Hermetic Magic

In the 8th century the wizard Bonisagus developed a universal theory of magic and the Order of Hermes was born. The most immediate advantage of Hermetic magic was that it allowed wizards of diverse magical backgrounds to share their knowledge. Before Bonisagus' theory, the practice of magic had been highly individualized and therefore limited in scope. With the ability to share and accumulate knowledge, Hermetic magi gained an immense advantage over other wizards. This universal theory is not without its disadvantages, however. Detractors of the system believe that the strict regimentation of Hermetic magic robs truly brilliant magi of the chance to discover the modes of magic power that best suit them, and that it is truly helpful only to mediocre magi who need an exact system to guide them.

The Order of Hermes is only a part of the greater magical world. There exist non-Hermetic magi from European traditions, and from further afield. Be this as it may, the rules presented here cover Hermetic magic only. *Hedge Magic, Revised Edition, Rival Magic, The Cradle and the Crescent, Between Sand and Sea, Lands of the Nile* and the *Realms of Power* sourcebooks provide rules for many non-Hermetic traditions. Storyguides should also feel free to create non-Hermetic magic that governs monsters, wizards, and magic items that do not fit the paradigm set out in these rules, and thus keep magic a mystery even to those who think they know it all.

Hermetic magic is a highly useful but not entirely perfect theory. These rules reflect the things that magi expect to happen when they work with magic. While the expected usually occurs, the exact effects of magic can be influenced by countless factors, including such vagaries as the phase of the moon, the spiritual nature of the target, and the mental state of the caster. This allows storyguides to occasionally bend the rules and interpret magical effects imaginatively.

The Gift

The capacity to work magic is known as The Gift among Hermetic magi. Only people with The Gift can be taught Hermetic magic, but not all of them learn it. Many Hermetic magi say that people with minor mystical abilities have a partial Gift, but it is not clear that the source of their power is the same as that of magi. People with The Gift may be taught non-Hermetic magic instead, but it is almost impossible for one person to learn two kinds of magic. (See page @@ for the rules for this.)

The Gift is very rare, appearing in perhaps one person in a few thousand. Magi have many theories as to the cause of The Gift, but none of these are generally accepted.

The Gift has a strong emotional effect on those around the Gifted person, making them suspicious and mistrustful of the Gifted individual, inspiring envy. As a result, social interactions are very difficult for the Gifted. Some Hermetic magi have the Gentle Gift (a Virtue, see page @@), which does not affect people in this way, while others have the Blatant Gift (a Flaw, see page @@), which has much more intense effects. The Gift also bothers mundane animals, which avoid the Gifted individual as far as possible. The Gift only affects those in the presence of the Gifted individual. Letters from a Gifted individual do not have this effect, nor does a messenger from such an individual, unless the messenger himself has The Gift.

When roleplaying a character dealing with a maga, have him act as though she has a well-established reputation for dishonesty and unreliability, and for undeserved privilege of whatever sort is most important to him. Thus, a merchant acts as if he believes that a maga is wealthy through cheating people, while a lord acts as if he believes that the maga is a treacherous vassal who retains her position through bribery or similar. If the maga tries to overcome this reaction through negotiation, she suffers a –3 penalty to any die rolls she must make. Someone without The Gift negotiating on her behalf does not suffer the penalty, but must deal with the mistrust inspired by The Gift. If the maga manages to convince or coerce someone into interacting with her, she suffers the –3 penalty to all rolls and totals based on social interaction, including training, whether the maga is the trainer or the trainee.

The Blatant Gift has a more intense effect. Treat the Blatantly Gifted character as having a well-established reputation for dishonesty and treachery of a dangerous kind, as well as for the possession of ill-gotten gains. People interacting with a Blatantly Gifted maga are extremely wary and rather hostile. Animals treat her as a threat to be driven away from their territory. If the maga tries to overcome this reaction through negotiation, she suffers a –6 penalty to any die rolls she must make. An unGifted individual negotiating on her behalf suffers no penalty, but must overcome the hostility. If a maga with Blatant Gift interacts with someone, she suffers the –6 penalty to all social rolls and totals, as for the normal Gift.

Note that those interacting with Gifted people do not actually think that they have a bad reputation; that is merely an analogy to help you to work out how they would react.

The Gift only has its effects if the maga comes to the attention of someone, just like a reputation. If a Gifted maga dresses unostentatiously, keeps to the middle of the group, does not appear to be the leader, and doesn't talk to anyone, then the group *should* be able to travel without suffering from people's reactions to The Gift, as long as the maga behaves herself. The Blatant Gift makes this a lot harder; these precautions reduce people's reactions to those inspired by the normal Gift.

People do not get used to The Gift, even if they have lived with magi all their lives. They can, however, get used to individuals with The Gift, just as long association overrides the effects of reputation. The mundane members of a covenant can be assumed to be used to the resident magi, and to react to them as appropriate to their actual behavior (see page @@, in the Covenant chapter, for rules for this). Nevertheless, they will be suspicious of visiting magi.

People who have dealt with a lot of different Gifted individuals do become able to recognize the effect of The Gift for what it is. They still feel the suspicion and envy, but they can act politely anyway. Mundane Redcaps have sufficient experience to recognize The Gift, and a mundane given the job of greeting all visitors to a covenant is likely to get it over the course of a decade or so. Most covenfolk, however, merely become accustomed to 'their' magi.

The Parma Magica blocks these effects of The Gift entirely. A maga with a Parma Magica is not bothered by the Gifts of other magi, although other people are still bothered by her Gift. This effect may have been as valuable as Magic Resistance in aiding the foundation of the Order.

Animals also react badly to people with The Gift. In their case, the reaction tends to be a combination of fear and hostility, with much more hostility if the magus has the Blatant Gift. Gifted characters cannot ride horses without magical aid, as the horse tries to throw them off as quickly as possible. Similarly, they can never train dogs to recognize them as friends.

Creatures belonging to one of the four supernatural realms may have different reactions to the Gifted. Some behave like mundane animals, others like mundane humans, while some appear completely unaffected by The Gift. Demons, in particular, do not seem to be bothered by The Gift, but that may just be because they envy every human being anyway.

First Impressions

A group of characters who appear to be ordinary travelers (rather than an armed band) seek shelter in:

A Typical Village

**Gentle (or no) Gift:** The villagers are cautious, but may offer the characters shelter in their homes if treated well. If someone has a separate barn, the characters are probably allowed to sleep there.

**Gift:** The villagers refuse to let the characters into their homes or property, and bar the doors and keep a watch all night if they camp on common ground.

**Blatant Gift:** The villagers tell the characters to get out of the village, and attempt to drive them off if they do not leave voluntarily. They keep some sort of watch for the next few days to make sure that the characters do not return.

An Inn

**Gentle (or no) Gift:** Visitors are welcomed if there is space, and the innkeeper can be bargained down from his initial price. Other guests eagerly share news with the characters, exchanging tales of where they have come from for the characters' stories.

**Gift:** The innkeeper treats the characters coldly. He sets his prices very high, and will not be bargained down. Other guests ignore the characters as much as possible, and keep a careful eye on them.

**Blatant Gift:** The innkeeper refuses admittance, and threatens to call the watch if the characters do not move along.

A Monastery

**Gentle (or no) Gift:** The characters are welcomed, housed in the guest quarters, and fed at the common table with any other travelers. They are encouraged to attend services, and other travelers talk as if at an inn. The characters may stay for two or three nights before the monks start to drop hints that they should move on.

**Gift:** The characters are welcomed, and housed somewhere isolated in the monastic complex. They are fed at the common table, but one or two monks are always around, keeping an eye on them. The other travelers do not talk to them. The monks start to drop hints that they should move on after one night.

**Blatant Gift:** The characters are housed in a building outside the monastery walls, and their food is brought to them there. They are watched by at least one monk and enough lay brothers to deal with mundane trouble at all times. If they ask to attend the service, they are escorted to and from the church and watched at all times. They are strongly encouraged to leave, and are no longer fed, after the first night.

A Covenant

These descriptions assume that the visitors announce themselves as Hermetic magi, and are not known to be hostile. They also assume that the guard room is outside the Aegis of the Hearth.

**Gentle Gift:** The characters are asked into the guard room while the magi are informed of their arrival. The guards chat while they are waiting.

**Gift:** The characters are asked inside while the magi are informed, but the guards do not talk much, and keep a careful eye on all of them.

**Blatant Gift:** The characters are made to wait outside while someone brings the magi. The gates are made secure, and all the guards are on high alert.

Established Relationships

A group including at least one magus arrives somewhere where the magus has visited many times before.

An Inn

The characters return to an inn where they have always been polite, tipped generously, and never caused trouble.

**Gentle Gift:** The innkeeper welcomes them enthusiastically, shows them to the best table in the house, and clears a good room for them to stay in if they want. If there are regulars at the inn, they are happy to see the characters again.

**Gift:** The innkeeper welcomes them enthusiastically, and shows them to a nice table slightly isolated from the rest of the room, to avoid upsetting the other customers. He clears a good room for them to stay in, and sees to most of the service personally if he has new staff. He tries to make small-talk with the magus, but clearly prefers talking to the companions.

**Blatant Gift:** The innkeeper hurries to meet them at the door, welcomes them politely, and quickly ushers them to a private room so that they don't disturb the other guests. He serves them personally, but while he is polite to the magus, he clearly tries to have as little to do with him as possible. (This assumes that the Blatant Gifted magus kept a very low profile on earlier visits, so that they were allowed in.)

A Monastery

The characters return to a monastery where they have always been polite, at least apparently pious, never caused trouble, and have donated generously (but not so spectacularly as to be viewed as potential patrons). The descriptions assume that there are no women in the party, and that the monastery can cope with bending the normal rules slightly.

**Gentle Gift:** The characters are quickly recognized, greeted warmly, and may even be invited to dine with the abbot occasionally. If their normal visits are brief, they are allowed to stay for some time before anything is said, and even then the monks are concerned as to their reasons for the long stay rather than keen to move them on.

**Gift:** The characters are housed away from the main guest quarters, and they take their meals with the monks, who know them, rather than the other travelers, who don't. At least some of the monks are just as eager to talk to the magus as to the other members of the group.

**Blatant Gift:** The characters are kept waiting at the gate while a senior monk is sent for. They are housed away from the main guest quarters, and fed there, although one or two of the monks probably join them, both out of courtesy and to hear the news. The monks clear a side chapel so that the characters can attend Mass there, rather than being in the main body of the church. The characters are not watched, although the magus with the Blatant Gift is expected to keep to himself as much as possible (and, to get to this point, he must have done so in the past).

The Hermetic Arts

The term "Arts" refers collectively to Techniques and Forms — two classes of magical disciplines that work together in spellcasting. Techniques govern the essential manipulations that magic can perform; Forms, the essential natural phenomena that magic can manipulate. Techniques and Forms have Latin names. A Technique is referred to by a verb conjugated in first person, and a Form by a noun. You combine one Technique and one Form to cast a spell, and together their names indicate the spell's general function. For example, a "Creo Ignem" spell employs the Technique of "Creo" ("I create") and the Form of "Ignem" ("fire") and produces light, heat, or fire. A "Muto Ignem" spell ("Muto" = "I transform") transforms light, heat, or fire in some way, such as by increasing its intensity, its size, or its shape.

Hermetic magi have a score in each Art. Your scores in the Arts represent your aptitude for working with the various types of magic. Arts are not merely knowledges; your Arts are ultimately ways your very being expresses magical energy. In reflection of this, your score in a Form (in addition to allowing you to cast spells incorporating that Form) helps you resist spells of that type and avoid harm from mundane sources related to that Form. For instance, your Ignem (fire) score gives you a bonus to resist damage from fire and cold. This bonus is equal to one fifth of your score in the Form, rounded up, and adds to your ability to resist any damage deriving from that Form. The most important examples of each Form bonus's applicability are listed under the Form, but these are not exhaustive lists.

**Form Bonus: Form score/5 (rounded up)**

These bonuses do not stack. If it seems like two would apply to a given hazard, use only the higher bonus.

In the following two sections, each of the Arts is listed with its common two-letter abbreviation, its translation from Latin, a general description, and its Hermetic pronunciation. More detailed descriptions of what a magus can do with various Technique Form combinations are given in the Spells chapter on page @@.

Techniques

Creo (Cr) "I create"

Creo magic makes things that exist independently into better things of their kind, which includes bringing them into existence from nothing. Things that exist independently are called substances, and include people, trees, and rocks, but do not include colors, weights, and sizes. Creo can thus both create and heal things.

The kind of thing that something is depends on its form. Natural things, such as plants, animals, flames, and so on, have simple forms, which means that the form is just one thing. This makes them easy to create and heal. Natural things created by magic are always perfect examples of their kind unless the magus wants them to be damaged. Similarly, magic can heal a natural thing even if the caster has no idea what is wrong, as it simply restores the form.

Artificial things, such as bread, swords and books, have complex forms. Their forms are combinations of several natural forms put together in a particular way. Creating an artificial thing by magic requires some skill on the part of the magus, reflected by his Finesse Ability. An Int + Finesse roll is made to determine how good the created thing is. Further, a magus can only create something he knows about. Any magus can create bread or cloth, but in order to create an elaborate mosaic depicting the foundation of the Order of Hermes the caster would need to know what it should depict. If he was wrong, the mosaic would also be wrong. Similar considerations apply to repairing artificial things.

A magus need not be able to create an artificial item by mundane means in order to create it by magic; he only needs to be somewhat familiar with it. A magically created item will always be the right sort of thing unless the magus botches his Finesse roll. Thus, unless the magus botches, magically created cloth will always be a whole piece and keep people warm, but it might not be very attractive if he rolled badly. For further details, see Craft Magic on page @@.

A magus can also use Creo to make something a better example of its kind, even if it isn't actually injured or damaged. Thus, Creo can make a horse as swift as the fastest horse, or a man as strong as the strongest man. Creo cannot make a horse able to run as fast as the wind, because no ordinary horse can do that, nor can it make a man strong enough to lift a castle. Since maturation involves becoming a better example of your kind, Creo magic can make something mature quickly. Aging after maturation involves becoming a worse example of your kind, and thus is covered by Perdo.

Creo magic can also create unnatural things, such as a winged cat, but a Muto requisite is necessary.

Magically created things last for the duration of the spell, but their effects last indefinitely. Thus, the footprints of a magically created horse do not vanish, nor does its dung, if it was fed on mundane food. If a magically created horse was fed on mundane food for a year, it would leave a mundane corpse when the spell expired, as the mundane food has been converted into mundane body. Conversely, magically created food only nourishes for as long as the duration lasts, and someone who has eaten it becomes extremely hungry when the duration expires. Things washed with magically created water stay clean, but people made drunk with magically created alcohol instantly sober up.

Pronounced 'CRAY-oh.'

Intellego (In) "I perceive"

Intellego is the Art of perception. It allows a maga to gather information directly from the forms of things. This information does not deal with the appearances of things, unless Intellego Imaginem magic is used. Rather, it provides information about the actual nature of a thing. Thus, Intellego magic is not deceived by mundane disguises.

Pronounced 'in-TEL-le-go.'

Muto (Mu) "I transform"

By using Muto magic a magus can grant or remove properties something cannot naturally have. Thus, Muto can give a person wings or turn her skin green, or turn a person into a wolf. The difficulty of the magic depends on the extent of the change, so that turning someone's skin green is easy, but turning someone into a golden statue is difficult.

