

Mythic



Perspectives

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# Collationes Auctorum



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## Epistolæ Receptæ

Letters, notes, email—all of these things are acceptable media to make it into this section of Mythic Perspectives. The only catch is you must send it to me in a direct (you actually write to me) or semi-direct fashion (you cc: your comments to the Berkeley mailing list to me) if you want your comments to have a chance of gracing these pages.

**Damelon,**

I recently subscribed to Mythic Perspectives and ordered all the back issues. The magazines arrived in a very timely manner. Reading all six issues allowed me to see the growth and improvement of the magazine. I like what you are doing and I consider my money well spent. I can think of no higher praise than that. I look forward to seeing the magazine continue to grow.

I realize that adventure-sagas are the poorest selling products but I place myself firmly in the minority here. I am always looking for good adventures and even buy adventures from other companies which I then convert to Ars Magica. I was very pleased to see that you are going to branch out and produce adventures for Atlas Games. I would also like to see an adventure included in each issue of Mythic Perspectives as a regular feature.

**Thank You,  
Al Pederson**

*I like adventures too and I do try to have one for every issue, but I am still partially a slave to what the writers want to provide. Things are looking up though, I have a couple on the drawing board even as I am writing this.*



**Hi Damelon,**

I've just read MP #6, and I'm stunned... again! Wow! Where will you stop?

The only negative thing I have to say is I'm glad the series about Covenant seasoning is over at last. It was pretty wordy, unstructured, and mostly useless to me overall. But maybe it's just me! In the same kind of entries, I greatly prefer Alan Flesh's texts about Tribunals and, now, Houses. I even prefer more "technical" articles (I want more about familiars next time! :) And David Chart's thoughts about the spell guidelines are precious), or stories (I loved "The Temple of Mercury" and "The Ghost's Wife" is pretty useful too if you use Kabbalah).

Uh, one last criticism: I sometimes don't get the rat's story at first glance, somewhat confused by the comic's layout. It's a shame, I love it!

**Jerome Darmont**

*The compliments and the critiques of the Covenants series were about even and almost all the criticism was akin to yours. I will endeavor to screen these things more vigorously in the future, after all what good is an article or a comic if you can't understand it.*

A quick note...  
I made a mistake last issue and now is time to eat my crow! To Mr. Mark Shirley. My apologies for misspelling your name.

**Damelon,**

I like the grey cover: I think it helps the 'magazine' feel by keeping the distinction between cover and contents clear.

'Winter Seasoning' was the best of the series—several ideas I hadn't thought of before here. However... 'penultimate' means 'last but one'. A covenant full of magi who thought they were last but one in their fields would probably keep its head down. I know that penultimate = superduper is getting some currency in the US, but I don't think it should be encouraged.

Adam Bank's adventure

was good, and nicely showcased some features of Jewish society (especially the 'gossip is eeeeevil' part). Mind you, if Kabbalists aren't supposed to listen to gossip, that's a lot of standard adventure intros out the window.

**Keep up the good work,  
David Chart**

*Thanks for straightening us out about penultimate. You would think we would learn about trying to slip English past the British.*

*A well earned congratulations to David Chart, his persistence has finally paid off. His entry in last year's fiction competition, Form and Substance was the favorite among the judges. For his efforts David wins the \$160.00 cash prize and his story's alpha placement in this year's fiction paperback. Way to write, David! To those of you who entered, but did not win, my sincerest thanks for your entries and my invitation to enter this year's fiction competition. It is my hope that enough of you will enter to push the purse well over the two-hundred dollar mark.*



**Hello Damelon,**

Thank you for the very welcome 6th issue of MP. I like the look of this issue very much—something about the grey cover and the intricate border design on the front and back covers appeals to me.

Just a few thoughts, since you request feedback.

A general point which, I hasten to emphasize, results from my editing and proof reading professionally so I may well be too touchy - I was pulled up short when reading by errors in most articles. Some are just typing-type errors which a proof reader ought to have caught.

Some are what seems to me to be misuse of a word, which may result from differences, unknown to me, between







English and US usage, but may be real mistakes which the editor ought to have picked up. In no case did these errors mean I could not understand the sentence but anything that interrupts the reader's absorption in the content is to be avoided if possible.

I enjoyed Neil's 'De Mutandum Corporis Animal'. I especially enjoyed the names of the spells and descriptions of the books. The illustrations did their job splendidly, being relevant and in keeping. I was obliged to buy a Latin dictionary at last, as half-recalled school Latin failed to allow me to appreciate Neil's jokes in the magus' names. Interesting that it was 'written by' a Bonisagus maga. My Bonisagus PC tends to think of many Bjornaer as scarcely magi at all.

'Winter Seasoning' contained a great many good ideas, which sparked off all sorts of trains of thought that might develop into characters or plot lines one day. However, this article contained a number of the sorts of errors I mentioned above. As well as those errors, I have to say that if I had been editor I would have asked the authors to group their ideas into sections (as demonstrated to excellent effect in the article that follows this one) which would make it much easier to read and might have allowed them to see that some of their impressive heap of ideas had become a little tangled.

'Making the Most of your Familiar' was a very easy read - well laid out and no mistakes to speak of. Good thought-provoking pointers. I think my SG knows me too well to permit me a cat familiar, sadly.

'The Ghost's Wife' was a very interesting read. I have had 'Kabbalah' on my shelf for ages but not had time to read it yet - this tale has encouraged me to make more effort to find time. I don't know enough about Storyguiding Ars Magica to know whether the information presented is sufficient to run the story but it looks comprehensive and clearly presented to me.

'The Riddle of House Criamon' made me think about this house in greater depth than I had done before and indicates ways in which I might be able to play a Criamon instead of just thinking 'weird' and looking the other way. This seems to me to be a sign of an article that has done a good job.

I read David's 'Thoughts on Spell Guidelines' as soon as the magazine arrived, shuddered a bit, and then read it again when I got that far having started at the beginning of the magazine. I think it is greatly encouraging that writers admit to having second thoughts, and take the trouble to amend things. The changes seem well-considered and sensible. I worry that I might have to try and remember when to turn to the revision for the amendment when looking things up in the main rule book. I suppose I have a slight advantage in that I have not to any extent learnt the 'old' rules so don't have to re-wire my brain for the new ones. That's always assuming our troupe decides to adopt them, of course.

'Council Passerum' isn't a bad idea, but it does need the right material to operate on and this wasn't it, in my view.

'Tales of the Order' - love the Rat, and wish the story chunks were not so short so I don't have to wait so long to know if it survives!

## Sheila Thomas

*I hope things are a little better this time, but if by chance they are not, give me one more chance to get it right. I let your letter stand as the most intact one this time because you raise a number of good points and well, to be frank, you're right. I had very clean plans to make sure things were done perfectly this time and then came down with a nasty case of bronchitis that kept me from following through on the precautions I hoped to put in place. As I am normally a reasonably healthy person, that won't be happening again anytime soon. In specific about the spellchecking, editing, and*

*proofreading... Please do not assume that any of this is anyone's fault but my own. I need to provide the materials in a timely manner to those that help me with such things and I have not done a very good job in that regard. Look for the improvement, it is coming!*



## Damelon,

The reason why I wouldn't have written up a "most pathetic grog" is that I love all of my characters, and, in a way, they are part of me. I'm such an arrogant sod that I can't feel that something I love as a part of myself is pathetic. I know there are pathetic elements in my nature, but I can't freely describe them, because my ego gets in the way. Even my pathetic characters always have some little feature about them which somehow redeems them, or hints at their possibility of redemption. I can write fallible characters, tragic failures, Piers-Plowman buffoons and anti-heroes, but I have real trouble, as I sit here trying to find a concept, of writing a pathetic companion who I'd actually use in play.

## Timothy Ferguson

*Thanks for the honesty, I had half suspected that the reasons you stated were the reason that series of contests didn't do to well for entries. I just thought that people would find it amusing to share their socially inept characters with others and possibly win something for doing it. I have no real problem with ego (mine is huge) or whatever you want to call it, but I actually enjoy playing a screwed up, sorta pathetic character once in a while; it helps keep me in prime roleplaying form. Hopefully this new contest I have come up with will be better for most of my subscribers, although I can already hear a different sort of complaint forming. More about that next time!* ☒

If it's time...  
resubscribe!





## Spring 1999 Update

By Jeff Tidball

### The Road Ahead

With *The Mythic Seas*, we've published ten Ars Magica titles since taking the property over from Wizards of the Coast in 1996. It's been an interesting — and difficult — few years. You've seen a new edition, new scenarios, new traditions of hedge magic, expanded rule systems, and groundbreaking background material (not to mention, upheaval after bloody upheaval on the business side of the adventure gaming industry).

But what will the future bring?

As we've always promised, we'll continue to release Ars Magica supplements until our Macintosh keyboards are pried from our cold, dead fingers. Even though we're also moving in new directions at Atlas Games (with new games like *Unknown Armies*, for example) we plan to keep on track with four new Ars Magica supplements each year.

With *The Dragon and the Bear*, we're embarking anew on descriptions of all Mythic Europe's tribunals. This makes four (Novgorod, Loch Leglean, Rome, and Iberia), and David Chart's Stonehenge will make five in December. You can probably expect to see about one new tribunal book each year for the foreseeable future.

You'll probably also see some collections in the vein of *A Medieval Tapestry*. Although these collections won't necessarily feature characters (we might do scenarios, or spells, or artifacts, or covenants, or anything at all, really) they'll feature the creative energies of a wide variety of contributors, brought together by some common theme. They'll provide storyguides with easy-to-insert saga resources and food for thought.

We'll also continue to release scenarios and saga materials. Although they won't be a main focus, many time-pressured storyguides value them greatly, so we'll continue to bring them to you.

Finally, you'll see the fruits of the imaginations of Ars Magica's strong and prolific fans. Many of our supplements are inspired not by what I, as line developer, tell people to write. Instead, they're driven by the proposals of would-be gaming writers who want to make a contribution to the line. I don't know what the mail will bring tomorrow, but I'm willing to bet that future pro-

posals will introduce entire constellations of ideas that I've yet to even consider.



### Upcoming Releases

As of this column's deadline, *The Dragon and the Bear* is yet to be released, but it will be available by the time you read this. The next release for the Ars Magica line after that will be a sourcebook on the mythic Norse. This book (whose title has not yet been finalized) will be released in July, barring major disaster. At press time, the final details of the release — its price and page count, for example — have not yet been determined. Be sure to check the Atlas Games web site, [www.atlas-games.com](http://www.atlas-games.com), for information as it becomes available.



Have a question or comment that you'd like me to address in this column? Send a letter to Jeff Tidball, Atlas Games, PO Box 131233, Roseville, MN, 55113, USA. Or, email [AGJeff@aol.com](mailto:AGJeff@aol.com), and make sure to mention that you'd like to see your questions answered here.



## Convention News

### DunDraCon XXIII

by Steve Saunders

If you don't take Ars Magica into account the 'Con was excellent.

From an Ars Magica point of view, disappointments abounded. Mine was the only Official Ars Magica game scheduled (though there MAY have been some pick-up games of Ars Magica in the Open Gaming sections). I had two people sign up, and only one actually showed. I posted an ad down in the Open Gaming area, and managed to catch a few more Ars Magica neophytes. They, with the one guy who signed in and showed up, plus my wife (at her request, I kept her in the dark about story details so she could play in it) constituted "the Troupe." Due to the recruiting delays at the start, and a generally tight schedule we ran out of time about halfway through. <sigh>

In previous years, there have been 1-3 Ars Magica games available, and I've seen only 1 (a LARP) get insufficient players. I suspect this year was anomalous, but I'd sure love to see Ars Magica garner a bigger, more reliable presence. That's a hint to all you Bay Area Storyguides!






historia gratia historiæ

# The Cult of Saints

by Jason Charles Buss

*"It is the custom of peasants to venerate more zealously those of God's saints whose feats are read to them."*

-Pope Gregory the Great (A.D. 540-603)



**T**he veneration of Christian saints and development of a cult of relics surrounding them is perhaps one of the most important yet overlooked aspects of medieval Europe in the game *Ars Magica*. This phenomenon permeated almost every facet of medieval life in Western Europe, affecting trade routes, instilling faith, and inspiring some of the most beautiful artwork of the era. Their lives and miracles even inspired an entire genre of literature, the hagiography (biography of a saint).

While the origin of the cult of saints has been connected by modern historians with the syncretic blending of pagan traditions and Christian theology, medieval peasants had a much simpler view. Separated by great distances and many centuries from the life of their holy Savior, the litany of saints provided a more human face to respond to their spiritual needs, endowed with very mortal emotions and passions that appealed to the everyday experience of the layman. And

while the saints were close to the mundane world of common men, they also had contact with higher powers, offering a link between their frightening modern environment and the virtuous gospels of Jesus. In the saint the peasants saw not only their own frailties and fears, but also they witnessed the embodiment of the ideals of Christianity: humility, morality, and virtue. Embracing the word of God, the saint was often elevated to the status of a hero, both in life and in death (especially if they

were martyred), and some particularly pious saints came to be regarded as being equal in status to the apostles.

The litany of Christian saints is at first glance overwhelming and confusing, as hundreds of them permeate the valleys and legends of Europe, with countless feast-days and specific associations. And while there does exist an unofficial hierarchy among the saints in which the apostles (particularly Peter, Paul, and John) were especially

revered, the other numerous saints are largely autonomous and unrelated figures. Yet it becomes easy to comprehend the significance and role of the individual saints when you examine them solely in terms of geography, for veneration of a particular saint was typically associated with a specific geographical region. This region might be the homeland of the saint in his or her mortal life, the locale where a saint died or was entombed, or perhaps the site of one of the saint's famous miracles. In any case, the local peasants typically regarded their regional saint quite highly, venerating the saint above most other holy figures, and it was thought that the powers of the saint were strongest within the region (as the saint paid particularly close attention to the happenings within the area, even appearing to its residents in their dreams to convey the saint's wishes).<sup>1</sup> Typically veneration of a saint would include prayers and gifts (to ensure the working of miracles), but also donations to the Church in the name of the saint, obedience, and the dedication of a holy feast day in the saint's honor.

Miracles (and to a lesser extent prophecies) represent the most common manifestation of the saint's powers, not to mention the primary reason saints were elevated to such a lofty status. Easing the lives of good Christians, their miracles were known to heal illnesses, stall blazing fires, avert menacing storms, protect harvests, or even free the meek from oppression. Some saints were known for a particular type of miracle, usually related to their own unique life. Saint Florian of Austria for example, who was drowned by the Romans for his faith in the early 4th century, was known for his capacity to douse fires with his divine intervention (and today St. Florian remains the patron saint of firemen). Yet the miracles of the saints were not given freely. The saints tended to demand attention and veneration, and were quick to take offense at any mistreatment or neglect (a knight whose broken arm was healed by St. James for example, was punished by the Saint by breaking his other arm when he forgot to visit the Saint's tomb as he had promised). Further, saints zealously guarded their own relics and

<sup>1</sup> A tale is told for example of a monk possessed by a demon who was healed when he went to the burial site of St. Martin in Tours. Yet this same monk became possessed once again when he departed Tours, and was forced to spend the remainder of his life within the city under the healing protection of good St. Martin. In game-terms, this may be defined by a specific Holy Aura endemic to the saint within which his powers effect the monk.



reputations, intervening even in matters of personal faith among their parishioners<sup>2</sup>. This vengeful anxiety may seem contrary to the very values the saint preached in mortal life: humility, forgiveness, and asceticism. But folktales emphasize the saints as champions of justice, and demand that the saints assume their role as both patron and protector of their own parishioners. While the saint might be willing to forgive (and frequently did in response to pious veneration), he was also obligated to inflict justice, and his devotees expected nothing less<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to understand that local saints were considered to be the 'property' of their parishioners, and fervent pride in the prestige or miraculous powers of the saint was a common phenomena. Peasants would boast of the miracles of their local saint, comparing the deeds with those of rival 'foreign' saints (who were typically regarded as inferior)<sup>4</sup>. And much as modern devotees to a local sports team, the followers of a regional saint were zealous in their veneration and defense of their saint. This devotion and the reputation of a local saint had many ramifications, perhaps most importantly serving to bind the denizens of a region together, both spiritually and economically (as will be described later). The saint served as a rallying point for the community. If a fugitive took sanctuary within the tomb of the local saint for example, peasants and even the pursuing lord's own soldiers might come to the saint's defense by protecting the criminal as long as he remained within the tomb (to do otherwise would dishonor the saint, perhaps inspiring her holy wrath)<sup>5</sup>.

It is now clear that the favor of a saint was not something automatically bestowed upon parishioners. Yet the converse also applies, as neither was devotion to a saint assured or given unconditionally. During times of trouble or in the absence of appropriate miracles for example, laymen might appeal loudly to the saint for protection, accusing him even of negligence and assaulting the saint's relics if he did not respond. Even ecclesiastical authorities might symbolically appeal to their saint, subjecting the saint's relics to humiliation in order to rouse them into action<sup>6</sup>. Such ritual denigrations were called 'humiliation of the saints', and became particularly widespread by the 10th-11th centuries.

## Patron Saints

While primacy has been given in this discussion to the role of local saints, it is true that the many saints were each associated with particular aspects according to their own unique histories (i.e., specific feast-days, occupations, ethnicities, illnesses, and many other forms). A saint associated with such an aspect was called the 'Patron Saint' of the specified aspect, and was invoked or appealed to in appropriate situations (perhaps even resulting in a divine miracle). This realm of influence ('specialization' as some call it) did not

gain in popularity until the latter medieval period, and remains secondary among laymen to the saint's association with a definite geographical area before the late 13th century. While peasants knew some of these aspects by tradition, many were not known so readily due to their great number. In such cases parish priests or mendicant friars readily imparted this knowledge to eager peasants (often along with colorful stories about the lives of the saints). Also, other ecclesiastical authorities and theologians harbored such knowledge. Additionally, an individual given a saint's name in baptism might also appeal to that saint as their namesake. This is due to the mysterious connection that links the mortal and the saint.

## The Cult of Relics

The concept of relics actually predates the Middle Ages, as preservation of the bodies and possessions of martyrs was relatively commonplace. Passive symbols, they gained their power from the belief instilled in them and were valuable beyond measure. In fact, much of the faith in a saint's ability to work miracles was irrevocably imbued within the saint's own relics (the theft of a saint's relics and their removal from a region for example, might result in the decrease or even a complete end to the presence of the saint's miracles within the former region). Their rising popularity eventually led to the formation of cults worshipping such relics, and by the 10th century a distinction between several different varieties of relics existed. The eldest of course were bodies and bones, which ranged from entire corpses to small fragments of bone or even individual teeth. A second variety were *contact relics*, which were objects once owned or wielded by a saint. Including such common devices as swords, hats, cups, and liturgical objects, contact relics could actually be used to perform their mundane duties in addition to their spiritual significance (a holy sword for example might be wielded in battle, resulting in miracles if the saint approved of the sword's use). Another variety of relics were *secondary relics*: mundane objects which became holy themselves after coming into contact with

<sup>2</sup> A peasant once avoided a liturgy in honor of St. Avitus and continued to till his vineyard, boasting to his neighbors that the saint himself had been a toiler and would understand his work. In return the saint broke the peasant's neck, and only after earnest prayers to Avitus did he forgive the tiller and heal his neck.

<sup>3</sup> Justice could take many mysterious forms. For example, a poor old woman once sacrificed a chicken to St. Sergius. When thieves stole it they found they could not enjoy it, for during the cooking the bird's flesh became ever-hardening, and the feast ended in embarrassment.

<sup>4</sup> In the hagiography of Bishop Rigobert of Reims is a tale of a woman suffering from fever. Testing the powers of the saints, she lit three wax candles of equal length, one for St. Theodoric, one for St. Rigobert, and one for St. Theodulf. When St. Rigobert's candle (her town's patron saint) burned much longer than those of the other saints, she revealed his superior power and upon praying to him for relief was immediately cured of her fever.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to stress that the peasants were not defending the fugitive but rather the saint, whose authority exceeds that of the mundane lord pursuing the criminal. Should the lord enter the tomb and forcibly remove the criminal, the saint might respond by punishing the lord (or even those parishioners who did not come to the tomb's defense). Further, if the fugitive was truly a wicked man who only selfishly used the saint's prestige to escape capture, the offended saint might haunt or punish the criminal himself, probably a fate worse than mundane capture by nobles.

<sup>6</sup> The *Miracles of St Benedict of Fleury* mention a story of peasants working on monastery land who cried out while beating the saint's altar: 'What have you done, Benedict, are you some kind of lazybones? Do you sleep all the time? How could you permit this to happen to your servants?' Other examples of such humiliation might include removing the saint's relics from the altar, setting them upon the floor and sprinkling them with thorns. Among monks such a ceremony was termed the 'lowering' of a saint, and demonstrated the abuse suffered by the saint's worshippers.



another holy person, object, or perhaps due to their presence at a miraculous event (The Miracle of Bolsena produced such a secondary relic, the *Holy Corporal*). These include virtually anything that has a connection with a saint, from tears they

once spilled to their burial shroud or even dust from their tomb. And perhaps most important, the final, wildly popular and highly coveted variety of relic were the *relics of the passion*, which included the Crown of Thorns, pieces from the True Cross, and nails and cloth from Christ's shroud.

## Forgeries and Reliquaries

Forgeries of relics were alas commonplace throughout Europe, often sold and traded since they were relatively easy to replicate (most relics had no distinct markings to differentiate themselves from other similar objects; a bone taken from a large animal for example might be passed off as the leg bone of a saint, to which it might look very similar to someone not familiar with human anatomy). And as objects of veneration themselves, a commercial traffic in relics developed (which was also accompanied by thefts). Christian belief held that no saint's relics could successfully be stolen without the permission and approval of the saint himself. If a relic was successfully stolen and transferred elsewhere, it proved that such was the saint's will, whereas a thwarted attempt demonstrated that the saint preferred to remain where he was. The Council of Trent attempted to quash this dilemma by forbidding the sale of relics. Yet after the sack of Constantinople in the 4th crusade (in 1204), a veritable flood of holy relics poured into Western Europe, generating new trade routes and inspiring elaborate hoaxes to pawn off forgeries<sup>7</sup>. To combat this serious problem, reliquaries were devised. Reliquaries were ornate containers fashioned to hold a relic. Often made of precious gold and inscribed with elegant letters or pictures, the reliquaries marked the importance of their contents and attached an opulence to the relic's presentation

that exceeded the capacity of petty forgers. Many reliquaries encased their contents within clear rock crystal, creating a surreal and beautiful

luster that suggested the otherworldly nature of the contents. And to reinforce their association with a specifically defined region, many of the reliquaries were housed within vast and elaborate structures inside cathedrals<sup>8</sup>. Yet despite their beautiful appearance and monetary value, no reliquary could surpass the importance of the relic it contained. Though the church unsuccessfully forbade the purchase or trade of relics, they did allow a relic to 'tour' a region in order to generate income and inspire faith. Much as a travelling entertainer, monks would journey with a relic to towns and cathedrals to display their holy prize, inspiring generosity in the faithful who donate money to the monks. This income was not typically viewed with skepticism, as the monks would use the funds to construct new buildings and repair monastic properties.

