The Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes is an organization of magi that spans the whole of Mythic Europe, even reaching some distance beyond. It has about 1200 members, living in thirteen Tribunals which divide up the continent. In the magical realm, no single group can even think to challenge the Order as a whole, but the power of God is far beyond even Hermetic magi. This chapter lays out the history and current state of the Order of Hermes, to which Ars Magica characters are almost all affiliated in some way.

The History of the Order

The practice of magic and wizardry goes back to the very beginnings of civilization. Gifted individuals have always found ways to utilize their power, often dominating the unGifted for a time, before the envy, suspicion, and hatred engendered by tyrannical behavior and the effects of The Gift brought them down.

Three things worked against the formation of magical societies or orders of wizards. The first was the effect of The Gift. Wizards who did meet naturally mistrusted one another, and could rarely agree to work together. Even if they agreed once, future meetings often planted the seeds of betrayal. This was compounded by the second factor: the lack of magic resistance. This almost guaranteed that the wizard who struck first would destroy his opponent, and thus encouraged pre-emptive strikes. Finally, every wizard had his own understanding of magic, and sharing this knowledge was a long and troublesome process. There was little that could be shared easily.

One of the few even partial successes in this regard was the Roman Cult of Mercury. Its members rarely met in person, communicating by letter or messenger except when they needed to gather to perform the great rituals that gave the Cult its power. Further, the rules of the Cult specified that anyone who killed a Cult member should be hunted down and killed by the other members. This rule was enforced quite strictly, greatly reducing the incentive to pre-emptive strikes. Finally, the Cult of Mercury had access to a number of magical effects which could be learned relatively easily, even by someone who already knew many of them. This gave the wizards some motivation to share knowledge.

Nevertheless, suspicions grew within the Cult that some members were hoarding knowledge, ready for a major strike against the other members. Soon after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Cult tore itself apart in internal conflict, leaving isolated wizards scattered across Europe. Magic entered a dark age, from which it emerged with the foundation of the Order of Hermes, more than three centuries later.

The Foundation of the Order

The Order of Hermes owes its existence to Bonisagus, without question the greatest magical genius yet to live. He made two great discoveries, either of which alone would have ensured his place in magical history. The first was the discovery of the Parma Magica, which defended a wizard from the magic of others and shielded him from the antipathetic effect of their Gifts. Safe behind a Parma Magica, a wizard could talk to another Gifted individual with little fear of attack and without having to constantly fight the natural tendency to lapse into envy, suspicion, and hostility.

The true potential of the Parma Magica was first recognized by the sorceress Trianoma, who willingly studied under Bonisagus despite her own power. She realized that the Parma Magica would make a true society of magi possible, a society where wizards could meet to resolve their differences, and live and work together. Bonisagus, already working on his next project, a unified theory of magic, was happy to go along with Trianoma's grand vision.

Trianoma & Viea

Trianoma had a twin sister, Viea. They were trained in magic together, and as they grew, Viea interpreted Trianoma’s visions. One of these visions suggested that the isolated magi of Europe would bring about a disaster, unless the sisters could defeat a particular powerful wizard. They searched for this wizard for years, and finally a dragon, said to be in the temple of the Hesperides beyond Ethiopia, told them to seek out a cave in the Alps.

That wizard was Bonisagus. The Parma Magica protected him from their assault, and he captured them, demanding that they taught him their magic, while he taught them in return. Viea refused, but Trianoma agreed, hoping to use the opportunity to defeat Bonisagus. As they studied together, however, she came to have great respect for him. Viea became increasingly jealous, and after a particularly violent fight with her sister, she stole some valuable texts and fled. Trianoma forbade Bonisagus to seek vengeance, realizing that her vision might have meant that she would fight her sister and bring about the disaster. Instead, she proposed founding an order of magi within which such theft would be forbidden.

Viea’s fate remains unknown.

Trianoma traveled across Europe, seeking out the most powerful wizards. The Parma Magica made her immune to their attempts to drive her off, and her demonstrations of her offensive power left many in no doubt that she could, if she wished, eliminate any wizard without fear of consequences. Some ran and hid, hoping to avoid her nefarious plans. Others listened to her dream of a unified order, and agreed to meet with Bonisagus.

From these discussions, Bonisagus drew a great deal of knowledge. From the traditions of the Cult of Mercury he developed Formulaic and Ritual Magic, and from the traditions of the druids, brought by Diedne, a woman cast out from that religion, he learned to create magical effects spontaneously. Verditius taught him the secrets of binding magic into items, and Merinita the arts of binding animals. From each of the eleven wizards who came to him, Bonisagus learned something, and to each he taught the Parma Magica.

The result of these studies was Bonisagus's second great discovery, the theory of Hermetic Magic. In 767 the thirteen wizards gathered at Durenmar in the Black Forest, and swore to the Code of Hermes, creating the Order of Hermes at the first Tribunal.

The Houses of Hermes

The first magi of the Order are always referred to as the Twelve Founders, for all that there were thirteen magi at the first Tribunal. Trianoma refused to put herself on an equal footing with Bonisagus, or the other magi she had brought to him, an astute political move that left her free to mediate power struggles rather than being drawn into them. Each of the Twelve Founders established a House. The current House Ex Miscellanea was founded later in the Order's history, and in the beginning House Diedne made up the complement. House Diedne were bound together by their adherence to an ancient pagan religion, which they soon came to dominate completely.

The Order immediately entered a period of rapid growth. The founders of the True Lineages recruited apprentices, and their Houses grew organically. The founders of the Mystery Cults initiated more members, recruiting eagerly from among those other wizards who seemed congenial. House Merinita was not yet a Mystery Cult, and recruited magi with an interest in the wilderness. House Diedne sought converts to its religion. House Jerbiton extended the reach of the Order into the higher culture of the mundane world, even making overtures to Charlemagne himself. And the magi of Houses Flambeau and Tytalus criss-crossed the continent, giving all magicians they found a simple choice: Join, or Die.

Within forty years the Order of Hermes dominated the magical landscape of Europe.

Crises in the Order

That domination persists until the present day, 1220. Nevertheless, an Order that has endured for well over four hundred years has naturally faced its share of crises and problems.

Damhan-Allaidh and the Ordo Miscellanea

In the early years of the ninth century Damhan-Allaidh (DAH-van ALL-ath), a powerful and evil wizard resident in the British Isles, led an organized resistance to the Order of Hermes. Rather than face Hermetic wizards in magical combat, his followers cursed and harassed their followers, set traps, and used mundane assassins to halt the progress of the Order. For a number of years these tactics were effective, and some began to think that the Order would be stopped at the English Channel.