It is possible to use Muto to give something an ability that it does not normally have. However, this can only change the target; it cannot give unnatural properties to other things. For example, a Muto Animal spell could give a feather the ability to cut stone. Feathers cannot naturally cut stone, but stone can naturally be cut. A Muto Animal spell could not give a feather the ability to turn stones into gold, because stones cannot naturally turn into gold. A Muto Terram spell could, of course, turn a stone into gold.

Muto magic cannot affect the properties that something has naturally, although it can add other properties to them to mask their effects. Thus Muto magic can neither injure nor kill someone directly, although it could render her immobile, by turning her to stone, or kill her indirectly, by turning her into a fish on dry land so that she suffocates.

Pronounced 'MOO-toe.'

Perdo (Pe) "I destroy"

Perdo makes things worse examples of the kind of thing they are. It is the opposite of Creo. Perdo magic can simply destroy things, removing them completely from existence, or it can destroy aspects of a thing. Thus, Perdo Corpus could remove a person's weight, while leaving the rest of his properties intact, and Perdo Ignem could make a fire unable to burn anything. Perdo alone can only destroy the whole of a natural property; making fire able to burn only wood would be Perdo with a Muto requisite (see page @@ for requisites), Perdo destroying the ability to burn anything, and Muto granting the ability to burn only wood, a property that fire cannot naturally have.

Perdo magic is easier if the thing can naturally lose the property destroyed. Thus, it is easier to kill a person than to remove his weight while leaving his other properties intact, because the first can occur naturally while the second cannot. Further, destroying properties that a thing cannot naturally lose falls under the Limit of Essential Nature (see page @@), and thus cannot be permanent; the destroyed properties return by themselves at the end of the spell's duration.

Perdo can only make something a worse example of what it is. You cannot sharpen a sword with Perdo, even though sharpening involves removing some of the metal. Similarly, you cannot remove someone's property of being wounded, because that makes them a better example of what they are.

Pronounced 'PARE-doe.'

Rego (Re) "I control"

The Art of Rego allows a maga to change the state of a thing to some other state that the individual thing can naturally have. Thus, since all things can naturally have any location, Rego magic allows a maga to move things around. Rego can also make a tree blossom out of season, put a person to sleep, shape a piece of stone into a statue, or weave thread into a tunic. It cannot make an animal appear young again, because mature animals cannot naturally become young (although Muto could do this). Rego also cannot make an animal old, because aging is decay away from the form (so Perdo could do this). Similarly, although Rego can make a tree bear fruit out of season, that fruit would not contain seeds, as the seeds are separate substances (potential trees), and thus creating them would require Creo. Equally, Rego cannot turn a brown dog black, because while dogs can naturally be black, the brown dog in question cannot naturally take on that color.

Mundane craftsmen can only change something's state to another state that the thing can naturally have. Thus, most changes that a mundane craftsman can make can also be made by Rego magic. In this case, a Finesse roll is required to determine the quality of the outcome. Rego can make changes that a mundane craftsman cannot make, however, when the craftsman is limited simply by available tools, time, or skill. On the other hand, mundane craftsmen can use their tools to simply damage or destroy things, and Rego magic cannot do that: it falls under Perdo. Rego magic could be used to control an axe to cut a tree down, but it could not be used to cut the tree down directly — that would be Perdo. Once the tree was cut down, however, Rego magic could shape the wood into planks. For more details, see Craft Magic on page @@.

Pronounced 'RAY-go.'

Forms

Animal (An) "animal"

Animal concerns animals of all kinds, from the fish of the sea to the birds of the air. Animal spells cannot affect people, and Hermetic theorists still debate the reason for this.

Form Bonus: Soak against animal attacks (claws, bites, etc.), rolls to resist animal poisons.

Pronounced 'ah-nee-MAHL.'

Aquam (Aq) "water"

Aquam concerns water and all manner of liquids, as well as properties of liquidity.

Form Bonus: Rolls to resist drowning and thirst, soak against water jets and the like.

Pronounced 'AH-kwahm.'

Auram (Au) "air"

Auram is the Art of air, wind, and weather. It also governs gaseous forms in general.

Form bonus: Rolls to resist suffocation, including drowning, soak against weather phenomena such as lightning.

Pronounced 'OW-rahm.'

Corpus (Co) "body"

Corpus is the Art of human bodies. This Art affects dead bodies and the bodies of magical or faerie creatures that look human, as well as those of living humans. Since natural philosophy asserts that these things have no more in common than their appearance, and Corpus does not affect human statues, Hermetic theorists are puzzled by the range of this Form.

Form bonus: Soak against human unarmed attacks, rolls to resist disease. It does *not* apply to aging rolls.

Pronounced 'COR-poos.'

Herbam (He) "plant"

This Form concerns plants and trees. This includes plant matter of all types, including that which is no longer alive — like dead wood and linens.

Form bonus: Soak against wooden weapons, rolls to resist herbal poisons, rolls to resist starvation.

Pronounced 'HARE-bahm.'

Ignem (Ig) "fire"

This Form concerns fire, heat, and light.

Form bonus: Soak against fire and cold.

Pronounced 'IG-nem.'

Imaginem (Im) "image"

This Form concerns the things in the world that the senses respond to. Natural philosophy calls them species (SPEH-kee-ayss, to be distinguished from species of animals and such). All things constantly give off species for each of the senses. Those for touch and taste do not travel far, while those for sight require light to get any distance from the originating body. Imaginem spells normally affect the process by which species are produced, rather than the species themselves. Thus, the species emanating from an illusion are not themselves magical.

Imaginem magic can also affect the species themselves, and if it does, those species are magical, and must Penetrate in order to pass through Magic Resistance and be perceived. This uses the same guidelines as spells affecting the process by which species are produced, and is discussed in more detail in the Jerbiton chapter of *Houses of Hermes: Societates.*

Note that Imaginem cannot create actual solidity, although it could make something 'feel solid' until you accidentally put your hand right through the surface. Touch illusions are much more effective at changing the way that an already solid surface feels; making a wooden table feel like stone, or a knife feel blunt.

Imaginem only changes the appearance that an object presents to the world. It does not change the actual effects of the object. Imaginem could make a fire feel cool, but the fire would still burn.

Form bonus: Rolls to resist confusion, deafening, or nausea caused by sights, sounds, smells, or tastes.

Pronounced 'ih-MAH-gih-nem.'

Mentem (Me) "mind"

This Form concerns minds, thoughts, and spirits. Mentem can also affect the "bodies" of noncorporeal beings, such as ghosts, as these are maintained in the physical world directly by a spirit's will.

Form bonus: Rolls to resist mundane persuasion, deception, or temptation.

Pronounced 'MEN-tem.'

Terram (Te) "earth"

This Form concerns solids, especially earth and stone.

Form bonus: Soak against metal or stone weapons, rolls to resist mineral poisons.

Pronounced 'TARE-rahm.'

Vim (Vi) "power"

This Form concerns raw magical power. All the Arts rely on the raw energy and potential of magic, but this Art refines the use of magic itself, allowing magi to assume even greater control of their spells. Vim also affects magical, infernal, divine, and faerie creatures.

Form bonus: Rolls to resist Twilight (see page @@), but not rolls to comprehend it; soak total against damage inflicted by your own spell-casting, but not damage inflicted by your own spells.

Pronounced 'WEEM.'

The Elemental Forms

Aquam, Auram, Ignem, and Terram are the elemental forms, dealing with the non-living things in the world. Often, a thing falls under more than one of these Arts. Thus, molten lava is basically Terram, because it is a form of rock, but its liquidity is governed by Aquam and its heat by Ignem. Similarly, ice is basically Aquam, being a form of water, but its solidity is covered by Terram and its coldness by Ignem. As a rule, simple creation or destruction of a non-living thing needs only the basic Art, without requisites (see page @@). Thus, to create ice you need only Creo Aquam. However, affecting the aspects and properties of a thing might use the other Arts. Thus, making ice warm would require Creo Ignem. A Creo Aquam spell with an Ignem requisite could create warm ice — still solid, but warm. Alternatively, a magus could simply create warmth, and allow it to naturally melt the ice.

Mist is a kind of air, so its basic form is Auram, but its dampness means that it is also affected by Aquam in certain respects. Weather phenomena are all basically Auram, including rain storms, but a spell to affect the rain alone would be Aquam. Hail storms, then, are basically Auram, but the hail stones are basically Aquam with elements of Ignem and Terram.

Limits of Magic

Magic, though a very powerful force, is not omnipotent. There are certain laws it must conform to and certain limits that it can never exceed. The limits to Hermetic magic are described below. Most Hermetic theorists believe that there are only two fundamental limits, the Limit of the Divine and the Limit of Essential Nature, and that the other limits are derived from one or other of these. Some theorists think that the lesser limits are merely flaws in Bonisagus's theory.

The boundaries of Hermetic magic are well known to the Order, but that doesn't stop magi from challenging them. Indeed, many magi spend countless years searching in vain for a way to transcend these limits. Certainly, any magus who actually succeeds in doing so will become famous, perhaps as famous as the Order's very Founders.

The Limit of the Divine

Hermetic magic cannot affect the Divine. Any magic attempting to do so simply fails. Everyone agrees that Hermetic powerlessness in the face of miracles is a result of this limit, as is the inability of Hermetic magic to affect the transubstantiated bread and wine of the Mass.

The agents of the Divine, such as saints and angels, are protected from magic to some extent, but are not normally completely immune. As a general rule, it seems that any being with a will separate from God's can be affected by magic, at least in principle. Only direct action by God is completely immune.

The Limit of Essential Nature

Any magic which violates a thing's essential nature must be maintained, and when power is no longer supplied the thing returns to its natural state. Thus, Muto magic must always be maintained, while the effects of Rego magic persist after the spell expires. A thing's essential nature cannot itself be changed. While Hermetic magic can completely change the way a thing appears, it cannot affect what that thing is.

A thing's essential nature varies depending on what it is. All human beings are essentially human; mortal creatures with reason, senses, and the ability to move and reproduce. The basic shape of the human body is also part of the essential nature, although bits can be cut off. The game works on the assumption that every feature of someone’s physical appearance is either an injury (which can be fixed with Creo magic), or part of their essential nature. This is necessary to avoid the ability to permanently change appearance with a single Momentary Duration Rego spell. A single characteristic may be an injury for one person, and part of the essential nature of another. For example, some people are essentially blind, whereas others are blind merely as a result of chance. As a rule, any disability purchased as a Flaw at character creation is part of the character's essential nature, while disabilities acquired later are not.

The Lesser Limits

The Limit of Aging

Hermetic magic cannot halt or reverse natural aging, although it can slow it down and mitigate its effects. This means that Hermetic magic cannot remove Decrepitude. Most magi think this derives from the Limit of Essential Nature.

The Limit of Arcane Connections

Hermetic magic cannot affect an unsensed target without an Arcane Connection. This is widely believed to be a flaw in Hermetic theory, as Intellego magic is much less tightly bound by this limit than other kinds. Intellego can determine whether, for example, there are any people behind a wall the magus can see, but Perdo Corpus magic cannot affect those people until the magus is aware of them.

The Limit of Creation

Hermetic magic is incapable of creating anything permanently without raw vis. This limit affects all uses of Creo magic. However, as pure Creo magic does not violate the essential nature of its target, Creo magic that does use raw vis does not need to be maintained. If a Creo effect has a Muto requisite, to create something unnatural, the effect cannot be made permanent by using raw vis. This applies to the whole creation, not just the unnatural aspects. Theorists are divided on whether this derives from the Limit of the Divine or the Limit of Essential Nature. A few think it is a flaw in Bonisagus's theory.

The Limit of Energy

Hermetic magic cannot restore one's physical energy (Fatigue levels), nor can it restore Confidence (see page @@). Most magi think that this is a flaw in Hermetic theory.

The Limit of Experience

Hermetic magic cannot create skills or knowledge in a person by manipulating their mind, nor can it transfer such things (Abilities, in game terms) from one person to another. This is widely believed to be a flaw in Hermetic theory, although a few magi have suggested that it is a flaw in their understanding of Abilities. Hermetic magic can create much simpler things of the same general type as Abilities, which would support the latter interpretation. (This is discussed in more detail in *Houses of Hermes: Societates,* pages 68–69.)

The Limit of the Infernal

Intellego magic is almost completely useless against the Infernal, because it reveals only what the demons want you believe, whether that is true or not.

The source of this limit is fiercely debated. Optimists think it is a limit in Hermetic theory. Pessimists think it is derived from the Limit of the Divine. Moderates think it is derived from the Limit of Essential Nature, in that deception is the nature of demons, so that if you use Intellego on them you only detect their deceptions. Heretical magi point out that, thanks to this limit, there is no way to tell the difference between God and a very powerful demon.

The Limit of the Lunar Sphere

Hermetic magic cannot affect the lunar sphere, nor anything above it. Most magi think this derives from the Limit of the Divine. The lunar sphere is the innermost of the celestial spheres, which carry the stars and planets on their revolutions around the earth, and so this limit rarely bothers magi directly.

The Limit of the Soul

Hermetic magic cannot create an immortal soul, and so may not create true human life nor restore the dead to life. Most magi think this derives from the Limit of the Divine, although a significant number think that Hermetic magic's inability to raise the dead reflects nothing more than a flaw in the theory.

Animals have no immortal souls, and so may be created. Magical creatures and faeries are generally believed not to have immortal souls, and there are spells that appear to create them, but some magi believe that such spells really summon existing beings. Angels and demons are nothing but immortal souls.

The Limit of Time

Hermetic magic is incapable of altering the passage of time. It cannot affect anything in the past, and can only affect the future by making changes in the present. This limit also means that Hermetic magic cannot scry on the past or future. Most magi think this derives from the Limit of the Divine.

The Limit of True Feeling

A few humans have a love, friendship or faith that Hermetic magic cannot affect in any way. (In game terms, this is indicated by a Virtue or Flaw.) Magi agree that this must derive from one of the two fundamental Limits, because most emotions can be affected by magic, but they disagree as to which one.

The Limit of Vis

Hermetic magic cannot change the Art to which raw vis is attuned. Most magi think that this is a result of the Limit of Essential Nature.

The Limit of Warping

Prolonged exposure to active magic or high auras usually causes changes, generally referred to as warping. Hermetic magic is completely unable to affect these changes once they have happened. Wizard's Twilight (see page @@) is one manifestation of warping.

Most magi would like to believe that this derives from the Limit of the Divine, as that would make magic a manifestation of Divine power. Others believe that it is derived from the Limit of Essential Nature.

The Limit of Magic Resistance

Non-Hermetic magic is incapable of granting general Magic Resistance, as far as Hermetic magi know. (The same is true of Faerie powers, but not the Divine or Infernal.) This is obviously not a fundamental limit of magic, as Hermetic magic does grant Magic Resistance, through the Parma Magica and Form scores, and many magi take this as evidence that Hermetic magic is simply superior to all other traditions. More knowledgeable magi are aware that some non-Hermetic traditions break some of the Lesser Limits of Hermetic magic. The optimistic among them take this as evidence that Hermetic magic could also break those limits. See *Ancient Magic, Rival Magic,* and *Hedge Magic Revised Edition* for examples of such traditions.

Raw Vis

Raw magic power, known as vis (pronounced 'WEES'), is sometimes found stored in and partially constituting some physical substance. This can occur either because a magus has trapped it there or because it was deposited there by natural magical processes. Vis trapped in some substance is called raw vis, and magi have many uses for it.