The fervor inspired by relics also led to some gruesome and rather sobering events during the Middle Ages, the era largely considered to be the height of relic-veneration. Particularly, on occasion zealous believers were known to seize upon the relics of their saint, whether he be living or deceased. In Umbria for example, peasants plotted to murder Romuald (a future saint whose miracles in life were known to locals that anticipated his canonization). They wished to do so for fear that he might move away and not leave them his lifeless body to be a patron of their lands. And in Scandinavia, a king's body (he was not canonized) was posthumously cut into many pieces and buried across a region to assure that he would remain their property and his good fortune would follow them.

Yet despite the expansive role of saints and relics in medieval Europe, the cults they spawned were not uniformly embraced within the church. Many educated ecclesiastical authorities and theologians criticized the excessiveness and pagan idolatry that the veneration of saints and relics represented (including Agobard of Lyons and Claudius of Turin). Guibert, the abbot of Nogent, expressed his doubts in *Relics of Saints* (1120), arguing for example that purported milk from the virgin could not sustain a liquid state and criticizing the pagan nature of the veneration. But the complaints of these elitist scholarly authorities typically fell on deaf ears. Typically most local clergymen and parish priests fully embraced the veneration of relics and saints, telling stories of the lives of the saints and propagating their worship.

## Pilgrimages

The presence of holy relics did more than inspire faith, unite geographical regions, and glorify God however, for they helped to define the trade routes throughout Europe. Relics tended to attract great throngs of pilgrims who would travel to pay homage to both them and the glorious cathedrals which housed them. The routes the pilgrims traversed were among the most heavily plied in Europe, and out of these roads grew a

<sup>7</sup> One of the more infamous forgeries involved the selling of the baby Christ-child's teeth, which ignited a theological debate about the mortal nature of Christ and whether any remnants of his physical body could exist since he had ascended to Heaven. Over 1000 such teeth were sold and traded across Europe, prompting skeptics within even the Church to inquire as to why anyone would have thought save the child's baby teeth.

<sup>8</sup> The Three Kings reliquary in Cologne Cathedral is a famous example of this practice. Attributed to the famous artist Nicholas of Verdun, the reliquary consists of a large chassis resembling a church in its design, employing precious gems, manuscripts, arches, pinnacles, columns, and tracery. Multiple levels of the large reliquary depict scenes of the Prophets of the Old Testament, the lives of the Magi, the apostles (each identified with a personal or geographical symbol), and heavenly scenes upon an azure background of angels and stars (this progression from Old Testament to the highest level, Heaven, was common in portals and other sculptures in the medieval period). The relics first traveled from Constantinople to Milan and then in 1164 arrived in Cologne as a gift to Ronald von Dassel.

<sup>9</sup> The church of Ste. Foi de Conques (in the Massif Central in France) for example, became a popular stop for pilgrims. Harboring a piece of cranial material from the 3rd century martyr Ste. Foi (a young girl), the reliquary (a wooden statue with a Roman head) included lavish gold and gems and was adorned with the ability to cure illness and assuage suffering (In 985 a miracle occurred here, when Guillaume l'Illumine had his sight restored by the relic). The town grew in stature along with the relic, owing its prosperity to the continued pilgrimages, and strict civil laws existed here to ensure proper reverence and respect for the relic. Punishments included floggings and beatings, which were given to many visitors who failed to demonstrate proper devotion to Ste. Foi.



burgeoning commerce. Further, the many pilgrims and increased road-traffic fostered safety from banditry, and led to the prosperity of towns all along pilgrim-routes. New bridges and roads were constructed to accommodate the many travelers, and a virtual tourist-industry blossomed along the routes (including souvenirs, food, hostels, and markets).

The concept of pilgrimages had existed since antiquity, and typically assumed the form of a journey for forgiveness or a cure for illness. The first Christian pilgrimages date to A.D. 230, when groups of believers traveled to Jerusalem for St. Alexander to achieve purification and penance. But since the infidels conquered the Holy Lands in the 4th century, sites in western Europe began to supplant the Holy Land as primary destinations, particularly places housing the relics or tombs of saints. Rome and Santiago (for its Shrine of St. James) were the most popular destinations, yet smaller reliquaries along the roads to Italy and Hispania also rose in stature as a result of the pilgrims<sup>9</sup>. Competition among both smaller churches and cathedrals for pilgrims became quite intense by the latter 13th century, as economic prosperity often came to depend upon a steady flow of income from pilgrims, and possession of a miraculous relic typically sustained a region by attracting many pious visitors. ■

# Flaws

by David Chart

Ars Magica 4<sup>th</sup> Edition has a limited selection of general flaws. It is very difficult to have a character with 10 points of Flaws that fit the character conception. Since Flaws provide good role-playing hooks, as well as balancing Virtues, this article provides some rules for generating your own Flaws. The Flaws produced will have much the same cost as those listed in the rules, and you can design exactly the flaws that you want for your character.

The value of the flaw is determined by adding together the value of a number of factors. The two central ones are the intensity and the frequency. The intensity determines how bad the Flaw is when it is in effect, while the frequency determines how often it is in effect. The value is also affected by the avoidability of the Flaw. If your Flaw has common triggering conditions, but you can avoid them relatively easily, it is not as hindering as it would be if you couldn't avoid them in any way. The last major factor is the generality of the Flaw. If it only affects a certain type of action, it is not worth as much as if it affects everything.

The over-riding rule for flaws is that if it doesn't hinder the character, it is worth no points. Note that an inability to do something does hinder a character who intends to avoid it anyway, since the direction of causation could be from the inability to the intention, but a second inability to do a thing is no hindrance.

## Intensity

Intensity	Penalty to Rolls	Value
Inconvenience	-1	0
Hindrance	-3	-1
Crippling	-6	-2
Incapacitating	None possible	-3

For the purposes of these rules there are three possible levels of intensity. In the table, they are linked to penalties to rolls, but they need not be. Psychological flaws that restrict your behaviour may not give you any penalties, but they may still be a hindrance. As a rule, a psychological flaw is only incapacitating if you can only take one action, and that action is taken mindlessly. An example is the overwhelming fear induced by the object of Terrors: you can only run away or tremble like a jelly. Most psychological flaws will only be an inconvenience: a normal Driving Goal, for example, lets you lead a fairly normal life. Players should negotiate the severity of a psychological flaw with the rest of the troupe. The same considerations apply to enemies, dependents, and secrets.

## Frequency

Frequency	Guideline	Value
Rare	Less than 10% of the time	0
Uncommon	About 25% of the time	-1
Common	About 50% of the time	-2
Constant	Over 90% of the time	-3

The frequency refers to the frequency with which the Flaw comes into play. Many psychological flaws are Constant, but fears and hatreds have a frequency determined by the frequency with which the objects appear. Other psychological flaws could have frequencies if they only apply to part of your time: a compulsion to attend Mass every Sunday would be Rare, for example.

This table assumes that the effects of the flaw last exactly as long as the stimulus is present. If they persist afterwards the frequency of the flaw may be higher than the frequency of the stimulus. For example, a flaw that affects you every time it rains is Uncommon, but if the effect remains with you for the rest of the day, then it is Common (at least in the British Isles).

This raises the point that Frequencies can vary with location. You should base the frequency for a Flaw on the location of the Saga, and then discuss what to do if the characters move. Characters whose flaws will become less frequent will probably be in favor, and vice versa, but it





might be best to alter the intensity to keep the cost constant. Thus, the character who was only made nervous by the sea while he lived on the coast becomes terrified of it after moving to the Asian steppes, because he no longer has the constant reassurance that it hasn't hurt him yet.

Avoidability

Avoidability	Value
Avoidable	+1
Precautions	0
Unavoidable	-1

The categories of avoidability are not self-explanatory. An avoidable flaw is one that the character can ensure he will not trigger in daily life. A fear of the sea is avoidable: the character just goes to live inland. Of course, events may force him near the sea.

Precautions indicates that the character can lessen the chance of triggering the flaw, or plan his life around the flaw. Most triggers fall into this category—you can plan your life to avoid women, by going to a monastery. Time-based flaws also fall into this category. The character will be affected, and cannot avoid that, but he can plan his life so that he isn't doing anything important then. Constant flaws also fall into this category: the character knows that they will always be in effect, and can plan accordingly.

An unavoidable flaw is one that the Storyguide can invoke at any moment during the Saga, without having to set it up in advance or give the player any hints. The frequency chosen limits how often he can do this, but nothing else does. If you choose an unavoidable psychological flaw, then the Storyguide can tell you how to role-play as and when he likes, within the limits of the frequency.

Universality

Universality	Value
All rolls	0
All physical or mental rolls	+1
Broad category of physical or mental rolls	+2
Narrow category of physical or mental rolls	+3

A flaw that affects everything is obviously more of a problem than one which only affects a few things, and the universality modifier reflects this. Most psychological and social flaws will affect everything: your whole life is shaped by them in some way. However, an old injury might reduce all your physical rolls, while not affecting mental ones, and insanity might have the opposite effect.

A narrow category would be all rolls involving sight, or all rolls involving hearing. Broad categories are broader than that, but still short of all mental or physical rolls.

Fatigue and Damage

Frequency of Loss	Value
Once per day/encounter	-1
Once per hour	-2
Once per diameter	-3
Once per round	-4

Some flaws may inflict damage or fatigue on the character. Instead of using the Intensity table, this one should be used, because fatigue and damage add up, persist, and can ultimately incapacitate. The values in the table assume that the flaw inflicts fatigue: if it inflicts Body Levels, there is an extra -1.

exempli gratia

A character is very scared of dogs. The effect is a hindrance (-1) (agreed upon by the troupe), and the frequency is common (-2), because there are plenty of dogs around. It is possible to take precautions (0) against meeting dogs, but not to reliably avoid them, and all (0) the character's actions are affected. The total value of the flaw is thus -3.

A character is blind. This is Incapacitating (-4) and Constant (-3), but only affects a narrow category of physical or mental rolls (+3), and thus comes out as a -4 Flaw. Pretty close to the book value, and adding an additional -1 to take account of the knock-on effects of the flaw makes sense: it is also a constant hindrance on a broad category of physical rolls, which would be -2 by itself. (Deafness also comes out as -4, and should probably be left there, as there are fewer knock-on effects.)

A character takes damage when in direct sunlight. She takes 1 Body Level every Diameter (-4), and sunlight is Uncommon (-1) (the sun doesn't shine at night, and at least some days are cloudy) and Avoidable (+1) (you can stay inside or in shadows), so the total value of the flaw is -4.

A character is obsessively religious, and insists on praying at all the canonical hours. It is agreed that this is only an Inconvenience (0), because he will stop praying if attacked, and it is Uncommon (there are eight canonical hours, and the character prays for half an hour or so at each) (-1). It counts as Precautions (0), because it is time-based, and it affects all of the character's behavior (0). The total value of the flaw is -1.

A Note on Virtues

Virtues should not be calculated by inverting the above tables. As it stands, automatic success on all rolls (the opposite of constant incapacitation) would be a +7 Virtue, which is obviously ridiculous.





## Alternate Rules for Familiars

# The Familiar Ritual Revisited

by Timothy Ferguson with assistance from Kenji Ulstein

Magi form familiar bonds to fill the hollows in their souls.

Magi are outcasts. The Gift and their isolated training hinder the development of social bonds based on anything other than fear or subservience. The drive to form Covenants, although it can be justified on defensive or economic grounds, is, in part, an attempt to form communities in which magi are in daily contact with people who are similar to themselves. Magi need each other, because almost everyone else either hates or fears them. Even among magi, true friendship is so rare that it is marked by rituals and titles. Loneliness is the natural state of many magicians. They compensate for this by training children, by attempting to form friendships with select mundane companions, or by ignoring the full potential of their Gift, trading study for time with the mundanes, the Fae, Hopolite war bands, Archmagus competitions, or other politicians. Many magi pursue these goals obsessively, because the alternative is to face the emptiness of their emotional lives.

The familiar's special role is to fill this void in the magus' life. Often compared metaphorically to a spouse, the link to a familiar is even more intense than that to a best friend. The familiar is always with the magus, sharing his experiences as years pass. Over time the couple grow together, reflecting each other's strengths and ideals. A familiar knows the magus better than anybody, and approves of the magus more fully than anyone else. They are confidant, friend, ally, and assistant in a life that is often otherwise emotionless.

If a familiar dies, a magus may mourn for many years, sometimes until beyond death or Twilight, for their lost friend. The rules which follow are designed to assist you in creating vivid partners which rest at the fundament of your character's emotional life. On a more practical level, they are flexible enough to allow players to tinker and fiddle, to create characters whose skills and powers are useful to adventuring groups of magi. They allow familiars to be tied to arts other than Animál, and provide cord types which are of interest to magi with a vast array of specializations, to encourage all players to consider this option for their character's development.

## Beginnings

Magi who seek a familiar find their perception altered. They begin to see clues and feel intuitions that otherwise would not be noticed. In this heightened state of awareness they do, how-

ever, fail to notice more mundane details, so their companions must be more vigilant than usual. Extremely perceptive magi can sometimes tell what sort of familiar their sodalis is seeking, because the searcher's perceptions alter to emphasize the strongest sense of the animal.

It's unclear why the familiar sought by the magus is usually within a few months' mundane journey. Some suggest that the fussier the magus, the further away the familiar. Magi seek the closest, yet most acceptable, creature, trading off these two priorities. Magi whose desires are particular, for example, a white cat or a dog who'll like chess once intelligent, pass by similar, closer animals. A magus who has a life-shaking experience during their quest may find themselves going back the way they came, as their desires, and target creature, change.

## Alternatives to the Search

### Magical creation of animals

Many inexperienced magi, wishing to avoid the difficulties involved in the search for a familiar, attempt to create their own. This is usually a waste of vis, although the creature created can usually be bargained away to another, in exchange for some consideration. The basic problem is that a standard CrAn spell doesn't create a creature that has the deep and abiding respect for the magus that is required for the bonds to anchor into it.

The ancient magi of the Order of Mercury sidestepped this problem by bonding to a genii, a sort of spirit, then having it possess a body that they crafted for it, using their magic. The rituals to do this do still exist, as they are recalled by the genii who were previously participants, but the amount of vis required is prohibitively large, especially since the magus still needs to find a spirit that is willing to bond with them before the body is designed.

The barrier to Hermetic advancement in this field has been a lack of interest on the part of the Order's specialists in the Ars Animál. The great practitioners of the art of animal magic have no interest in the creation of magical familiars for historical reasons. House Diedne magi travelled widely and had a network of contacts able to seek out suitable beasts for the formation of a partnership. The Bjornaer magi are not interested in forming familiar bonds, seeking the animal nature within themselves. The Merinitans have been





turned from the study of nature to the study of Faeries by the Primus Quendalon, and the techniques of the Mendalusian school have been lost, or are secreted in House Bjornaer.

A second complication is the lack of successful research into the creation of personalities using Hermetic magic. The Criamon are interested in the creation of thoughts, but generally prefer not to fix those thoughts into matter, allowing them to range freely, influencing objects with their magical powers and create increasingly complex webs of arcane connection around themselves. Insights into the construction of thoughts could be translated into the form of, for example, a cat, but few Criamon desire that it should be so. When it does occur spontaneously, the procedure is usually no different from the possession of an animal by a spirit or demon.

Certain magi of Bonisagus are looking into the matter, and have found ways of bottling ghosts inside animals. So far none has designed a completely satisfactory method of creating familiars, although the best spell currently available is given here. Although it was designed by a Bonisagian Mentem specialist, he did so using experimentation and no magus is known to have actually used it. Most are unwilling to risk thirty-two pawns of vis and their own lives on an untested spell. The inventor has made it known that he'd be quite grateful if anyone doing so could report flaws or unexpected effects to him, via Redcap. Certain knowledgeable Criamon magi have offered to contribute a pawn or two to the casting, so long as they can watch the performance from a safe distance.

## Summoning a Beloved Companion

**CrAn 80 Ritual**

**Requisites:** In, Me

**R:** Near

**T:** Individual

**D:** Instant

**Foci:** That object the magus has the strongest sentimental attachment to (+5) or A comprehensive diary for the last seven years of the magus' life (+5)

A derivative of two, now intertwined, Mercurian rituals reads the desires of the caster, creates the shape of the beast and designs its personality so that it suits the magus. During the *reading* process, the Magus needs to make a Concentration roll of 9+ to emphasize those characteristics they find the most desirable, keeping them in the forefront of their mind while continuing the casting of the ritual.

The personality of any beast created by this spell, the inventor warns, may be stereotypical, or flawed. Hermetic magic has grave difficulties with the creation of intelligence. Creating a complex personality is one of the conundra facing Mentem specialists at the moment.

Since this ritual is essentially two spells performed together, it requires twice as much vis than is usual.

Some magi, of course, are simply lucky. They cast a basic CrAn spell and the beast respects them enough for bonding to occur. It's rare for a magus to accept another's creation as their familiar, as paranoia is considered a healthy emotion by many magi. Some magi have reported success with the kitten trick, where the creature they create is a juvenile that bonds to the magus as its *mother*, but this often creates psychological complications as the creature grows into what virtually amounts to a spouse.

## Magical adaptation of animals

Some Hermetic magi desire to alter their familiar magically before familiarization begins. The simplest method is to cast Instant or Permanent spells on the familiar. Since these mystical effects are either natural, or maintained by Hermetic magic, there is no attunement charge for these powers.

Some magi, however, desire a somewhat more durable alteration in the creature to which they are about to become bound. For example, one Hermetic wizard desired to so alter the structure of his pet octopus to allow it to fly through jetting, to breathe air, and to allow it to spray a colored smoke in the place of fluid. What's more, he didn't want a simple PeVi to turn his familiar into a flopping puddle of dying calamari. His ingenious solution is now standard for similar situations. He made the octopus his Talisman. Other magi have turned their animals into invested devices, but the Talisman trick is considered a particularly efficient use of magic by many.

An octopus (for instance), is invested thus:

- The octopus, in a tank, is taken into the laboratory. In the first season, 6 pawns of vis are expended upon it, opening it for enchantment. This creates the Talismanic bond.
- In the next season, the octopus is opened for one type of magic, in this case, +5 (camouflage, going unnoticed), as its master was a sneaky fellow.

## The invested enchantments were:

- MuAu 15: Breathes air as water, Constantly
- MuAq(Au) 5 (+10, Unlimited use) Change water or air into sepia cloud
- MuAn 17 Density: (30 Major change +5 Constant use /2 (Affect Governs item alone) . The octopus is so light that it floats in air. With most creatures this would be fatal, as they would be blown into nearby objects and crushed, but the rubbery consistency of the octopus, designed for the pressures of the deep seas, grants immunity to this otherwise fatal effect. The octopus is cautious to place it's tentacles firmly around nearby anchoring points if there's a wind up

- CrTe 10: Conjunction of the Invisible Anchor. When the wind is high, the octopus can summon a glass marble, which it wraps itself around, thereby gaining ballast and maximizing wind resistance.

- The octopus, of course, knows the triggering motions for the various powers.

When bound as a familiar, the magus gains a bonus of +2 on his lab total, due to the closeness of the Talismanic bond. Some magi report that the Talisman's bond is incorporated into the physical cord during its construction, a process that weakens it, preventing it from having a positive bond score. Certain high-ranking Bonisagian magi have indicated that a young magus might make a name for himself by developing a method of avoiding this effect.

## The Alchemical Alteration of Animals

The ancient alchemists of Arabia had abilities which have not yet been replicated by Hermetic alchemists, who use minor alchemical skills to bolster their quicker style of magic. It is possible to take the reproductive essences of two animals and combine them mystically to produce a magical hybrid. This process takes far longer than the gesture and words used to create Hermetic creatures, but unlike their Permanent durations, alchemical beings are considered *natural* and so cannot be dispelled. The Alchemists did not determine how to design animal minds, so this system is no more likely to produce an acceptable familiar than the other, save that for some magi only a winged cat would be an acceptable familiar. That being said, they did discover how to graft human minds onto animal bodies, though a mixing of human and animal reproductive essences. The difficulty with this is that the magus has no guarantee that the centaur or satyr they create in this way will want to bond with them as a familiar. All such cautions aside, there are at least three known examples of magi who have raised such halfplings as though they were children and have later successfully bonded to them. Such a centaur is believed active in Thebes at the moment.

Guernican theorists, who consider the mixing of human seed with animal muck to be scandalous and against the Code, with possible dispensation for Bjornaers, nonetheless agree that the animal-headed gods of the Egyptians may, in some few cases, represent avatars created for the Old ones by a similar process. They claim that it is likely that was a mixing of animal-formed Old One substance with human matter, rather than human matter with animal matter, that led to the ancient hybrids, which would mean that even if alchemical halfplings are made via the same technique, they are not made with equally worthy materials, and so their creations should probably be avoided. At the moment an informal compromise

allows the creation of halfplings in non-Christian states, or in places so distant from the mundanes that they will remain perpetually unaware of the products of this research.

Many Seekers favor halfpling-producing alchemy, as they believe that all magi are descended from Old Ones through interbreeding with humans. They consider it possible that, in time, the alchemists will develop techniques to permit dragons, or other ancient powers, to inseminate humans, essentially reverse engineering the Old Ones, or at least the servant races who are left within the world, thereby accessing broader mystical insights and more potent magical technologies. With these finer tools they hope to be able to uncover the secrets of the Old Ones more easily.

## Creating halfplings

Alchemical halfplings take a long time to produce, often killing the mother, making repeated attempts costly. The original version of this work came from Araby, and it breaches Hermetic limits. Users euphemistically call it *Hermetistic magic* (i.e., magic similar to that of Hermes).