Tytalus the Founder entrusted Pralix, his most gifted apprentice, with the task of defeating Damhan-Allaidh. She brought as much cunning to the task as her opponent, and in a series of devious raids and spectacular magical battles she was able to defeat Damhan-Allaidh and bring many of his followers over to her side. Despite the victory, rumors persist to the present day that Damhan-Allaidh was not destroyed, and still plots revenge against the Order.

As the Order prepared to welcome the victor home, it received a message. Pralix had established her own Order, the Ordo Miscellanea, which would serve as a competitor to the Order of Hermes, keeping it strong. Flambeau wanted to march against her immediately, but Tytalus, impressed by his filia's nerve, forced a negotiated settlement. In 817 the Ordo Miscellanea joined the Order of Hermes as a thirteenth House, House Ex Miscellanea.

The Domination of House Tremere

House Tremere had been slowly building its power since the foundation of the Order, with Tremere himself keeping close control over his line. Through the careful use of certamen and the building of political alliances, the House gained effective control over several Tribunals, and was poised to take over more. When Jerbiton died, leaving Tremere as the sole remaining Founder, the House was ready to move to dominate the entire Order, turning it into a tool for their larger plans.

At that point, a group of magi whose identities are still unknown broke the minds of Tremere's closest lieutenants. This event, known as 'the Sundering', also broke the power structures that the House had built, as obligations to those magi and threats posed by them ceased to be a concern. Tremere himself met with the magi responsible for the Sundering, or perhaps their representatives, and some sort of agreement was forged. While Tremere himself died soon afterwards, the House has kept to the agreement, and has never again tried to dominate the Order.

The Corruption of House Tytalus

House Tytalus has always sought challenges. In the late tenth century, leaders of the House went too far, seeking to control demons and instead being corrupted by them. They were engaged in a subtle campaign to corrupt the rest of the Order as well when their corruption was uncovered by another Tytalus maga. She alerted the Quaesitores, and the Order turned with great efficiency to purging the diabolists from their midst. The Prima of House Tytalus, Tasgillia, was the most prominent victim, but the House lost many of its members, and never again recovered the relative size it had in the early years. To this day, many magi wonder whether the House has completely escaped this taint.

The Schism War

Just after the turn of the millennium, the Order of Hermes began to descend into anarchy. The corruption of House Tytalus made magi more paranoid about the secret activities of other magi, even without the incitement of The Gift. Magi also became more concerned about attempts to pry into their secrets, and thus rebuffed attempts at investigation. Many disputes reached Tribunal, where the voting was deadlocked as magi refused to get drawn in. In this period, many Tribunals were inquorate, as magi were reluctant to leave the security of their own covenants.

Magi who felt themselves threatened resorted to Wizards’ War, and even to illegal raids on other covenants. The Quaesitores, Redcaps, Bonisagi, and other magi interested in keeping the Order together were stretched too thin, and found that they could not impose order on magi who did not want it.

The anarchy grew, and for a while it looked as though the Order of Hermes would fall to the same threat as the Cult of Mercury before it.

Then House Tremere declared war on House Diedne. The pagans of that House had always been somewhat distant from the rest of the Order, which was, as it always had been, largely Christian. Dark rumors about their religious rites had spread in the wake of the corruption of Tytalus, and few trusted them. When the Primus of House Tremere, Cercistum, accused the Diedne of human sacrifice and called on the Order to help eliminate the diabolists, House Flambeau eagerly joined the battle. Many members of House Jerbiton, who had long been concerned that the Order harbored a pagan cult, also joined in. Members of many Houses stepped forward to join the Tremere, and no-one publicly supported the Diedne.

Seizing the opportunity, the Bonisagi and Quaesitores called an emergency Grand Tribunal, at which the whole of House Diedne was declared Renounced, so that it was the duty of all Hermetic magi to hunt them down and slay them.

The war that followed was bloody and destructive, and wiped the House out. Its leaders, however, were never found, and while the Order hope that their spells killed them, the fear remains that they fled to some magical regio, biding their time and waiting for revenge.

With the destruction of the Diedne, the Schism War came to an end. The Quaesitores had been able to enforce the Code during the final stages of the War, as all members of the Order were theoretically united against a single enemy. The experience of chaos and destruction convinced most magi that they never wanted to see such a thing again, and once again Tribunals were respected, and the rule of law returned to the Order.

Since the Schism War, the Order has existed in a state of relative peace and co-operation. However, by 1220 the last magi who can remember the War have died or passed into Final Twilight, and memories of that terrible time are fading.

The Houses of Hermes

The Order of Hermes is divided into twelve Houses, all but Ex Miscellanea descended in some way from one of the Twelve Founders. This section provides a brief overview of the Houses, but it is important to remember that individuals within a House can vary widely.

The twelve Houses fall into three groups. Four (Bonisagus, Guernicus, Mercere, and Tremere) are true lineages, made up of those trained by someone trained by someone (etc) trained by the founder of the House. It is not possibly to join those Houses later. These Houses are described in the supplement *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages.* Four (Bjornaer, Criamon, Merinita, and Verditius) are Mystery Cults, and magi can join those Houses by being initiated into the cult. Such initiations teach the Outer Mystery of the cult, the only cult ability that is not kept largely secret. Their secret Mysteries, and much more detail of the Houses, are detailed in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults.* The last four (Ex Miscellanea, Flambeau, Jerbiton, and Tytalus) are gatherings of magi with common interests. It is relatively easy to join these Houses after training, and magi who feel that they do not fit in to their old Houses often do. Ex Miscellanea, in particular, will take anyone with The Gift, a smattering of Latin and Magic Theory, and the ability to raise a Parma Magica — and many members will teach the last three to potential recruits. The interests and activities of these Houses are discussed in *Houses of Hermes: Societates.*

It is only possible to be a member of one House at a time.

House Bjornaer

Magi of Bjornaer (BYORE-nayr) concern themselves primarily with beasts and the animalistic side of human nature. Because of this emphasis in their training, each Bjornaer magus can take the form of an animal, known as his "heartbeast." Understanding the heartbeast in particular and animals in general is considered more important than Hermetic magic by many in this House. Despite this close association with shapeshifting, Bjornaer magi avoid any kind of shapeshifting other than their heartbeast, and have hostile relations with some other shapeshifters, for reasons that other magi do not fully understand.