Raw vis is always associated with a particular Technique or Form. Thus, there is Ignem vis, Creo vis, Imaginem vis-even Vim vis. Raw vis invariably exists in some kind of matter appropriate to the Technique or Form to which it corresponds. Animal vis might be found in blood, skins, or horns; Herbam vis in plant fiber or sap; Terram vis in crystals; and so on. When raw vis is used its power is permanently lost. When this happens its substance often changes — dissolving, withering, crumbling, shriveling, or otherwise degrading — in whatever way is appropriate to it. This normally does not happen if the vis has been magically transferred to another receptacle (see page @@), and never happens to such artificial receptacles.

Raw vis can be used in many applications. Examples include strengthening a spell, performing a ritual, creating a magical enchantment, or aiding in the study of the magical Art to which it corresponds. Because of its utility, vis is greatly prized by magi. They often use it as a form of currency, measuring it in units called pawns. Ten pawns are said to make a rook, while ten rooks make a queen. A queen of vis is a legendary quantity, and it would be highly unlikely for a given magus to possess even a sizable fraction of such an amount.

Magi often wear sources of vis in necklaces or rings so that other wizards or magical beings can readily perceive that they have vis to use in response to a threat.

Casting Spells

Spellcasting is based on the maga's *Casting Score:*

**Casting Score: Technique + Form + Stamina + Aura Modifier**

When casting a spell, success is determined from the maga's *Casting Total.* This is calculated in different ways, depending on the type of spell.

If the generation of the casting total involves rolling a stress die, a botch is normally possible. If the casting roll botches, the casting total is treated as zero, in addition to any other effects.

Spell Basics

All Hermetic spells have a Technique, Form, and Level. The Technique and Form are determined by the kind of effect that the spell has, while the Level is determined by how powerful that effect is. Spells also have a magnitude, which is equal to the level divided by five, rounded up. These terms are discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter and in the introduction to the Spells chapter, page @@.

Formulaic Magic

Formulaic magic is the use of spells that the maga already knows. The casting total is the casting score plus a die roll.

**Formulaic Casting Total: Casting Score + Die Roll**

The type of die rolled depends on the situation. If the maga is not under any pressure, it is a simple die. If she is in a stressful situation, it is a stress die. If the maga has mastered the spell, the die is always a stress die, but in a calm situation there are no botch dice, even if the maga is in a non-Magic aura (see below, page @@).

If the casting total equals or exceeds the level of the spell, the spell is cast and the maga suffers no ill-effects. If the casting total falls short of the spell level by ten or less, the spell takes effect and the maga loses a Fatigue level. If the casting total falls short of the spell level by more than ten the spell fails to take effect, but the maga still loses a Fatigue level.

Casting Total – Spell Level Spell Cast? Fatigue Levels Lost

0 or higher Yes 0

–1 to –10 Yes 1

–11 or lower No 1

It takes only a few seconds to cast a Formulaic spell.

Ritual Magic

Ritual spells are like Formulaic spells, but they take longer to cast, and involve both elaborate rituals and the expenditure of raw vis. It takes fifteen minutes per magnitude to cast a Ritual spell, and the maga must expend one pawn of vis per magnitude of the spell.

**Ritual Casting Total: Casting Score + Artes Liberales + Philosophiae + Stress Die**

The more elaborate process of casting a Ritual spell allows the maga to incorporate astrological calculations and to draw on the powers of natural magic. This is reflected in the addition of the maga's Artes Liberales and Philosophiae scores to the casting total. However, a maga with no experience points in either Ability may still cast Ritual Magic.

The vis used in a Ritual spell must match either the Technique or the Form of the spell. It is possible to use both types of vis at once. In addition, the maximum number of pawns of a given type that a magus may use in spellcasting is his score in the corresponding Art.

The magnitude of Ritual spells, and the need to incorporate many elements, means that a stress die is always rolled, which normally creates the possibility of a botch. However, if the maga has mastered the spell, there are no botch dice in a calm situation, as for Formulaic spells.

See the table to determine whether the spell succeeds or not, and how many Fatigue levels are lost. Fatigue levels lost to Ritual Magic are long-term Fatigue levels, which can only be regained by a good night's sleep (see page @@). If the maga does not have enough Fatigue levels remaining, she takes wounds as well. If she would have taken one more Fatigue level, the wound is minor, if two more, medium, if three more, heavy, and if four more, incapacitating. For example, consider a maga with two remaining Fatigue levels who is casting a level 30 Ritual spell. She generates a casting total of 22, 8 less than the spell level. The spell is cast, but the maga loses her remaining two Fatigue levels, falling unconscious, and then takes a minor wound.

Casting Total-Spell Level Spell Cast? Fatigue Levels Lost

0 or higher Yes One

–1 to –5 Yes Two

–6 to –10 Yes Three

–11 to –15 No Four

–16 or more No Five

Spontaneous Magic

Spontaneous magic involves the production of effects which do not correspond to a spell the magus knows. Magi may choose whether or not to exert themselves when casting Spontaneous Magic, but this affects the casting total. If a maga exerts herself, she loses a Fatigue level immediately after the spell is cast, so that if this loss renders her unconscious the spell takes effect first. Casting fatiguing Spontaneous magic is inherently stressful, and so it always uses a stress die, with the risk of a botch, no matter how calm the environment and the maga may otherwise be.

**Fatiguing Spontaneous Magic Casting Total: (Casting Score + Stress Die)/2**

**Non-Fatiguing Spontaneous Magic Casting Total: Casting Score/5**

Before casting the spell, the maga must decide on the effect she is trying to create. If her final total is too low for that effect, the spell fails. The chosen effect may be open ended. For example, the maga may want to create the brightest light she can. In this case, the spell will fail if the final level cannot produce any light, but otherwise greater totals will produce brighter light.

If the maga rolls well, she may choose to increase any or all of the Range, Duration, or Target of the spell, but may not change the basic effect. If the effect was open ended, the maga may choose how much of the casting total to devote to the power of the effect, and how much to devote to Range, Duration, and Target. She may also choose to cast the spell at a lower level than her casting total, to increase its Penetration.

Modifiers from circumstances that affect the casting score are divided just like the basic casting score. Modifiers that affect the casting total are not divided.

Penetration Total

The maga's casting total measures the total amount of power that she can channel to the spell. The spell's level determines how much power is needed to create the intended effect. Any excess power is used to overcome, or Penetrate, magical defenses. It is possible for the casting total to be lower than the spell level, in which case the maga has no spare energy for penetrating defenses, and even the weakest defense stops the spell.

The Penetration Total measures how effectively the spell can overcome the Magic Resistance of its targets. It is calculated in the same way for all spells.

**Penetration Total: Casting Total + Penetration Bonus – Spell Level**

The Penetration Bonus is at least equal to the magus's score in the Penetration Ability, but may be increased in various ways; see the Penetration section on page @@, below. This may mean that a spell has different Penetration Totals for different targets.

The Penetration Total may be zero or negative. For example, if a magus with a Penetration Bonus of 0, because he has no score in Penetration, casts a Formulaic spell with a Casting Total 5 less than the spell's level, his Penetration Total is –5. If the Penetration is zero or negative, the spell cannot affect any target with Magic Resistance, even if the score of the Magic Resistance is 0. However, it can still affect targets with no Magic Resistance.

If the Penetration Total exceeds a target's Magic Resistance, the spell affects that target. If a spell is targeted at several individuals who have different levels of Magic Resistance, it is possible for the spell to affect some but not others.

The rules for calculating Penetration for the powers of supernatural creatures are given in the Bestiary chapter (page @@). The rules for the Penetration of other supernatural abilities are given on page @@, or in the supplement with the rules for the ability; in most cases, the Penetration is the total generated for the ability plus Penetration Bonus, minus the Ease Factor for the effect.

Concentration

A maga must concentrate in order to cast a spell. If she is distracted, she must make a concentration roll.

**Concentration Roll: Stamina + Concentration + Stress Die**

If the concentration roll fails, the spell fails. If the spell casting roll involved a stress die, you must still roll to see whether the maga botches, and you get one extra botch die. The Ease Factor for the concentration roll depends on the distraction.

Situation Ease Factor

Still Trivial (0)

Walking Simple (3)

Running Average (9)

Dodging Hard (12)

Jostled Average (9)

Sudden noise or flash of light Average (9)

Knocked Down Hard (12)

Damaged this round Very Hard (15)

Some spells are also maintained for as long as the maga concentrates. In that case, the Ease Factors on the above table are reduced by three points each.

There are some things it is possible to do while maintaining a spell, but impossible to do while casting. These still distract magi who are concentrating on maintaining a spell, and so concentration rolls are necessary, but the Ease Factors on the following table are already correct, and should not be reduced by three points.

Situation Ease Factor

Answering a single easy yes/no question Hard (12)

Conversation Very Hard (15)

Casting another spell Very Hard (15)

Maintaining another spell Hard (12), +3 for each spell beyond the second

Injured 3 times wound penalty to Concentration rolls (this is instead of the normal penalty)

For a continuing situation, such as injury or maintaining another spell, you must make a concentration roll every two minutes (Diameter duration). If you are undistracted, you can maintain concentration for fifteen minutes for every point you have in the Concentration Ability.

Note that, if a spell is designed to let the magus do something, doing that thing does not interfere with concentrating on the spell. This applies to spells that let the magus talk to animals, plants, or water, or to spells that let the magus run very quickly.

Spellcasting Options

All Spells

The following option can be used with all spells.

Using Raw Vis

It is possible to use raw vis to boost the power of a maga's spells. The vis must match either the Technique or the Form of spell, and a maga may only use a number of pawns of a given type of vis equal to her score in that Art.

**Limit on vis use in spell casting: The maga's score in the Art of the vis**

For all spells, a maga may expend vis to increase her casting score. Each pawn of vis expended increases the Casting Score by two.

**Vis boost to Casting Score: +2 casting score per pawn**

Vis must be used when casting Ritual spells, as noted above. Vis used in this way does not increase the Casting Score, but it does count against the limits of what can be used.

It is possible to use vis matching both the Technique and the Form in one casting of a spell, and the amount of each type of vis is limited separately. Thus, a magus with a score of 5 in the Technique and 3 in the Form could use up to 8 pawns of vis, no more than 5 corresponding to the Technique and no more than 3 corresponding to the Form.

For every pawn of vis used, the maga must roll an extra botch die if the casting roll is stress and comes up a zero. This includes the pawns used to make a Ritual spell possible. Remember that, if the maga can cast a Formulaic spell under calm conditions, she can use a simple die and thus avoid the possibility of botching.

**Vis botch dice: +1 botch die per pawn of vis used**

Non-Ritual Spells

The following option can be used when casting Formulaic or most Spontaneous spells, but not for Ritual Magic, or Spontaneous spells cast ceremonially (see later).

Words and Gestures

Spells are normally cast with a firm voice and bold gestures. However, the caster may choose to be more or less subtle. Increased subtlety gives a penalty to the casting score, while reduced discretion gives a bonus. If the maga changes the volume of her voice, she also changes the range of Voice range spells.

Words Modifier Gestures Modifier Voice Range

Loud +1 Exaggerated +1 50 paces

Firm 0 Bold 0 15 paces

Quiet –5 Subtle –2 5 paces

None –10 None –5 0 paces (caster only)

The total modifier is determined by adding the Words and Gestures modifiers together. Thus, using exaggerated gestures but making no noise gives a total penalty of –9 to the casting score.

The process of casting a Ritual or ceremonial spell uses all of these options at different points, as determined by the ritual. Thus, unless the caster can speak in a loud voice and make exaggerated gestures, they cannot cast a Ritual spell.

Spontaneous Spells

The following options can only be used when a maga is using Spontaneous magic, but can be used equally for fatiguing and non-fatiguing Spontaneous spells.

Fast Casting

A maga may choose to cast a Spontaneous spell extremely quickly, as a response to an attack or other surprising event. A fast-cast spell is always cast in the way that a maga casts urgent spells normally. In most cases, that means using a firm voice and bold gestures. However, for example, a maga with the Subtle Magic Virtue who almost never uses gestures to cast spells would also cast fast-cast spells without gestures. It is not possible to apply options that affect the spell itself, rather than the way it is cast, as there is not enough time for the maga to think about anything other than the core features of the spell. For example, a fast-cast spell cannot be boosted with raw vis.

There are two stages: determining the speed of casting, and determining the effect of the spell.

The speed of casting is determined as follows:

**Fast Casting Speed: Quickness + Finesse + Stress Die**

The Ease Factor for this roll depends on the situation. In combat, the Ease Factor is always the opponent's Initiative Total. Other Ease Factors should be set by the storyguide. Note that, even in combat, the fast casting speed is not an Initiative Total. A maga may be able to cast more than one fast-cast spell in one combat round. However, each spell after the first takes a cumulative –6 penalty to the Fast Casting Speed: –6 for the second spell, –12 for the third, and so on. Once one of these rolls has been failed, that is the roll does not equal or exceed the Ease Factor for that roll, which may be the Initiative Total of another combatant, the maga can cast no further spells in that combat round.

If the roll for a fast-cast spell fails, the maga may still cast that spell. It will be too late to have its intended effect, and the maga may choose to abort the spell without any risk.

A maga casting a fast-cast spell must subtract ten from the Casting Score before calculating the Casting Total. In addition, if the player rolls a zero, there are two additional botch dice.

**Fast Cast Penalty: –10 to Casting Score**

**Fast Cast Botch Dice: +2 botch dice**

In order to create a fast-cast defense against magic, a maga must know the Hermetic Form that governs that magic. If the caster is a Hermetic magus and is using words and gestures that she can hear and see, she may determine this automatically. A Perception + Awareness roll may be needed to catch the details of the gestures, particularly if they are subtle.

In other circumstances, the maga must work the Form out. A Perception + Awareness roll against an Ease Factor of 15 minus the magnitude of the effect is needed.

**Determining Form of Magical Effect: Perception + Awareness vs. 15 – effect magnitude**

In general, a fast-cast defense with half the level of the attacking spell is enough to protect the maga herself or one other individual. The spell still takes effect, and the side effects of deflecting the spell may have to be dealt with. A fast-cast defense that matches or exceeds the level of the attacking spell can completely neutralize it, probably in a fairly spectacular fashion.

Fast-cast defenses against mundane threats work if the level of the spell is high enough to neutralize the threat.

Ceremonial Casting

A maga may spend fifteen minutes for every magnitude of the spell performing rituals to invoke the powers of natural magic. As a result, she may add her scores in Artes Liberales and Philosophiae to her Casting Score. A maga may use ceremonial casting even if she has no experience points in one of the two Abilities, but not if she has no experience points in either.

No matter how good the roll, the level of the spell is limited by the time the maga spent in casting it, to one magnitude per fifteen minutes. However, the casting total may be very high, so the spell may have good Penetration. Thus, if the maga spends one hour preparing, the final spell cannot be higher than fourth magnitude, which means its level cannot be higher than 20. However, if she gets lucky and rolls a 64 on the stress die, the spell will have a Penetration of 12 (32, which is half of 64, minus the maximum spell level of 20) plus half her Technique + Form + Artes Liberales + Philosophiae + Stamina total.

**Ceremonial Casting Bonus: Add Artes Liberales and Philosophiae to Casting Score**

Characters may also increase the effectiveness of ceremonial casting by using props, and by using a prepared spellcasting space.

The use of props provides a bonus based on the mystical significance of the items used. Large props are the most effective, but are very expensive, because master craftsmen must make them from rare materials. Large props are also difficult to transport. Medium-sized props are the ones magi can create or acquire most easily. Many evocative items that may found during stories are medium-sized props. Tiny props are expensive because they must be made from precious metals and gemstones that accord with the Arts. Props aid magic, but are not magical items. They may be constructed or repaired by a skilled craftsman (Ability of 5 or more) under the guidance of a magus, without distracting the magus from study.