## Preparation

The ensorcelled fetus needs to be bought to term in a mother that will not abort it. This requires a Muto Animal effect of either 30th level, which changes the nutrients in the blood, 40th level, which also rearranges the organs and makes labor simple, or 50th level, which transforms the mother into a halfpling. This may be done either alchemically or Hermetically. Since the change must be permanent, so that the mother may carry the fetus to term, this process requires vis.

- Requires a skill in Alchemy of 5+.
- Hermetic Magic Theory is not used in this process. Hermetic lab texts do not add to the Lab total. Studying the formula in alchemical writings provide experience points in Alchemy, but isn't of use in the laboratory. Without Hermetic Theory to guide in the application of its power, expenditure of vis cannot increase this working's lab total.

- Lab total: Intelligence + Muto + Animal (or equivalent, requisites used if cross-breeding between forms) + Alchemy + Alchemy Transformation Bonus of 2 + Aura.

Essentially this working creates a potion that acts immediately on the reproductive essences of the "parents" in the laboratory to fuse them together. This is a Muto Animal effect, but it's over in an instant and is relatively simple since the area of effect, which is about a teaspoon of reproductive fluid, is so incredibly small. It's suggested level is 40, but storyguides should vary this to suit the tone of their campaigns. This spell requires 8 points of Art-specific vis to complete. For every 5 levels of effect above 40, the alchemist may spend additional vis to alter another fetus. Usually each fetus requires a separate carrier to be immediately available.

The new creature, at birth, is a juvenile of its species, but it may not be dispelled unless there







was a botch somewhere in the process. The sigil of the wizard may be prominently displayed by the halfling.

The First Season:

The Season of Auras

In the first season, the familiar is prepared for enchantment. This process is a slow one, containing traditional and formalized usage of a thousand tiny enchantments.

Hermetic magi could perform familiarization far faster, yet they do not. Few are willing to take risks with magic that affects their Gift, their familiar, and large amounts of vis. Even those experimenting do so within extremely cautious parameters, not willing to tinker with Gift-altering rituals. Some player characters may wish to speed along the process by performing the initial enchantment quickly. Those who do so court the vagaries of the storyguide's imagination and the Experimentation Table.

Vis of flavors other than Vim cannot be used in this ritual unless both the creature and the magus already have a strong connection to that form or technique. In that case up to half the vis may be of another type, but this distorts the bond qualities later derived.

The Second Season:

The Season of Cords

In this season the magus creates magical connections between himself and the familiar. To someone with magical vision these look like thin threads of metal. They are called the gold, silver and bronze cords in *Ars Magica's* main rules. This supplement gives options other than these three, for example cords made of lead. So as to avoid confusion the cords are described by what they link, not what they are made from. The *gold* cord of a magus generated using the core rules need not, under these rules, be made of gold, so it is called the *spiritual* cord and similarly the other two cords are termed *mental* and *physical*.

The spiritual cord, usually golden, links the magus' Gift to the mystical nature of their companion. Mundane animals that have been selected for familiarization develop a weak mystical presence due to their preparation in the first season, into which this cord is anchored. The mental cord, usually silvered, links the minds and personalities of the partners. Even mundane creatures have a

personality, so this hooking is simple. The physical cord, which usually looks like bronze, links the bodies of the two companions. In creatures lacking a body, for example ghosts, a representative object, such as the ghost's favorite possession or skull, can be used.

Cord and Tincture Costs

	Common	Rare
	Score	Metal
Cord:	+0	0
	+1	5
	+2	15
	+3	30
Tincture:	+1	10
(usually)		

The creation of each cord requires a small amount of metal which acts as a focus during bonding. Some magi do not bother to acquire these materials, generating them magically instead. This can enhance the vividness of the magus' sigil into the bonds, which is often undesirable.

Alternative Metals

It is rare for metals other than gold, silver, copper or bronze to be used as foci during familiarization. Most magi are wary of the familiarization ritual, as it is long, expensive and bypasses their *Parma Magica*. Few wish to complicate it further. Specialists, or those few willing to experiment, sometimes choose an alternative metal that reflects their strengths or fears. *Criamon* magi, for example, often use quicksilver for their spiritual cords, while magi living in faerie forests, especially those of *House Tytalus*, sometimes forge their physical cords from iron.

List of alternate cords

The Four Usual Metals:

These metals are those with which Hermetic magi have the most practice. The techniques for their enchantment are the best understood, so these bonds are the easiest to make.

When a modifier is mentioned (for example, reduces number of Twilight points gained), its score is equal to the bond strength, unless otherwise stated.

Familiars gain benefits from cords and tinctures, described later, that parallel the benefits of the link to the magus.

Important Formulæ

Bond Score =  
Animál\* + Mentem  
+ Intellego + Affinities  
- (Magic Resistance + Size)

\*If the vis in a creature is other than Animál, that form may be used instead, so long as the magus has a skill of at least 10 in the new art. Storyguides may allow Vim to be used instead of Animál if the familiar is strongly tied to the Magical Realm, even if its vis is of another type.

## Gold

A gold spiritual cord allows you to avoid magical mistakes, reducing the number of botch rolls you need make by the strength of the cord, to a minimum of one.

In the mental cord, this metal banishes fear, hatred, and negative emotions. Magi and familiars may use their cord strength to modify Personality Trait rolls. If the mind of one, but not the other, is ever overcome by an outside force which stirs negative emotions, they may make a simple roll every sunrise. If it is 9+ the character regains control of their faculties. Some magi claim that this bond is worse than useless against mental influences counseling greed as it makes such domination easier.

A gold physical cord lends the body a quality of incorruptibility, so that they may use the bond strength in rolls to resist poisoning, disease and aging. This cord also attunes the senses of nocturnal familiars to the day, so that they suffer no penalty for daylight activity, although they do suffer penalties at night.

## Silver

Silvered cords in the spirit create the Cyclic Magic virtue (the full moon) in the magus. The Magic Might of the familiar rises and falls in the same cycle. The bonus is twice the bond strength score. The lunar cycle is usually too short for the bonus to aid in seasonal laboratory work.

The silver mental cord grants its strength to personality traits, to resistance against mental magic and mundane psychological influences. If your defenses fall, then your familiar may, once per day, make a stress roll using the bond score as a bonus. If the roll is 9+, you are free of the affliction, but if a botch is rolled, your companion also succumbs. This is considered a particularly good cord for those that wish to deal rationally with the Fae. It's said that in the war between Quendalon and Mendalus over the future of House Merinita, all of the Silver corders were on one side, all of the Copper corders on the other.

The silver physical cord attunes the magus' senses to the night. Although daylight is too bright to be comfortable, a magus with this bond can see under moonlight as though under the sun and under starlight as though on a day with heavy cloud. The bond score adds to Perception rolls made at night by the magus, and by the familiar if they were originally day-orientated. Day orientated familiars, and humans, who receive this quality lose 1 from their Perception in weak light, or 2 in very bright light, such as the noonday sun.

## Bronze

There hasn't, in the history of the order, been a magus with a bronze spiritual or mental cord. Bronze is not a pure elemental metal and, as such, is best suited for earthy and material things.

Some Verditius claim that, in theory, it should add to lab totals to create mystical artifacts and that, in the mental cord, it should enhance the ability to co-ordinate diverse talents. This is considered, by some, to be a promising, if low-priority, area of work for a researcher.

This physical cord grants bonuses to Soak, healing and deprivation resistance rolls. It does not aid in the withstanding of fatigue.

## Copper

The copper cord is of ancient lineage and usually acted as the physical bond. It is very attractive to faeries, who like to play with whoever is at the ends of this interesting bit of twine.

Copper in the spiritual cord attunes one to the realm of Faerie. Although the magus does not gain the Faerie Magic virtue, they can cast spells in Faerie Aura up to twice the cord strength as though it were magical. This cord makes botches more likely in Faerie areas, but so long as the botch is smaller than the bond score it is under the control of the senior nearby fae, which usually prevents it being lethal. The familiar may not determine what the effects of botches are. Familiars gain three added points of might per point of bond strength while in faerie areas.

Copper in the mental cord makes the magus hedonistic and indulgent. Although less able to overcome the temptations of the flesh, bottle or platter, the magus is rarely frightened, disheartened or otherwise out of spirits. The bond quality acts as a modifier on all appropriate personality rolls. Unlike many other mental cords, this one is ensorcelled so that it may not be used to influence the mind of the magus.

Copper physical cords add to Stamina, acting as a modifier on Fatigue rolls due to over-indulging, carnal pleasure, dancing and sleepless nights. It doesn't aid in resisting fatigue due to casting spells.

These versions of the copper cords are Greco-Roman, used by the followers of Bacchus, and slightly different versions occur elsewhere. The copper cords do not require the Faerie Magic virtue to create, although those making them may add their Faerie Magic score as an affinity to the bond pool.

## The Unusual Metals

Cords of the following types are unusual within the Order since the best method of making them is not entirely understood. If the storyguide decides that during the saga a breakthrough in magical theory has occurred, one or more of these could be moved into the Usual section, and new metals added to the Unusual group. Bronze, for example, was an Unusual metal within the early Order. Each of the following cords costs ten more points than a cord of equivalent potency, however they may allow the use of Affinities that would not otherwise enter the bond pool.





## Iron

Some magi, skilled in conflict, create an iron spiritual cord. It aids spells which draw or restore blood, as well as those that harm iron-influenced fae. It also assists in laboratory work that requires smithying iron.

When used as a mental cord, the magus develops an inflexible personality (Bond Strength +3 to Determined) and may use this unshakability to resist mind-affecting magic. Faerie glamours are oddly impotent against iron-minded magi and their familiars, doubling this bonus. The stubbornness of iron-minded magi prevents this cord being used to rescue those befuddled by mind-affecting magic, save if it is of Faerie origin. In that case, the spell can be broken by a contest of wills between the two partners, each rolling a stress die + Determined personality trait, with the unaffected partner gaining double the bond score as a bonus. The more Determined partner convinces the other of their point of view, either extending or disrupting the spell effect.

The iron cord is usually physical. It assists in the use of iron, both in combat and artifice, aids healing of injuries which have bled, and makes the skin of the magus burn those faeries so harmed by iron. Resistance is also increased against those glamours of the fae that distort the body. Fae usually hate magi with iron cords although some few smith and tinker faeries do not have this reaction. Check with your storyguide before designing an iron physical cord. In some stories it is far more useful than others, and your storyguide may wish to adjust its cost.

## Lead

As it is potent in the arts of warding and bonding, lead is a favored metal of those tinkering with the diabolic. It is also popular amongst the spirit masters of House Ex Miscellanea. Its dark color may give rise to rumors of *black cords* between diabolists and their familiars.

Lead spiritual cords aid in the binding of the spiritual presences of mystical creatures, including other magi. The cord's bonus extends only to those processes which ward, protect or seal. Botch rolls are reduced on magical effects of these types.

When used in a mental cord, lead makes the magus introverted (gain Private personality trait equal to the bond score). A familiar attempting to break their master free of mystical coercion, but not mundane trickery or illusions, may roll a stress die daily. If they score 9+ they succeed, but botches are treated as simple failures, as the lead wards the mind of the unaffected partner. Magi may similarly save their familiars. A lead physical cord aids in the bonding of the physical form of mystical beings, save those of the divine realm. It also assists in magic that wards areas, objects and individuals. If the cord is ever attacked, it is treated as having a strength of +3, regardless of its actual score.

## Mercury

This unusual spiritual cord aids in rolls concerning the Enigma and Twilight. It increases the number of botch rolls on all spells involving Vim and adds to all rolls for Twilight entrance, but makes Twilight easier to control and return from, as the familiar acts as an anchor in the mundane world. It also reduces the number of Twilight points gained, by an amount equal to the bond score, to a minimum of 1.

The Quicksilver cord, as it is sometimes called, is rarely used as a mental or physical cord, its effects are considered excessively deleterious. Quicksilver alters perception sufficiently to make concentration difficult. The character develops the Visions Talent, but it's always active, so that they are unable to interact with the world directly. Quicksilver also gradually poisons the body. Some Crialmon claim there are benefits to each cord, but have never explained them to those without Enigmatic Wisdom in a comprehensible manner. They seem to focus on the idea of falling into Twilight more rapidly, or living partially in Twilight even while on Earth, neither of which appeal to the majority of the magi of Europe.

At the storyguide's discretion, those forging a Mercury cord may add their Enigmatic Wisdom score to their Bond Pool.

## Fourth cords?

In the early years of the Order specialists sometimes created a fourth bond, that represented their Gift's strengths. For example Merinita magi would sometimes create the three usual bonds, then another of green, tarnished copper that linked the faerie nature of the two partners. This was usually a wasted effort, as a copper spiritual bond fulfils a similar function without dividing the bond pool into so many cords. Some diabolists are thought to have *black cords*, but these are usually just cords of lead, since infernal magic is invisible to Hermetic magi in many cases. True *black cords* tie the soul of the magus to the demon and are beyond the power of Hermetic magic to create. In the modern Order it is more usual to tinker with the first three cords than weaken them by designing a fourth.

If a player character wishes to design a fourth cord, they must describe to their storyguide:

- What the cord links
- What the cord is made from. If this is not a common metal the cord uses the higher scale of costs given above.
- What bonuses the cord gives to both the magus and familiar.

A fourth cord can be constructed at the same time as the first three, or can be woven separately in the same year-long process that created the others. If a cord is created later, it costs a Twilight point per point of Bond Strength, as the anchors of the cord permanently distort the magus.



## Tinctures

Tinctures are formed by allowing impurities to enter the focus during the creation of the cords, or the bond itself during retempering. Although retempering cannot make a bond stronger, it can add a tincture, so particularly skilled magi can have oddly tainted bonds. Each taint draws 10 points out of the bond score pool.

**Unless otherwise noted, a tincture adds 1 to those scores it modifies.**

Tincture modifiers accumulate with cord modifiers, so that, for example, if a magus has an iron spiritual cord of strength 3, tintured with gold, and they botch a roll on a PeCo spell that would draw blood, then the number of botch dice is reduced by four. Many tinctures reduce botch rolls, but they will never remove the last unless specifically noted.

A cord cannot be tintured with its own substance. For instance, a gold cord may not have a gold tincture.

A cord repeatedly tintured with the same substance does not gain greater effect. For example, a gold cord with a silver tincture will not, in game terms, be altered by a second silver tincture. Some magi hypothesize that a cord given repeated tinctures changes from one type to another, so that a gold cord repeatedly tintured with iron might in time become an iron cord tintured gold, but no magus has, as yet, demonstrated this process.

Tinctures look like marbling in the substance of the cord they modify. Magi may make Magic Theory rolls to identify a tincture and guess at its effects.

To create a tincture a magus must have some of the

appropriate substance available. Creating this material permanently, using vis, is possible, but may warp the bond with the mage's sigil. Some storyguides may limit the availability of powerful tinctures by requiring player characters to collect Stones of Virtue (see *Hedge Magic* for details) from which to create their tinctures.

### Bronze

Bronze is a composite metal, made from copper, tin, silver, lead and zinc. The magical properties of each of these metals interfere with the others, and this makes bronze less useful for magic than the metals would be if pure.

The amount of metal used to make a tincture is quite small, and a tiny quantity of bronze, unless created with extreme care, usually comes from a batch which has patches where the alloy's ingredients have mixed in different quantities. Unless absolutely pure bronze is used, for example using a CrTe spell, add three botch dice to the tinturing process, with a minor botch indicating that a tincture of one of the component metals has been created instead.

- A bronze tincture in the spiritual cord adds one to Lab Totals when enchanting solid objects.

- A bronze tincture in the mental cord grants a Knack in one Craft skill related to metalurgy.

- A bronze tincture in the body adds one to Soak and to healing and deprivation rolls.

### Copper

- A tincture in the cord of spirit adds one botch to spellcasting in Faerie Aurae, so long as the dominant Faerie has some correspondence to what copper represents. If the magus botches spellcasting by a single die when in such a faerie area, the effects of the botch are under the control of the dominant local faerie. This fae may not be the magus' familiar.

- A tincture of the Mind grants a bonus on Faerie Lore.

- A tincture of the body makes one mildly uncomfortable while touching iron, and makes faeries more accommodating of your presence. It also increases sexual stamina slightly.

### Gold

Gold is considered by many to be the optimal metal for magic, so its tinctures are common. As the sovereign metal, it emphasizes control over the effects of lesser metals.

- A gold tincture added to any spiritual cord reduces the number of botch rolls on magic.

- A gold tincture combined with a mental cord adds to attempts to overcome the minds of others, by magic or by mundane persuasion.

- A gold tincture mixed into the physical cord grants mastery over exhaustion and pain, reducing fatigue. Casters of formulaic magic with this tincture, if they fail to reach their level of effect by up to three points, do not lose a Fatigue level. The Ease Factor of Combat Fatigue rolls is reduced by one.

### Iron

The metal of blood and war. Many mistakenly believe that iron is anti-magical, because it scares the Fae. On the contrary, it's terribly magical, which is why they avoid it. Iron's practitioners, such as smiths and knights, are steeped in its power, with the ability to curse, heal, or kill.

- Iron in the spirit reduces the botch rolls on spells that heal bleeding, kill, or maim.

- Iron in the mind adds one point to the Determined Personality Trait and one to the favored metal weapon skill of the character.

- Iron of the body removes the penalty for Light Wounds.







## Lead

- A tincture of spirit reduces botch rolls on any warding, sealing or protecting magic.
- A tincture of mind adds one to the magus' Private Personality Trait, and adds one to their Occult Lore skill.
- A tincture of lead in the body is a most unhealthy state of affairs and is generally avoided. It does, however, prevent the blood of the magus being used as an arcane connection without their consent.

## Mercury

- A tincture of Mercury in the Spirit will add one to Twilight entry and control rolls.
- Tinctures in the Mind and Body are eventually fatal and are avoided.

## Silver

- Silver is the metal of the moon and the mind.
- A silver tincture in a spiritual cord aids in those spells that create or destroy perceptions and reduces botch rolls on those spells.
  - A silver tincture in a mental cord reduces or enhances madness or passion. A player may alter their personality traits by one, in either direction, before they roll on them.
  - A silver tincture added to a physical cord makes the couple immune to lycanthropy, if they wish to be. It also strengthens to the ability to see under moonlight, adding one to Perception rolls.

## Stone Tinctures

There are many other tinctures than those given here. Players are encouraged to experiment with unusual combinations.

## Carbuncle

The carbuncle is a red stone, or, more specifically to

magi, a sort of vis-tainted stone that emits light in the dark. Either type can be used to create these tinctures.

- If linked to the spirit, this tincture reduces the possibility of magical botches when fighting sneaky or ignoble opponents. The magus rolls either one or two fewer botch dice, at the storyguide's discretion, based on the vileness of the adversary.
- The carbuncle tincture of the mind allows one to combat ignorance, shedding the light of truth. The magus gains a Knack in the Disputatio skill.
- A red tincture in the Body adds to the strength of the sinews and blood. When in complete darkness, both the familiar and magus gain one point of Strength.

## Cobalt

This taint is linked to the faeries of the mines, that curse veins of silver and cause cave-ins.

- If in the spirit, this tincture confounds the magic linked to the silver cords of others. While touching a magus or their familiar, their silver cord temporarily ceases to function. If resisting a spell aided by the silver cord or a silver tincture of another magus, this tincture adds 3 to the magus' resistance. The magus can permanently disenchant magical artifacts made of silver by touching them. This ability acts as a *Disenchant* ritual (PeVi 30) but requires no time or vis to use.
- A cobalt tincture in the mind gives the magus a little of the cunning and craft of the kobolds, adding one point to each of Guile, Faerie Lore, Craft (Mining) and the Personality Trait Deceptive.
- A cobalt tincture of the body shrinks the magus, so that they and their familiar each lose a point of Size, as well as a Body and Fatigue level. In exchange the magus can see in darkness as though it were twilight, in dim light as though it was day and gains +1 on all aging rolls. This trait is incompatible with the *Faerie Blood* virtue, unless the Faerie type is similar in nature to the Kobolds.

## Coral

The coral tincture is sovereign over flowing things.

- If in the spirit this taint alters the flow of vis about the caster. If in an Aura other than magical, it creates a little bubble of magic about them, which makes the Aura one point lower than it would otherwise be. Characters attuned to Faerie Magic, Pious Magi, or Diabolists may make Coral Tinctures aligned to other realms.
- If in the mind, this taint adds to all rolls concerning water, save those involving the Art of Aquam.
- If in the body, this taint staunches wounds. The character's first Body level, representing minor injury (-1), instead has no penalty, since cuts and scratches, although present, do not bleed.

## Diamond

The diamond is the stone of insurmountable resistance and indefensible assault.

- If in the cord of the spirit this tincture aids all Penetration rolls.
- If in the cord of the mind this tincture adds to all rolls to resist coercion.
- If in the cord of the body this tincture adds to the Soak score.

## Emerald

The emerald is the stone of serpents and temptation.

- If in the spirit, this tincture removes one botch roll from all spells that create passion, or affect serpents.
- If in the mind, this tincture gives the Entrancement virtue, however the value of the skill may not rise above one unless purchased separately. In that case, it gives a +1 on all Entrancement rolls.
- If in the body, this tincture makes the body odorless. It also adds one each in up to three Personality Traits that deal with passion, guile or temptation.

## Marble

Marble is cold and hard. It resists alteration, and represents pride and indifference.

- A marble tincture in the spirit reduces the number of botch rolls in Infernal and Faerie auras.

- A taint of marble in the mind adds one to the mage's Leadership skill, it also gives a Personality Trait of Somber +1.

- A taint of marble in the cord of the body adds one to all rolls dealing with resisting damage due to cold. Marble makes one highly resistant to the common cold and similar afflictions. This is popular amongst the Bards of Ely Island in Britain, and other covenanters who make their homes in swamps.

## Opal

Opals are for ill-luck.

- If in the spirit this taint will grant the Hex ability, to a value of 1, which may not be increased with experience. If the character already has the Hexing virtue, this taint adds one to their score.

- If in the mind, this stone allows a magus to know when a hex has been placed upon them, although they do not know its effects, or caster, save by deduction.

- If in the body, the spell allows the free movement of unnatural things, including magi. It removes the penalties associated with the Gift, although not the Blatant Gift, when dealing with humans. Animals are, however, still aware of the character's nature.

## Pearl

The pearl tincture is valued for its ability to aid in resisting contamination and poisoning. It is especially favored by magi who imbibe to excess, or who are part of the hedge magic traditions that commune with fey powers through drunkenness.

- If in the spiritual cord, this taint adds one to Concen-

tration rolls penalized by poisoning, including inebriation.