Due to their nature, Bjornaer magi are unable to forge the necessary links to have a familiar, and the very concept is alien to them. Some Bjornaer deride magi who take familiars, which they call "substitute" heartbeasts. On the other hand, other magi are wary of followers of Bjornaer because of their fascination with the bestial. Furthermore, House Bjornaer is less respected than it might otherwise be because its founder was from a Germanic rather than a Roman magical tradition.

The House is divided into six clans. Clan Arelie is concerned with remembering the past, Clan Ilfetu is responsible for Initiating members of the House, Clan Maruhs seeks self-realization, Clan Midusulf leads, Clan Sirnas protects, and Clan Wilkis nurtures magi and strengthens the House. Philosophically, the House is divided between Harmonists, who want to see humans and nature live in harmony, and Wilderists, who want to drive humans back to the cities, restoring the wilderness to its dominance. The Wilderist philosophy was the original philosophy of the House, while the first Harmonist was Hérisson, a magus of the tenth century whose ideas only became popular after the Schism War.

The Prima of the House is Falke, and its domus magna is Crintera, in the Rhine Tribunal, described in *Guardians of the Forests,* page 92*.* The former Primus, Archmagus Urgen, is the chief of Clan Midusulf, and still important in the House, sitting on its council and residing at Crintera.

This House is a Mystery Cult, and the ability to take the form of the heartbeast is the Outer Mystery (see page @@).

House Bonisagus

Bonisagus (BOH-nee-SAH-goos) invented the Hermetic theory of magic, and his student, the maga Trianoma, masterminded the formation of the Order. House Bonisagus is a true lineage; all of its members can trace their heritage back to Bonisagus himself.

House Bonisagus is split into two strands, the political and the theoretical. Theoretical Bonisagus magi concentrate on pushing back the boundaries of Hermetic magic, and are the undisputed masters of Magic Theory. Political Bonisagus magi, often called 'magi Trianomae', concentrate on keeping the Order together, and excel at politics.

The current Prima is Archmaga Murion, a consummate politician, who resides at Durenmar in the Rhine Tribunal (see *Guardians of the Forests,* page 51*).* The House typically remembers its researchers better than its politicians: figures such as Notatus, the first Primus, who created the *Aegis of the Hearth*, and Conciatta, who extended Hermetic magic to the directly affect the other supernatural powers (Divine, Faerie, and Infernal) (see *Legends of Hermes,* Chapter Two). Among contemporary members, Archmagus Relisius is well-known for his Christian faith and advocacy of harmony between Magic and the Divine (see *Tales of Power,* Chapter Four: Encroaching Dominion).

House Criamon

This very secretive House is known for its obscure philosophy, its disdain for simple power, and its members' habit of marking their faces and bodies with arcane symbols. Followers of Criamon (KREE-ah-mone) are an enigmatic and otherworldly group of magi, generally having little interest in the politics of the Order.

Magi of Criamon seek the "Enigma," which other magi characterize as some sort of mystical experience. For followers of Criamon, understanding the Enigma is about releasing all souls from some sort of imprisonment. Their philosophy is inspired by the ancient Greek thinker Empedocles, and has something to do with the nature of time. They have a unique perspective on right and wrong action, but those outside the House find it very difficult to understand this. Indeed, magi outside the House often stereotype them as tattooed weirdoes whose actions make no sense.

Even among the Mystery Cults, House Criamon is difficult for outsiders to comprehend.

Its Prima is Muscaria, who is resident at the domus magna, the Cave of Twisting Shadows in the Tribunal of the Greater Alps. She is a young and intensely practical maga, little like the common image of her House. Important past magi include Vederis, who wrote the *Travels of Fedoso*, an allegorical, or at least esoteric, text that is popular in the House and beyond, and Abdkypris, who found important links between the Mysteries of the House and the beliefs of the Sufis, a tradition within Islam. St Nerius (see *Realms of Power: The Divine,* page 91), a magus famous for his Christian devotion and sanctity, is generally said to have been a member of House Criamon.

This House is a Mystery Cult, and the Mystery at the heart of the cult is the Enigma (see page @@).

House Ex Miscellanea

This is a large, diverse, and highly disorganized collection of magi. Though originally founded by Pralix as a rival to the Order of Hermes, this association was accepted as a House of its own. It accepts wizards of all kinds, some only nominally Hermetic, whose magic comes from many disparate traditions. Magi Ex Miscellanea (EKS mis-kel-LAH-nay-ah) are often called hedge wizards by their many detractors within the Order, although most can use Hermetic magic just as well as any other magus.

Magi of Ex Miscellanea have very little in common, belonging to many different traditions within the House, each tradition having its own strengths and weaknesses. Many of these traditions are described in more detail in *Houses of Hermes: Societates.*

The Primus of the House is Ebroin, a relatively young magus who was elected four years ago when the previous Prima, Immanola, was declared to have entered Final Twilight. He has ambitions to revitalize the House from its domus magna of Cad Gadu, in the Stonehenge Tribunal. One of Pralix’s closest allies was Colomen, from a tradition of warding wizards now known as the “Columbae”, or “pigeons”. He taught his tradition’s magic to other magi, and those insights formed the basis of most of the wards created by Hermetic magic. Most magi would be hard-pressed to name any magus Ex Miscellanea they did not know personally — including most members of the House.

House Flambeau

While most followers of Flambeau (flahm-BOH) specialize in fire magic, some study spells of simple annihilation as a more subtle alternative. Flambeau the Founder was known for his mastery of fire, while his apprentice, and the first Primus, Apromor, favored Perdo. Thus, both of these traditions are respected within the House. These aggressive and ferocious magi often cause trouble within the Order and frequently anger mundanes. However, their fearlessness and love of destruction make them invaluable when the Order requires the application of martial force.

House Flambeau is a gathering of kindred spirits. While most followers of Flambeau believe in direct action and combat, there is also a strong tradition of honor and chivalry in the House, making them in many ways the Order’s knights. This is particularly true under the current Primus, Garus, who leads the House from its domus magna of Castra Solis in the Provençal Tribunal (see *Faith & Flame,* page 67). The House’s original domus magna was Val Negra, also in the Provençal Tribunal, but it has been lost in a regio for decades, if not centuries. Flambeau’s second apprentice, Elaine, carried on his tradition of fire magic, and served as a Hoplite (see House Guernicus, next). She was also an important scholar and author, and wrote several texts that are still important today, including *Ars Flambonis*, a summa on Ignem (level 14, quality 12) that is peppered with anecdotes of the Founder and particularly popular within the House.