Bonus to Casting Score for casting with ceremonial props, by prop size:

+1 for gemstones and other tiny items, that can be carried in a belt pouch by a magus.

+2 for small props, fifteen of which completely fill a backpack.

+3 for medium sized props, such that fifteen would completely fill a horse's saddlebags, or a barrel.

+4 for large props, such that fifteen could only be transported by a wagon

+5 for props so large that it is impractical to move them from the room in which they are constructed.

As an example, Carmine of Flambeau, the wife of the Primus of Jerbiton, prefers Creo Ignem effects. She wears a ruby necklace and a coral brooch, and uses these as a small ceremonial kit when casting small effects in cities. Her husband prefers Rego Imaginem magic. He has a medium-sized ceremonial kit, two items of which are a wand made of the crown of a fairy king that he defeated (Imaginem), and his cat familiar (Rego, for this particular cat).

Prepared space reduces the time required to cast spells ceremonially.

Casting time when using ceremonial spaces, in minutes per magnitude:

Twelve minutes per magnitude: a space that the magus has created as a temporary recourse. For example, a series of chalk circles on the floor of a rented room in a foreign city.

Nine minutes per magnitude: a space naturally suited to the performance of ceremonial magic. These spaces are often beautiful. For example, a cliff ledge that faces the sunrise, the pinnacle of the covenant's tallest tower at night, or the depths of an autumn forest.

Six minutes per magnitude: A space that the magus has carefully designed to have suitable architectural features, lines of light and reflection, and appropriate placement of color.

Three minutes per magnitude: The magus's laboratory, or other place of magical contemplation.

One minute per magnitude: A room designed solely for ceremonial casting, which contains props of the largest variety, and mystical choreographies permanently inscribed on the floor. Characters with the Mystical Choreography Virtue cast ceremonial magic at this speed regardless of how temporary their prepared space.

Arcane Connections

Arcane Connections allow a maga to cast a spell on something she is not currently sensing, as long as she is currently aware of the Arcane Connection. Mystically, the Arcane Connection is still a part of the target, thus making the spell possible. However, the spell must have a range of Arcane Connection, which makes casting spells like this harder than casting them on a target that is actually present.

One thing, the connection, is an Arcane Connection to something else, the target, if the connection was very closely associated with the target, often by being a part of it. Once the connection is removed from the target, the connection starts to fade. The length of time that the connection lasts depends on the nature of the connection.

Arcane Connections must be stored carefully, or else they become links to different people or places.

**Duration Example Connections**

Hours Air from a specific place, shed skin from a human being, water from a moving body of water.

Days A frequently used tool or item of clothing, water from a still body of water, something mundane made by the target, excrement.

Weeks Lesser enchanted device, an item designed and made by the target, for example a letter composed and written by the target. An item designed by one person and made by another is an Arcane Connection lasting for days, to the person who made it.

Months Strand of hair, favorite tool or item of clothing, wood shard from a specific place, feather from a bird, scale from a reptile.

Years Invested device, rock or metal from a specific place, blood, lock of hair, group of feathers from a bird, group of scales from a reptile.

Decades Body part.

Indefinite Hermetic familiar (link to master), Hermetic magus (link to familiar), Hermetic talisman (link to creator), fixed Arcane Connections (see 'Fixing Arcane Connections' in the Laboratory chapter, page @@).

Penetration

Penetration is the ability of a spell or other magical ability to affect something that has Magic Resistance. If something has no Magic Resistance, Penetration is irrelevant. A single spell may have several targets, for example all the members of a Group. In that case, any targets without Magic Resistance are affected no matter what the Penetration of the spell, but a target with Magic Resistance are only affected if the spell Penetrates that target's Magic Resistance.

Any character with the Penetration Ability can use sympathetic magic to increase the Penetration of her magic. The Penetration Bonus starts at one times the character's Penetration Ability, and the multiplier can be increased. This requires that the character have an Arcane Connection to the target of the magic.

**Arcane Connection Bonus to Multiplier**

Lasts hours or days +1

Lasts weeks or months +2

Lasts years or decades +3

Lasts indefinitely +4

The same Arcane Connection can be used to both allow the use of Arcane Connection Range, and to boost Penetration. Only one Arcane Connection can be used to give a bonus to Penetration against a single target, but it is possible to use Arcane Connections to multiple targets to boost the Penetration of a single spell. The spell might then have a different Penetration against each of its targets. Note that a caster might think she has an Arcane Connection to a target, but be mistaken. In that case, the Arcane Connection does "work", but the increased Penetration is irrelevant as that individual is not targeted by the spell.

Once a character has an Arcane Connection she can use other sympathetic magic to increase the multiplier further. Any number of sympathetic connections may be used, and their bonuses stack. The following table provides some examples, but is not exhaustive. Each troupe should specify the kinds of sympathetic connection it allows, but no single connection should give a bonus of greater than +2.

Forceless Casting

A maga can deliberately ensure the Penetration Total of a spell does not exceed 0. In essence, the maga casts the spell with no more effort than is required to avoid Fatigue and opts not to use her Penetration skill. As most magi have at least a Magic Resistance of 0, she can ensure her spell will not affect them, provided she does not botch. It is not possible for a maga to choose a Penetration Total other than 0, although mystery cults may know secret techniques that permit this, and original research might also reveal a method.

Forceless casting requires no particular skill or effort. It is useful in magical tournaments, or when a maga casts a spell covering a large area and wants to avoid inadvertently affecting any magi who may be within the target area.

Sympathetic Connections

**Sympathetic Connection Bonus to Multiplier**

Caster is blood relative of target +1

Signature of target +1

Target's nickname or birth name\* +1

Name target uses in secret magic rituals +1

Target's horoscope for today\*\* +1

Target's nativity horoscope\*\*\* +2

Symbolic representation of target\*\*\*\* +2

\* Baptismal names cannot be used in sympathetic magic.

\*\* Caster must know the target's current location, and succeed in an Int + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Casting such a horoscope takes an hour.

\*\*\* Caster must know the target's place and time of birth, and succeed in an Int + Artes Liberales (Astronomy) roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Casting such a horoscope takes a day's work.

\*\*\*\* An illustration or model of some sort. A simple representation, good for one use, takes several hours and a Dexterity + Craft roll of 9+ to create. A permanent representation takes a month of work and a Dexterity + Craft roll of 12+. The representation can only be used by the person who made it.

Penetration Example

For example, Mari Amwithig wants to be able to cast *Agony of the Beast* on the dragon that has been causing problems for the covenant. She has a Penetration score of 3, specialized in Perdo, so it is effectively 4. That would typically give her a Penetration of around 20, because she can expect to exceed the spell level by 16 on most rolls. That isn't enough to affect the dragon.

The first thing she does is obtain an Arcane Connection to the dragon, and fix it in the laboratory. This gives her a bonus of +4 to the Penetration multiplier, so now her Penetration score is multiplied by 5 (1 + 4) when determining her penetration bonus. Her typical penetration is now around 36, which is better but still not quite good enough, she thinks.

Mari's player argues that dragons have horoscopes just like anyone else, and the storyguide agrees. Unfortunately, Mari has no idea when, or even if, the dragon was born, so she can only make a daily horoscope. That increases the Penetration multiplier by +1, so her Penetration score is now multiplied by 6. This makes her typical Penetration total 40.

Mari has also Mastered the spell (see page @@, below) and taken the Penetration Mastery special ability. She has a score of 1 in the Mastery Ability for the spell, and this adds to her Penetration score, so that instead of multiplying 4 by 6, she multiplies 5 (4 for Penetration, 1 for the Mastery Ability) by 6. This raises her typical penetration total to 46, which she thinks will be enough to get the dragon's attention. Arcane Connection and horoscope in hand, she sets off.

Magic Resistance

Most human beings have no Magic Resistance. If the target of a spell has no Magic Resistance, then he suffers its effects no matter how low the Penetration total, even if it is negative. Humans can gain general Magic Resistance from three sources: the Divine, the Infernal, and Hermetic magic. No other magical or faerie powers are able to provide general Magic Resistance to humans, but creatures with a Might score have Magic Resistance equal to their Might (see page @@).

Hermetic magi have a base Magic Resistance equal to their score in the Form most applicable to the spell cast. In case of doubt, Vim is a safe default. Thus, a maga attacked with magical fire would have Magic Resistance at least equal to her Ignem score. Since all Hermetic magi have a score of at least 0 in every Form, a maga never has a Magic Resistance of less than zero.

If the target of a spell has Magic Resistance of 0, she is only affected if the Penetration total is 1 or greater. Thus, Magic Resistance 0 is substantially better than no Magic Resistance.

Parma Magica

The Parma Magica, Bonisagus's great invention, is an Ability that grants Magic Resistance that adds to the resistance arising from a maga's Form scores.

Parma Magica adds Magic Resistance equal to five times the maga's score in the Ability to the resistance based on her Forms. It takes two minutes to perform the Parma Magica ritual, and the Magic Resistance granted lasts until sunset or sunrise, whichever comes first. A magus can suppress his Parma by concentrating, and this also suppresses his Form resistance. This suppression lasts for as long as the magus concentrates, which takes the same effort as concentration on maintaining a spell, and leaves him with no Magic Resistance against anything.

An unconscious magus may not suppress his Parma, and thus has his full resistance against all magic, even helpful magic. His Parma will go down naturally at sunrise or sunset, at which point he has only the resistance based on his Forms. There is no way for an unconscious magus to lower his Form resistance.

A magus may also protect one other person for each point in Parma Magica, with their consent. He must touch each person to start the protection, and it lasts as long as at least one character can see the other. The magus may cancel the protection at will, at any distance. While a magus is protecting others, his effective Parma Magica score is reduced by 3 points, both for himself and for the other people he is protecting. If the magus has a Parma Magica score of 3 or lower, his Parma Magica provides each character, including himself, with a Magic Resistance of 0. In the magus's case, this is added to his Form resistance, and a magus protected by another magus's Parma Magica may also add his Form resistance.

Awareness of Attack

If a spell is stopped by Magic Resistance, the target knows that some effect has been stopped, but knows nothing about it. If a spell penetrates her Magic Resistance, she gets no warning other than any obvious effects the spell has. A very subtle spell might well go completely unnoticed if cast successfully.

The Functioning of Magic Resistance

Magic Resistance keeps magic away from the maga, her clothing, and other items that are very close to her. It does not dispel magic.

Spells cast with Personal Range do not have to overcome the caster's own Magic Resistance. Spell cast with any other Range, even if cast by the maga on herself, do have to overcome the caster's own Magic Resistance.

If the maga is the Individual target of the spell, a resisted spell simply fails to work. If she is part of a Group or large Target, the spell fails to work on her, but may affect other people within the target.

If the target of the spell is a magical thing, which then attempts to damage the maga, the spell works, but the created thing is unable to affect the maga unless it Penetrates her Magic Resistance.

Things that are created and sustained by magic (anything not created as a mundane thing by a Ritual spell) are magical for these purposes. Things moved by magic can cross the resistance, but their motion cannot, unless the spell Penetrates the Magic Resistance.

In all the following examples, the Penetration of the magical effect is assumed to be equal to or lower than the maga's Magic Resistance.

A mind control spell targeted at the maga alone fails.

A mind control spell targeted at a group including the maga fails to affect the maga, but may affect other members of the group.

A jet of magical water parts around the maga, and she does not even get wet.

A jet of normal water driven by magic reaches the maga and makes her wet, but has no force of impact, as the magical power cannot pass her resistance.

A quantity of normal water magically raised over the maga's head and dropped makes her wet and strikes with impact, because it is not being moved by magic when it reaches the maga.

A magical rock thrown at the maga bounces off her resistance, and the maga feels nothing beyond the warning that something has been successfully resisted.

A normal rock turned into a large boulder by a Muto spell bounces off her resistance, as above.

A large boulder turned into a pebble by a Muto spell bounces off her resistance, as above.

A normal rock continuously propelled by magic stops at her skin or clothes. The maga feels the warning that something has been resisted, and also feels the rock touching her (before it falls), but she is not struck by the rock. It is as if the rock had been moved up against her as slowly and carefully as possible.

A mundane rock launched upwards by magic so that when it falls, it will fall on the maga is not resisted. By the time it strikes the maga, its motion is natural, due to gravity, rather than magical. However, such a rock must be aimed (see below).

If the maga steps onto a magical bridge, it remains and will bear her weight.

If the maga falls onto a magical bridge, she is stopped by the bridge, and takes falling damage.

If the magical bridge falls onto the maga, it is stopped, but does her no damage.

If a maga falls into a pit full of magical spikes, she either slides around the spikes if there is room, or finishes lying on top of them if there is not. She takes normal falling damage, but no damage from the spikes.

The maga cannot see an invisible character, as the species (see Imaginem, page @@ above) are destroyed before reaching her.

An invisible character cannot touch or exert physical force on the maga, even if the invisibility spell had Personal Range. The maga feels the warning that something has been resisted, but feels nothing else. See the magical bridge examples, earlier, for further discussion.

The maga can see an illusion, as the species emitted are natural rather than magical. She gets no indication that it an illusion.

The maga can see a magically-created object, as the object generates normal species.

The maga sees something affected by a Rego Imaginem spell in the location intended by the spell, as the species are no longer under magical influence when they reach her.

An illusion cast on the maga fails.

Aiming

A maga may want to cast a spell that affects something else, and only indirectly affects the target. In this case, the target's Magic Resistance is irrelevant, as the spell does not target her. However, while spells always hit their targets, indirect effects may not reach the true target; they must be aimed. If a spell is resisted, as above, it need not be aimed. If it is not resisted, it must be aimed.

**Aiming Roll: Perception + Finesse + Die**

The die is a stress die if the maga is under stress, a simple die otherwise. Treat the total as an attack total (see Combat on page @@). If the 'attack' hits, the spell effect is in the right place; what effect this has depends on the spell. The magus does not generate an Attack Advantage even if the spell inflicts damage; the damage is determined by rolling a stress die and adding the spell’s damage bonus, and comparing it to the targets Soak Total + stress die.

If the direct target of the spell is a basic Individual for the Form in question (see page @@), there is no bonus to the aiming roll. For every step larger, and thus for every magnitude added to the spell, the aiming roll gets a +6 bonus. It is hard to miss a single person when you create a pit the size of a church.

For extreme cases, the troupe should use its judgment and may change the bonus. For example, a basic Individual in Auram could be a cloud 100 paces across, which should grant a large bonus to aiming, while a gemstone created two steps larger than a basic Individual is still only 10 inches or so across, and so should probably grant no bonus at all.

The following are examples of spells that bypass the ultimate victim's Magic Resistance, and thus need to be aimed.

Moving a boulder over the victim's head with Rego Terram, and then dropping it.

Destroying the earth underneath her feet so that she falls into a pit.

Creating a wooden box around her so that she cannot see or move.

Changing the earth under her feet into mud, so that she sinks. Note that she will not get muddy unless the spell penetrates her Magic Resistance, as the mud is a magical substance which is kept away from her.

Destroying all the air around her so that she cannot breathe (briefly, but enough to force a Concentration roll), and suffers some damage from the surrounding air rushing in to fill the vacuum.

Projectiles and Rego Magic

The laws of physics in Mythic Europe conform to medieval ideas, not modern ones. The differences are often unimportant, but they become significant when a magus uses Rego spells to throw projectiles or to drop heavy objects from a height. The physics (or "natural philosophy" as characters would call it) of Mythic Europe is described in more detail in *Art & Academe.* This insert clarifies a narrow topic: how to use Rego spells as a form of attack.