- If in the mental cord, this taint adds one to all rolls involving Intelligence or Perception, if the character is being penalized due to poisoning or drunkenness.

- If in the body, the taint modifies by 1 all rolls to avoid poisoning or drunkenness, and adds one to all skill checks involving Strength, Stamina, Dexterity or Quickness while the character is under penalty for being drunk or poisoned. Character may make a Perception check of 9+ to taste poison in comestibles.

- Similar effects are sometimes created using an Amethyst Tincture.

## Quartz

Quartz is the stone of invisibility (a Magic Theory roll of 12+ to discern).

- If in the cord of the spirit, the quartz tincture allows the magus to remove their sigil from spells they are casting. Spells cast from a magical item retain the sigil, which was placed on them in the laboratory.

- If in the mental cord this tincture adds one to all rolls that keep thoughts hidden.

- If in the physical cord, this tincture adds one to all rolls that involve camouflage.

## Sulfur

Sulfur is the diabolic tincture. The effects of sulfuric tinctures vary from diabolist to diabolist but generally they grant:

- In the spirit, one less botch roll on spells involving demons.

- If in the mind, the ability to breach the Hermetic limitation concerning the lies of demons weaker than yours, so long as those demons do not serve your familiar. If you lack a demon, this taint allows you to Sense Unholiness in animals of your familiar's type.

- In the body, ability to produce Infernally-tainted vis. This is a most unhealthy tincture, and creates the gaunt and aged look of some diabolists.

## Umbur

Umbur is a dark brown earth often used as a dye. It is associated with the shadow of the sundial and numerology.

- If in the cord of the spirit suffer one less botch dice on Intéllego or shadowy spells

- In the cord of the mind you gain the ability to perform a mystical feat of numeracy once per week, such as counting out an exchequer, or predicting the future using (Intelligence + Divination of 1 + stress) against the table on p. 45 of the main rulebook. This talent is unspecialized and may not be increased with experience, but if the character is already a diviner, add 1 to skill.

- If in the cord of the Body: You have an affinity with time. Your internal clock is flawlessly accurate and you can estimate the time a process will take with extraordinary accuracy. When giving a letter to a redcap, for example, you can roll (Intelligence + Divination of 1 + knack of 3 + stress) to determine when the reply is likely to arrive. This talent is unspecialized and cannot be improved with experience.

## Whetstone

Whetstones are used to sharpen blades and are hung around the necks of liars to warn people to beware their tongues. They also sharpen the wits and bring the emotions to peak.

- If in the spirit, the tincture makes it easier for the magus to master spells. Each spell costs one less point to master than otherwise, so spells of the first magnitude are mastered automatically.

- If in the mind, the tincture gives a Knack in the Guile Talent of +1. Player may also alter each of their character's personality traits by 1 point.

- In the body, this tincture allows the magus to shame liars with a glance. For those lying to the magus, it is as if they have Piercing Gaze.







The Third Season:  
The Resonances

Once the partners are attuned, then linked, a season is spent evoking the qualities of the familiar in the magus, and the qualities of the magus in the familiar. Through this process the couple adjust to each other and develop a working relationship.

**Qualities:** You may not purchase any quality multiple times unless its description includes the flag "Multiple". Ranged qualities are in effect only so long as the partners are within 100 feet of each other, unless the description notes otherwise. You may not take qualities that overlap in their effects. Ask your storyguide for advice if you are unsure if a combination is permissible. If you find this section unclear, try reading the same notes in the core rulebook, where the qualities are described slightly differently.

General Virtues

**Shared Virtues: Multiple.** The magus gains a virtue based on the typical abilities or natural magical talents of the familiar, while it gains a copy of one of the magus' virtues or a human quality that is an improvement on its own. Neither loses the ability it has traded to the other. This bond quality costs three times the combined values of the virtues traded. For example if the magus gains a +2 virtue and the familiar a +3 one, this quality costs 15 points.

**New Powers: Multiple.** New powers cost a number of bond quality points equal to the level of the spell simulated. Each use costs:

Spell level	Might Points
5	1 or a Fatigue level
10	1 or a Fatigue level
15	2 or a Fatigue level
20	3 or 2 Fatigue levels
25	5 or 2 Fatigue levels
30	10 or 3 Fatigue levels

Many bond qualities break this general guideline, since the familiar bond provides a wonderful avenue for magical interaction between the parties. Additionally, the special talents, odd tinctures and natural powers involved sometimes make certain types of bond quality easier to evoke. When designing a magical power, check with your storyguide before using it in play.

**Twilight Loss:** For every five points spent on this bond quality, one Twilight point is transferred to the familiar. The effects of this process are unpredictable, but can be bought as flaws during the character creation process.

**Virtues: Multiple.** For every ten points spent on this bond quality, either the magus, the

familiar or the cords themselves develop a virtue (value +1). Multiple purchases can be used to create more powerful virtues. This bond quality is easily abused, and storyguide should carefully consider the effect on the saga of permitting new virtues to be easily acquired. Players should give careful consideration to *why* the virtue forms, and should note that the virtue is only active while the pair remain in range.

**Suppress Flaws: Ranged, Multiple.** This quality costs six times the value of the flaws the characters wish to suppress. If the partners leave bond range, the flaws reassert themselves.

+ 5

**Attunement: Multiple.** This quality attunes one natural magical ability of the familiar's to Hermetic magic. All of the familiar's natural magical talents must be attuned before any other bond quality may be purchased. Any natural magical talents not attuned at this time are lost and cannot be regained by later retempering.

**Awareness: Ranged.** Each partner knows the direction and approximate distance to the other. Each gains a quirk related to the sensory strengths of their partner.

**Extended Bond:** The effective range of your bond, and therefore your bond qualities, extends to one mile.

**Frog's Mouth: Ranged.** The partners may teleport from one to the other any object that can fit in the mouth of the sender. Check with your storyguide before selecting this quality.

**Linked Targets: Ranged.** Whenever one of you is affected by magic, so is the other. Although this means that harmful magic is transferred, it is listed as a virtue because it reduces the vis cost of permanent healing substantially.

**Material Bond: Restricted, Multiple.** Each partner gains one point in a physical statistic, of your choice, in which the other is superior. The physical statistics are Strength, Stamina, Dexterity, Quickness and Presence. If one partner is superior, or equal, in all physical characteristics, to the other, then this quality may not be purchased. This trait may be purchased multiple times, but may not raise any statistic over 3 + the usual score of the species of the recipient. Each time the bond is purchased, a quirk relating to the physical appearance of each partner is duplicated upon the other.

**Mental Bond: Restricted, Multiple:** As Material Bond above, but relating to Intelligence, Perception, Presence and Communication. Each time this type of bond is purchased a mental quirk, Personality Trait or psychological habit of each is duplicated upon the other.

**Primary Power:** The magus gains 2 levels in the Art most closely tied to the familiar's strongest natural magical talent. If the familiar lacks natural magical talents, then the Art relates to their most potent natural ability. In exchange, the familiar develops a new magical ability tied to the

magus' strongest Art. This ability is limited in effect to the equivalent of a tenth or lower level spell. If it affects only the familiar, it costs two magic might points to use, but if it extends to others, it costs three. Should the familiar lack magical might, the new ability may be used either three times per day, if personal, or twice daily, if extendible.

**Ring Magic: Ranged.** When casting spells that require the caster to pace out the boundary of the area of effect, the familiar may mark out part or all of the boundary instead. This reduces the difficulty level of the Concentration roll required for drawing very large rings by the strength of the pair's spiritual cord. Magi gain, with this quality, a sense of the territorial markings of members of the familiar's species. Their familiars develop a finer understanding of human concepts of owned, personal and political space.

**Shared Ability: Multiple.** Each partner gains a non-magical ability of the other, or increases an ability in which their partner's skill is superior. The ability's score becomes the same as that of the partner. This bond may be taken multiple times, with different abilities being raised in each exchange. Each time this bond is taken each partner receives a quirk from the other that relates to the ability traded. This ability transfers skill, but does not allow unnatural effects. A mage who learns to fly from his bird familiar needs to shift into a winged form before that skill can be put to use, for example.

**Shared Languages:** Your familiar's speech becomes intelligible to other humans, while you develop the capacity to talk to animals of the same species as your familiar. Your familiar speaks either Latin or your native language, but not both, at your choice. Animals of your familiar's species will find your accent strange and your speech poor, a problem paralleled in your familiar's interactions with humans. Each of you gains a speech habit of the other.

**Shared Protection: Ranged.** Each of you is protected by the magic resistance of the other, although these do not accumulate, so in practice you have the best resistance of either of you. Your familiar does not gain the ability to instigate your Parma Magica, but is within its protection whenever you do. You each gain a defensive quirk of the other. This isn't a combat technique or skill in avoidance, it's just a habit, like a dog's preference to walk beside walls when reconnoitering a new area.<sup>1</sup>

**Shared Emotions:** You feel each other's emotions. Whenever one of you makes a Personality Trait roll, the other also undergoes its effects. The familiar gains a Confidence point (to a maximum of the magus's score) and the magus gains the familiar's highest Personality Trait at a score equal to the familiar's.

**Talking Telepathy: Ranged** The magus and the familiar may communicate telepathically, but to do so they must vocalize the thoughts they wish to send. Inarticulate familiars must still make

appropriate noises, like barking or chirping, to communicate.

## + 10

**Mental Communication: Ranged.** Each of you can share thoughts, images, emotional state and ideas with the other. Mentally communicated images are sufficient for selecting targets at Arcane Connection range. Each gains a Personality Trait of the other.

**Secondary Power:** Your familiar develops a magical power, related to any Art, equivalent to a spell of up to a 15th level. If the ability affects others, it costs 2 Magic Might, or in creatures lacking Magic Might can be used thrice per day. If it affects only the familiar, then it costs single magic might point, or in creatures lacking might, works four times daily.

In exchange, the magus adds 4 levels to a single Art that is related to one of the familiar's natural powers.

**Shared Forms: Ranged.** When both partners so wish, they may trade forms. That is, the familiar takes human shape and the magus takes on animal shape. This requires each to spend a Fatigue level or five Might points and make an Intelligence + Concentration roll of 9+. The two switch back using the same process. If one partner is rendered unconscious or dies, each returns to their natural form. If one wishes to change back, but the other does not, the dominant partner (the magus, unless the Familiar Dominant flaw has been purchased) gets their way.

**Shared Personal Effects:** When the magus and familiar wish, spells of Personal range cast upon either partner also affects the other. If the spell requires vis, like those that heal instantly, it needs be paid only for the first target. A complicating factor is that spells usually require Animál and Corpus requisites to affect both partners. Each partner gains a physical trait of the other, usually related to body structure or posture.

**Overlapping Resistance.** Similar to the Shared Protection quality, but if the higher resistance value fails to give protection, the attacking magic still needs to overcome the lower resistance value also, on a separate roll.

**Shared Touch Range:** That which the familiar is touching is, for magical purposes, within the Touch range of the magus. Similarly, that which the magus is touching can be affected with the Touch ranged powers of the familiar. This quality does not allow the partners to share sensory information, Touch referring only to a range of effect, not tactile sensation. Each develops a trait of the other related to the manipulation of objects.

**Shared Speech:** The familiar's speech becomes completely clear to humans. It has linguistic abilities that mirror the mage's exactly. The magus, in return, may speak to any creature of the same general class, terrestrial, avian, aquatic, as the familiar. Each partner gains a prominent vocal







characteristic of the other and, in some cases, their voices are altered tremendously.

**Sympathetic Emotions:** You feel each other's emotions. Whenever one of you makes a Personality Trait roll, the other also undergoes its effects, if desired. You may resist your partner's emotional surge with a roll on the appropriate trait, with the difficulty 3 points higher than on the original roll. The familiar gains a Confidence point (to a maximum number equal to the magus') and the magus gains the familiar's highest Personality Trait at a score equal to the familiar's. The Sympathetic and Shared Emotions virtues should not be taken together.

## exempli gratia

Gregor is assailed by the animated decaying corpse of his shield grog. He needs to make a Brave roll of 6+ to avoid being terrified. He fails, and this emotion washes into Berthold, his familiar boar. To avoid being terrified, Berthold needs to roll 9+ on Brave. If he succeeds Gregor will also be Brave, if his player wants him to be.

Aramis is hunting through a ruin when a seductive woman in black with a cute tail beckons him with a crooked finger. He needs to roll Lust of 5+ to avoid following her into her den. He fails, but his familiar can roll Religious (or Chaste or Misogynistic) of 8+ to bring his hormones under control.

**Transferred Fatigue: Ranged.** Each of you may take a Fatigue level from the other. You may not pass on a second Fatigue level until the first has been recovered, although you may still receive a level from your partner. If the transfer would knock your partner unconscious it fails. Each of you gains a sleeping habit of the other.

**Unlimited Bond:** Your characters benefit from their mystical connection regardless of the distance between you.

## + 15

**Cross-fire: Ranged.** Whenever the magus casts a spell, the familiar may cast an identical spell at the cost of a Magic point or Fatigue level per ten spell levels. The target of both spells must be the same, and must be within an imaginary circle formed by the position of the casters. Imagine that they are standing on the opposite sides of a ring. If the target is also within that ring, then the second spell may be cast. Cross-fired spells must not require vis.

**Humanoid:** The familiar develops an anthropomorphic body, learns to walk on its back legs and develops hands. In return, the magus may develop quite marked animal features, including the ability to walk on all fours.

**Shapechange:** Either of you can assume the shape of the other's species by making an Intelligence + Concentration roll of 9+. This change costs the magus a Fatigue level, or the familiar 5 Might

points, or, lacking Might, a Fatigue level. Each hour the shapeshifted character must make a Fatigue roll of 9+, or lose a Fatigue level and revert to their initial form. If rendered unconscious while shapeshifted, the partner immediately reverts to their own species.

**Shared Magic: Ranged.** The familiar gains the ability to cast minor spells related to the magus' strongest Art, while the magus gains the ability to use a magical talents of the familiar's. The familiar may cast spells of level 5 or lower, at the cost of a Magic point each. If the familiar has no Magic points they may use Fatigue levels instead. The magus can make an Intelligence + Concentration roll of 9+ and spend a Fatigue level to use, once, a specified magical ability or natural power of the familiar.

**Shared Sight Range: Ranged.** That which the familiar can see is, for spellcasting purposes, within the Sight range of the magus. Similarly, that which the magus can see may be affected by Sight ranged powers of the familiar. This quality doesn't allow the transfer of sensory information, Sight in this case referring only to a distance from each partner. Each partner gains a sense of what is visually pleasing to the other.

**Shared Wounds: Ranged.** Each of you may take a wound for the other. That damage that exceeds the Soak score of the injured passes along the physical cord, so long as it would not be fatal to the recipient. Until that damage is permanently healed, the partner may not receive a fresh injury using this quality, although they can still pass injury to their companion.

**Single Life Force:** The life force of both partners is stored in only one of their bodies. Should the other body be destroyed, it can be reconstructed using magic, or will heal itself, from even terrible injuries, in a season. Should the body that contains both life-forces die, then both characters pass to their eternal reward, leaving a mindless body behind them that will usually starve to death. Sometimes a ghost, faerie, spirit or demon will enter the body as a motivating intelligence, which prevents it from dying, but does not transfer it to the player's control.

## + 20

**Shared Perceptions: Ranged.** This virtue bundles together the Mental Communication and Shared Sight Range virtues.

**Traded Minds: Ranged.** The familiar and magus can swap bodies. Since their skills travel with the minds, this means that the characters may not initially know how to co-ordinate the muscles of their bodies, and may have difficulty walking. To attempt flying without a great deal of practice is probably suicidal. All rolls when unskilled are at -3 and have an extra botch dice. If one partner dies while their bodies are swapped they are, at the gamemaster's discretion, either trapped in their new host, or returned to their own bodies.

+ 25

**Translocation: Ranged.** The familiar and the magus can exchange places at the cost of a Fatigue level. Ask your storyguide before selecting this quality.

**Flight from Azrael: Ranged.** At death, the spirit of the dead partner flees to the body of the living partner. This prevents the second partner from dying sympathetically, or pining for their lost friend, but it does prevent either partner from finding a new familiar. With the permission of the storyguide the dead partner may be redesigned and played as a ghost, but most familiars of this type become little more than a voice in the head of their host. Remember that in Ars Magica spirits (ghosts) and souls are different, so this quality does not breach the Hermetic limit of the Soul.

**Warped Bodies: Ranged.** Under stress, each partner takes on the beneficial qualities of the other. A magus in battle might develop the hide and tusks of his boar familiar, while his familiar might develop hands, a bipedal run and the ability to speak clearly. Such creatures are regularly mistaken for lycanthropes, but do not have their vulnerabilities. Each also develops some of the weaknesses of the other, so a maga turning into a human snake will become lethargic if the environment around her is cold. Once the stress is removed or overcome, the partners change back, however repeated shapeshifting can cause physical traits to be transferred between the partners.

+ 30

**Teleport: Ranged.** The magus or familiar can teleport to the side of their partner at the cost of a Fatigue level. Ask your storyguide before selecting this virtue.

## General Flaws

**Biological Clock:** You age at the rate of the familiar. Discuss with your storyguide if this is a virtue or flaw, and how much it costs.

**Exchange Flaws:** The familiar and magus trade personal flaws, or attributes of their species that act as flaws once traded. For example a raptor that receives human sight purchases it as the Poor Eyesight flaw. This quality gives three times the sum of the exchanged flaws in bond pool points. For example if the magus gets a -2 flaw and the familiar a -1 flaw, this quality is worth -9 points.

**Jealous Pack:** To bind themselves to the magus the familiar has had to leave the social hierarchy into which it was born. This may provoke anger and retaliation from members of its species. This flaw's value is determined by the storyguide after determining how dangerous these enemies are, and how regularly they are to be used in the saga.

**Roving:** The familiar or magus feels a wanderlust that the other does not share. At the begin-

ning of each season, the player rolls a simple die. If the roll is equal to or less than the flaw's value divided by five, then the two are separated for that season.

**Twilight Points:** The creation of the bond soaks the magus with magic and causes irreparable harm. The magus gains Twilight points equal to one third the value of the flaw. The character does not roll on the Twilight tables.

-5

**Independence:** Although you always band together in times of need, your magus and familiar have an unusual degree of independence of outlook. Each acts on their own initiative on a regular basis.

**Limited Bond:** Those bond qualities that are ranged and have positive values are only operative when the couple are within 5 paces of each other. Negative bond qualities still operate to a 100 pace range.

**Size: Multiple.** The familiar becomes smaller as the bonds are formed. Each time this virtue is purchased, the familiar loses a point of Size, a Body level, and a Fatigue level. Recalculate the familiar's combat statistics to account for its new diminutiveness. The character's bond pool and scores should be determined before this diminution takes place. Although the creature's smaller size does not expand the pool when the flaw is first chosen, if the mage later wishes to retemper the bonds, the creature's smaller size is taken into account.

Storyguides should note that it's a rare horse that'll allow itself to be shrunk to the size of a dormouse, or even the size of a pony. Size and breeding success are closely interlinked, and few animals will be willing to sacrifice the idea of progeny for better bond qualities. As always, players should use this flaw sensibly, rather than as a sink to store flaw points.

**Sympathetic Fatigue: Ranged.** When either of you are fatigued the other must make a Fatigue stress roll 6+ or also lose a Fatigue level. On a botched roll, two levels are lost. Your sleep cycles synchronize.

**Sympathetic Pain: Ranged.** In the round following injury, the partner not injured suffers modifiers as if they were. If partner is already injured, they are only affected by the most serious wound. Each partner gains a muscular reflex, probably a pain response, from the other.

**Temperamental Bond:** Your bond qualities cease to work in certain rare circumstances, such as when in a large city, or when one of the pair can hear church bells ringing. If the magus' spellcasting suffers from deleterious circumstances, the two flaws usually parallel.

-10

**At Odds:** The couple regularly bicker and argue, often working against each other, although







when threatened by an outsider they will set aside their differences temporarily. Each has a Loyalty to (partner) Personality Trait of +3. Each of you gains a debating tactic, or some other psychological stratagem, from their partner.

**Blatant Gift:** Once the familiar develops links to the magus, it also develops the repulsive air of those tainted with the Gift. Other animals of the familiar's species will hate and fear it, attacking it if they feel they can destroy it. Animals particularly sensitive to the Gift, like cats, dogs and horses, will instinctively shun or attack the familiar.

**Undependable Bond:** Your bond qualities cease to work in certain common circumstances, such as when being talked to, or when outside. If the magus' spellcasting suffers from deleterious circumstances, the two flaws usually parallel.

**Size:** As the bonds form, the size of the magus is reduced. Magi lose a point of Size, a Body level and a Fatigue level.

**Tight Bond:** The magus and familiar only gain the benefits of positive bond qualities when they are touching each other. Each gains a cosmetic quirk of the other, probably involving their skin.

**Sympathetic Wounds: Ranged.** When either partner loses a Body Level the other must make a Stamina + Size roll of 6+ or suffer an identical injury. A botched roll causes an added Body level of damage. Each develops an instinctive fear felt by the other. Take a Flaw or a Personality Trait of +3 to reflect this.

**Superiority of Familiar:** Should the magus die, the familiar is saddened, but should the familiar die, the magus will pine away and die within a few weeks.

**Wild: Inverse ranged.** When out of bond range, the animal reverts to its wild state, becoming Cunning instead of Intelligent and losing the ability to use human knowledges. This flaw may only be purchased if the animal was not intelligent prior to entering familiarization and is incompatible with the Quality Unlimited Bond. Each partner gains a strong instinctive reflex of the other.

Storyguides may permit an alternative trigger for wildness, such as being indoors, being unharnessed, or after giving birth. The value of this flaw should reflect how common the trigger is likely to be during the saga.

-15

**Jealousy:** Each partner is intensely jealous of the other's attention. Each should take the Loyalty to partner +3 Personality Trait and the flaw Fury.

**Halves of the Whole: Ranged.** When beyond bond range, the range of emotions and scope of knowledge of the two partners are divided between them, so that about half is inaccessible to the other. For example, when a Jerbiton-horse pair are separated, one may lose the ability to be angry, the other the ability to read. Essen-

tially the two are so interdependent that they function like a single personality. Beyond bond range each lacks completeness. This quality is incompatible with the Unlimited Bond virtue, in the sense that those having this property and an unlimited bond suffer no disadvantage, and therefore accrue no bond points.