Among its contemporary members, the Archmaga Geirlaug of Montverte covenant in the Normandy Tribunal is particularly notable, as much for her great age as her great power. She is rarely seen outside her tower these days, but is a master of Ignem and still has a firm grip on the direction of her covenant (see *The Lion and The Lily,* page 58).

House Guernicus

House Guernicus (GWAIR-nee-kuss) is a true lineage, all its members descended from Guernicus the Founder, who believed that the Order needed strictly enforced rules if it was to survive. Members of this House are the judges of the Order, investigating wrongdoing and bringing cases against those who transgress the Code of Hermes and the Peripheral Code. They believe the Order will collapse through internal conflict without their fierce stewardship. The House is sometimes known informally as House Quaesitor (KWAE-see-tor), as 'Quaesitor' is the title of those magi empowered by the Order to investigate crimes.

Although House Guernicus trains and inducts their own apprentices, other magi can also join the ranks of the Quaesitores, and one of the highest honors in the Order is to be invited by the elders of House Guernicus to become a Quaesitor. Such magi invariably retain membership in their original House. A starting maga can only be a Quaesitor if she was trained in House Guernicus.

Quaesitors are sometimes asked to investigate possible crimes, or to mediate disputes between magi or covenants. While this does take time, the custom of the Order is that the Quaesitors be given a few pawns of vis as a gift, in return for their efforts. These investigators are often supported by magi known as Hoplites, who are often from other Houses. Hoplites are skilled in defeating the things that might threaten a Quaesitor, which means that they are strong in magical combat.

The House has an important philosophical split between Traditionalists, who believe that the Code should be preserved as it has been since the Founding, and the Transitionalists, who believe that it should be revised to better suit modern realities. The Transitionalist movement started with Simprim of Guernicus in the mid-twelfth century, and seeks greater legal powers for the Quaesitores.

The Prima of the House is the Archmaga Bilera, a maga with a long history of fine service to the House and, importantly, a largely neutral stance on the Traditionalist/Transitionalist debate. She resides at the domus magna of the House, Magvillus, in the Roman Tribunal. Guernicus himself was a master of earth magics, and taught Bonisagus much of the knowledge incorporated into the Hermetic Art of Terram. A tradition of such magic remains in the House, and its most famous living representative is Ausculator, the leader of the covenant of Hedyosmos in the Theban Tribunal. Hedyosmos is located in a labyrinth of caves, and is rumored to possess a portal to the underworld, something that would be very appropriate to the tradition (see *The Sundered Eagle,* page 66).

House Jerbiton

House Jerbiton (YARE-bih-tahn) is interested in the arts and the mundane world, and sometimes assumes the duty of keeping the Order on good terms with the nobility and Church. This inclination in its members often stems from a noble background — apprentices are sometimes taken from the aristocracy, and these magi maintain ties afterwards. Other members are taken from skilled artists and craftsmen who have The Gift. The Gentle Gift (page @@) is particularly common in this House.

Many members of other Houses believe that followers of Jerbiton are too closely bound to the mundane powers to be trusted. On the other hand, Jerbiton magi fear that members of the Order have become isolated from humanity, risking bloody conflict with the mundanes. They try energetically to heal this rift, and pursue aesthetic and Classical knowledge with a passion. The fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204 has inspired the Primus, Andru, to rally the House to its original values, the defense of civilization, a call that the younger generation of magi have heeded. The domus magna of House Jerbiton is Valnastium, in the Tribunal of the Greater Alps. Two historically important Primi were Petrus, in the tenth century, who advocated life within mundane communities, and Mattieus, in the twelfth, who believed that Jerbiton should live with other magi and serve as their ambassadors to the mundanes. These two philosophies remain strong within the House.

Members of House Jerbiton are trained in mundane study, the arts, and politics, and the House is held together by these common interests. The House is not tightly organized, and its magi group themselves into leagues based on a common interest. A maga may join many leagues, to find companionship with other magi who share her interests. Examples of leagues include The Gastronomers, who cooperate to hold a lavish party every year (this is a very popular league, and has members from other Houses), The Silent Ones, who are led by a magus of House Bonisagus and seek to remove the need for words and gestures from Hermetic magic, and The Humble Brethren, who work to subtly influence the College of Cardinals and ensure that no-one with strong anti-magic opinions is elected Pope.

Fortunata of Jerbiton was a powerful spirit master of the eleventh century who defeated many non-Hermetic enemies and gathered knowledge and power from many Mysteries. She was forced into exile by Hermetic enemies, and disappeared into Final Twilight shortly after 1120. Her writings are rumored to contain information on how to gain the power that she had (see *Legends of Hermes,* Chapter Three for more information).

In the present, Archmagus Mathieus of Constantinople, who is named for the city where he was trained but has lived in Paris for many years, is known for having given up the study of magic as not worth his time. For many years he seemed to have no purpose in life, but since the fall of Constantinople he has become much more active (see *The Lion and the Lily,* page 87). Archmagus Edward of Milton, on the other hand, is famed for heading the covenant of Schola Pythagoranis in Cambridge, which claims to have served as the nucleus for the new university in that town (see *Art and Academe,* page 112).

House Mercere

The founder of this House lost his magical powers but remained involved in the Order. He assumed a non-magical role valuable to other magi — that of messenger. His followers continue to fulfill that role. All members of House Mercere (mare-KAY-ray, or mare-SARE in vulgar Latin), regardless of whether they possess The Gift, are officially recognized as magi of the Order. Even unGifted Mercere spend 15 years in apprenticeship like other magi.

Followers of Mercere are more commonly known as Redcaps because of the headgear they wear as a badge of office. Redcaps are permitted to attend Hermetic Tribunals, but by convention they only vote if they have The Gift. Some unGifted Mercere have powerful supernatural abilities, which are generally attributed to descent from the heroes of classical myth. Whatever the truth of that, these Redcaps are particularly respected within the House.

House Mercere is a true lineage. Mercere trained two apprentices before he lost his Gift, and thus there is a small Gifted tradition in this House, which is composed almost entirely of blood descendants of Mercere. Many magi of this House have had a strong interest in the magic of the ancient Cult of Mercury.

The most famous member of House Mercere, apart from the Founder himself, is Belin, Mercere’s last apprentice. She was renowned for her devotion to the Order and her dedication to getting messages to their destination, and despite having no Gift she is, even today, held up as an ideal in the House.