In fact, there are three different ways Rego magic may be used offensively.

The first way is to use magic to propel the projectile all the way to the target. In this case, the motive force of the projectile is entirely due to magic. Magic Resistance would protect against this form of attack. The projectile would stop harmlessly at the edge of the target's Magic Resistance. This sort of spell does not need to be aimed.

The second form of attack is to exploit what philosophers call "natural motion:" the natural tendency of heavy objects to fall downward. A magus could use Rego magic to levitate a rock over someone's head and then cancel the spell. The rock would naturally fall and would bypass Magic Resistance. Such a spell would need to be aimed.

The third way is to use a brief jolt of magical force to hurl a projectile as an arrow is thrown from a bow. Medieval natural philosophy did offer an explanation for how an arrow could continue moving after it leaves the bow. To over-simplify (in the interest of brevity), it involves the motion of air around the arrow. Magi can devise spells that hurl projectiles in this manner. Only specially-designed Rego spells can throw projectiles this way — the spell's description must explicitly state that it can throw projectiles (these spells are higher magnitude than generic Rego spells). Spells that throw a projectile release control of it immediately after launching it. The projectile then continues on a natural trajectory. In game terms, this means the spell must be aimed, but the projectile bypasses Magic Resistance. The Range of the spell need only be Touch (the magic only needs to act at the moment the projectile is thrown), but once launched, the projectile is subject to the natural laws of motion. The aiming roll suffers a range penalty just like a missile weapon does (page @@) and the projectile can go no farther than it could be thrown by a very powerful mundane bow (or sling, catapult, or other device). Most projectiles thrown by spells have a range increment of 20 paces.

Sigils

Every Hermetic maga has a 'wizard's sigil'. All the spells that she casts have something in common, which makes it clear to those who know her that she was the caster. The sigil also appears in the effects of enchanted devices created by the maga.

Some sigils affect the environment where the spell is cast. For example, a maga might have the scent of orange blossom as her sigil. In that case, whenever she casts a spell there is a smell of orange blossom in the area. The spell has its effect as normal. Another maga's sigil might make everyone nearby feel briefly chilled.

Other sigils affect the maga herself. For example, a sigil might make the maga's hair stand on end and flash with sparks, or make her eyes glow briefly.

Finally, some sigils affect the actual products of the spell. A maga's sigil might mean that all her spell effects involve whiteness in some way, whether white fire from Creo Ignem, or a white patch on animals affected by Muto Animal.

Whatever the form of the sigil, it never requires requisites, as it is part of the maga's magic. Accordingly, it should never be something useful, nor something that imposes major problems. It is a bit of flavor for the caster, nothing more.

All kinds of sigil leave some traces behind in the magic, and skilled Hermetic investigators can use this sigil to find out who cast a spell.

Hermetic magi also have a voting sigil, a small physical object which identifies them and is used to vote at Tribunal. This often resembles the casting sigil in some way, but need not.

Spell Mastery

Hermetic magi can study Formulaic and Ritual spells that they know in more detail. This study leads to spell mastery. Magi can write books about spells they have mastered, to convey that knowledge to others. The Spell Mastery Ability can be learned from such books according to the normal rules for study (see page @@). Spell mastery Abilities are their own category, and Virtues that give characters access to other categories of Ability do not cover spell mastery Abilities. They may only be learned by characters who use Hermetic magic to cast spells.

For every possible Hermetic spell, there is a corresponding Ability. This Ability can be studied in the normal ways, and is called the spell's mastery ability. If a maga has a score of one or greater in a mastery ability, she is said to have mastered that spell.

**Mastery Ability: Adds to casting score and subtracts from number of botch dice**

A maga adds her score in the mastery ability to her casting score whenever she casts that spell. In addition, she subtracts her mastery ability from the number of botch dice she has to roll if she rolls a zero. This may bring the number of dice down to zero. Mastered spells are always cast with a stress die, but if the maga is relaxed there are no botch dice, even in a non-magic aura or when using vis, or when casting a Ritual spell.

Mastered Spell Special Abilities

For every level in the Mastery Ability, the maga may also choose one special ability, which applies only to that mastered spell. Thus, a maga with a Mastery Score of two for a spell has two special abilities for that spell. A maga who has mastered more than one spell may have different special abilities with each of them.

Adaptive Casting

You may use your mastery score and all the special abilities associated with it whenever you cast a similar spell (as defined in the Laboratory chapter, page @@). If you have two or more mastery Abilities that apply to a single spell (because you have mastered two or more spells that are similar to the spell you are casting) you may only use the score of one Ability, and the special abilities taken for that mastery Ability. For example, if you have mastered Demon's Eternal Oblivion 30 with a score of 3, and the abilities Adaptive, Fast Casting, and Penetration, and Demon's Eternal Oblivion 25 with a score of 4 and the abilities Adaptive, Quiet Casting twice, and Still Casting, you must use the score of 3 if you want to use the Penetration ability, and the score of 4 if you want to use the Still Casting ability, and you cannot use the Penetration ability with the score of 4.

Ceremonial Casting

The maga may apply the rules for Ceremonial Casting (page @@) to casting this spell. This special ability may not be taken for Ritual spells, as they effectively use ceremonial casting to start with.

This special ability is not widely known in the Order, having originated with the Cult of Mercury, but it is no longer a secret of the cult. They know other special abilities that do remain secrets of the cult, however (see *The Mysteries, Revised Edition,* page 117).

Fast Casting

The maga may Fast Cast the mastered spell according to the rules for Fast Casting Spontaneous spells, on page @@. The maga still takes the –10 penalty to Casting Score and risks the extra botch dice, although the botch dice will be partially offset by her Mastery Ability. Any or all of your Mastery Abilities may be applied to the spell even when it is fast-cast, as these abilities are a fundamental part of your understanding of the spell. This special ability may not be taken for Ritual spells.

Imperturbable Casting

Add the caster's Mastery score to all Concentration rolls related to the spell. This helps her maintain spells of Concentration Duration amid the chaos of battle, or while casting another spell (see the Concentration Table, page @@).

Magic Resistance

Your Magic Resistance is doubled against the mastered spell, and against any spells or powers that count as similar. (See 'Similar Spells', page @@)

Multiple Casting

You can cast several copies of a single mastered spell so that it affects more people, objects, or areas (as applicable) than normal. A single target may also be affected more than once. You may cast a number of additional copies of the spell equal to or less than your Mastery Score.

All copies of the spell are cast simultaneously, and the action counts as a single casting for the purposes of Concentration and similar concerns. Each copy must be rolled for separately. If any of the copies fail outright, you lose the fatigue and the copy fails, though others may still take effect successfully. If you lose consciousness, any copies that were successful still run their course. If you lose consciousness and accumulate additional fatigue loss, each additional Fatigue level causes an extra hour of unconsciousness. Any other, special, cost associated with casting the spell must be paid for each copy.

Subtract the total number of discrete targets from any aiming rolls that are required. Even if all spells are directed at the same target, a –1 applies. The storyguide can further penalize or prohibit multiple casting that is especially difficult, such as casting two spells in opposite directions.

**Aiming: Penalty of one for every separate target, including the first**

This special ability may be taken for Ritual spells. The casting time is that for a single spell, but one pawn of appropriate vis per magnitude of the spell must be expended for each copy. The normal limit on pawns of vis expended (the maga's score in the Art) applies. Excess Fatigue levels lost convert to wounds, as normal for Ritual spells.

Obfuscated Casting

Magi cannot automatically identify the Form of the spell as the magus casts it. This makes it difficult for them to use fast-cast spells as a defense. They must always roll to determine the Form of the spell (see page @@) and must add the caster's Mastery score to the Ease Factor.

Penetration

The maga's Mastery Score is added to her Penetration Ability score for determining her Penetration Bonus (see page @@).

Precise Casting

Add +1 to all Finesse rolls the caster makes with the spell, including aiming rolls. Subtract one botch die from any Finesse rolls she makes using the spell, to a minimum of one botch die. A maga may take this ability multiple times for the same spell.

Quick Casting

Add +1 to the caster's Initiative Total when he casts the mastered spell. If he also has the Fast Casting special ability, add +1 to his Fast Casting Speed rolls (page @@) when he fast-casts the spell. This ability cannot be taken for Ritual spells. A magus may take this ability multiple times for the same spell.

Quiet Casting

The penalty for casting a spell quietly is reduced by five. This cannot grant a bonus, although using a booming voice gives the normal bonus. A maga may take this ability twice. If she does so, she can cast the spell silently without penalty. The range of a Voice Range spell is still based on the actual loudness of the maga's voice.

Rebuttal

This Mastery special ability may be applied to any Muto or Rego Vim spell designed to affect a spell or power used by another being (thus *Wizard’s Boost* or *Maintain the Demanding Spell* are not eligible, but *Mirror of Opposition [Form]* is). The magus may add three times his Mastery score to the effective level of the Vim spell when determining whether or not it can change or control the foreign magic.

Still Casting

The maga can cast the spell without gestures, at no penalty. The normal bonus for using exaggerated gestures applies.

Unravelling

This Mastery special ability may be applied to any Perdo Vim spell designed to weaken or destroy magic. The magus may add three times his Mastery score to the effective level of the Perdo Vim spell when determining whether it can destroy the targeted effect. Thus a 20th level *Wind of Mundane Silence* cast by a character with this Mastery special ability and a score of 3 can negate the effects of a spell if he can double the spell’s level on (29 + stress die) rather than (20 + stress die).

Books on Spell Mastery

A book on spell Mastery can be studied by anyone who knows the spell that the book is about. For the purposes of spell Mastery, two spells are the same if they have the same Arts, level, Range, Duration, Target, and effect; essentially, if the game rule versions of the two spells are identical. Different wizard's sigils are not a problem.

Because magi reinvent spells for themselves, rather than actually learning another magus's version, a magus studying spell Mastery from a book may learn any special ability, not just the abilities known by the original author. The book provides insight into the structure of the spell, but that insight may differ slightly between the author's and reader's versions of the spells.

Dangers

Despite the Order's attempts to regulate it and make it a science, magic remains an art. No matter how skilled a practitioner you are, and no matter what precautions you take (short of not using magic at all), your magic will sometimes get out of your control. From the danger of casting a spell improperly to the danger of the enigmatic Wizard's Twilight, magic is filled with hazards.

Botches

The most common danger magi face when performing magic is a botch. The results of a given spell cast under stress are not entirely predictable, and a botch on a spell roll means that the maga has made a mistake that, rather than just causing her spell to fail, causes her spell to produce different effects than she intended. Though the effects of botches can vary widely, they are almost universally detrimental. The storyguide should use his imagination when determining botches.

As noted above (page @@), a botch automatically gives a maga a Casting Total of zero. However, this does not mean that nothing happens; in general, the spell still goes off. The magic is beyond the maga's control; almost anything could happen. More powerful spells should have more powerful botch results, in general, but as usual the number of botch dice that come up zero should determine just how badly things have gone wrong.

Magi gain one Warping Point for every zero that comes up on the botch dice when casting a spell. (This does not include the original zero that meant the botch dice had to be rolled. If the roll does not botch, the magus gains no Warping Points.) If a magus gains two or more Warping Points from a single spell botch, he may enter Wizard's Twilight (see below).

Sources of Botch Dice

When casting a spell under stress, you start with one botch die, as normal. The storyguide can increase this for all the normal reasons, such as distractions or a difficult magical environment, but there are several standard modifiers to the number of botch dice for spell casting.

Using vis while casting: +1 botch die per pawn of vis used

Casting in a supernatural aura other than Magic: +1 botch die per level of the aura, doubled if in a regio

Fast Casting: +2 botch dice

Golden Cord to a familiar: –1 botch die per level

Spell Mastery: –1 botch die per level

Note that there are a number of Virtues and Flaws that can modify both the number of botch dice, and what they mean. For example, the Faerie Magic Virtue attunes Merinita magi to Faerie auras, so that they do not gain additional botch dice in them.

If the maga is relaxed while casting a Formulaic spell, then there are no botch dice, no matter how many the circumstances would normally add. Note that it is not possible to be relaxed while casting a fatiguing Spontaneous spell, as the process itself is stressful. Ritual spells also require botch dice in all circumstances, unless the maga has mastered them.

Botch Suggestions

Attract unwanted attention: The attention of someone or something, perhaps the target of your spell, is drawn to you.

Caster addled: You are rendered insane, confused, or demented. You acquire the Flaw Simple-Minded for an indefinite duration.

Caster overwhelmed: You are overwhelmed by your own magic. Make a Stamina stress roll of 6+ or be knocked unconscious.

Connection with target: Your target becomes aware of your investigations, and may learn something about you through the arcane link that is temporarily established.

Debilitating: The spell pushes the target too hard and does permanent damage: for example, a Rego Animal spell might forever leave a beast without its natural instincts and urges.

Flawed creation: A creation is heavily flawed, though the flaw may not be obvious until the creation is expected to serve the function it was created for.

Incomplete or improper effect: For example, a spell intended to transform you into a wolf might only transform your head and hands.

Out of control: The spell creates or calls forth something beyond the caster's ability to control.

Related but unwanted effect: For example, a spell intended to transform you into a wolf might turn you into another animal.

Reverse effect: The spell does exactly the opposite of what is intended.

Spell affects caster: You, instead of the intended target, are affected.

Too powerful: The spell does more than it should and thereby causes problems.

Undying spell: The spell does not end at the normal time, and it proves resistant to being dispelled.

Wrong target: Pick a new one at random.

Warping

Warping affects everyone, not just Hermetic magi, so it is described in the Saga chapter, page @@. Note that magi gain one Warping Point for every zero on the botch dice when they botch a spell.

Wizard's Twilight

Wizard's Twilight is unique to Hermetic magic. Most magical traditions have a unique reaction to Warping, and Wizard's Twilight is the reaction of magi trained in the Hermetic tradition.

Entering Twilight

Whenever a maga gains two or more Warping Points from a single event, rather than from prolonged exposure, she must add them to her current total, possibly increasing her Warping Score, and then roll to avoid Twilight.

**Twilight Avoidance: Stamina + Concentration + Vim Form Bonus + stress die vs. Warping Score + Number of Warping Points gained + Enigmatic Wisdom + local aura + stress die (no botch)**

If the roll succeeds, the maga spends two minutes (one Diameter) bringing her magic under control, but there are no further effects. If the roll fails, the maga enters Wizard's Twilight. If the maga botches, she enters Twilight and cannot comprehend the experience.

A maga may choose not to resist Twilight, in which case she makes no roll and automatically enters Twilight. In some situations, such as combat, taking two minutes to control the magic may be very dangerous, and in such cases a maga may wish to enter Twilight in the hope of comprehending it and thus getting through the experience more quickly.

Comprehending Twilight

A maga within Twilight must comprehend her surroundings in order to get out.

**Twilight Comprehension: Intelligence + Enigmatic Wisdom + stress die vs. Warping Score + stress die**

**Botch Dice: 1 + 1 per Warping Point gained to trigger the Twilight**

The time that a maga feels that she spends in Twilight is completely independent of time passing in the real world. The time that passes in the real world depends on the maga's Warping Score, and the success of her Twilight Comprehension roll.

Warping Score Base Time in Twilight

1 Diameter (2 minutes)

2 Two Hours

3 Sun

4 Day (24 hours)

5 Moon

6 Season

7 Year

8 Seven Years

9 Seven plus a Stress Die Years (no botch)

10+ Eternal: Final Twilight

If the comprehension roll botches, the time the maga spends in Twilight one step longer on the table for every zero on the dice, and she suffers a bad effect from the experience.