-20

**Schism of Mind:** When beyond bond range, the magus becomes Wild reverting to Cunning and losing the ability to use knowledges. Wild Magi may not cast spells, and are essentially under the control of the storyguide. This flaw is incompatible with the virtue Unlimited Bond.

Note that this flaw does not include the Wild flaw. It's possible that the familiar will retain sufficient intelligence to hunt down their partner. Even if the two flaws are purchased and both parties are Wild, they may still seek the society of the other, drawn together by pair or social bonds.

-25

**Transferred Linguistic Abilities:** The ability of the magus to speak, including vocabulary, is transferred to their familiar. The magus may not add to their language skills while the familiar lives. The familiar can translate for the magus almost instantly, passing the information through the mental cord. At the storyguide's discretion, the expressive abilities lost by the human might be replaced by similar artistic skills from the familiar.

It is extremely difficult for magi with this flaw to write books. Generally they develop spells that translate what the familiar says into words, and allow the familiar to dictate their ideas onto the page. Some few, however, have explored alternative storage media, using Creo Mentem spells to store pure concepts. This process fascinates certain Criamon magi.

-30

**The Magus Reforged:** During the process of binding the familiar, the magus loses the knowledge of how to cast the formulaic spells they knew. The magus may relearn these spells normally. Magi unable to cast formulaic spells may not take this flaw. The familiar loses its ability to use natural magical powers for a year per ten points magnitude of the power.

## Transferred Quirks

When the bonds are first forged between the familiar and magus, then later when they work together, qualities from one spill across into the other. The next chapter provides suggestions for what these transferred traits might be. Many of those given are bizarre or extreme, and storyguides may wish to tone them down. These are included for those campaigns in high-fantasy

settings, such as a Winter covenant or the midst of a faerie forest, for Bjornaer magi, or for characters who have had familiars for much of their life.

To take an example, the Cat Quirk of Fur gives the magus a downy layer of cat hair all over their body, patterned like that of their familiar. Storyguides should feel free to reduce its severity, for example by having hair rise only on the palms of the hands, or by having the magus's beard take on his cat's pattern. Extreme examples are provided so that the storyguide can slip them directly into powerful NPC's as signals which the PCs can then interpret. For example, a magus whose body hair has been replaced by the pin feathers of a crow is unlikely to be a cordial guest.

For player characters, it is useful to divide quirks into severity levels. Using the Cat Fur quirk as an example:

**Mild:** Hair on the palms of the hands. Triggers allergies in cat-sensitive people.

**Average:** As above and, head hair, and sometimes facial hair, takes on cat patterns, if appropriate. This is one reason why black cats are popular amongst magi. A desire to bathe and wash one's hair far more often than is usual in Mythic Europe.

**Severe:** Cat patterns spread to chest hair, under the arms and to facial hair. The fine hairs on the rest of the body begin to change color.

**Extreme:** The fine hairs on the body become more dense, and develop cat patterning.

When quirks are due to a ranged virtue, they begin to slowly reduce in prominence if the two partners are out of range. Some never fade away completely, although most disappear after a year. This means that if your mage or familiar is distorted by their bonds, they do not suddenly change appearance or personality when their partner steps out of range. If the partner stays out of range for a year, for example by dying, then almost all of the quirks due to their bonds will disappear. Quirks usually reassert themselves as slowly as they fade, but if characters shapeshift into their partner's species, they reassert themselves almost immediately.

## The Fourth Season:

# The Closing of the Bond, Ending the Ritual.

Closing the bonds, that is, completing the tempering, costs four pawns of Vim vis, although one pawn may be substituted for that of an Art particularly appropriate to the magus and familiar.

## Later Seasons

In later seasons the magus may:

- add a new cord, as described above.
- retemper their cords, which takes one sea-

son and allows new bond qualities to be added.

•re-anchor a cord, which increases bond strength. Only the weakest cord may be reanchored, although if two or more cords are equally weak, the magus may choose which to strengthen. Reanchoring takes two seasons and consumes (cord strength + 4) Vim vis. During reanchoring the bond qualities related to the cord are unpredictable. Reanchoring costs 1 Twilight point, as it places magical hooks deep into the spirit of the magus.

## Alternative Rituals

### Multiple Familiars

Many magi believe that it is only possible to have a single familiar at a time, but this belief is false. Secondary familiars are certainly possible, merely difficult to bind, requiring the skills of a specialist, in many cases.

The Bonisagian Animál theorists interested in the creation of familiars have traditionally had a large familiar to which they were bound, then found further bonding impossible. To draw from this the conclusion that multiple familiars are impossible is understandable, but not justified. A breakthrough was made when a non-Hermetic eastern magus, using a different system of binding familiars, was able to discuss magic theory with a specialized Animál magus from the Bonisagus Domus Magnus. In essence, it is to take the spousal metaphor of the Hermetic magus, and apply, in a mystical sense, mental disciplines of polyandry.

In game terms, those wishing for multiple familiars should work out their bond quality and cord strength pools, then divide them into portions. The first creatures to which the magus bonds, under traditional Hermetic techniques, takes up all of the potency in the Cord Strength Pool, which leaves magi unable to enter familiarity with a second creature. If, however, some cord strength is deliberately set aside for later use, this may be expended on the creation of other familiar bonds. When Cord Strength is spent, an equal portion of the Bond Quality Pool is also exhausted. It's possible to enchant multiple familiars in the same year long process, but once it has been concluded the addition of another familiar requires a further year.

The theorist who first discussed this technique has demonstrated that, in theory, a mages can, by keeping the bonds they have extremely weak, have a potentially unlimited number of familiars. Among the Islamic magi from whom this idea was derived a usual limitation is four familiars so as not to hoard the few natural creatures available, deplete valuable sources of vis with animal creation, or incur the expense of keeping many creatures. Many of them never find their fourth familiar, dying with that section of their Bond pool unfilled. Among Hermetic magi the average is two, due to the practice of adopting a pair-bonded







couple as familiars. It is very difficult to find a third animal which is accepted by the magus and its previous partners, as most familiar species are strongly territorial.

Although most magi have now at least heard of the multiple familiarization technique, few choose to use it. Unless the magus is particularly powerful, they are unable to attain the more desirable bond qualities when using this technique. Many familiars refuse to share *their* magus with another creature, even if the magus is able to find one, which can be very difficult. However, player characters are often the exception, so storyguide should remember the limiting factors described above. Any player who wants to spend two years bonding to couple of cats when they could be developing spells really shouldn't worry the storyguide too much, and their search for new familiars can provide adventure hooks.

## Refamiliarization

Some familiars have been a familiar before, and these have their natural magical powers already attuned to Hermetic magic. Although courting one is difficult, they are valuable partners if one can bring them to bondage.

## Intergenerational Familiars

Some familiars have lifespans many times those of a normal human being. Some of these form links with each generation of a magical lineage, acting a sort of family guardian. Unconfirmed reports suggest that Criamon was part of such a lineage. These creatures, if they truly exist, must be extraordinarily potent, as they have powers already attuned to Hermetic magic when their later partners form fresh bonds, allowing them to continue developing their abilities over centuries.

On a less obscure level, those familiars who link to their magus is more collegial than spousal will sometimes bond with their initial magus' apprentice when the initial magus dies. Sometimes this process continues for several generations, extending an animal's life to tens of times its expected duration. Generally these creatures disappear when their second or third magus passes on, fading into Twilight, which has a strong claim to such magic-drenched creatures.



This article is the culmination of a lengthy process. Over two years ago Damelon sent me a book I needed for a game and I swore to myself I'd write some articles for the website that eventually evolved into this magazine. My first article, how to roleplay cats, snowballed into a 90,000 word book, the core mechanics of which appear here. The remainder is available on the World Wide Web courtesy of the Durenmar site at '<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~mapaps/durenmar.html>'. Thank-you to all of the people who worked on the Familiars project, especially Kenji Ulstein, whose feedback forms part of this article. ■

A look at...

# Alchemy

The purpose of this column is to explain in more detail the Exceptional Talents described in *Ars Magica* fourth edition. Each Ability begins with the description found in the rules (occasionally with minor modifications), and then expands on that brief description.

These abilities can be used to make minor hedge wizards or supplement the powers of more powerful magicians. Storyguides might wish to exercise caution when allowing characters, especially Magi, to take these abilities. For the most part, they are incompatible with Hermetic magic.

by Mark Shirley

Alchemy is an esoteric art which has its origins in antiquity. The name "Alchemy" itself derives from Arabic sources, but the study of alchemy is by no means an invention of the arabs. There was a thriving tradition of western alchemy based upon the philosophy of Aristotle (who first described the occult properties of natural materials). The most important source, which could be considered the Authority on Alchemy, is Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*. This is merely the first in a long history of western alchemy and a number of books were written deriving from these ancient texts. In the twelfth century, Arabic alchemy was introduced to the west, starting with *The Book of Morienus*, translated into Latin in AD1182 by Robert of Chester. This introduction of Arabic alchemical principles also lead to the increase in mysticism, turning alchemy from a simple magical practice into an esoteric search for the secret of Life itself.

The typical Alchemist is nearly always well educated, and pursues alchemy as a solution to a goal, whether that is the promise of untold wealth, the secret of Life Æternal, or a similar mystic goal. The compounds that he learns to make in the course of pursuing this goal are often useful, but nevertheless incidental by-products of his studies. Many Alchemists have Virtues and Flaws such as Obsessed, Higher Purpose or Driving Goal to reflect this search for hidden knowledge.

Note that the many alchemical preparations are sure to require rare and expensive materials, such as ground gemstones and precious metals. The more powerful the preparation (i.e., the higher the ease factor required to create it), the more expensive it is likely to be. At the very least, an alchemist must be given the space of a magus in a covenant (whether or not he has other magical powers) if he is going to perform his art successfully. Guild Alchemists (as in the *Virtue in Hedge Magic* p55) are able to obtain rare substances more easily, but they will still be costly. It

is up to the storyguide to impose any restrictions on the creation of alchemical preparations.

When using these rules described here, it is suggested that Alchemy cannot be used to assist a Hermetic Lab total, though there is no prohibition on a magus using Alchemy to make a purely Alchemical preparation. The two magic systems are completely incompatible. To allow for some overlap between the two types of magic, a magus can still gain an alchemical bonus to Lab totals, as given in the description of the Ability. For example, a Verditius with Alchemy creating a preparation of *Chirurgeon's Healing Touch* would receive the +3 bonus that Alchemy confers upon preparations of Health, but does not get his Alchemy score added to his Lab Total.

## Creating Alchemical preparations

First, fully describe the effect. The level of effect must be determined by the storyguide (some examples are given below). Very broadly, the ease factor is half the level of an equivalent Hermetic spell. Some effects are just not possible to create with Alchemy - the storyguide must be the ultimate judge of this, but it is recommended that 'flashy' effects that produce overtly magical effects are not allowed, or are made very difficult. Alchemy cannot give someone the ability to cast a spell, and cannot affect the dead, but it can break some Hermetic limits, such as permanent transformations without *vis*. Note that Alchemical preparations tend to be applied externally (as modern-day chemicals would be), not imbibed, though poisons are usually taken internally.

Once the effect has been chosen, the Alchemist spends a season and compares his Lab Total to the level of the effect.

The Lab Total for Alchemy is Alchemy + Intelligence + Aura + any applicable bonuses according to the type of preparation being created. Those with Philosophiæ may add this score to the Total.

For every 5 points, or fraction thereof, by which the level of effect is exceeded, one dose of the preparation is created. If the Lab Total equals the level of the effect, one dose is created. If the Lab Total is less than the level of effect, the season is wasted. Alchemists may not use *vis* to boost their Lab Totals (exception: Natural Magicians, see *Hedge Magic*), but they may choose to experiment (as described on p 92 of Ars Magica fourth edition).

Alchemical preparations are magical in nature, but exploit the natural magics of the substances they are made from. Thus they are hard to detect using Hermetic magic, and magical resistance is less effective against them. They should be treated as half their level of effect when using any detection magic to pick up their magical nature (i.e., a preparation requiring a 10+ to make requires a Intellego Vim spell of 50th level to detect its magical nature), but double their level when trying to resist or dispel their effects (i.e., a preparation with an ease factor of 10+ has a pen-

etration of +20, and a Perdo Vim spell must beat the effective casting total of 20 with half level plus a quality die). The exception to this is any preparation made using *vis*: in these cases the magic is quite overt, and the level of effect unmodified for the purposes of detecting, resisting or dispelling.

Those with the Guild Alchemist Virtue (see *Hedge Magic* pp 41-42 & 55) can transform plants and stones into their Virtuous forms and can craft Longevity potions for themselves. These are secrets of the Guild, and are not known to anyone outside it. The Guild Alchemist virtue is a necessity for these activities—those with just the Alchemy Virtue cannot attempt these tasks.

## Homunculi

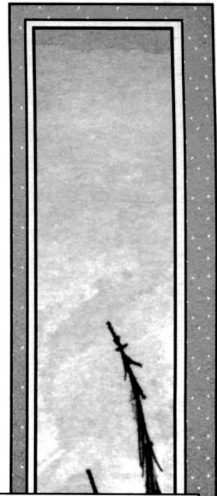
At a point in the career of most alchemists, they begin to wonder if it is possible to emulate God and create life. This may occur right at the beginning, and be the goal of the alchemist's study, or it may arise from later research. Anyhow, the alchemist will eventually concoct a formula which he believes will do this, and embark on the creation of a homunculus (literally, a "little man").

The formula has a level of effect of 22. It involves many expensive ingredients, many of which need to be pre-treated with other alchemical compounds to prepare them. One of the most important ingredients in this formula is a pint of the alchemist's own blood. When the concoction has been created (with the character not knowing whether he was successful or not!), it is poured into a large copper vessel. To this is then added another part of the Alchemist—this will determine which Characteristic of the homunculus is the highest. He would add one of his wisdom teeth for Intelligence, an eye-tooth for Perception, a finger for Dexterity, a toe for Quickness, more blood for Stamina, or four ounces of his own flesh for Strength. These are the only objects suggested in the Alchemical literature. The vessel is then sealed with a membrane of uterine vellum from an unmated ewe, and kept warm for the next nine months. It must never be allowed to either fully cool or boil during this period. After nine months, if the procedure is has been a success, the Alchemist is struck with birthing pangs, signifying that he should crack the seal on the vessel. Inside will be a fully formed man, some 12-18" high. This 'birth' costs the alchemist a point of Stamina which is gone forever.

## Alchemy

**(+1 General Virtue—Ars Magica 4th Ed., p 40):** You are skilled at creating potions, poisons and elixirs, as well as refining alchemical substances. You are also familiar with alchemical techniques such as distillation and fermentation. Alchemy is especially suited for some purposes, so bonuses apply when making certain types of preparations: poisons +5, antidotes +4, health +3, and transformations +2. Choosing this Virtue confers the Exceptional Knowledge Alchemy 1, which can be improved as any other Knowledge.

*Specialties: paralyzing poisons, transformation of metals, purification, elixirs (reduce effects of aging), etc.* It is suggested that Specialties are no broader than these—a character cannot have a Specialty in Transformation, for example, but in purification, distillation, concentration, etc.







If the procedure was not successful, no labor pains will be felt, and if opened, the vessel will contain only a rotting morass. If the Alchemy roll was a near miss, there may be some suggestive remains within the filth.

The homunculus will have Characteristics of -1, except for the one chosen at conception, which will have a value of +2. Its Size is -3, and it will never grow or speak. Instead of Intelligence it has a Cunning score, for true intelligence is a Divine Gift, as is the gift of Speech. However, it does have an instinctual feel for Alchemical processes, and will provide a +3 to all alchemy rolls; and can understand basic commands given by its maker. It has a Magic Might of 15. Homunculi can never stray far from their creators. If they go further than about 100 yards they lapse into a coma until reunited with the alchemist.

Homunculi may be given magical powers if objects of Virtue (see *Hedge Magic*) are included within the birthing vat. These may give the homunculus and the Alchemist the ability to utilize the powers of the object, but always give the homunculus a bizarre appearance. Thus a homunculus that was made with an Iris (a Crystal of Virtue) seems to be made entirely of glass, but can set fire to flammable objects at a touch. A homunculus made with Heliotropium (Sunflower of Virtue) has a halo of yellow petals around its head, but can give its maker prophetic dreams.

## Sample Alchemical Preparations

### Poisons

- 6+** Create a sulphurous powder which causes nausea and vomiting in all who breathe it in.
- 8+** Create a dust that when hurled, will blind those whose eyes it touches. The blindness lasts about 12 hours.
- 8+** Create a poison that inflicts a Light Wound if a Stamina roll of 8+ is not made.
- 10+** Concoct a truly foul-tasting preparation that will usually kill a normal person (if she's stupid enough to drink it!).
- 10+** Concoct a preparation that induces a death-like coma. Patient may die of starvation if the preparation is not purged.
- 12+** Brew a poison that inflicts a Medium Wound if a Stamina roll of 12+ is not made, and causes nausea even if the roll is successful.
- 15+** Create a poison that causes a Heavy Wound if a Stamina roll of 12+ is not made, and inflicts a Light Wound even if the Stamina roll succeeds.
- 18+** Concoct a fatal poison with a subtle enough flavour to hide it in normal food, unless the target rolls Perception + Herbalism or Perception + Medicine to detect the taste as she eats the food.

### Antidotes

**Varies**—Match the level of effect +3 of a poison to negate its effects (short of death!).

- 8+** Slow the spread of a natural poison of normal strength (e.g. adder bite).
- 10+** Purge a natural poison of normal strength.
- 12+** Slow the spread of a natural but powerful poison (e.g., yew berries, nightshade).
- 18+** Purge a powerful natural poison.
- 20+** Bring back a poisoned person from the brink of death (must be administered within 3 rounds of the fatal dose).

### Healing & Health

- 6+** Create pungent salts that will rouse someone instantly from unconsciousness.
- 8+** Relieve pain of a minor ailment (e.g., toothache).
- 8+** Create a tonic that keeps one healthy (+1 to all rolls to fight off disease).
- 10+** Prevent the spread of an infection in a patient.
- 10+** Create a tonic that dulls all pain in the recipient and induces lethargy.
- 10+** Speed recovery of a wound—Add Alchemy +4 to all Medicine rolls.
- 12+** Create a tonic that, if taken once a year, can relieve the ravages of time (-1 to Aging roll).
- 12+** Create powder which, when thrown onto a fire, will cleanse an area from the evil humors that cause disease, making disease spirits flee.
- 15+** Relieve a standard strength non-magical disease, half the speed of the diseases progression.
- 20+** Halt the effect of leprosy, or something equally nasty, but not cure it.

### Transformations

- 6+** Make a powder which, when cast upon flames, produces copious amounts of smoke. Add +1 to level of effect to make the smoke a bright color.
- 8+** Create a highly flammable powder which when cast upon a fire, causes flames to burn brightly.
- 10+** Concoct a powder which creates a bright flash of light when it comes in contact with air without need for a flame.
- 10+** Create a liquid that turns to smoke upon contact with air, filling an area the size of a room.

**10+** Create a substance (often a liquid or incense) that will change the balance of humors in someone so as to invoke a specific emotional reaction. Gain temporary Personality Trait of +2 (or increase one by same).

**12+** Create a powder that, when sprinkled over water, will freeze it. It can cause effects similar to frostbite if used on a living being.

**12+** Purify a compound by adjusting the balance of both elements and qualities. If the raw ingredients are an alchemical preparation, the effects of the preparation can be doubled.

**15+** Create a stone that will increase the amount of heat in any liquid. This will boil any Small amount of liquid it is dropped into in about 3 minutes. It will dry out any semi-solid such as mud without boiling it. The stone is destroyed in the process.

**15+** Create a liquid (acid) that will dissolve all metals except gold and silver, but does not affect stone or glass.

**15+** Create a substance which can purify an Element by decreasing its contaminating qualities. Fire can be made hotter, water and air are made clean, earth becomes harder. Affects a Small amount of substance.

**18+** Create a True Metal—a substance that has the precise balance of elements and qualities. The precise effect of this is up to the storyguide, but will have a semi-magical power related to the Form and Effect bonus of the metal. True Lead could form a barrier against evil, True Gold might induce wealth, etc..

## Miscellaneous

**6+** Make two chemicals which, when mixed, produce a flame.

**6+** Make a solution that will test whether a substance is poisonous.

**8+** Create a paste which, when smeared with a second component, produces a phosphorescent glow, slightly dimmer than a torch. The light fades in 4-6 hours.

**10+** Create an ink which, when used, is invisible, but can be revealed any time later by applying the correct compound.

**12+** Create a liquid (acid) that will burn flesh as if it was fire—inflicts +8 points of damage and usually leaves horrible scars if more than a single Body Level of damage is done.

**12+** Create a very strong glue, that when dry (1 hour), will bond two objects together so that a Strength roll of 10+ (or a load of 300lb) is required to break the bond.

**12+** Create a very slippery oil—Dexterity rolls of 10+ are needed every round if used offensively.

## Exempli gratia

Arnald (Int +1, Alchemy 4), is a Flemish scholar, who taught himself Alchemy from his Uncle's tomes on the subject that he had inherited when the old man died. His laboratory is on the outskirts of town. However, his pursuit for untold wealth has, ironically, left him destitute, and he needs some money to continue his experiments. He has therefore turned to thievery. He wants to create a substance that will eat through metal and rot wood in a matter of minutes—useful for getting into locked chests. Consulting Uncle Rogier's book, he spends his last few pennies on the substances he needs (the storyguide sets an ease factor of 15+ for this task), and Arnald gets to work. He guesses that he will be stretching his abilities to create this substance, and so decided to experiment. His total is 1 (Intelligence) + 4 (Alchemy) + 3 (he has the Inventive Genius Virtue) +2 (transformation) - 1 (Dominion of 1) + 7 (result of a simple die), a total of 16. Arnald just makes a single dose, and so must plan his theft carefully.

Note that the provided table of Sample Alchemical Preparations is not intended as an exhaustive list. The storyguide is the ultimate arbiter of whether an Alchemist can concoct a given preparation.

In general, these preparations have a duration of either Sun or Instant., as applicable, unless indicated otherwise. Most poisons, antidotes and preparations of health need to be drunk, but most other alchemical effects are used in other ways. By adding +3 to the level of effect, the poisons, and such may be made easier to apply, such as a paste that can be smeared on weapons or objects. Transformations are limited by size—one dose will affect a Small Target, 3 doses is needed for Target Individual, 6 doses for Target Room, etc. Natural Resistance rolls usually apply: poisons have a Stamina Soak associated with them, for example.