The Prima of House Mercere is Insatella, an unGifted Redcap who inherited the role from her father and skillfully manages the affairs of all Mercere from the domus magna at Harco, in the Roman Tribunal. As she does not have The Gift, she tries to stay out of Hermetic politics as far as possible, thus reinforcing the House’s reputation for neutrality.

House Merinita

This House is focused on the world of faeries, and its members tend to be just as strange as the creatures they study. Merinita (meh-rih-NEE-tah) magi frequently remain isolated, having little to do with the rest of the Order, except to defend faeries from the assaults of other magi. Those of this House eschew the merely mortal, and seek answers within the mysterious world of Arcadia.

Although the House was founded by Merinita, she herself was not particularly interested in faeries. This was the work of her first apprentice, Quendalon, who had been raised among faeries and had always believed that they had much to offer. Merinita disappeared at the end of the eighth century, and soon after Quendalon announced that he was going to study with the faeries, leaving Merinita’s second apprentice, Myanar, in charge of the House.

Quendalon returned two years later, his eyes replaced by rubies, and announced a new direction for the House. This was resisted by Myanar, and war broke out within the House. Ultimately, Quendalon was victorious, and the Merinita turned to the study of faerie. Quendalon served as Primus, at least in name, until the end of the tenth century, although he had little contact with his House in the latter half of that century. Some magi even now suspect that the returned Quendalon was actually a faerie.

The current Primus is Handri, who lives at the domus magna of Irencillia in the Rhine Tribunal. The previous Prima, Vinaria, also lives there. In 1202, she vanished much as Quendalon had done, leaving Handri in charge. However, when Vinaria returned in 1209, she made no moves to regain control of the House, and still lives quietly at Irencillia (see *Guardians of the Forests,* page 104)*.*

Lucian the Scholar is an elder magus who lives in the covenant of Aegea, on the floor of the Aegean Sea in the Theban Tribunal. He is renowned for his deep knowledge of the literary traditions of the Byzantine Empire and ancient Greece, and is rumored to have been Initiated into secrets of story magic (see *The Sundered Eagle,* page 81). Dama, the Praeco of the Provençal Tribunal, was born in 993. She fell into Twilight in 1061, but emerged 19 years later, and remains active today. She is one of only two members of the covenant of Mimizan, and is rumored to lead a Mystery Cult that is not part of House Merinita (see *Faith & Flame,* pages 29 and 64).

House Merinita is a Mystery Cult, and magi of Merinita are all initiated into the Outer Mystery of Faerie Magic (see page @@).

House Tremere

Members of House Tremere (tray-MARE-ay or tray-MARE) emphasize the importance of judgment, strategy, and detailed planning. They believe in respect for superiors and in asserting authority over minions. Dignity is of the utmost concern.

House Tremere is considered one of the more sensible and stable Houses, providing strength and courage when needed and refraining from action when peace better serves the Order.

House Tremere is a true lineage. All of its members can trace a chain back through their masters and their masters' masters, and so on, back to Tremere the Founder. It is not possible to join the House from outside. Certamen, a safe method of magical dueling between magi, was invented by Tremere the Founder, and his House retains a great deal of interest in it.

In addition, Tremere magi hold their filii's voting sigils (see page @@) until the filius beats the parens in certamen, or until the parens dies. If a Tremere magus who does not hold his own sigil trains an apprentice, the new magus's sigil is held by the parens of the training magus, assuming that that magus holds his own sigil. If he does not, the sigil is passed back up the chain until it reaches a magus who does hold his own sigil. As a result of this custom, House Tremere's votes are concentrated in a very limited number of hands.

The domus magna is Coeris, in the Transylvanian Tribunal, and the Prima is Poena. She is said to know the names, magical strengths, and preferences of every member of her House, and of any other magus she thinks may be of use. Whatever the truth of that, she certainly manages the projects of the whole House with unusual efficiency (see *Against the Dark,* page 21). The House’s second-in-command (unlike other Houses, Tremere actually has such a post) is Archmaga Monica Ierne, a maga originally from the Stonehenge Tribunal and a master of combat magic. She is unsuited to the post of Prima, and has publicly acknowledged this, but she is an excellent field commander (see *Against the Dark,* page 30). Archmagus Stentorius is exactly what other magi think of when they imagine an older, powerful member of House Tremere. He is the leader of Fengheld, the largest covenant in the Rhine Tribunal, and holds three-fifths of the sigils of the Tremere magi of that Tribunal, as well as commanding the House there. Even in a Tribunal that holds the domus magnae and Primi of Houses Bonisagus, Bjornaer, and Merinita, he may hold more political power than any other individual magus or maga (see *Guardians of the Forests,* page 84).

House Tytalus

The philosophy of Tytalus (TIE-tah-loos) magi is to master all forms of conflict. To this end, they promote innovation in all sorts of contests. They do not feel alive unless they are in a constant state of struggle, perpetually testing the strengths and weaknesses of others.

House Tytalus is almost the opposite of House Tremere. Where the Tremere believe in stability and respect for elders, Tytalus magi believe in constant change, and in challenging your elders repeatedly until you can finally win. The Founders of the two Houses were trained by the same wizard, Guorna the Fetid, and often fought over their contrasting visions of how to live.

In their never-ending search for conflict, the leaders of House Tytalus went too far in the 10th century, falling prey to demonic machinations. Those masters of intrigue arrogantly believed they could master the dark forces, but despite their skill, were unable to outwit Hell. The leaders were executed for their crime of diabolism, and House Tytalus has been distrusted ever since. This has not been helped by the fact that two magi, Buliste and Harpax, both claim to be Primus (or Prima, in Buliste’s case). Buliste was the ninth Prima, but passed into Twilight. Harpax then claimed the right to be tenth Primus. However, Buliste emerged from Twilight, and refused to acknowledge his position; he, of course, refused to yield. The two are still fighting for control of the House, and of its domus magna, Fudarus, in the Normandy Tribunal (see *The Lion and the Lily,* page 41*).* The magi of House Tytalus choose sides, but most of them seem to do so simply for the sake of the challenge, and not because they have any real loyalty to one or the other.

House Verditius

Magi of House Verditius (ware-DEE-tee-oos) have unsurpassed skill at creating enchanted items, making them invaluable to other magi and non-Gifted persons.