If the comprehension roll fails, the maga spends the base time in Twilight, and suffers a bad effect from the experience.

If the Twilight side of the comprehension roll botches (same botch dice as the maga's side), the maga need only beat a total of zero to comprehend the Twilight. The botch has no other effect. This means that, all else being equal, a maga is slightly more likely to comprehend a Twilight caused by gaining a lot of Warping Points.

If the comprehension roll succeeds, subtract the maga's Enigmatic Wisdom score from the result, and compare that total (that is, the maga's Intelligence plus the stress die result) to the Twilight's result.

**Twilight Time: Intelligence + stress die vs. Warping Score + stress die**

**Note: The die rolls are the rolls already made to comprehend the Twilight**

If the two match exactly, or the maga's score is lower, the maga spends the base time in Twilight. For every additional point by which the maga's score exceeds the Twilight result, move one step shorter on the duration table. For example, if a maga with a Warping score of 7 makes her comprehension roll by three points, the Twilight lasts a day. If this lowers the duration below Diameter, the whole Twilight lasts a mere moment in the real world.

During Twilight

The experiences of magae in Twilight vary enormously. Some experience a dreamlike copy of the real world. Others encounter strange creatures, or copies of themselves, or feel an infinite benevolence watching over the universe, or an infinite malevolence likewise. These may be played out if desired.

The effects are equally varied in the outside world. The simplest effect is that the maga falls unconscious until she emerges from the Twilight. This is most common with low Warping scores. Magae with moderate Warping Scores often seem to resist Twilight, but act without real initiative. They are easily led while in this state, and have no memory of their actions when the Twilight finishes. Magae with high Warping Scores sometimes disappear physically into the Twilight Void. If they do so, their bodies reappear in the same place, near enough, when they come out of Twilight.

If the maga's body remains in the real world while she is in Twilight, it is completely immune to magic, mundane damage, aging, and hunger. In many ways it seems to be outside the world although it still appears within it. A maga's body is also unable to perform magic while she is in Twilight.

While these are the most common effects, others have been observed. Bjornaer often take the form of their heartbeasts, and Flambeau magi have been known to turn into large fires which burn without fuel.

Effects of Twilight

Every Twilight experience marks the maga. The strength of the mark is random. Roll a simple die. The maga gains that many Warping Points, in addition to the points that triggered the Twilight.

If the maga comprehended the Twilight, the effects are good.

Twilight Scar: Something minor and magical, and also neutral or beneficial. For example, the area around the maga always smells faintly and pleasantly of roses, the maga's eyes glitter with many colors, the maga walks a fraction of an inch above any surface. In the case of a maga who wants to keep her magic inconspicuous, the effect may not be obviously magical: people around her become slightly more cheerful, insects don't bite her, and so on.

In addition, the storyguide should pick one of the following effects:

Increased Knowledge: A number of experience points in an Art, Magic Theory, or Enigmatic Wisdom, equal to twice the number of Warping Points gained.

New Hermetic or Supernatural Virtue: Minor (if between 7 and 10 Warping Points, inclusive), or major (if more than ten Warping Points). Virtues cannot be gained if the maga gains fewer than seven Warping Points.

New Spell: The maga knows a new Formulaic or Ritual spell, with a magnitude equal to the number of Warping Points gained. This spell is chosen by the storyguide, and the maga need not be able to cast it. She may write a Lab Text about it as normal.

If the maga failed to comprehend the Twilight, the effects are bad.

Twilight Scar: Something minor, magical, and annoying. For example, the area around the maga smells faintly of sulfur, the maga's touch stains skin black (it washes off, with effort), the maga's footprints create myriads of fine cracks in any surface. At the storyguide's discretion, a maga who tries to keep her magic inconspicuous might get a scar she can hide. For example, the smell of iron makes her feel nauseous, or insects always bite her given the chance.

In addition, the storyguide should pick one of the following effects:

Lost Knowledge: Lose two experience points for every Warping Point gained in an Art, Magic Theory, or Enigmatic Wisdom. This cannot reduce the score below zero.

New Hermetic or Supernatural Flaw: Minor (if between 7 and 10 Warping Points, inclusive) or major (if 10 Warping Points or above). The maga can only gain a Flaw if she gains at least seven Warping Points.

Lost Spells: The maga loses the knowledge of spells, chosen by the storyguide, with magnitudes totaling the number of Warping Points gained.

Twilight Example

Darius of Flambeau, played by Niall, botches a spell while hunting a Renounced magus. There are two zeroes on the botch dice, so he gains 2 Warping Points, and must check for Twilight. Darius has a Warping Score of 6, and his enemy is not immediately present, so he chooses to try to resist the Twilight.

As a member of House Flambeau, Darius does not have an Enigmatic Wisdom score, so that doesn't affect anything.

Darius has a Stamina of 0, Concentration 3, and a Vim bonus of 2. He thus gets +5 to his roll to resist the Twilight, and Niall rolls a six on the stress die, for a total of 11. Not bad, but not great.

The Ease Factor is 6 (for his Warping Score) +2 (the number of points gained) + 4 (for the local Faerie aura, a major contributor to the botch in the first place), or 12 + a stress die, no botch. The storyguide doesn't bother rolling; even if he rolls a zero Darius has failed to resist and will enter Twilight.

When it comes to comprehending the Twilight, Darius gets his Intelligence, +3, plus a stress die.

The Twilight has a base of 6, Darius's Warping Score, plus a stress die. Niall rolls a 7, but the storyguide rolls a 5. Darius has a total of 10, and the Twilight has a total of 11. Darius has failed to comprehend it.

The comprehension roll simply failed, so Darius spends the base time in Twilight, and has a bad experience. At a Warping Score of 6, the base time is one season.

The storyguide rules that Darius feels his magic destroying his body and mind from the inside. He can't tell how long it takes, although he is fully aware of every step of the process, and as the last trace of his awareness is about to vanish, he comes out of the Twilight. To the outside world, Darius's body appeared to dry up and decay to dust over the course of a few seconds. At the end of a season, Darius reappears, and finds that two of the covenant grogs have been camping here to see whether he was coming back from Twilight.

The simple die for additional Warping Points is a one, so Darius gains three Warping Points in total. He loses six experience points in Corpus, two for each of the three Warping Points he gained. He didn't gain enough Warping Points to gain a Flaw. He also gains a Twilight Scar, and the storyguide rules that any dead meat Darius is touching looks, tastes, and smells rotten, although the effect passes when he releases it, and the meat is actually perfectly good. It looks like Darius will be becoming a vegetarian.

Certamen

Certamen (Care-TAH-men, Latin for "duel") is the ceremony by which two magi conduct a magical duel. It serves as a nonlethal way for one magus to establish dominance and precedence over another, and has formal restrictions to keep it from disrupting the unity of the Order.

The most important is that certamen cannot be used to over-rule a Tribunal, require a violation of the Code, or require a magus to overlook a violation of the Code. Beyond that, however, certamen can be used to settle any dispute, and the result of the certamen is binding.

One need not accept a challenge to certamen, but that is the same as conceding defeat. You may challenge anyone to certamen over a certain issue once, but the Peripheral Code prohibits you from challenging the same person again over that issue unless he challenges you in the meantime. If another issue comes up, you may challenge him again. Bullying magi with certamen is a Low Crime in almost all Tribunals. Certamen is solely an institution of the Order of Hermes; non-Hermetic wizards do not have the ability to participate in the ceremony, as it relies heavily on the Hermetic Arts.

Both participants specify in advance what the other magus will do, or refrain from doing, if he loses. The two requirements are expected to be symmetrical, and Tribunals do over-ride the results on asymmetric certamens. This gives magi some motivation not to bully with certamen; even the greatest archmage can botch.

To engage in certamen, you and the other magus must agree on one Form and Technique combination you will both use. By tradition, the aggressor in the duel chooses the Technique and the defender chooses the Form, and it is considered good form to go along with this choice. However, each magus may veto the other magus's first choice. If he does so, he must accept the second option.

Once the Technique and Form are chosen, you and your opponent concentrate for a moment, both entering trances. While entranced, competing magi have no defense against physical attacks. Each becomes attuned to the magical forces surrounding them, shaping them into phantasms representing the Technique and Form of the duel. If the Technique and Form are Muto and Animal, the phantasms might be two animals, one controlled by each magus. During the course of the duel, each animal changes into various other animals in an effort to defeat the other. A Creo Ignem contest could consist of two fiery beings fighting. In an Intellego Aquam contest it might appear that the combatants are in hazy water, each trying to reach some goal. The illusionary battle is a representation of the more subtle magical battle which affects the minds of the combatants.

Mechanical resolution of certamen is based on six totals.

**Initiative Total: Quickness + Finesse + Stress Die**

**Attack Total: Presence + Technique or Form + Stress Die**

**Defense Total: Perception + Form or Technique + Stress Die**

**Attack Advantage: Attack Total - Defense Total (if Attack Total is higher)**

**Weakening Total: Intelligence + Penetration + Attack Advantage**

**Resistance Total: Stamina + Parma Magica**

Initiative is rolled only once, at the beginning of the duel. This initiative is the same as combat initiative (see page @@), and if a certamen is taking place during combat each magus acts at the point in the sequence determined by his initiative total.

On his action, a magus rolls a stress die to generate an Attack Total. His opponent rolls a stress die to generate a Defense Total. Unlike initiative, the dice for attack and defense are rolled every round. If the Defense Total equals or exceeds the Attack Total, the attack does no damage. If the Attack Total exceeds the Defense Total, the amount by which it does so is the Attack Advantage.

Each magus must use both the Technique and the Form in each round of certamen, using one for Attack and the other for Defense. The two magi may use different Arts from each other for Attack or Defense, and may change which Art they apply to which total from round to round.

Subtract the defender's Resistance Total from the Weakening Total. For every five points or fraction left over, the defender loses a Fatigue level. Note that the magus's Parma Magica score is added to the Resistance Total; it is not multiplied by five as it is for magic resistance.

**Weakening Total - Resistance Total Fatigue Levels Lost**

0 None

1–5 1

6–10 2

11–15 3

16–20 4

21–25 5

26–30 6

etc.

Certamen itself never causes wounds, merely exhaustion. If you lose more Fatigue levels than you have, you spend one more hour unconscious for every additional level lost.

You can use raw vis at any time during certamen, even if your opponent doesn't use it or doesn't expect its use. For every pawn you expend, add 2 to your Attack Total or Defense Total for one round only. Raw vis used must be attuned to the Art used for Attack or Defense in the duel. The number of pawns you can use in one round is limited to your score in the Form or Technique the vis is attuned to.

All members of House Tremere have a Minor Magical Focus with Certamen. This means that they always double the lower of the Technique and Form when engaged in certamen. Other Magical Foci do not apply.

There are three ways to win certamen. The first involves wearing your opponent down until he falls unconscious. When this happens, the victor is entitled to cast a single spell at the loser. This spell, which must be of the same Technique and Form as the contest, circumvents the loser's Parma Magica (though the loser still gets Magic Resistance based on the Form of the spell). In most certamen contests, this "free" spell is unnecessary, because your opponent's collapse already designates your victory. However, some duelists use it anyway to intimidate and embarrass those who fight them. This free spell can be used to harm your fallen opponent, but remember, certamen is intended to be a harmless way to resolve disputes, and the winner is still bound by the Hermetic Code.

The second way to win certamen is by surrender. If your opponent realizes he is outmatched, or wants to walk away from the duel, he can concede the contest. Such a submission means that the loser is still capable of defending himself, so he has full Parma Magica and Magic Resistance against any final spell cast at him.

The third way to win certamen is to maintain concentration in the face of distraction when your opponent does not. Concentration rolls are not necessitated by the loss of Fatigue levels during certamen. Sometimes, however, conditions surrounding the duel necessitate that the duelists make Concentration rolls. If one of the duelists fails a Concentration roll, the fight ends. The duelist's loss of concentration causes his phantasm to disappear, indicating the opponent's victory. A victor through loss of concentration does not get a free spell.

Loss of concentration, however, does not necessarily mean that certamen is over and that a victor is decided. If the victor under these circumstances refuses the honor, and the combatant who lost concentration agrees, the battle may resume until a clear victor emerges. A magus might refuse a victory by loss of concentration for reasons of honor, or because he intends to do more harm.

Certamen Example

Moratamis of Guernicus harbors suspicions about what Carolus of Tytalus gets up to at night. She asks him to tell her what he is doing, and he refuses. She doesn't have enough for an official Quaesitorial investigation, so she challenges him to certamen, demanding that he tell her what he has done if he loses. Carolus agrees, with the condition that Moratamis will not ask him about his activities again unless she is on official Quaesitorial business. (He has to add the condition, although he would prefer not to, or else the Tribunal is unlikely to uphold a result in his favor.) Carolus suspects he will lose, as Moratamis is older and thus more powerful.

Moratamis's Arts are: Cr 1, In 12, Mu 1, Pe 7, Re 8; An 5, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 5, He 0, Ig 0, Im 10, Me 13, Te 0, Vi 5

Her Characteristics are: Int +2, Per +3, Pre +2, Com +1, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex –2, Qik –1

Her relevant Abilities are: Finesse 2, Parma Magica 5, Penetration 3.

Carolus's Arts are: Cr 2, In 0, Mu 5, Pe 10, Re 7; An 3, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 5, He 0, Ig 0, Im 10, Me 7, Te 6, Vi 4

His Characteristics are: Int +2, Per –1, Pre –1, Com –1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +4, Qik 0

His relevant Abilities are: Finesse 2, Parma Magica 3, Penetration 1.

Moratamis challenged, so she picks the Technique. She is fairly sure that the only Technique she is much better at is Intellego, and she's also sure that Carolus knows this too. She thinks that her scores in Rego and Creo are fairly balanced with Carolus's, though. She knows that, if she proposes Intellego first, Carolus will veto it. On the other hand, if she proposes Rego first, Carolus might have other reasons to veto that, and thus let her use Intellego. Thus, she proposes Rego.

Carolus accepts, knowing full well that he'll be stuck with Intellego if he doesn't. For the Form, he proposes Imaginem. He knows that Moratamis studies that, but also that he has a reputation as a bit of an Imaginem specialist. He hopes that she'll think he thinks he has an advantage she doesn't know about. It works; Moratamis vetoes his first choice. Carolus then settles on Terram, where he is fairly sure he is better.

The two now have the following statistics:

Moratamis: Initiative: +1 (Qik –1 + Finesse 2), Attack: +10 (Rego: Rego 8 + Pre +2) or +2 (Terram: Terram 0 + Pre +2), Defense +11 (Rego: Rego 8 + Per +3) or +3 (Terram: Terram 0 + Per +3), Weakening +5 (Int +2 + Penetration 3), Resistance +6 (Sta +1 + Parma Magica 5)

Carolus: Initiative: +2 (Qik 0 + Finesse 2), Attack +6 (Rego: Rego 7 + Pre –1) or +5 (Terram: Terram 6 + Pre –1), Defense +6 (Rego: Rego 7 + Per –1) or +5 (Terram: Terram 6 + Per –1), Weakening +3 (Int +2 + Penetration 1), Resistance +4 (Sta +1 + Parma Magica 3)

The phantasms for the contest are the stones of the floor under their feet, which try to rise up and engulf them.

The two roll Initiative. Moratamis rolls a 2, for a total of 3, and Carolus rolls a 5, for a total of 7. Carolus acts first.