Many of these effects can also be created using the Herbalism skill. However, note that Alchemy concentrates on health, whereas Herbalism is geared more to healing. Alchemy cannot cure diseases, and has a harder job curing wounds and opposing poisons. An alchemical preparation is specific to a particular disease, as different diseases cause their effects by unbalancing different humors. Thus a preparation designed to relieve consumption will have no effect against pox, for example. The Transformations possible through Alchemy usually involve changing the amount of a Quality (heat, cold, moisture or dryness) in a substance, or else altering the balance of elements, rather than more overt effects possible through Hermetic magic. ■







# Calypso's Cave and Malta

by Benedict Chapman

**C**alypso's Cave is a faerie regio found on the island of Gozo in the Mediterranean. It is the home of Calypso the nymph and her attendants. Calypso is an extremely powerful faerie and has lived at Gozo for many centuries. She tempted Odysseus to stay with her when he was shipwrecked on the island called Ogygia ('of the Swift Goddess') in Homer's *Odyssey* but even though she offered him immortality, she was unable to make him forget his wife and his home and had to let him go, leaving her alone again.

## The Cave

Calypso's Cave is found on the cliff-face above Ramla Bay, on the north coast in a corner of Gozo known as Ghajn il-Qamar, 'Spring of the Moon'. It is located about five miles west from Qala Point, the east cape of the island, and about three miles from Rabat (see map). The cave is high up the cliff, but access is not difficult.

Calypso's home exists inside a faerie regio and is not normally accessible. (Make sure you get the official regio rules from the errata for *Ars Magica* 4<sup>th</sup> edition or *Faeries* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.) The regio consists of two supermundane levels, of ratings 3 and 6. The lower level extends over Ramla beach, the top level in the cave only. It is possible to gain access to the regio by seeing into it magically or with special perception, but another possibility is to get to Ramla beach after becoming lost at sea. If anyone enters the lower level of the regio by accident, Calypso is likely to welcome them to the top level, which she is less likely to do for anyone entering deliberately.

### Mundane level (0)

On the mundane level Calypso's Cave is quite unremarkable. It is no more than a slit in the cliff face and the depths of the cave are empty, dry and labyrinthine, some of the caverns being inaccessible due to rockfalls. There is a hint of the gardens of Calypso, as the cave has some trees and parsley around it and there are three springs nearby.

### Lower level (3)

The lower level of the regio begins at the beach. From here the vicinity of the cave can be seen to be more wooded than is normal for Gozo, with cypresses and poplars and wild, grape-bearing vines growing around the entrance. The cave

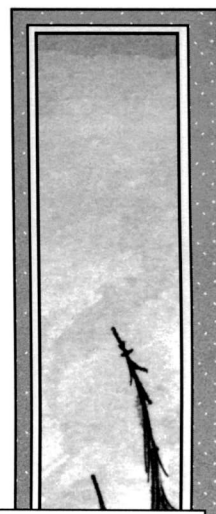
on this level is decidedly more pleasant than on the mundane level. The entrance of the cave is much larger and the first cavern, a delightful grotto, is lit by sunlight for a good deal of the day. On this level, the three streams are generous and are sourced inside the cave. This makes the interior of the cave moist enough for plants to grow. The interior is more accessible, but is still fairly rough with some parts of the cave blocked-off.

The cave has an agreeable, restful atmosphere and even if this is the only level achieved, it is a good refuge.

### Top level (6)

Calypso has her home on the top level of the regio. Here the cave is a veritable palace with a myriad of chambers filled with gardens of great variety. The three springs of the lower level become four fountains, the waters of which feed the caves. Openings in the ceiling provide lighting, as do the rear entrances, which lead to lush meadows, decorated with violets, and groves of exotic trees, such as cedars and giant firs, fed by streams. As well as seabirds, owls and hawks make their homes on the trees surrounding the cave, feasting on the abundance of grapes and figs.

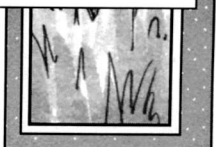
In her cave, Calypso is attended to by an army of servants, all of them nymphs. She has maids to serve her at her meals and others to help her in her weaving as well as singers and musicians to entertain her. The inhabitants of Calypso's Cave use many of the different caverns of the cave as functional rooms. Thus the cave has bedrooms and dining halls. However, most of the gardens are used simply for recreation; as places to pass time or to sing, dance and play games. Life in Calypso's Cave is one of idle leisure as all needs are met by the bounty of the cave.



### Odysseus' Odyssey

At the time Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, was raising an army to fight the Trojans for the return of his brother's wife, Odysseus (Ulysses) was king of the Island of Ithaca. Although he had just had a son, Telemachus, on his wife, Penelope, he was prevailed upon by the Mycenaeans to accompany the army to Troy. The war with the Trojans took 10 years but was finally won by the cunning of Odysseus who came up with the plan of using a giant wooden horse to get access to the city.

Returning to Ithaca took Odysseus another 10 years as dangers and enchantments conspired to hold him up. In his adventures he avoided the temptations of the lotus-eaters in North Africa, escaped the cyclops Polyphemus in Sicily (see *Tribunal of Hermes: Rome* pp. 99-101), became lost after opening a bag of winds, had his crew turned into animals (and restored) by Circe on Aeaea, visited Hades, avoided the lures of the Sirens and braved Scylla and Charybdis at the Straits of Messina. When his crew ate the forbidden cattle of Helios (the sun) from the island Thrinakia, Zeus sent a storm to destroy the ship. Alone, Odysseus was washed up on Ogygia, the navel of the Mediterranean, at Calypso's Cave. Calypso fell in love with the hero and took him as a lover. She kept him on her island for seven years though he pined for his home. Eventually, Athena petitioned Zeus that he might arrange Odysseus' release. So Hermes carried the message to Calypso and Odysseus was freed. He returned to Ithaca and with help from his son, killed all the suitors after his throne and was reunited with his wife who had never stopped being faithful to him during the twenty years of his absence.





## Calypso

Faerie Might: 60

Calypso, 'the Hidden One', is a nymph, but a nymph of Greek legend rather than a nymph of faerie. In fact, she is as much a goddess as a faerie, certainly the equal of one such as Hermes. (Some troupes may wish to classify Calypso as being of the realm of magic rather than faerie. This will require only changing her Faerie Might to Magic Might and the faerie regio to a magic one.) Her greatest power is the gift of death, but the gift one would most want from her is of ambrosia and nectar—the gift of undying (see sidebar).

Calypso, shining among goddesses, is an extraordinarily attractive woman (Pre 8: radiantly beautiful), possessed of particularly beautiful hair. She is able to enchant men but does not always need to, as it is difficult for men not to fall in love with her beauty. She is susceptible to love herself, exacerbated by her loneliness. If a particularly attractive 'hero' were to end up at her cave, she is likely to try to hold on to him in the same way she did with Odysseus.

### Gozo and Malta

The island of Gozo is the second largest island of a small archipelago found in the centre of the Mediterranean. Malta, the largest island and four times larger than Gozo, lies to the southeast (with little Comino between them) and gives its name to the archipelago. The archipelago is located some 20 leagues south of Sicily, 60 leagues east of Tunis and 80 leagues north of Tripoli in North Africa.

The islands are small and barren with a landscape of broken dun-yellow rock. Both islands are largely flat, neither having features higher than 1000 feet; Malta having its highest land in its southwest, Gozo being more undulating. There are no rivers and no rain for much of the year, so the islands are nearly critically short of water; the inhabitants of the islands must get water from natural springs and domestic wells. Summers on the islands are warm and dry, made worse by the occasional hot, frazzling sirocco wind off the Sahara. During this time, vegetation withers. Winter is usually sunny but cooler and with occasional rains and even storms.

Vegetation on the islands is sparse; most wild plants being isolated trees, shrubs and vines. However, the land is surprisingly fertile, Gozo more so than Malta, and orchards of oranges, figs, olives and carob are grown and a wide variety of crops and grapes are farmed. The other main food producing industry is fishing.

Valetta, Malta's largest town in modern times, was not founded until 1566. In medieval

times, Birgù (Vittoriosa in modern times) was the main town on Grand Harbour. It was the seat of government for the Sicilians (see History section). A castle built by the Saracens occupies the tip of the peninsula—previously the site had a Roman temple, and a Phoenician temple before that. The castle holds a church to the Blessed Virgin Mary built in 1090 by Count Roger and since 1274, a church to St. Angelo. Mdina is the other important town and along with Birgù, is an ecclesiastical seat. Mdina is a walled and moated city built by the Arabs abutting the Roman capital Melita, now called Rabat. The principal town of Gozo is also called Rabat (modern day Victoria). The interiors of the islands contain several small villages and the coast has several fishing villages, Marsaxlokk being the largest.

### History

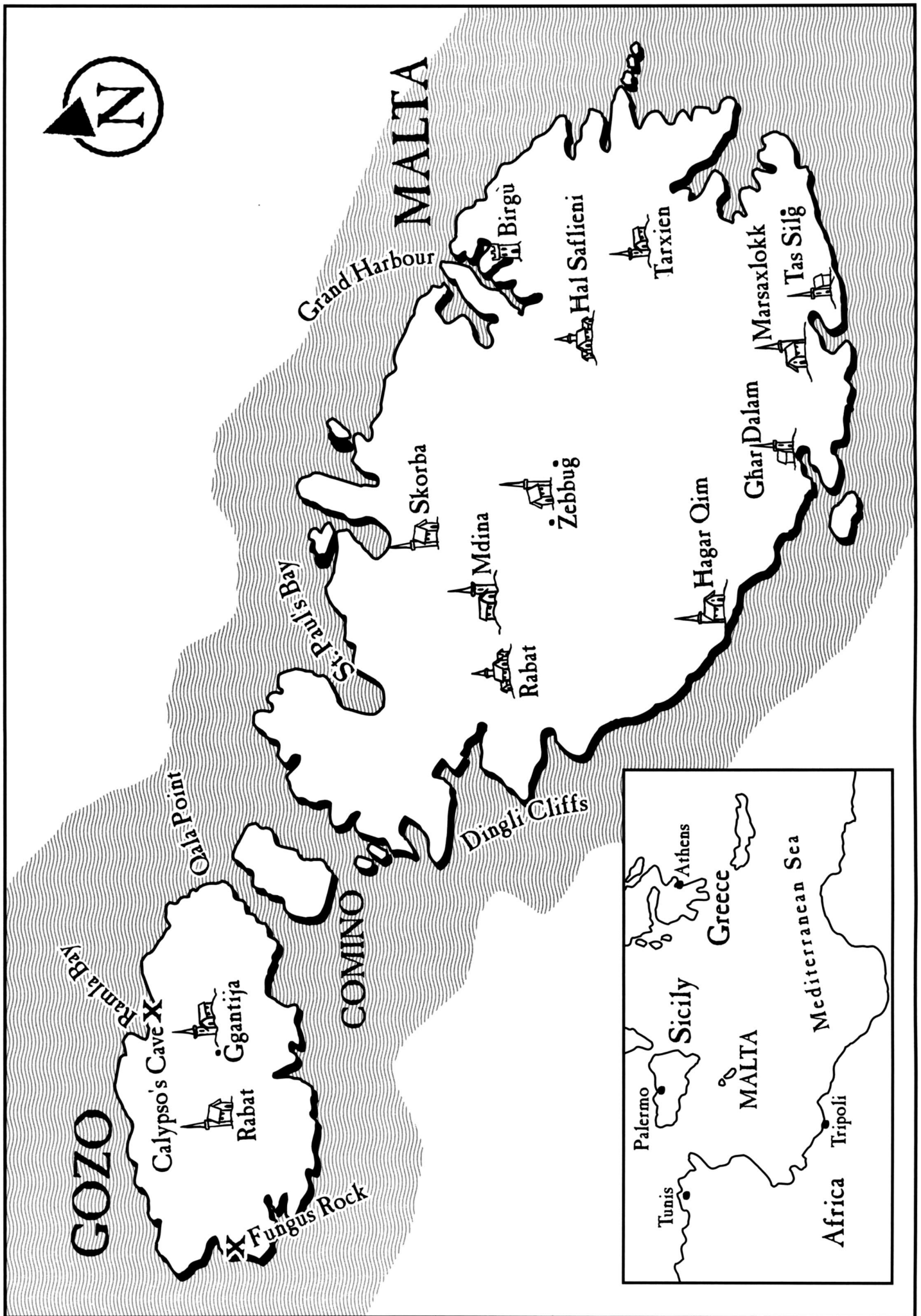
If the Seekers of the Order of Hermes of AD 1220 could scry Malta's earliest history, they would find much that they would think significant. Even if one does not accept the Seekers' fancies of a lost land of magic-breathing "Old Ones", Malta's history gives us something to ponder. Malta's oldest inhabitants were a mysterious temple building people. The antediluvian constructs of Malta are the oldest in the world—three hundred years before the building of the pyramids and an age before Stonehenge, the Maltese were worshipping their ancient gods in subterranean shrines. Ancient Malta was a considerably more verdant land and game abounded on the islands. The people who made this land their home lived in the caves of Ghar Dalam and the village of Skorba. They based their religion on death and fertility, centering it on the worship of an abnormally fat being, usually depicted naked though sexless and sometimes dressed in a skirt. They worshipped in sacred groves and also made their temples in natural caverns, which also served as burial grounds. However, about 5000 years ago (reckoned from AD 1220, i.e. 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC) a new group of people arrived. The date is interesting, for, as Infamus claims in *The True Origins of the Magical Traditions*, this is the time when the Old Ones were at their peak. Make of that what you will. These new people built their capital at Zebbug and began to build their mysterious temples. Initially their temple building simply improved on the work of the earlier culture, using naturally occurring caves, but later they built great temples using monoliths, such as Ggantija and Tarxien. A difference from the earlier traditions was that the temples were not used for burial. To build these wonders required a society committed to religion and a highly devoted community.

The temple builders left us many wondrous monuments, but of them themselves, there is no trace. 3500 years ago, God sent a flood to destroy mankind, and as the Book tells us, only Noah was spared God's wrath—the temple builders were destroyed. In time, man found his way back to Malta and a new culture of bronze users made

### Ambrosia and Nectar

Ambrosia and Nectar are the food and drink of the gods. Eating and drinking ambrosia and nectar makes one immortal (the words ambrosia and nectar come from 'immortal' and 'death-cheating'). The effect of ambrosia and nectar is to turn the blood into ichor and to be truly immortal, one must continue consuming them.

It is very uncommon for the gods to allow mortals to eat and drink ambrosia and nectar and Calypso is unlikely to give any to anyone—over seven years she did not give any to Odysseus. Tantalus stole some ambrosia and nectar (though his real crime was to boast about it) and was punished with a hell of food and drink just out of reach.







Malta home. They knew nothing of their predecessors and used the temples as cemeteries. They did not worship the fat god; instead they worshipped a group of women with big headdresses. It was during this time that Odysseus came to the lonely islands.

Two thousand years ago, Malta became a Punic colony—in fact, the names Malta and Gozo are Phoenician (Malta from *malat*, meaning refuge, and Gozo from *gol*, a type of ship) and the Maltese language, a unique Semitic language, was born at this time. As with all invaders of Malta, the Phoenicians brought their own religion with them and Malta became home to a Phoenician high priest and two archons. The Phoenicians built the towns of Birgù, Mdina-Rabat and Marsaxlokk for themselves and established their government with a senate and an assembly of the people.

Carthaginian rule came to an end during the second Punic War when the islands fell to Rome (in 218 BC).

Christianity came early to Malta; on Paul's journey to Rome, he and Luke were shipwrecked at Malta (AD 58). Paul preached the gospel to the Maltese and performed miracles before leaving for Italy. Luke recorded the episode in Acts 27 and 28.

The Dark Ages were a brutal time for Malta. The small islands were particularly susceptible to raids by Vandals and Arabs. The Maltese knew great persecution in this time; for example, it was not unknown for the whole population of Gozo to be carried away to slavery during a particularly arrant raid. Roman rule was finally ended during the reign of Emperor Basil (AD 870) of Byzantium when Malta was wrested from the Byzantines by Arabs. The Arabs used the islands chiefly as a base for their piracy and slavery.

In order to protect his Sicilian Kingdom from the Arabs, Count Roger the Norman took Malta (AD 1090). Three years later he gave Malta as a fief to the Grand Admiral of Sicily, Margarito Brundusio with the title of Count. In AD 1220, Malta is still part of the Kingdom of Sicily and Henry of Malta is Count.

Scrying into the future we will find Frederick Hohenstaufen expelling Muslims between AD 1240 and 1250 and forcing migration from Italy to make up the lost population. We will find Malta becoming increasingly wealthy from trade (and continued piracy and slavery). The islands passing to the Swabians and then to Charles of Anjou who will lose the islands after the Sicilian Vespers. In AD 1282 Peter of Aragon takes the islands. Further in the future, Malta becomes a fortress of the Knights of St. John (Hospitallers) from AD 1530 to 1798.

## Mysterious Malta

Malta is a mysterious place—read all about it *Mythic Europe* and *The Hidden Paths: Shamans*. It is not the intent of this review to delve into this mystery or offer any explanations. This article will not reveal who the fat god is or what strange ritu-

als the natives perform in their cavernous retreats. It will not answer any questions, such as: Are the temple builders really gone? Is Calypso an Old One? All this article attempts is to put the mystery in context and present some new material, which, if anything, makes the mystery more mysterious.

The oldest mysterious places on Malta are the caves of the earliest dwellers. There are a number of these sites across the islands but Ghar Dalam is certainly the most impressive. It consists of five levels of natural caves. However, there is little to see, only a collection of animal skeletons (though the skeletons of miniature elephants and hippopotami as small as 3 feet tall are quite intriguing). What use the locals make of these apparently empty caves is a mystery, but it would be a fair conjecture that a regio exists here.

Around Ghar Dalam are some mysterious 'cart ruts': parallel grooves cut into the ground appearing as if made by cart wheels or sleigh tracks. The ruts appear across Malta with a particular concentration around Dingli Cliff where about 30 tracks criss-cross. At St. Georges Bay, a pair of ruts runs down to the sea and re-emerge on the other side of the inlet. Others disappear off cliffs. It is not clear when they were first formed, though they predate the Carthaginians as some Carthaginian structures are built on top of ruts. The grooves are between 4 and 25 inches with a gauge of about 1 1/2 yards. They are cut as deep as 25 inches, but the most amazing thing about them is that if observed over a very long period of time, they are seen to get deeper, as if still being worn down.

The temple builders of Malta left the most wondrous structures on the islands. Their megalithic temples resonate with their respect for their deity and awe at the intensity of their own reverence. Although they moved their temples aboveground, the temples are reminiscent of caves. Their standard design is a four-roomed complex, with three oval rooms leading off a central rectangular chamber. The temples may have other rooms, which though subsidiary, could have great purpose, such as dream chambers. Ggantija, the mightiest of the temples, was also the most important to the religion. The Ggantija site consists of two huge temples side-by-side made from the largest monoliths, standing as high as 17 feet. The interior of the temples differs from most others in that they have two extra rooms, which are situated inside the entrance. At the rear of the temples, the more conventional trefoil design is found. The temples contain a number of altars, tabernacles, hearths, apses and holes of enigmatic purpose in the walls.

Other impressive temples are found at Hagar Qim and Tarxien. The four-temple complex of Tarxien is particularly interesting. It includes a 9 foot statue of the fat god. Tarxien is largely buried in 1220 and though the locals are able to get to it, it will need to be discovered and excavated by any non-local, unless they are able to find the entrance to the regio one presumes exists. A carving at

Tarxien of a twin eyelike spiral suggests that it may be guarded by a gorgon.

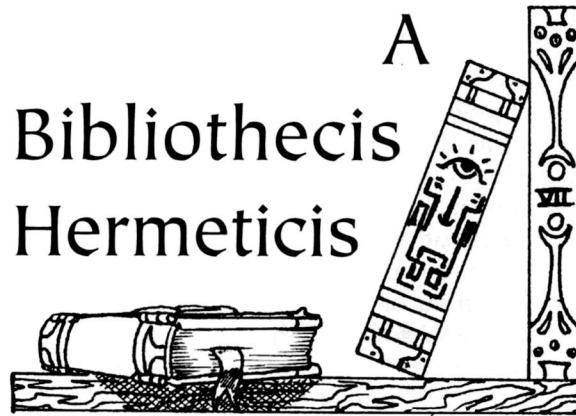
The temple builders also used caves, but unlike their forebears, they decorated their caves with carving and extended them with artificial caverns. Hal Saflieni, just over a mile south of Birgù, is a huge sacred burial ground in a series of underground caves descending several levels, the uppermost of which is natural but the lower caverns are fashioned. Many of the chambers were used for burial but the innermost chambers were ceremonial and are intricately carved. Amongst the caverns are the well-fashioned main hall, the 'holy of holies', a huge echo chamber and a sinister room whose access steps terminate half way down. Again, this site is not normally accessible in 1220.

Later inhabitants of Malta also built temples and other sites that may be of magical importance or interest. Tas Silg, for example, is the site of a Pucino-Roman temple to Juno (Astarte to the Phoenicians, Hera to the Greeks).

St. Paul's Bay is another site of interest. It was here that St. Paul first preached to the Maltese and the site of his miracle of turning Malta's snakes nonpoisonous. A snake struck at Paul from a fire and Paul was unharmed by its poison and hence, no snake on Malta is poisonous. Paul also preached at Rabat where he converted Publius, the chief man of the island after curing his father of a fever. His sermon could be heard all over Malta and even Gozo.

While Malta is a magical place in a unique way, it does have mythic places that would not be out of place on a more mundane location. Calypso's Cave is one perhaps, Fungus Rock is another. Fungus Rock is found on the west coast of Gozo. It stands in the opening of a cove. Access is not easy; it is normally done by aerial ropeway. A fungus grows on the rocks, which has magic healing powers. ■

In future issues, Mythic Perspectives will publish around themes that address Hermetic Houses, Tribunals, the lives those who pray, those who war, those who toil plus any other topics for which interest can be generated.



Contributed by Rob Angeloni (RA), Rich Evans (RE), Matt Iskra (MI)

The rules for library points are found on p210 of the *Ars Magica 4th Edition*, and in the *Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition* p124 and are summarized here.

Libri quaestionum	target + Quality
Summae	(Quality + level) x 2
Tractatus	Quality x 3
Authorities	50 points

For the purposes of multisubject books, calculate the points for each subject as if it were a separate book and then total them. You may wish to subtract some amount as only one person may use such a book at a time. Or devise a system that better suits your saga.