Almost all, unfortunately, have also inherited their founder's magical Flaw, making them unable to cast Formulaic spells without the aid of casting tools. Followers of Verditius are sometimes considered inferior to other magi because of this weakness. They do not measure themselves by this standard, however, seeing themselves as superior to other magi — this hubris is a side effect of the Inner Mysteries of their House.

While the Code forbids magi to sell enchanted items to mundanes, the mundane employees of magi may do so, and almost all magi of this House have such associates, known as venditores. The magi sell items directly to other magi, of course, and can become wealthy in both magical and mundane terms.

Magi of House Verditius often become involved in vendettas with other magi of their House, antagonizing each other until one admits that the other is superior. As that is rare, vendettas tend to last a long time. The House believes that such contests are honorable and admirable, but magi of other Houses may not agree. These vendettas reflect the politically fragmented nature of the House, in which the Primus is the only official position.

Every eighteen years, the House holds a grand Contest, at which enchanted items are judged to determine the best created since the previous Contest. Every magus of the House is allowed to enter a single item, and many magi spend years preparing their entries.

The Primus of House Verditius is chosen by strict primogeniture: the eldest living filius of the previous Primus becomes Primus. There is almost no opposition to this in the House, as most magi do not care who their Primus is, and appreciate a system that means they need not worry about choosing a new one. The current Primus is Stouritus, who does not live at the domus magna of Verdi in the Roman Tribunal. He is a member of the covenant of Ingasia in the Theban Tribunal, and would like it to become the domus magna so that there would be no need for him to move (see *The Sundered Eagle,* page 86).

House Verditius is a Mystery Cult, and all members are initiated into the Outer Mystery of Verditius Magic. (See page @@)

Covenants

Covenants are as important to the Order of Hermes as Houses, and magi can, and do, spend hours debating which is more important in the end.

Strictly speaking, a covenant is any group of magi who agree to a set of rules that go beyond the Code of Hermes, and that allow them to share resources and co-operate more easily. In the overwhelming majority of cases, covenants are formed by magi who want to live in the same place, sharing access to a Magic aura, buildings, and servants. Thus, the term 'covenant' has come to refer to a place where a number of magi live together, as well as to the group of magi making the agreement.

A typical covenant has about half a dozen magi as members, but they range from two magi to large organizations with over two dozen magi and hundreds of mundane staff. Most **Ars Magica** sagas center around a single covenant, and ensuring that the covenant prospers is as important as individual advancement. After all, characters belonging to a well-supplied covenant will advance more quickly than those who must rely on their own resources.

The physical form of covenants varies, but towers and castles are common. In addition, covenants are normally located some distance from major mundane settlements, in large part because that is where most Magic auras are found.

The Code of Hermes

The foundation of the Order of Hermes as an organization is the Code of Hermes. This short text, also called the Hermetic Oath because all members of the Order recite and swear to it when they are admitted, sets the structure of the Order and fixes certain limits on what its members may do. It was drafted to give magi as much freedom as possible, while protecting them from each other.

The degree to which magi obey the Oath varies from magus to magus, covenant to covenant, and Tribunal to Tribunal. Magi who violate the Oath and get caught, however, usually find themselves in trouble with their Tribunal.

The Hermetic Oath

The Code of Hermes, first sworn by Bonisagus, can be found below. Since he was the first to swear it, his name is recorded whenever it is written down. There is a slight difference between the Code that members of House Bonisagus swear and the Code that members of other Houses swear. The difference is marked.

"I, Bonisagus, hereby swear my everlasting loyalty to the Order of Hermes and its members.

"I will not deprive nor attempt to deprive any member of the Order of his magical power. I will not slay nor attempt to slay any member of the Order, except in justly executed and formally declared Wizards' War. I hereby understand that Wizards' War is an open conflict between two magi who may slay each other without breaking this oath, and that should I be slain in a Wizards' War, no retribution shall fall on he who slays me.

"I will abide by the decisions made by fair vote at Tribunal. I will have one vote at Tribunal, and I will use it prudently. I will respect as equal the votes of all others at Tribunal.

"I will not endanger the Order through my actions. Nor will I interfere with the affairs of mundanes and thereby bring ruin on my sodales. I will not deal with devils, lest I imperil my soul and the souls of my sodales as well. I will not molest the faeries, lest their vengeance catch my sodales also.

"I will not use magic to scry upon members of the Order of Hermes, nor shall I use it to peer into their affairs.

"I will train apprentices who will swear to this Code, and should any of them turn against the Order and my sodales, I shall be the first to strike them down and bring them to justice. No apprentice of mine shall be called a magus until he first swears to uphold this Code.

\*

"I request that should I break this oath, I be cast out of the Order. If I am cast out of the Order, I ask my sodales to find me and slay me, that my life not continue in degradation and infamy.

"The enemies of the Order are my enemies. The friends of the Order are my friends. The allies of the Order are my allies. Let us work together as one and grow hale and strong.

"This oath I hereby swear on the third day of Pisces, in the nine hundred and fiftieth year of Aries. Woe to they who try to tempt me to break this oath, and woe to me if I succumb to the temptation."

\* At this point, followers of Bonisagus recite: "I shall further the knowledge of the Order and share with its members all that I find in my search for wisdom and power." Others recite: "I concede to Bonisagus the right to take my apprentice if he should find my apprentice valuable to him in his studies." The Peripheral Code extends Bonisagus's right to claim apprentices to followers of Bonisagus.

The Peripheral Code

The Peripheral Code consists of all decisions made in Tribunal since the foundation of the Order. Its formal authority derives from the clause in the Code requiring magi to abide by the decisions made at Tribunal, but as every case is different later Tribunals are not bound by the decisions of earlier Tribunals. Indeed, there are contradictory precedents throughout the Peripheral Code, and few magi outside the Quaesitores are familiar with all of its details. Some points are widely known, however, and worth discussing in this section.

In theory, the only penalty for breaking the Code is death. In practice, Tribunals only rarely impose that, instead settling for vis fines, time spent in service, or other lesser punishments. These punishments are backed up by the ultimate sanction, however, and refusing to submit to the punishment imposed by a Tribunal is always taken as reason for the death penalty. This is enforced by declaring a Wizard's March, which casts the offender from the Order and thus deprives him of the Code's protection. This is called 'Renouncing', and magi subject to a Wizard's March are known as 'renounced magi'. Since the criminal's possessions are, by tradition, granted to those who kill him, powerful magi are often interested in helping to hunt down the offenders.

Much more information about the Peripheral Code and its enforcement can be found in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages,* starting from page 45.

