spend Aberrance to improve it for a scene.

DAMAGE MODIFIER

This is the damage the demon does with bites, sword slashes, talon swipes, tail smashes, horn butts, fiery blasts, etc. Treat Aberrance as Scuffling, Weapons, or Shooting depending on the effect.

ARMOR

Demons only take damage from iron (or in some games, silver or hawthorn or ash-wood); blessed or holy weapons or relics; goëtic swords, staves, and blasting rods; and holy water (as acid). The GM may restrict or change these weaknesses.

SAMPLE DEMON: BUNÉ

The *Lemegeton* says of Buné (or Bime):

He is a strong, great & mighty duke, & appeareth in ye forme of a

Dragon with three heads, one like a dog, the other like a griffin, the 3rd like a man; he speaketh with a high & comely voice; he changeth ye places of ye dead, & causeth those spirits that are under him to gather together upon their sepulcheres; he giveth Riches to a man & maketh him wise & eloquent; he giveth true Answers to yr demands; & governeth 30 Legions of spirits.

As a Duke, he has Aberrance 43, Damage +7, and -3 Armor. He requires a pentacle with Might 43 or more (total Inscription roll + spend = 7+) to hold him.

He specializes in questions and answers about the dead and undead, and probably in necromancy, zombies, and similar sorts of effects. He can send demons and ghosts to graveyards regardless of their protections.

His “Riches” probably consist of buried treasure, especially grave goods. He tells the karcist where to dig, rather than dumping golden mummy masks on the floor.

He teaches abilities like Preparedness and Sense Trouble (“wise”) and Interpersonal abilities (“eloquent”).

If he grants powers, they are probably powers associated with the dead or undead: vampire or ghost powers, etc. A vampiric Buné may be more easily held with blood (blood sacrifice adds +1 to conjuration Power per source).

He answers questions readily and completely.

RESISTING DEMONIC ATTACK

Outside a pentacle, use the normal GUMSHOE rules against the demon, which will attack either physically or magically.

Resistance (if warranted or possible) to demonic mental attack, possession, etc. requires a Stability test against a Difficulty equal to the demon’s Aberrance spend (usually 3+) plus its roll.

PENTACLE DEFENSE

Inside a pentacle, the attack becomes a contest of the demon’s Aberrance pool and the pentacle’s Might pool. Subtract the Constriction totals (roll + spend) of any previous conjurations in that pentacle (since the last sunrise) from the pentacle’s Might.

Then subtract an equal amount from both values until either Aberrance or Might is below 20. (If further demons join the fight, subtract that same amount from each demon's Aberrance.)

Then run a full GUMSHOE contest between the demon and the pentacle, with the following changes:

- The contest ends at sunrise, when the demon returns to Hell. This usually takes 2 to 7 rounds. After the third round, every human inside the pentacle must make an Athletics or Health test (Difficulty = round number) to avoid collapse from the strain. On an unmodified roll of 1, the collapsing body breaks the pentacle.
- If the demon succeeds with an unmodified roll of 6, it can either:
 - o add 1 round to the contest
 - o attempt to mesmerize someone inside the circle into breaking it (Stability test to resist, Difficulty = demon's Aberrance spend + roll)
- If the karcist succeeds with an unmodified roll of 6, she can either:
 - o subtract 1 round from the contest
 - o attempt an immediate Abjuration test (Difficulty of 2 + demon's Aberrance spend) against the demon
- If the pentacle fails a test or otherwise breaks, anyone inside it can spend 1 Magic or 2 Occult to repair it. (The GM may also allow 2-point spends of Anthropology, Physics, etc. to repair the pentacle depending on the campaign cosmology.) Such a spend costs

2 Stability, as the spender briefly touches the unprotected Outside.

- If the demon fails, it can spend 2 Aberrance to stay in the contest for the next round.
- The Difficulty of the pentacle's test increases by +1 for each person inside with a Stability below 0.
- During any round, the demon can also shapeshift or otherwise attempt to panic those inside into breaking the pentacle, as the effects in Invocation and Evocation. These attempts cost 2 Aberrance apiece.
- Once Might or Aberrance reach 0, a failure ends the contest. If both fail simultaneously, the demon loses.

The demon can always use its other powers on the room or humans outside the pentacle as normal; these uses usually cost 1 or 2 Aberrance apiece. It can also reveal truths about those inside, make offers or threats, etc. to inspire conflict and distraction, hopefully breaking the pentacle as a result. This is free.

Those inside the pentacle can spend its Might on their own Stability, Athletics, and Health tests. The karcist who inscribed the pentacle can also spend its Might on Magic tests (but not to repair the pentacle).

SOURCES

These sources skim the surface of what's available. Nevertheless, I found them inspiring in some fashion.

FICTION

The novella *Black Easter* by James Blish is the indispensable goëtic fiction, and

almost the only one. *A Dangerous Energy*, by John Whitbourn, makes near-goëtic (and quite horrid) demon-summoning a centerpiece of its alternate-historical weird fantasy tale.

Dennis Wheatley's *The Devil Rides Out* has a bravura demonic defense sequence, and his other Black Magic novels can be mined for lurid details. Alan Moore's magnificent comic *Promethea* of course includes goëtia (specifically the demons Andras and Marchosias) within its grand tour of all Western occultism.

NONFICTION

Detailed (if occasionally slipshod or outmoded) smorgasbords of ceremonial magic lie before you in works by A.E. Waite (*Mysteries of Magic* (trans.), *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*), E.M. Butler (*Ritual Magic*), and Emile Grillo de Givry (*Witchcraft, Magic, and Alchemy*). They can be found cheap in most good used bookstores or (in Waite's case) free online.

For lots more demons than the standard 72, see Gustav Davidson's *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Ones*, or Michelle Belanger's *Dictionary of Demons: Names of the Damned*.

Owen Davies literally wrote the book on *Grimoires*. Jake Stratton-Kent posits a very weird theory about goëtia as Greek zodiacal magic in his *Geosophia*; he also translated the *Grimorium Verum*. Any translation of any grimoire by Joseph Peterson is dependable and scholarly. His website *Esoteric Archives* has the full text of many goëtic grimoires, including the *Lemegeton*:

<http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/lemegeton.htm>