### An Onion of Magic Volumes I, II, III

by Aerotheus of Bonisagus

**Intéllego 14, Rego 16, and Vim 18, (Summa, Quality 15), Vim, tractatus, quality 6, Aegis of the Hearth (Re Vi 15), Hermetic Magic Theory (Summa, level 4, Quality 15), 182 pts**

Aerotheus firmly believed that if the young are to uphold the future of the Order they need to be better prepared to face threats to the Order and to magic itself. Understanding and controlling magic is an essential part to that education. Aerotheus, with his gift for writing (most obvious in the increased quality of the tractatus) chose the most basic of the principles to concentrate upon and developed greater theories from these building blocks. Included in the 3 volumes are the following spells each identified for quicker reference with a different colored ribbon.

Scales of the Magical Weight InVi 5, Sense the Nature of Vis InVi 5, Feeling the Font of Power InVi 5, Scales of Power InVi 5, Sense the Hidden Place InVi 10, Glimpse Through the Mystic Veil InVi 20, and Sense the Lingering Magic InVi 30. Aegis of the Hearth ReVi 15 and ReVi 35.(RA)







## The Burdened Merchant's Boon MuTe 40

**R: Spec D: Spec T: Spec**

**Spell Focus: A Dry Pair of Boots +2**

This spell makes the road you are on navigable by carts, wagons, and pack animals even in the most inclement weather, however, you must walk the road without riding or being carried by any contrivance. The mud and muck up to 10 paces in front of you and 5 paces to either side solidifies into a solid path or road. The road is affected by weather normally after you move over it. The spell lasts until you have traveled 7 miles, you stop moving, or you move off the road. Note that if the spell focus is utilized, they must remain dry throughout the duration of the spell or it ends. (Base Effect Level 30 as per *Treading the Ashen Path* and assuming Perdo guideline modifications in last issue, adjust for base RDT modifiers)(RE)

## Mordane's Gift

**By Mordane Ex Miscellanea**

Mordane Ex Miscellanea wrote this slim Quattro. Mordane was a budding Necromancer and an indifferent writer. He was coerced by his fellow magi to write this book during one harsh winter in Ireland. It contains his most potent spell and one lesser spell. It also contains numerous passages detailing how to use the lesser spell to great effect in bringing fear in mundanes.(MI)

Rego Corpus 35, Seven League Stride

Rego Corpus 15, Lifting the Dangling Puppet



## Scroll of Truth

**By Antaris of Bjornaer**

This scroll is written in a surprisingly elegant hand and shows a mastery of Latin rare for one of House Bjornaer. The author, Antaris, has a heartbeast of the owl and is a great seeker of knowledge. He contributed this minor work to his covenant when he finished covenant duties early one season.

Intéllego Mentem 20, Frosty Breath of Spoken Lies



## Ode to Grow

**by Bryanovh of House Tytalus**

**Herbam, Summa level 10, quality 6**

**Lectio level 3, specialty in insults, quality 6, 50 points**

After losing to a Tremere rival, Bryanovh was forced to write in depth a new text for their covenant. He chose an Art he knew held no interest for other members of is covenant and spent several seasons developing this text. Throughout it he defames and belittles the Tremere magus, done entirely in a patronizing way, with intimate detail. He scribed several copies of this text and dispersed them to covenants within their tribunal and beyond. Believing Bryanovh to have spied

upon him for the information in the summa the Tremere called in a Quaesitor for assistance. Though no offence of magical scrying was proven in this instance, other matters not pertaining to the feud lead to a heavy vis fine on the home covenant and the eventual eviction of both magi from said covenant, which no longer allows debts to be paid in quill and ink.(RA)



## Three Spells of Perdo

**By Umbrea of Flambeau**

This Quattro contains three spells inscribed by the infamous Maga Umbrea of Flambeau. Her mastery of Enigmatic Wisdom, small frame, and demure nature have earned her a poor reputation in her house. However, those that have known her recognize that quiet ponds can be deadlier than a storm. She contributed this work to her covenant to assist her fellow magi in their studies.(MI)

Perdo Imáginem 10, Veil of Invisibility

Perdo Corpus 15, Grip of Choking Hands

Perdo Corpus 15, Dust to Dust



## The Key

**By Arislan of Bonisagus**

**Summae on Magic Theory, Level 4, Quality 11, 30 pts**

This Ocatavio is bound in durable eel skin and a strong backbone. The book was intended to be a primer on Hermetic Magic Theory for apprentices and young magi. Its sturdy nature is enhanced by minor magic to ward it against ink spills. The text is bold and simple and the illustrations are unexceptional.(MI)



## All that Wiggle are Not Worms

**by Gracious of House Bjornaer**

**Muto, Summa, level 12, quality 6, 36 points**

This text contains many variations on the use of Muto to solve problems. There are several references to various heart beasts and the differences between assuming a heart beast form and a magical transformation into an animal. Often the author references works by others, but none of the other works are necessary to study this tome as all relevant information is included. Although thorough, she rambles in places and often adds superfluous information and commentary.(RA)



Got an interesting book, spell, or magic item you would like to share with others? Send it in!



## Milosh Chernoknizhnik

**Age:** 27    **Size:** 0    **Decrepitude:** none  
**Confidence:** 3

**Characteristics:** **Int** +2 (quick-witted), **Str** -1 (small frame), **Prs** +1 (frightening), **Dex** +0, **Per** +2 (far-sighted), **Stm** +0, **Com** +0, **Qik** +1 (jumpy)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Entrancement +4, Stingy Master -2, Affinity with Weather +2, Unpredictable Magic -4, Skinchanger +2, Limited Magical Resistance -2, Weather Sense +1, Creative Block -1, Strong Willed +1, Blatant Gift -1

**Reputation:** none yet

**Personality Traits:** Vengeful +3, Malicious +2, Power-Hungry +3

**Abilities:** Speak Russian (peasant tongue) 4, Speak Finnish (magical terms) 3, Speak Latin (Hermetic terms) 3, Scribe Latin (copying) 2, Magic Theory (learning spells) 3, Parma Magica (Auram) 2, Order of Hermes Lore (House Tylalus) 2, Penetration (Auram) 2, Entrancement (innocuous requests) 6, Affinity with Weather (storms) 5, Weather Sense (storms) 2, Bow (short) 2, Survival (steppes) 3

**Magic Arts:** Cr 7, In \*, Mu 4, Pe \*, Re 6, An \*, Aq 3, Au 11, Co \*, He \*, Ig \*, Im \*, Me \*, Te \*, Vi \*

\* Does not have a complete understanding of these arts.

**Sigil:** Eyes crackle with blue sparks

**Spells Known:** Jupiter's Resounding Blow (CrAu10) +23, Charge of the Angry Winds (CrAu 15) +23, Clouds of Rain and Thunder (CrAu 25) +24, Incantation of Lightning (CrAu 35) +23, Clouds of Thunderous Might (MuAu 20) +20, Broom of the Winds (ReAu 15) +22, Breath of Winter (MuAq 15) +12

Milosh also has written versions of Clouds of Summer Snow (CrAu 25), Gathering the Stormy Might (ReAu 30), Bridge of Frost (MuAq 30), Chaos of the Angry Waves (ReAq 20), Tower of Whirling Water (ReAq 30) and Waves of Drowning and Smashing (ReAq 30), but he has yet to take the time to learn these (those that he can, anyway).

### Appearance

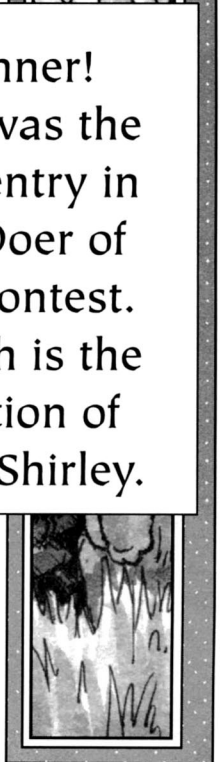
Milosh is a lithe man, of pale skin and fair, almost colourless hair, strongly resembling his mother's kin. He dresses in black, a volumous cloak of sable usually graces his shoulders, its collar and yoke decorated with a ruff made from the feathers of ravens that he has slain.

Despite his unassuming appearance, there is a feeling of power around him. None who meet him can look him in the eye, and the more weak willed will either grovel or faint at one of his harsh looks. Animals do their best to avoid him, and even the fiercest of dogs cringe and whine in his presence. The only animals not affected by his Blatant Gift are crows

### History

Born in 1193 in a Russian village by the Baltic sea. His father was a native of the area, but his mother was from one of the tribes that roam the Finnish wastes. He was born with a caul, and this heralded his unusual nature. The villagers somehow knew that the child was different, and mistreated him and his mother whilst his father was serving in the armies of the prince of Kiev. At five, his father was killed, and his mother's brother came down from the frozen north to teach the boy forbidden knowledge. Milosh was given the caul that his mother had preserved in a small leather pouch, and his uncle taught him how to use it to take the shape of a crow. His uncle also taught him how to capture another man's soul in his eyes, and get them to do his will. Milosh used this talent to get revenge on those who had tormented him and his mother.

**Winner!**  
This was the best entry in the Doer of Evil contest. Milosh is the creation of Mark Shirley.





In 1203, Radis Czeremcha, a Polish magus from the House of Tytalus, came to the area. He was a master of weather magic, and was searching for a new source of *vis*. Instead, he found himself an apprentice in Milosh. He heard rumours of the 'witch-child', and went to the village and met the boy. He could feel the power of the gift in the youth, and could see the storm brewing in his eyes. Czeremcha slew the boy's uncle with a bolt of lightning called down from a clear sky, and returned with Milosh to Poland, and commenced his training in the Hermetic Arts at the Covenant of Lapis Crudus (The Bleeding Stone).

Czeremcha's teaching methods, like those of most Tytali, were harsh. Milosh proved unruly, and difficult to control. He managed to keep the powers taught him by his uncle a secret from his master, and using his second skin was able to escape Czeremcha's harsh rule and fly free. He always returned though, for he recognised power beyond that possessed by his uncle in this magus, and was eager to learn all of it that he could. Czeremcha punished the boy severely for these escapades, believing, in the classic Tytalus philosophy, that he was making the boy stronger. What Milosh was learning, however, was how to hurt. He took out his anger on the covenfolk, and was soon hated by all.

One day when Milosh was about 15, after a particularly severe beating, he destroyed one of his master's more important experiments in a rage. Czeremcha decided that he'd had enough of his apprentice's disobedient behaviour. He took a trip to the covenant's library that night, and brought back a scroll of Mentem spells. Sneaking into the boy's bedchamber with a handful of *vis* from the ruined experiment, Czeremcha started to cast *Enslaving the Mortal Mind* from text. Milosh woke during the spell, and glancing up at his master, he recognised the blazing eyes of the Tytalus as an attempt to capture his soul, as his uncle had taught him to do. Milosh retaliated. The two became locked in a battle for dominance, Hermetic magic fighting pagan power. It was the magus who lost. His command of Mentem magic was not strong enough for the raw strength of will that opposed him, and he lost control of his magic. The botched spell left him enslaved to the mind-controlling powers of his apprentice.

At first Milosh used this control to get revenge on Czeremcha with petty cruelties, but he soon realised the potential of his power. He commanded his former master to teach him all of his magic, to the exclusion of everything else. Milosh had little interest in most of Hermetic magic, having been earlier convinced by his master that it was weaker than the control of the weather. For three years, Milosh absorbed the Art of Auram like a sponge, occasionally learning Techniques and the Art of Aquam. By the end of this period he had learned just about everything that his master could teach him. Getting his ensorcelled slave to steal *vis* and books of weather spells and Magic Theory from the covenant, Milosh left, using his most

powerful magic to raze the tower of Czeremcha to the ground with a levinbolt of lightning. Czeremcha himself was killed in the collapse of his sanctum.

Milosh headed for the land of the Finns, seeking out his uncle's compatriots. Displaying his mastery over storms to them, he convinced them to teach him more about his native magical skills. They were evil-minded men, who used their powers to assert mastery over the minds of men, and ruled their people through fear. He spent five years studying with them, and learning from the plundered books, teaching himself the spells contained within.

At the age of 22 he decided that it was time to strike out on his own. He returned to the village where he had spent his miserable early years, and brought ruin to it, first destroying their crops with rainstorms and unseasonable frost, then flattening the rude huts with wind and lightning. After driving out the villagers, he singled out those who had tormented him as a child, and caused their own neighbours to kill them. Having cleared the area of people and crops, he set about building a kremlin (palace) for him to live in, and hired guards of evil repute to do his will.

## Current Status

Milosh currently dwells in his dark kremlin and plots. He has had five years to get his plans together, and is well prepared. He hates the Russians who caused him so much misery. He hates the Order of Hermes, who he holds responsible for his twisted upbringing. He longs for power, and will do almost anything to possess it. He has brooded in his palace for five years now, frequently making trips in his crow form across the steppes, in search of what he desires. In one of these forays he came across the Mongol Horde gathering to the East under Chingis (Genghis) Khan, and they figure prominently in his schemes.

His Hermetic training is incomplete. He only learned the Forms of Auram and Aquam, and the Techniques of Creo, Muto and Rego, and is unable to use Hermetic magic that involves any other Arts. He also did not learn as much as the average Hermetic apprentice, resulting in the 'Stingy Master' Flaw. He learnt only the basic theory of formulaic spell-casting from his enslaved master, and all his spells are self-taught—thus he never learned how to master his spells, nor adequately control their casting. His lab experience is virtually nonexistent. These gaps in his learning are summed up by the Flaws Unpredictable Magic and Creative Block. Finally, he did not have enough practice in forming a *parma magica* (Limited Magical Resistance).

His non-Hermetic powers are summed up in the Virtues of Entrancement, Skinchanger and Weather Sense. His Magical Affinity with Weather is the vestige of a fourth non-Hermetic power which was never fully developed by his uncle before he was taken by Czeremcha. ■



# Verditius Verus

## A Hidden Tradition In House Verditius

by Niall Christie

In 1165, at the meeting of the Hibernian Tribunal, it was discovered that the newly-qualified magus Silversmith of Verditius had no ability whatsoever to cast formulaic, spontaneous or ritual magic. Upon being questioned about her reasons for allowing such an apprentice to pass his Gauntlet, his mater, Argent of Verditius, pointed to the fact that not only had her apprentice produced his required "journeyman piece," but that he also showed extraordinary talent in the application of Hermetic principles to the creation of magic items. Indeed, his work was greater than that of many more "normal" members of House Verditius. "It is known that our founder was unable to cast even the simplest spell," she said. "My filius is much more a true follower of his teachings than all the other members of the House. Hence I call him a True Verditius." Since Silversmith had fulfilled the minimum requirements of a Verditius Gauntlet, his position as a fully-qualified magus was upheld by the Quaesitores.

However, the Quaesitores remained suspicious, and conducted further investigations. It was soon discovered that Argent herself suffered from a similar inability to cast spells. What is more, she revealed that her pater had suffered from a similar deficiency, as had his pater, and his mater before him. Indeed, this magical "bloodline" claimed descent all the way from Verditius himself. Soon it was revealed that there were several such "bloodlines" within the house, each claiming descent from Verditius and his filii. Furthermore, it was discovered that the Primi of the House were aware of this fact, but had chosen not to reveal it to the rest of the Order. The Quaesitores debated over this matter, and decided that although they disapproved of such secretiveness, no breach of the Code had been committed. Since then, it has been accepted that in the Order there is a tradition of Verditius magi who, although unable to cast spells, nonetheless excel in the creation of magic items and potions. The epithet given by Argent to her filius, latinized to Verditius Verus, has become the name of this tradition, which currently comprises some seven magi.

Other magi of the Order view these magi with mixed feelings, and many regard them as being somewhat "stunted" in their development. The Verditius, however, regard them as the embodiment of their founder's tradition, and some of the house's more capable magi have even begun neglecting to teach their apprentices to cast spells, in an attempt to make them better at crafting items. However, the tradition is still too young to tell what the end result of this will be. The revelation of this secret initially damaged the reputation of House Verditius in the eyes of several of the

other houses, however, the effects of this seem mostly to have passed.

The rules for playing a Verditius Verus are presented below in the form of a Magus Archetype, similar to those presented in *A Medieval Tapestry* and *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*. The main differences are that some compulsory requirements are given, as are the views of other houses towards the tradition (since only Verditius magi may be Verditius Verus).

### Compulsory Flaw: Verditius Verus -2

You are unable to cast spells of any type, be they Formulaic, Spontaneous or Ritual. However, you excel at the creation and understanding of magic items and potions. You automatically have the Inventive Genius Virtue (+1), and also gain the following advantages: When creating items or potions, if you know the spell you are enchanting into them, you may add the spell's magnitude as a Similar Spell bonus to your lab total (see Similar Spells, AM4 p69). When investigating Hermetic enchantments, double your Magic Theory. When creating your character, you use the normal Verditius template for Flaws and Abilities, and learn Arts and Spells as normal. You may not, however, take Virtues and Flaws relating to spell-casting (Storyguide's decision). Although you are unable to cast spells, you may still use Certamen and Parma Magica, though they are likely to be difficult for you.

**Suggested Virtues:** Mage-Smith +2 (*Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*, pp.60-1), Magical Memory +3 (*Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*, pp.61-2), Extra Arts +1, Secret Vis Source +1, Knack (with Craft Ability) Variable Virtues involving magical items and potions, like Alchemy, Charm Maker, etc. Magic Item (Variable), Beginning Vis +1, Highly Trained +3, any other Virtues involving magical items and potions (i.e., Alchemy, Charm Maker etc).

**Suggested Flaws:** Flawed Parma Magica -1, Incomprehensible -1, Limited Magic Resistance -2, Weak Parma Magica -3, Bad Reputation (especially among other magi) -1, Reclusive -1.

**Suggested Abilities:** Concentration, Bargain (Vis), any Craft.

**Suggested Arts:** Any, but especially Vim, to allow for vis use.

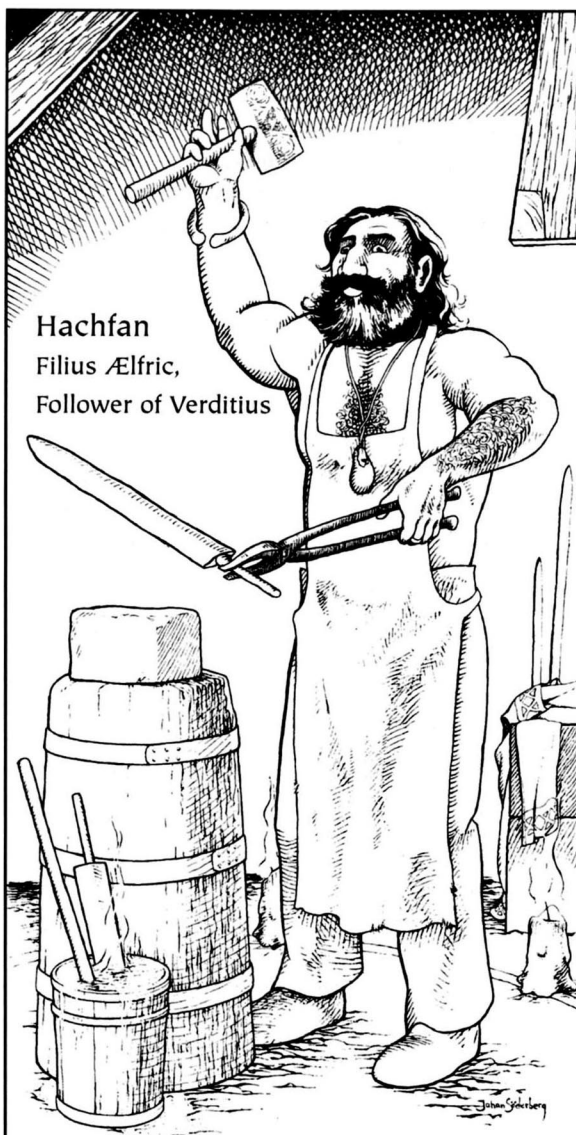
**Suggested Spells:** Any, but especially those which would be useful when enchanted into items.

### OTHER HOUSE VIEWS

**Bjornær:** Like most Verditius, they rely on tools, rather than themselves. It is perhaps more understandable in their case, however, considering their limited abilities.







### Hachfan

Filius Ælfric,  
Follower of Verditius

**Age:** 25 **Decrepitude:** 0 **Size:** +1  
**Confidence:** 3

**Characteristics:** Int +3 (astute), Per +2 (perceptive), Str +2 (big), Stm +3 (stalwart), Pre -2 (unattractive), Com -3 (strong accent), Dex 0, Qik (ponderous) -2

**Virtues and Flaws:** +1 Well-Traveled, +3 Large, +3 Highly Trained, +1 Secret Vis Source - Vim, +2 Mage-Smith, -1 Follower of Verditius, -2 Verditius Verus, -1 Incomprehensible, -1 Deep Sleeper, -1 Bad Reputation, -3 Sense of Doom, -1 Weakness - Opportunities to Travel

**Reputations:** 2 Undisciplined (quaesitores)

**Personality Traits:** Brave +3, Jolly +3, Practical +3, Curious +2

**Equipment:** Quarterstaff, Heavy Leather Hauberk, Tools

**Abilities:** Order of Hermes Lore (quaesitores) 1, Magic Theory (enchancing items) 5, Parma Magica (Te) 3, Scribe Latin (neatness) 2, Speak Latin (hermetic) 5, Speak Danish (colorful phrases) 4, Verditius Magic (items) 3, Athletics (jumping) 1, Awareness (alertness) 1, Woodworking (weapons) 3, Folk Ken (peasants) 1, Legend Lore (magic items) 1, Great Weapon

(quarterstaff) 3, Brawling (fists) 3, Metalworking (armor) 3, Bargain (vis) 1, Survival (mountains) 1, Swim (rough water) 1, Craft Weaponry (great weapons) 3, Craft Armor (chainmail) 3, Carouse (drinking songs) 1

**Magical Arts:** Cr 2, An 0, Ig 0, In 0, Aq 0, Im 0, Mu 0, Au 0, Me 0, Pe 0, Co 0, Te 10, Re 1, He 10, Vi 8

**Spells:** The Wizard's Armor ReTe 20 Req:He R:Per. D:Dia. T:Ind. Deflects all attacks by wood, stone and metal weapons. Focus: A Shield +1, Trap of Entwining Vines CrHe 10, Wall of Thorns CrHe 20, Seal the Earth CrTe 15, The Crystal Dart MuTe 10 Req:Re, Pit of the Gaping Earth PeTe 15, The Earth's Carbuncle ReTe 15 Req:Mu, Hands of the Grasping Earth ReTe 15 Req:Mu, Gather the Essence of the Beast MuVi 15, Demon's Eternal Oblivion PeVi 15

**Background:** Born into a large Danish family, Hachfan was originally apprenticed to the town armorer, but was spotted at age 10 by the magus Ælfric of Verditius. His family was approached, and soon he found himself with a new master. Ælfric soon realized the boy's potential to be a Verditius Verus, and so spent the winter seasons at his home covenant teaching his filius magic and smithcraft, and took him travelling during the summer months, so that he might have more experience of the world than the inside of a dusty castle. This lifestyle instilled a deep wanderlust in Hachfan, and he takes to the road at the slightest excuse. Hachfan passed his Gauntlet with a journeyman piece consisting of a finely-crafted silver ring enchanted with the spell *Wizard's Armor*, which Ælfric wears to this day.