Depriving of Magical Power

This clause is often invoked to punish actions against a magus that fall short of physical harm, such as damaging his laboratory or killing grogs. The justification is that, by depriving a magus of the resources he needs to study, the miscreant is depriving him of some of the magical power he would otherwise enjoy. The core meaning of the clause, though, is that magi must not try to damage each other's Gift.

Wizards’ War

The Code allows for a conflict between two magi to escalate to open conflict in certain conditions. When those conditions are met, the two magi involved may step outside the bounds of the Code temporarily to settle their differences. One magus initiates a Wizards’ War by sending a declaration of war to the other. The message must arrive on the next night of the full moon. The war then begins on the rise of the following full moon, and lasts until the rise of the next full moon after that.

Unjust or constant use of Wizards’ War is discouraged by the majority of level-headed magi. Occasionally, those who declare war too often find themselves victims of a Wizard's March.

Tribunals

Tribunals are central to the political life of the Order, as was always Trianoma's intent, and thus they are discussed in detail in their own section, below. This clause is vital, however, as it gives Tribunals some authority to make new rules and interpret the clauses of the Code to fit changing situations.

Interfering with Mundanes

The clause forbidding interference with mundanes is probably the most controversial clause in the Code. Covenants have to deal with mundanes repeatedly in order to exist, and fortified dwellings containing substantial numbers of warriors tend to draw the attention of local nobles. As a result, the second half of the sentence, 'and thereby bring ruin on my sodales', is brought into most debates. As long as dealings with mundanes do not harm other magi, nor seem likely to cause such harm, they are permitted. Many precedents, however, have established that working as a court wizard is a violation of the Code.

Dealing with Demons

The Order hunts down and kills any member found dealing with demons. This is the only clause enforced absolutely. Trying to destroy demons is normally acceptable, but even then drawing a demon's attention to the Order is frowned upon.

Molesting the Faeries

Interpretation of this clause rests heavily on what counts as molestation. Faerie places are good vis sources, so few magi have been willing to argue that charging into a faerie area spells blazing, stealing large amounts of faerie property, and retreating to your covenant, counts as molestation. This has made it rather difficult to say what is, and prosecutions under this clause tend to come down to politics, and whether other magi have suffered. Unlike the mundane and demonic clauses, however, it does not prohibit friendly dealings with faeries, at any level.

Magical Creatures

Notably missing from the Code is a clause granting protection to magical creatures or other wizards. This was deliberate, as Trianoma wanted the Order to be able to use force to compel people to join. Excessive interference with powerful magical beings, however, can still fall under 'endangering the Order by my actions'.

Scrying

This prohibition is enforced with surprising rigor. Tribunals have ruled that it is illegal to scry on a non-magus, if by so doing you learn about the magus's activities, that simply walking around invisible is magical scrying, and that you can be punished for using Intellego magic on a magus even if you didn't know that he was a magus. There are also contrary rulings on many of these points, but in general Tribunals have taken a very strict view of what constitutes magical scrying.

Apprentices

By contrast, the clause on apprentices is hardly enforced at all. Magi do not have to train apprentices, and the obligation on the parens to join a Wizard's March against his filius is treated more as a social expectation than a legal duty.

The special right of Bonisagus magi to take apprentices from other magi is upheld, however, as is the duty of Bonisagus magi to share their work.

Tribunals

In origin, a Tribunal was any formal gathering of magi that made decisions by a majority vote of those present, and kept a record of those decisions. As the Order grew, however, the Peripheral Code rapidly provided more definition. The Tribunals of the Order are now the Grand Tribunal, and any other Tribunals formally established by it. In 1220, the regional Tribunals are the only ones so established.

A legal Tribunal must be attended, in person, by at least twelve magi from at least four different covenants. There must be one Quaesitor present to oversee the legality of the proceedings, and while the Quaesitor does not vote, he does count towards the quorum. Magi may vote by proxy, giving their voting sigils to someone who is attending on their behalf, who may or may not be required to use them in a certain way, depending on the agreement with the person granting the sigil.

The Tribunal is chaired by the Praeco, the oldest magus present, and while he also cannot vote, except to break ties, he does have the power to choose the order of business and, in extreme circumstances, silence a magus or eject him from the Tribunal. If the ejections render the Tribunal inquorate, or deprive it of a presiding Quaesitor, the Tribunal ceases to be valid. At the end of the Tribunal, the presiding Quaesitor must certify it as valid, and this is the main check on the Praeco abusing his power.

The Grand Tribunal

The most important Tribunal of the Order is the Grand Tribunal, held every thirty-three years and drawing magi from the whole Order. The Grand Tribunal is always held at Durenmar, the domus magna of House Bonisagus and the birthplace of the Order. Three representatives are sent from each of the regional Tribunals (see later), and the Primi of all Houses also attend. The Primus of House Bonisagus serves as Praeco, even if older magi are present, and the Primus of House Guernicus as Presiding Quaesitor.

The Grand Tribunal discusses matters affecting the whole Order, and its decisions are generally given far more weight than the decisions of lesser Tribunals. In addition, it is the only Tribunal with authority over the whole Order, and thus the forum where inter-Tribunal disputes must be settled.

Regional Tribunals

Each regional Tribunal is composed, in theory, of all the magi living in a certain area of Europe. These areas are roughly fixed by Grand Tribunal decisions, but the magi in them can change the name of the Tribunal at will, and set the membership requirements freely. In general, you don't change Tribunals if you visit a covenant in a different Tribunal, and different Tribunals might have different rules on just how long a visit can be. Regional Tribunals meet once every seven years, and the Redcaps are required to ensure that every magus in the Tribunal has received an invitation. Otherwise, they follow the normal rules for Tribunals.

For the borders and names of the Regional Tribunals, see the map. Note that the borders are only approximate, as no disputes have yet arisen requiring them to be precisely fixed. Six of the Tribunals have been described in detail in supplements for Ars Magica 5th Edition: *Guardians of the Forests* (the Rhine Tribunal), *The Lion and the Lily* (the Normandy Tribunal), *The Sundered Eagle* (the Theban Tribunal), *Against the Dark* (the Transylvanian Tribunal), *The Contested Isle* (the Hibernian Tribunal), and *Faith & Flame* (the Provençal Tribunal).

The Order and Society

Most Hermetic magi want society to leave them alone to get on with their research, and in return they are perfectly happy to leave society alone. Life is, of course, not that simple, and magi are often forced to interact with many parts of society. Some even want to do so.