On the first round, Carolus chooses to put Rego into attack and Terram into defense, while Moratamis chooses to defend with Rego and attack with Terram. Carolus attacks first, and rolls a 12 (lucky!), for an Attack Total of 18. Moratamis rolls a 7, for a Defense Total of 18. On a dead heat, the defender wins, and Carolus cannot get through. Then Moratamis attacks. She rolls a 5, for a total of 7, while Carolus rolls a 2, also for a total of 7. Another dead heat, so nothing happens. The stones jump around a bit, but nothing happens.

On the next round, Moratamis switches her Arts, in the hope of breaking through Carolus's defenses. Carolus still attacks first, and rolls a 10, for an Attack Total of 16. Moratamis rolls a zero, but doesn't botch, for a Defense Total of 3. Carolus has an Attack Advantage of 13. This adds to his Weakening Score of +3, for a Weakening Total of 16. Moratamis subtracts her Resistance of 6, so the final damage is 10. Moratamis thus loses two Fatigue levels, giving her a –1 penalty on Attack and Defense.

On her attack, Moratamis rolls a 2, for an Attack Total of 11, including the –1 penalty. Carolus rolls a 6, for a Defense Total of 11. Thanks to having already weakened Moratamis, he beats off the attack. The stones have climbed up to around Moratamis's knees.

Moratamis decides that her switch of strategy was a mistake, and switches back. Carolus rolls a 20 (lucky again!) for an Attack Total of 26. Moratamis rolls an 8, for a Defense Total of 18. Carolus has an Attack Advantage of 8, which translates into a single Fatigue level lost. Moratamis now has a –3 penalty to Attack and Defense.

She rolls a 7, which gives her an Attack Total of 6. Carolus rolls a 4, for a Defense Total of 9, easily safe.

Moratamis is now hoping for a lucky break, and Carolus only rolls a 6, for an Attack Total of 12. Moratamis rolls a 6, for a Defense Total of 14, including the penalty. She is safe this round. For her counterattack, she rolls a 5, for an Attack Total of 4. Carolus rolls a zero, but doesn't botch, and still has a Defense Total of 5. He is safe, and the stones are swarming up around Moratamis's waist.

The next round remains evenly balanced, neither magus managing to weaken the other. In the following round, Carolus rolls a 9, for an Attack Total of 15, while Moratamis only manages a 4, for a Defense Total of 12. This gives Carolus a Weakening Total of 6, which Moratamis is just able to resist. Still, she feels it.and a few stones boil up to her chest for a moment. She rolls a 7 for her attack, for an Attack Total of 6. Carolus rolls a 6, for a Defense Total of 11, and easily blocks the thrust.

In the next round, Carolus rolls a 10, for a total of 16, while Moratamis rolls a 0, but doesn't botch, for a Defense Total of 8. This gives Carolus a final advantage of 2 points, enough to clip a further Fatigue level from Moratamis. Now that she has a penalty of –5 to Attack and Defense, she decides that she cannot win, and concedes the contest so that Carolus cannot cast a spell on her. Carolus goes off feeling that he wriggled out of that one quite nicely, and Moratamis turns her attention to other matters.

Mysteries

Mysteries are paths to greater magical power requiring sacrifices beyond the time for study. Many magi within the Order of Hermes pursue mysteries, and four of the Houses are Mystery Cults — organizations that teach a mystery. Extensive details on the mysteries of the Hermetic Houses are given in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults,* while *The Mysteries Revised Edition* gives extensive information on other mysteries found within the Order of Hermes. This section provides information about the outermost layer of the House mysteries, and one of the deeper mysteries for each House. Player characters in the Mystery Cult Houses are Initiated into the Outer Mystery as apprentices, but must seek Initiation into deeper mysteries in play. Rules for Mystery Initiation are given in the Long-Term Events chapter, on page @@.

Bjornaer — The Heartbeast

Bjornaer magi can take the form of a single mundane creature. This is usually an animal or bird, but it can be a plant. The heartbeast is always a living thing, and usually a noble creature. No known magus has had an earthworm heartbeast, for example. A maga's heartbeast displays a central aspect of her nature, so that her personality, even in human form, will resemble that of the creature. Initiates of the Bjornaer mystery gain the Ability Heartbeast. This Ability cannot be gained by any character who has not been Initiated into the mystery. For Initiates of the Outer Mystery, the Heartbeast Ability is only used when something tries to stop the magus changing forms. In that case, a roll of Stamina + Heartbeast against an Ease Factor set by the storyguide allows the character to change anyway.

A Bjornaer maga can only change into one kind of animal, and that kind cannot be altered by Hermetic magic. The transformed Bjornaer can be changed, by Muto Animal magic, for example, but the kind of animal that her heartbeast is cannot be changed. A Bjornaer maga really is her heartbeast, and so remaining in that form does not count as being under an active mystical effect (see Warping, page @@). Of course, she is really human as well, so remaining human does not cause Warping either. Hermetic magic is unable to tell whether an animal is actually a Bjornaer, and the same applies to most other kinds of magic. (This assumes that the maga is trying to hide her nature, of course.) As a result, a Bjornaer in animal form is affected by Animal spells, not Corpus or Mentem spells. Spells already in effect before the transformation remain in effect, however.

Bjornaer magi can cast spells while in the form of their heartbeast, but they cannot speak or make the appropriate gestures, and thus normally take a –15 penalty.

The transformation takes only a moment, and affects only the maga. None of her possessions are transformed. A Bjornaer who has been physically changed by magic may try to assume her normal form or her heartbeast form. She must roll Stamina + Heartbeast against an Ease Factor set by the storyguide. As a rule of thumb, 3 + the magnitude of the transforming magic is a reasonable number. If she does resume one of her natural forms, the other magic is dispelled.

Bjornaer magi do not treat physical transformations as major magical effects for the purposes of gaining Warping Points. However, a magical transformation which is maintained over time will grant one Warping Point per year, as it is still a continuing mystical effect.

Finally, Bjornaer magi cannot bind familiars. The reasons for this are debated, but the fact is uncontroversial.

Ringing the Changes

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

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

Those who have an innate supernatural power to change shape (represented by Virtues or Flaws such as Shapeshifter and Lycanthrope) only invoke a magical effect at the moment of transformation. Thus the shapechange is not an active effect all the time that character is in animal form. Consequentially, Penetration is not required for mundane attacks, nor does the creature radiate magic or suffer warping due to the transformation. However, this type of shapechanger is still a human in an animal shape, and so Corpus and Mentem magics are effective, as are Animal spells. An exception is the lycanthrope, who do not retain his human mind when transformed, and therefore cannot be affected by Mentem spells, although Corpus spells still work.

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

Secret Name (Minor House Mystery)

This mystery permanently severs the sympathetic resonances of the magus's name, and forges them anew with a name known only to the Mystagogue and the Initiate. All Arcane Connections to the magus which date from before the ritual immediately expire upon its completion, and all Sympathetic Connections become invalid. The magus produces new Arcane Connections after the ritual has taken place, but no Sympathetic Connection will ever work against him again, even if created after the ritual. The Mystagogue provides a secret name which allows the magus to work magic upon himself; without this he would not be able to use the Personal Range. However, anyone knowing the secret name — such as the Mystagogue, or wizards who know the mystery of Synthemata Magic (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*) — need not subtract the spell level from the Penetration total of any spells cast against the target, much like the Weak Magic Resistance Flaw. Clan Ilfetu considers these secret names to be a sacred trust, and has never been suspected of misusing them.

The Initiate chooses a new public name as well as receiving the secret one. There is inevitably a time of confusion while sodales get used to referring to the magus by his new public name, but this is part of the symbolic sacrifice of this Mystery. This Mystery can benefit any person (Gifted or not) who possesses Magic Resistance, and those few magi outside the House who learn of it occasionally ask the House to perform it on their behalf.

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

**Initiation of Secret Name**

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

**Script Bonus**: +8

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

Criamon — The Enigma

No-one outside House Criamon really understands what their mystery is about. All Criamon magi have a score of one in the Ability Enigmatic Wisdom, and may place experience points in it at character creation. This Ability assists with the comprehension of Wizard's Twilight, but it also makes the experience more likely (see page @@). Characters may not learn Enigmatic Wisdom without being initiated into the mystery of the Enigma.

**Enigmatic Wisdom:** A far-reaching perception of strange and baffling phenomena that helps you understand their nature, though you may seem strange or even ludicrous to the uninitiated. Your score in this Ability is added to rolls to interpret dreams and riddles, and to understand phantasms and arcane or mysterious situations. Thanks to this Ability, Criamon magi go into Wizard's Twilight (see page @@) more often, but survive it better than most. Specialties: interpreting signs, explaining the Enigma, Twilight.

As described earlier, the mysteries of House Criamon are divided into several Paths. The earliest step on the Path of the Body is described here, and the rest of the major Paths are described in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults.*

The Path of the Body

The Path of the Body focuses on the human form. Some Criamon magi believe that the human body and the universe reflect each other structurally, so that knowing the body illuminates the prison of time. Others enhance the body, as a tool, and as a vehicle for escape from the universe. The Criamon Path of the Body is in many ways the inverse of Hermetic alchemy, which assumes the universe is perfect and a magus who reflects it perfectly will become immortal. Criamon magi assume that the universe, like each body, is inevitably decaying.

An unusually large proportion of the Primi of the House followed this Path. The followers of the Path of the Body tend toward practical, useful insights. Primi who have achieved the Microcosmic Station on this path are active administrators under whom the House co-ordinates its ventures effectively.

The Avenue of Subduing the Meat and the Station of the Perfect Tool

Several ritual investitures assist magi to find the first Station of the Body, each descended from a different tradition of mystics adopted into the early House. Those following this Avenue develop control over their body's desires and distractions, usually through painful mortifications, or fatiguing exertions, that last a year. A handful of magi have followed this avenue by being transformed into plants for a year. The Avenue ends with a guide acting as midwife for a symbolic rebirth.

At the first Station of the Path of the Body, the magus realizes that the body is the perfect tool for Hermetic magic, because it is adapted for magic, and magic, in turn, is adapted for it. The magus's close inspection of the body allows the development of Minor Potency in an aspect of the Art of Corpus. Magi who have found this Station see the intrinsic links between the body and the magical energies it wields, and so can use their understanding of magical events to minister to the body. They may use their Enigmatic Wisdom score in place of Chirurgy and Medicine in rolls. They also know, instinctively, if their body is ill, and where, although they may not know the appropriate treatment.

Initiates of this station are bound by the lifestyle of the House (Vow) and find it more difficult to use their magic when their body is ill (Deleterious Circumstances). Some illnesses do not block certain mystical effects: the usual example given is that fevers do not restrict Ignem spells, because they are caused by a surplus of fiery humors. Wounds do not prevent magic use, of themselves, but open the body to infections, which may.

**Initiation of The Avenue of Subduing the Meat, which reaches the Station of the Perfect Tool**

**Ease Factor:** 21, as Major Virtue (Minor Potency in an aspect of Corpus, may use Enigmatic Wisdom in lieu of Medicine and Chirurgy.)

**Script Bonus:** +15:

**Script Details:** Major Ordeal, constructed of three minor flaws (Vow – to not pollute the body and use it aptly, Deleterious Circumstances – while ill, Disfigured – stigmata) +9, Sympathetic Bonus (a complete year cycle as a plant, or similar) +3, Special time and place (Symbolic rebirth) +3.

Merinita — Faerie Magic

A character may not be Initiated into this mystery unless she has been touched by the fay.

A character is touched by the fay if the powers of faerie have interfered with her life in a substantial fashion. Anyone with a Virtue or Flaw related to the fay qualifies, as does anyone who has gained a Warping Point from a faerie source. Merinita characters without a faerie Virtue or Flaw start with one Warping Point, caused by their parens to qualify them for the mystery.

Characters initiated into Faerie Magic are attuned to both Magical and Faerie auras, and so gain Warping Points from neither. Further, they gain full benefit from both kinds of aura, and do not gain additional botch dice from either. Magic cast by these magi counts as a fay power, so anyone who gains a Warping Point from one of their spells can be initiated into the Mystery.

Initiates of the Outer Mystery gain access to special Ranges, Durations, and Targets. They may use these with Spontaneous, Ritual, and Formulaic magic, although some of them require Ritual magic. Spells created using these parameters can only be learned by characters with Faerie Magic.

**Road** (Range)**:** The maga may target anyone or anything on the same road or path as her. The identity of roads and paths is not always clear, and the troupe must decide if things are difficult. Two paths may cross each other, but two paths may not become one. In that case, either one path joins the second, or the junction is actually the joining of three paths. The maga need not be able to see her target, but she must be able to sense it somehow, unless the spell is an Intellego effect intended to find out if something is there.

People are only on a road if they are actually between the edges of the path, at least partially. Buildings are on a road if the primary access to the building is from that road. Plants and small objects must be between the edges of the path.

For the purposes of spell level calculation, Road is the same level of range as Voice.

**Bargain** (Duration): A spell with Bargain duration can only be cast on someone who has just concluded a bargain or agreement with the maga. The maga's Penetration total is doubled, and if the spell Penetrates the target's Magic Resistance, nothing happens unless the target breaks the bargain. If he does, the spell takes effect without the need to bypass Magic Resistance again. Bargain spells have a second duration which determines how long the spell lasts after it takes effect. To calculate the level of a Bargain spell, calculate the level of the spell that takes effect when the bargain is broken, and add three magnitudes. The spell can only enforce a bargain for a maximum of a Year.

**Fire** (Duration): Spells with this duration can only be cast on fires, and they last until the fire targeted goes out. Because the fire is the target, the form of the spell must be Ignem or Imaginem. It is possible that the spell could persist indefinitely if the fire is carefully maintained. Fire is the same level of duration as Moon.

**Until (Condition)** (Duration): The spell lasts until some condition is met, such as speaking the name of God, or some item is touched with iron, or until a word in a list is said out of place (the days of the week are spoken out of order, for example). Until (Condition) is the same level of duration as Year, and also requires a Ritual spell. Until (Condition) spells cannot normally be dispelled by magic unless that is part of the condition. The ending condition must be specified when the spell is cast. Spells with this duration expire if the caster passes into Twilight, even temporarily, and also expire when the caster or primary target dies.

**Year + 1** (Duration): The spell lasts for a year and a day. This is the same level of duration as Year, and also requires a ritual, but the duration is determined by the actual time that passes, rather than by the turning of the seasons; the spell ends at the same time of day as when it was cast, a year and a day later. Year + 1 spells can be dispelled according to the normal rules.

**Bloodline** (Target): A bloodline is all the people descended by blood from a given person, the immediate target. Only the immediate target need be within the spell's range, but all members of the bloodline are affected immediately. Spouses do not count as part of the bloodline. The spell applies to all members of the bloodline born during its duration, as well as those already living when it is cast. As with all spells that target multiple people, every individual gets Magic Resistance, if applicable. The category is the same level as Structure. It is possible to design a spell with Bloodline target so that it does not warp any members of a particular bloodline (see Warping, page @@).

**Faerie Magic**

Faerie Magic is an Arcane Ability learned after Merinitae Initiate the Outer Mystery of Faerie Magic, which represents how their magic differs from normal Hermetic magic. This includes applying faerie thinking to arcane activities, usually by drawing out sympathetic connections between magical and mundane things.

These mystic relationships may be integrated into casting tools that Merinitae often use with their spells, called **charms** (see sidebar). These are symbolic representations designed to highlight a particular quality of the target that always involve some sort of artistic ability. They may be used to increase Penetration, but are also used with many of the Inner Mysteries to produce other interesting effects.

Merinitae can integrate the principles of charms into their laboratory activities, making use of their knowledge of symbols associated with the Faerie and Magic realms in their work, and this is represented by three additional effects of the Faerie Magic Ability:

Faerie Magic may be substituted for Magic Theory when experimenting, when using faerie vis, or when practicing magic associated with the Faerie realm.