Hachfan is a large, barrel-chested man with bushy black hair, a beard, twinkling blue eyes and a ready smile. In many ways he is the epitome of the jolly Viking smith, something which got him in trouble repeatedly during Tribunal meetings when he either cracked jokes at the wrong peoples' expense or pointed out when the ceremonials served no purpose whatsoever. Even now the Quaesitores regard him as being somewhat undisciplined. This image is further propagated by his choice of clothing. He always wears practical travelling clothes, a smith's apron and boots, even at Tribunals. He carries a Quarterstaff of pine wood, which is also his sigil. His wizard's sigil is that he always hums to himself as he works.

Recently Hachfan has been having recurring nightmares of being betrayed by someone close to him, he is convinced that when this happens his death will soon follow. Now he is travelling on his own, seeking further information about the meaning of his dreams. Where this will lead him, he does not know, for the moment he is just enjoying the sensations of the road.

**Bonisagus:** They could teach us a lot about enchantment. It is a shame they are otherwise so limited.

**Criamon:** It must be dreadful to be unable to feel the rush and flow of magic. So near, and yet so far.

**ex Miscellanea:** It is nice to see another house acknowledging some diversity in their membership.

**Flambeau:** Their magical devices are even better than the ones we buy from normal Verditius magi.

**Guernicus:** They seem to be even more stable than other magi of their house, and don't usually cause trouble.

**Jerbiton:** They are closer to mundanes than most magi, and so worth knowing.

**Mercere:** They produce devices which are vital to our Redcaps.

**Merinita:** Most magi of Verditius are boring by choice. At least these people are only boring because they have to be!

**Tremere:** Someday we may be able to make use of their abilities to further our cause.

**Tyталus:** They are an interesting study in how one might compensate for weakness by developing other talents.

**Other Verditius:** They embody the teachings of our founder, and have much to teach us.

## Bibliography-Inspirations

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Gemmell, David, "Knights of Dark Renown". London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.

Rohan, Michael Scott, "The Winter of the World," Vol. 1-3 - "The Anvil of Ice," "The Forge in the Forest" and "The Hammer of the Sun". London: Futura Publications, 1987-8.

Tweet, Jonathan, "Houses of Hermes". Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast, 1994. ■

## Famae Fabulaeque



by John Kasab

This feature is designed to provide some story seeds that can provide a diversion, a short storyline, or even a major saga thread. Storyguides should feel constrained only by their imagination. This issue's Famae Fabulaeque deals with magic artifacts.

1. My dear young magi, thank you so much for taking me in. I know it is the courtesy you would extend any Redcap, but the weather can be so damp and cold this time of year. But still, if I can travel, I must. Anyway, you remember that Winter covenant not too far from here? Well, it seems that the last of the magi there, a Verditius, has finally passed into Final Twilight.

You are the first to hear about this. I suppose someone will need to go through and dispose of their estate. Perhaps their filia will, come this summer. There are enough covenfolk there to keep things running for a little while at least.

Anyway, I know that Verditius had really put some effort into making the place nice in its heyday. I imagine that most of those enchanted items are still in place, there, although it might be a bit difficult finding them now that she's gone.

**Story hooks:** Should characters from the covenant go out and ransack the soon to be abandoned Winter covenant complex? What treasures and perils await?

2. I hear that far to the north, there are these underground creatures. Monsters, some call them, but they aren't like a dragon-type monster. More like a twisted up short person, they are. Called dwarves, I think.

Anyhow, what I heard from a trader who does some business up that way was that you could still find one of these, whatsit, dwarves and get them to make swords and boats and things like that for you.

Oh, I know what you're thinking. Why should I go into the northern wilderness to get a sword when there's the smith right here? Well, pal, these aren't any old swords. No, these are mighty swords, like out of them stories. You know, the kind of sword that some young lad stumbles upon that lets him retake the Holy Land for us Christians. That sort of thing is what I'm talking about here.

Catch is, you can't just pay these special smiths with some silver pennies or a cow or something. No, they take weird sorts of payments. And, this assumes you can find them and all. They don't exactly live out in the open, you know.

**Story hooks:** How far north do you have to go? What might you want the dwarves to make for you? And, what will the price be for a fantastic weapon or other fabulous item?

3. Oh, you're selling charms and powders, are you? I hear there's some guy who has been touring the fairs in this region with powders and charms. I was hoping you might be him. Seems he has this love potion that reworks, if you know what I mean. And what with me getting married and all, well, I thought that I should, you know, be prepared. I mean, it looks like you all have a nice selection and everything, but, you know, I think I'm going to hold out for this other guy I've heard about. If he doesn't show, I'll stop by again.

**Story hooks:** Is there a hedge wizard wandering the countryside? How powerful is he? What could the covenant gain from him? ■







## Council Passerum

Europe AD 1200, the setting is a covenant in the fullness of its years, a place of wondrous and terrible power.... The site of many tribunals, Vespasian's Rest lies in the Tribunal of the Greater Alps and its masters have agreed to answer the inquiries of those who would make them.

Danis and Vaille meet Constance, a Verditius staying at the covenant. The covered walkway from the garden to the bath is pleasant and has intricately carved benches between the pillars on which they could sit.

"Constance, what have you brought us from your laboratory?"

"Oh, nothing of my working Danis. These are this season's missives."

The Criamon started, "Is it us? I thought Chromus was supposed to be here?"

"I don't think he'd be... qualified for these, Vaille."

Vaille's eyes rolled. "Celebration has its price."

"Hmm.... Well, try this. 'What are the effects of Faerie Magic upon the understanding imparted in the written word?'"

Danis perks up and quickly answers, "I'd just say that we say things different. That's all."

Concerned, Vaille says, "As I understand it, some magi of Merinita have a special rapport with faeries. Their magic is compatible with Bonisagus' theory of magic, a variant if you will. The faerie expression of magic can be very confusing to the practitioners of normal Hermetic magic. Consider those who speak the local tongue.

One may meet a villager who speaks the same tongue but in a different dialect; same language, different expression."

"That's what I said!" pouted Danis.

Mystified at Vaille's knowledge, Constance pulls out another page and reads, "How do Verditius magi improve their skills in the laboratory?"

"Don't they practice?"

"Sure, Danis, we can also teach each other, though this is costly in both time and materials, since most Verditius masters don't want to take the time or want to give away their secrets."

"Really? We just find a faerie and give them some flowers or tell them a story."

"Hmm, that doesn't work for us. We need vis or something powerful to trade. Magi don't give up their time for nothing."

"We Criamon sit in contemplation of the vast meaninglessness of the world, losing ourselves in the possibilities inherent to the Gift."

"Huh?"

"What?"

"It seems there are many possibilities in the Order's magic. We often write texts describing our Enigma. It seems Merinita do as well. Constance, do Verditius write texts on their techniques?"

"Our House isn't very open about these things, but it is said that the early masters put to paper their techniques, but I haven't heard of any modern magi doing so. It's not really something you can write about. There is a tome in Verdi, *On the Construction of the Staff of the Dragon's Scale* by Himinis. It's more of a lab text than a summa but it's common for Verditius apprentices to read it through sometime before their gauntlet."

"That would explain much," mused Vaille.

"Isn't there a matching belt buckle?" asked Danis.

Amused, Vaille continued, "Is it possible that for most of your House your ancestors' knowledge has become an innate skill? For you, what they studied and debated, is a skill your parents chose to train you for."

"Hmm... That's possible. This isn't something we discuss much. If you want me to build you something, I will ask detailed questions. I leave metaphysics to priests."

"It's just something I've been thinking about: aptitudes, natural tendencies, and knowledge. I suppose what's natural for one may have to be studied and learned for another."

"So, it's my natural tendency to build things and Danis' naturally drawn toward faeries. We each, however, need to learn the other's craft: natural talent versus learned knowledge."

"Exactly."

"Is Chromus' stupidity a talent or a knowledge?" giggled Danis.

"Dear, we're discussing those with education," explained Constance.

"Oh. Right."

The discussion went on for some time and no conclusion came of it, though the three magi came to a closer understanding of each others' magic. As they moved on to the baths, the discussion turned toward the foibles of their fellow magi, the absence of Chromus, and their forced servitude to the Order.















# Epilogue

Salvete Sodales,

As Mythic Perspectives gains readership and subscribers, it is also gaining a few of the problems that associate themselves with larger magazines. The magazine readership is by no means huge but what it lacks in sheer numbers it probably makes up for in the distances the magazines travel around the globe. Now, expanding the readership was (is) always on my mind, but a consequence of that gain is more room for errors. Aside from actually producing Mythic Perspectives which is both a pleasure and a terror to do, the process of getting Mythic Perspectives to you is fraught with peril. Until MP5 I had a total of three subscribers complain about magazines not properly reaching their destinations, all of those eventually surfaced in their mail boxes or mine, but they were all resolved.

Then comes MP6 (woosh)! Suddenly in one issue I get eight complaints. There are three basic players in the equation of magazine delivery and probably in the delivery of everything else as well: me, you, and the postal service. For my part, I will eat one of the complaints right off the top because I did the unthinkable: I didn't properly record a check I received and left a reader without a prompt copy of a prepaid subscription. Two copies didn't arrive at their final destinations even though they were sent (one of these two did eventually make it back to my mail box), so we will award these to the post office. The last five were... guess where? That's right, you did guess it, right where they were supposed to be. Now I am not making fun of any of my customers or their roommates, spouses, dogs, cats, or anyone else, believe or not. What I am trying to do however is point out a very real problem, that if not carefully combatted could kill this or any other small business. Those missing magazines had made it to the right places only to be set aside, buried under newspapers, set on top of the refrigerator, etc., and then summarily forgotten by the involved parties. Then at some point after that the subscriber decided to write me and find out why I hadn't sent their magazine. I should say that everyone that wrote about this topic was very polite and made no attempts to ridicule me or the mag, they just (understandably) wanted to know where their copy was. I made every attempt to be equally polite and professional when I inquired as to who else had access to their mail and here's the reason... for a small business like this mailing costs are very close to the top of the list of expenditures. Since I don't yet qualify for any kind of special mailing rates, if I need to mail a second magazine to a subscriber unnecessarily, then I have just wiped out the potential profitability of a subscription. Now don't ever hesitate to contact me if your magazine doesn't show up in a timely fashion (timely means different things depending upon where you live and if your subscription is airmail or surface mail). I will always replace a copy that didn't get where it was going as long as it isn't under that pile of dirty clothes in your closet <grin>. Anyway, I really don't want anyone offended by this topic, I just wanted to let you know why I might ask you a peculiar question or two before I mail a replacement copy if you ever have to ask.

And now on to something you might have already noticed. This issue of Mythic Perspectives was totally printed. Since I am writing this before the printing occurs, hopefully we will all be pleased with the results and making this happen on a regular basis won't be a hellish thing for me to accomplish. I really do listen to your criticisms and hopes concerning Mythic Perspectives and many of your concerns are mine also. So continue to be vocal about the magazine and what you think, I rely on your input to balance my practical and creative direction.

And finally, this isn't where it ends. I had even more things I wanted to do for this issue that unfortunately I was forced to postpone because of 5+ weeks of illness during the production of MP7. MP8 is going to be even more refined than I hope this one turned out to be. My current planning is for Mythic Perspectives to go for at least another 20 (five years). I have enough ideas to keep it fresh and interesting at least that long. So my pledge is as long as I continue to have contributors and subscribers who are interested in Mythic Perspectives and I have any breath left in my body, the magazines future is pretty damn secure!

Sincerely,






# Contest Information

## What was on the Storyguide's mind...

Well, I gave away a few prizes last year as part of *Mythic Perspectives* contest offerings, but got precious few entries for my efforts. So here is my final stab at stirring up some interest. It is now or never, enter or the free stuff for talking about your characters (something you all like to do, I'm sure) and such will dry up. This contest is really about the Storyguides but is something the whole troupe could potentially participate in. In a nutshell I am looking for a member or members of a troupe to nominate the best character created by their Storyguide. This must be done with the permission of your Storyguide as I will not be caught printing a character concept without the permission of its creator.

### Rules

1. Entry must be an actual Storyguide character creation. The character can be of any House, tradition, vocation, nationality, sex, or species. In short, this is pretty open ended. If it's a character the storyguide came up with and sprung on the troupe, it's a candidate.
2. Characters may be submitted using any of the four editions of *Ars Magica* rules. Submissions should include a complete write-up of the character using the chosen set of rules. There should be not only a history for the character, but some discussion of what made the character great or the best of those the storyguide presented in the saga.
3. Judging will be done by me. If your entry shows an insightful use of the the game mechanics, makes me think, wince, or roll on the floor and laugh then you have a better chance of winning.
4. While it is possible for a troupe to send in an entry, it is best if entries have the permission of the storyguide. Group submissions will have the prize split among the group. See below.
5. Only one entry is permitted per troupe.
6. Representatives or employees of Gnawing Ideas, *Mythic Perspectives*, or *Atlas Games*, are not eligible to enter.

### What you get if you win...

The winning entry will be published in an future issue of *Mythic Perspectives*. The winning storyguide will receive a new 4th edition hardbound *Ars Magica* rulebook and \$35 for refreshments at one of your gaming sessions.

So there are no arguments in the case of a group submission, I really want a single contact for sending the prize to, preferably the storyguide. Feel free to list everyone in the troupe, but single out the storyguide.

### Entry Deadline

August 20, 1999

## Fiction 2000

Do you enjoy writing fiction? If you do, why not enter the 3rd *Mythic Perspectives* fiction competition? Stories can address any concept that falls within the realm of *Ars Magica* and its *Mythic Europe* setting. The lives and times of kings, magi, knights, peasants, high and low, brought to life by your creative expression.

### Rules

1. Submissions must be in English, between 1000 and 5000 words, and either submitted as an .rtf file attachment to an email message; or an .rtf file sent on a 3.5" disk to the *Mythic Perspectives* mailbox; or a neatly typed or printed paper submission. All correspondances should be labeled **Fiction Competition 2000**. For standard mail allow sufficient time for submission deadline.

2. All stories must be set within the official *Ars Magica* milieu. In order to successfully write a story in the *Ars Magica* world, it is essential to be familiar with the main game book, and familiarity with the *Order of Hermes* or *Houses of Hermes* supplement might prove useful.

3. Judging will take place in two stages. First, the entries will be assessed for general readability and clarity. Then author's names will be removed and be passed on to a group of judges, who will decide the winner. The judges will be announced in the Winter 1999 issue of *Mythic Perspectives*. The winner will be notified after February 20th, 2000.

4. There will only be one cash prize.

5. All entries become the sole property of Gnawing Ideas and *Mythic Perspectives*.

6. The decisions of the editor and judges are final, and no correspondence will be entered into concerning the judging.

7. Only one entry is permitted per person.

8. Representatives or employees of Gnawing Ideas, *Mythic Perspectives*, *Atlas Games*, judges, or their families, are not eligible to enter.

### What you get if you win...

The winning entry and a selection of the rest will be published in a special fiction paperback if participation allows or the winner's entry will be published in a regular issue of *Mythic Perspectives* if it does not. All those published will receive a copy of the issue in which their story appears.

The winner (and only the winner) will receive a cash prize based upon the following: A base of \$100US plus \$10 per accepted entry, up to a maximum of \$300US. Thus, if ten people enter, the first prize will be \$200, and if twenty or more enter, the prize will be the full \$300.

### Entry Deadline

December 31, 1999

# Ars Market

Personal ads in the Ars Market are free to subscribers as space allows. Ads can be to buy, to sell, or to trade, anything related to Ars Magica. Advertising space is also available for businesses with a product that will be of interest to storyguides and troupes and are related to Ars Magica and its specific gaming genre. Please contact the publisher for further details.

## Wanted

### Piacenza Italy

We're trying to match our little town, Piacenza, Italy with a Northern-European town of medieval interest. This will mean that our town, and maybe the one you're living in, will exchange visits, tour medieval resorts, meet people, and generally have a good time.

Piacenza is the town that saw in AD1099 Pope Urban declare the First Crusade, and other waypoints of medieval history.

What we're looking for is for a town or city that makes profit of its historical past, and in which annual events concerning the Middle Ages are being held. So, if you are interested in making your city known, please contact me at [cymbalus@equipiacenza.org](mailto:cymbalus@equipiacenza.org) and we'll hammer out the details.

Vale!  
Massimiliano Bariola

I am looking for Shadis #49. Do you have a copy you are willing to part with? Please contact Eric Kouris at [styren@aol.com](mailto:styren@aol.com)

I am interested in starting a modern "X-Files" type of saga using converted Ars Magica rules. If anyone is aware of any "modern" rules for Ars Magica that would accommodate this I would appreciate it if they would drop me a line and let me know via email at [pederson@wi.net](mailto:pederson@wi.net).

Thank You,  
Al Pederson

## Disclaimer, Et Cetera

Mythic Perspectives and its publisher, Gnawing Ideas, reserve the right to refuse any material for any reason.

Got something related to Ars Magica to buy, to sell, or to trade? Contact us to place your own ad.

## For Sale

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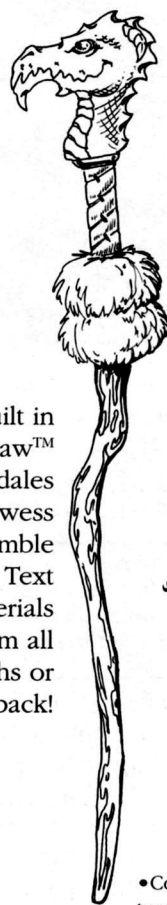
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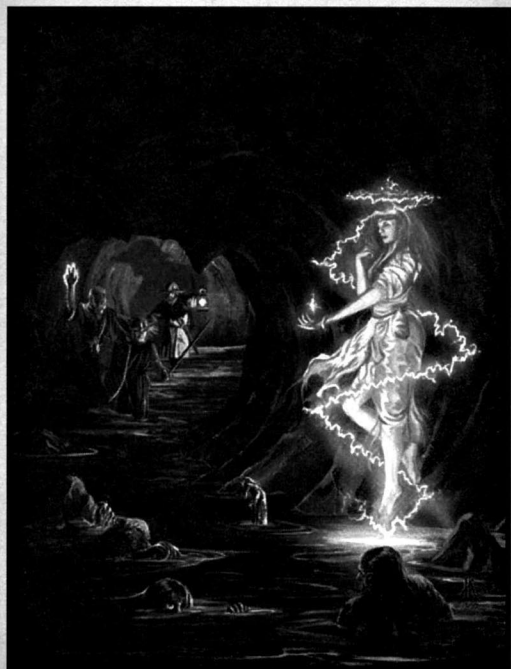
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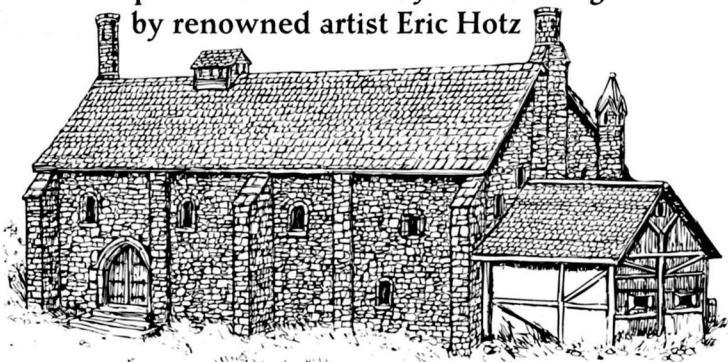
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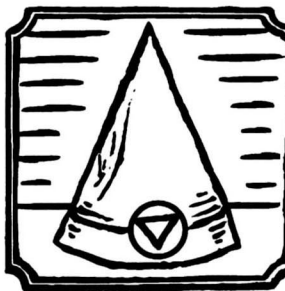
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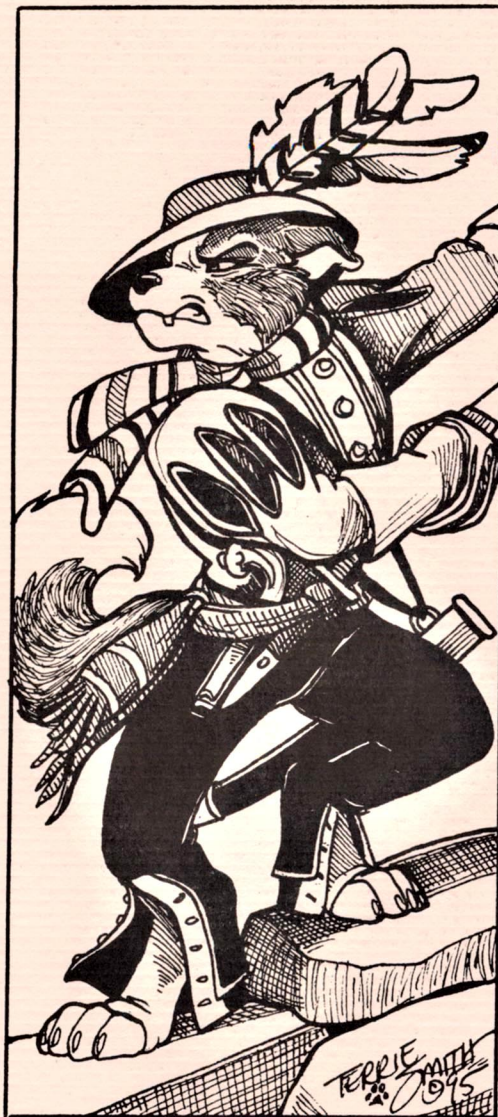
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