Peasants

Most peasants are afraid of magi, and stay away from their covenants. This fear is generally reasonable, as covenants are almost invariably founded in Magical areas, where strange and dangerous things happen. Further, magi themselves, due to The Gift and their ability to turn people into frogs, tend to inspire fear in the uneducated. Local legends may grow up around a covenant, and older legends or legends from distant places may be attached to it, giving it a very strange, and largely undeserved, reputation.

On the other hand, a covenant in a remote location which keeps itself to itself might well be almost unknown among the peasants. They have no particular reason to want to know about it, and there is no reason for them to hear about it. In this case, they are probably still scared of the region, which almost certainly has a Magical aura, but may not even know that there are magi living there.

Most covenants rely on some peasants to grow food, just as the nobility and clergy do. These peasants find the magi creepy, due to The Gift, but are likely to accept them as lords as long as they treat their charges fairly well. Indeed, they might even be seen as better lords than most, as magi can do something about bad weather, plagues, or rampaging dragons. Sensible covenants will have an unGifted official in charge of direct interaction with the peasants, but there is no reason why the local peasants shouldn't feel a certain degree of affection for 'their' wizards, as long as they don't have to deal with them in person too often.

Finally, peasants who don't fit into Mythic European society for whatever reason may seek sanctuary at the covenant. Women who want to be scholars or warriors, serfs who want to be free, and people fleeing the consequences of a single misjudgment are all potential recruits. As a rule, people join a covenant because they have a good reason not to be somewhere else, rather than because they particularly want to live with wizards.

The Church

Relations between the Order and the Church are officially non-existent. The Order is well aware that the Church, with God's backing, could wipe them out with no problem. The Church is well aware that Hermetic magi are very powerful, and that at least some are good Christians. The Order's tendency to harbor heretics draws suspicion, but as long as magi stay out of ecclesiastical affairs, the Church is not willing to take official action.

Individual clergy, however, run the full range of attitudes, from self-righteous certainty that magi are devil worshipers who must be destroyed, to enthusiastic collaboration with them as fellow scholars, albeit scholars with unusual talents. Most covenants try to establish good relations with the local parish clergy, at least, and most succeed at that. Again, using unGifted intermediaries is generally a good idea.

Tribunals tend to treat interfering with the Church as a very serious crime, simply because the Church is the only organization with the potential to wipe out the entire Order. Friendly, or at least neutral, relations are encouraged; magi who launch attacks on the Church can expect to be renounced and Marched before they can inspire a Crusade.

Nobility

Most nobles are aware of the existence of the Order of Hermes, and all local nobles will quickly become aware of a standard covenant, with its castle and armed troops. Most nobles also have some vague recollection that these powerful wizards aren't allowed to swear fealty to them, or serve them as court wizards, and thus they apply a bit more subtlety in trying to forge relationships with their powerful new neighbors.

Again, individual attitudes run the full gamut, from eager, sycophantic fawning in the hope of magical assistance, to outright hostility in the hope of convincing the magi to set up somewhere else, a long way away. Most covenants, again, try to establish good relationships with the local nobility, but many fail to win over everyone, thus leaving a constant rival as a thorn in their side. Few nobles are stupid enough to mount a direct assault on a covenant, and those who are tend to die, but equally any covenant that deliberately wiped out a noble rival would be hauled before Tribunal and Marched, post-haste.

The Peripheral Code has tended to rule that deals with nobles that don't involve service or permanent magical aid are not a violation of the clause against interfering with mundanes. This is only a tendency, though, and covenants with extensive mundane involvement need to pay close attention to their Hermetic relationships as well, lest they find themselves isolated and condemned at Tribunal.

Cities

Most covenants and magi stay away from cities. In a city, The Gift is a major handicap, and most cities have Dominion auras that interfere strongly with magical research. On the other hand, cities contain scholars, merchants, and all kinds of mundane resources, and even simple magic can support an effective trade, so some magi, particularly of House Jerbiton, enjoy living there.

City covenants try to find a Magic aura, ideally a regio, in which they can undertake laboratory work without undue interference, and often offer their services as go-betweens for more remote covenants who want to deal with an urban area. For most magi, however, cities are an interesting place to visit, but they wouldn't want to live there.

Magical Items

In the early days of the Order, magi were allowed to sell enchanted devices or other magical services to mundanes without restriction, as long as they were never at the beck and call of a mundane. This changed in 1061, with a series of Tribunal rulings making it illegal to accept money or other mundane goods as payment for arcane services from anyone other than a member of the Order of Hermes or a Hermetic covenant. The rulings also make it clear that any magic sold in this way to a non-magus must eventually lose its power, whether because it is a charged item, or because the effect has a limited duration.

There are two obvious loopholes in this ruling. The first is less important; mundanes can pay with other arcane items, or with vis. Very few mundanes have access to vis, and the Order is quite keen to gather permanent enchanted devices in return for temporary ones. A mundane offered a temporary item which will last for his and his son's lifetime might be quite willing to trade a rather weaker permanent item for it. Trades of this sort are actually encouraged by the Quaesitores, as they take permanent items sold before the ruling out of mundane circulation.

The second loophole is so glaring that it must have been deliberately designed. There is nothing to stop a mundane covenant member from selling an enchanted item on, or, indeed, to stop him from accepting a commission to obtain a particular item. Thus, the main effect has been to stop magi from dealing directly with mundanes.

Other Wizards

Hermetic magi may be the most powerful users of magic in Europe, but they are far from the only ones. People with supernatural abilities are much more common than people with The Gift, and not everyone with The Gift becomes a Hermetic magus. The official policy is still that all wizards must join the Order, or die. However, this is rarely enforced, particularly if the wizard in question is weak, or a member of the Church, or a noble.

Powerful, isolated wizards are strongly encouraged to join, and may well be killed if they refuse, but other wizards may merely be threatened with dire consequences if they cause trouble for the Order. Since other wizards have no equivalent of Parma Magica, these threats can easily be backed up.

There is one case in which the 'Join or Die' policy is rigorously enforced. Any non-Hermetic wizard who learns the Parma Magica, or any other form of general magic resistance, must join the Order of Hermes or be hunted down. The Order is virtually unanimous in its opinion that this monopoly must be preserved.

More information about non-Hermetic wizards can be found in *Hedge Magic Revised Edition* and *Rival Magic,* and in the regional sourcebooks for areas outside Mythic Europe: *The Cradle and the Crescent, Between Sand and Sea,* and *Lands of the Nile.*