The amount of vis you can use in a single season is equal to your (Magic Theory + Faerie Magic) x 2, so long as all of it is faerie vis.

Add your score in Faerie Magic to the number of botch dice you roll when taking advantage of the two benefits given above, but the effects of these additional dice tend to be more annoying than dangerous; it takes two of these botches to produce the negative effects of a normal botch die. The character still gains a Warping Point for each 0 rolled on these extra dice, though they do not force you to check for Twilight. (This is because integrating faerie power into magic warps the character more quickly, but does not increase her chances of being overcome by it.) Two or more botches on the standard botch dice require a check for Twilight as normal, however.

Faerie Magic might also represent the union of Faerie Lore and Magic Lore, the knowledge of similarities between the two realms. Often this combination can inspire surprising insights, especially when dealing with entities traditionally associated with both realms, like pagan gods, ghosts, and chimerae. It is also an appropriate Ability to use when trying to distinguish between Magic and Faerie, as it can address differences between the two realms.

**Specialties:** faerie vis, experimenting, inventing spells, charms, lore (Arcane)

Charms

Charms are casting aids that identify a specific magical effect using sympathetic magic, which all magi who study Faerie Magic learn how to make. They can be physical objects, like sculptures or drawings; or performances, like songs or stories; or even arcane pronouncements or ceremonies, like prophecy or naming.

A **temporary charm** takes about ten minutes to design, and must be used right away, typically with Spontaneous magic. More lasting charms, or **permanent charms**, take several hours, and must involve a special object that the maga wields when she activates the charm, incorporating the object into the effect; if this object is damaged, the charm must be remade.

A maga who has a score in Faerie Magic and an Arcane Connection to her target may use a charm as a sympathetic representation, increasing her Penetration Multiplier by two. This requires a roll when the charm is made: composing a song might use Communication + Music, while a drawing might be Dexterity + Craft. The maga produces an effective charm on a roll of 6+, or 9+ for a permanent charm. Other magi can do this without Faerie Magic, but it takes them longer and they need a higher total on the roll (see Sympathetic Connections, earlier).

Temporary charms may only be used once, as they always include unique properties associated with the effect, though a permanent charm associated with a special object may be used whenever it is applicable. A maga may prepare any number of charms in advance, but may only incorporate one charm into a given spell in this way.

Illusion Mysteries

These Mysteries deal with illusions and images, including aspects of the physical world that faeries can see but most humans cannot. These include unusual durations for Faerie Magic spells that can last nearly forever.

Mystery Cult: The Followers of Pendule

Pendule is regarded as something of a legend within the Order; no one knows how much of his tale is true and how much is fanciful. According to the stories, the Provençal wizard was discovered by Flambeau and refused when given the choice to "join or die." He was powerful enough to evade the fiery Founder and his followers who sought to destroy him, and many comedic tales depicting Pendule as a trickster defeating the mighty and blustery Flambeau with wit and illusions have become part of Hermetic lore.

Eventually, it seems, Pendule tired of these games and adopted four Hermetic magi as his followers. No one knows exactly why he did this; perhaps he simply wanted to share his secrets with others before he died, or perhaps he desired to learn Magic Theory from them. Two of these followers were from House Merinita, and having Initiated Faerie Magic from Quendalon they were able to master the illusion Mysteries Pendule taught — the others could not comprehend them. Afterwards, these Merinitae continued to teach the secrets to their followers as part of a special House lineage.

Pendule's magic was very sensual and personal, and he especially believed in the use of color and sound in his spells. He expected magic to transform the wielder, rather than yield submissively to him, and while he was oddly sensitive to the passage of time, he seemed to have great difficulty with standard Hermetic durations, preferring spells that relied upon strange conditions or that triggered after being cast. He also practiced other Mysteries which his Merinita followers did not master, and other lineages dedicated to his magic still exist in other Houses and cults within (and perhaps without) the Order.

Followers of Pendule usually Initiate Spell Timing and Glamour (described in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*) from their masters. Imaginem is almost always their primary Art. A common weakness in the lineage is iron — both of the Merinitae who studied Pendule's secrets were especially susceptible to it — and Pendule Merinitae often learn Spell Improvisation or a Major Magical Focus in counterspells.

Pendule quietly succumbed to death in 854, but not before imparting one last magical secret to each of his followers. To maintain this tradition, the Inner Mystery of Perpetuity is usually kept from a maga until her master is dying, Initiated as a final lesson from teacher to student.

**Sample Followers of Pendule Initiation: Spell Timing**

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

**Script Bonus:** +12

**Script Details:** The Initiate undergoes a ceremony wherein she must go an entire day and night without sleeping, casting a non-Fatiguing Imaginem spell every round to count how many individual moments pass (+3). After this rite she gains three Minor Flaws to represent how her magic becomes more illusionary, and her way of thinking about time becomes more rigid: Harmless Magic (+3), Poor Memory (faces) (+3), and a Social Handicap (+3). Because of this ordeal, the Initiate is said to begin to more closely resemble Pendule, and many of his followers adopt wild, multicolored clothing, dye their hair, or radically alter their physical appearance soon after their Initiation.

Spell Timing (Minor Illusion Mystery)

This Mystery gives a maga access to several new Durations for her spells. Only those who have Initiated this Mystery may cast or invent spells and effects that use them.

Three of these new durations allow the maga to cast the spell but keep it dormant, "holding" it for a specified length of time. The effect and its Penetration are evaluated when it is released, as if she had just cast the spell. If the parameters are no longer applicable (the target has moved out of range, for example, or dramatically changed size), the spell has no effect.

**Held (Duration):** This duration is the same level as Concentration. The maga may cast the spell as normal, but the effect is delayed for as long as she concentrates. When she releases it, treat it as if cast with Momentary duration.

**Midday/Midnight (Duration):** This duration is equivalent to Sun, but does not manifest until dawn, dusk, noon, or midnight. It then lasts until the next dawn, dusk, noon, or midnight. For example, a spell cast just after dawn would not manifest until noon, and would then last until dusk.

**Season (Duration):** This duration is held until the start of the next equinox or solstice, and lasts only until the following equinox or solstice. It is the same level as Moon, but requires a ritual spell like Year.

Three other durations have conditions that must be built into the spell when it is designed, similar to the Until (Condition) Duration.

**While (Condition) (Duration):** The target must perform some activity, such as a musical performance or reading a book, or fulfill some common and temporary physical condition, such as sleeping or being drunk. As long as that condition lasts, the spell remains in effect. This is the same level as Concentration.

**Not (Condition) (Duration):** The spell lasts for as long as the target does *not* fulfill some common physical condition, such as sleeping or speaking. It is equivalent in level to Sun duration, but cannot last longer than a month.

**If (Condition) (Duration):** This effect triggers if the target fulfills a specific condition. It has an additional Duration which determines how long the triggered spell lasts after it takes effect. To determine the level, you should add four magnitudes to the level calculated based on the Duration that the spell has when it takes effect, and it must be cast as a ritual spell. The spell expires without triggering if the caster passes into Twilight, even temporarily, if the caster dies, or if a year passes.

In addition, this Mystery allows the Merinita's spells to have **recurring** effects—she designs the spell so that from then on it always triggers in response to an environmental or physical condition, increasing its level as described on the chart in the insert. The recurring spell must be cast as a ritual, and effects that require a ritual because of their unusual effects or non-Hermetic origins (not because of their level or spell parameters) cannot recur. For example, a ritual with Year duration can be made to recur, but a lasting effect like *Chirurgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo20) or a unique effect like *Breath of the Open Sky* (ReAu40) cannot.

Recurring spells may be given triggers, using the special (Condition) durations above. The cost for making them recur is based on how often they can be activated; if a daily-recurring effect is activated twice in one day, the second trigger will have no effect. Also, spells cannot stack; when a spell recurs, it cancels before starting again. This is not a noticeable interruption; as with an enchanted device, the transition usually appears constant.

Recurring Spells

Use the frequency that most closely matches how often the spell recurs, rounding up to the next greater magnitude. For example, a spell that recurs every ten minutes adds five magnitudes. Spells cannot recur more often than once per minute.

**Frequency** **Magnitudes**

minute +5

day +4

month +3

year +2

decade +1

Verditius — Verditius Magic

Verditius magi are initiated into the Outer Mystery of Verditius Magic, which allows them to incorporate craft abilities into their magic. To do this, the magus crafts the item from raw materials as part of the first season of enchanting it. For a talisman or standard invested device, this is the season in which it is opened for enchantment. For lesser enchanted items and charged items, this is the whole process. If crafting the item would normally take the magus a season or less, this does not increase the time required for the enchantment. If crafting the item would normally take more than a season, the process takes a whole number of seasons that is at least as long as the time it would normally take the magus to craft the item. For example, if it would normally take the magus four months to craft the item, then it takes him two seasons to craft and enchant it. No matter how long this takes, it only includes the first season of enchantment.

As part of this process, the magus may add details that enhance the Shape and Material bonus of the item. These details give an additional bonus to all the item's existing Shape and Material bonuses equal to the creating magus's Philosophiae score, for the purposes of enchantment. These bonuses apply in the season that the details are added, as well as in the future. Other uses of Shape and Material bonuses, such as the casting bonuses from a talisman, use the standard bonus. Other magi refer to these details as Verditius Runes, but they are far more complex than that suggests, and do not normally look like actual runes. Other magi get this bonus if they instill appropriate powers into an item created by a Verditius. The total bonus from Shape and Material and Verditius Runes is still limited by the magus's Magic Theory score.

The magus uses the magic of the enchantment to shape the item. This does not require any Craft Ability, although most Verditius magi will use an Ability that they have, and the final form may be impossible to make by mundane means. For example, a Verditius magus could set a gem in a wooden lattice so that the gem cannot be removed without breaking the wood, without having any breaks in the wood to get it in. The final form must be able to sustain itself by mundane means once created; in particular, it must be strong enough to bear its own weight. If the magus is not using Craft Ability and an Ability score is needed, use the magus's Finesse in place of Craft.

However, most Verditius do use mundane craft as part of this process. This is because a magus who does so may add his score in the relevant Craft Ability to all Lab Totals for enchanting that item, both in the first season and in the future. Thanks to his mystical link to the item, this bonus is always his current Craft Ability, even if it has improved since he crafted the item. Note that only one Craft Ability can be added to the Lab Total in a given season, even if the magus has more than one applicable to the item. The applicable Ability may, however, change over time — the magus should add his highest applicable Craft Ability. Other magi adding enchantments to an invested device do not get this bonus, even if they have the same Craft Ability as the creating magus, and even if they are members of House Verditius.

If the magus creates the enchanted item in this way, the number of pawns of vis needed to open the item for enchantment is reduced by the magus's Craft score, to a minimum of one pawn. The magus, or any other magus, may invest effects in the device as if he had paid the full, normal cost to open it.

A Verditius naturally reinforces Verditius Runes as part of the enchantment process, even when working on an item that has already been enchanted, and so if a Verditius working on an enchanted item has a higher Philosophiae score than the earlier Verditius enchanters, the Verditius Rune bonus increases. This also applies if a Verditius magus increases his Philosophiae score between seasons of enchantment.

Verditius magi need casting tools to cast Formulaic or Ritual spells. They make these themselves, in a form that appeals to them, and it only takes an hour or so to make a new one. However, if they lose or cannot reach their tools, they cannot cast their Formulaic spells. Spontaneous spells do not require casting tools, although Flaws hampering Spontaneous magic are very common among the Verditius.

Hubris

A magus's first Initiation into an Inner Mystery of House Verditius is always accompanied by an Ordeal that gives him the minor Flaw: Hubris. Every Verditius magus who seeks knowledge of the Inner Mysteries is plagued by this psychological shortcoming, the growth of exaggerated self-esteem. The magus realizes the worldly benefits he can reap from his magical creations, and his prideful image of himself blossoms. At first this is just a slight personality shift, but as the Verditius magus profits from his magical craft, his hubris grows. This trait, which beleaguered the founder, is inherent in the magic of the Inner Mysteries. In game terms, characters receive the Minor Personality Flaw: Hubris and the corresponding Personality Trait: Hubris 1.

Hubris is more than merely a Personality Trait. While it contains all the game aspects of a Personality Trait, it is also a measure of the degree that a character has succumbed to the curse of pride that plagued the founder. A propensity for pride is part and parcel of the Mysteries of House Verditius. The intrinsic magical link between Verditius' hubris and his arcane crafting caries through to his descendants. A Verditius magus's pride is mystically coupled with his Gift, and as his Hubris increases so does his ability to instill greater amounts of magic in items that are similarly connected to him. A Verditius magus can add his Hubris score to his Lab Totals for creating a talisman, enchanting casting tools (Minor House Inner Mystery), binding magical animals, making automata, and creating attuned items (Major House Inner Mysteries).

For role-playing purposes, the specific flavor of a magus' Hubris should be noted in parentheses after the Personality score. Hubris does not manifest in all magi exactly the same way. Some are overly proud, some arrogant, some pompous. Characters that already have the Minor Personality Flaw: Proud have their Hubris score automatically increased by +1, and those with the Major version of the Flaw increase their Hubris by +3.

Hubris increases over time, building like an Ability. Hubris cannot be deliberately changed by the player, unlike other Personality Traits. Specific situations grant Experience Points that are applied to a character's Hubris score. If a Verditius magus receives recognition, fame, money or vis for his magical efforts, his Hubris score increases. While a degree of pride is inevitable for every Verditius magus, a completely conceited nature is avoidable. Those wishing to keep their Hubris score low need merely avoid many of the behaviors that result in increasing that score.

**Experience Points Behavior**

1 Selling a charged item or an item of quality. Manufacturing a similar item for another person and receiving pay for your efforts (either money or vis).

1 Repairing or reforging an item for another for pay.

1 Selling or manufacturing for another a lesser enchanted device.

3 Selling or manufacturing for another a greater enchanted device.

6 Selling or manufacturing for another an attuned item.

1/magnitude of Might Selling an automaton.

1 Winning the apprentice category of the Contest (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults,* page 116).

3 Winning the journeymen category of the Contest.

6 Winning the master category of the Contest.

1 Learning a new minor House Inner Mystery.

3 Learning a new major House Inner Mystery.

1 Declaring a vendetta.

3 Winning a vendetta.

The higher a magus's Hubris score grows, the harder it is for him to resist situations that will further increase it. A magus with Hubris 4 will be quite tempted to continue to sell magical items, for example. If a character wishes to resist such temptations, in hopes of maintaining a low Hubris score, you can make opposed Personality Trait rolls. This assumes the character has a Personality Trait that she can uses against her Hubris score. She can also spend a Confidence Point to walk away from the situation.

Magi with Hubris scores of 6 and higher are extremely self-centered. These are the magi most prone to engage in vendettas with other Verditius magi, usually with those as self-centered as themselves. Resisting a declared vendetta is difficult. If the maga wishes to resist, you must make an opposed Personality Trait + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of your maga's Hubris score + her challenger's Hubris score. You may substitute her Intelligence if she does not have a Personality Trait that works opposite Hubris.

Demons and other Infernal agents are quite aware that Verditius magi are susceptible to the great sin of pride, and many lick their chops in anticipation as a maga advances through the Inner Mysteries. Some will offer seemingly innocuous assistance to young magi to propel them on their hubristic path: anonymous gifts of vis, coincidental deliveries of Verditius Cult Lore texts to copy, and accidental meetings with wealthy clients willing to pay large amounts for minor magical gewgaws.

Enchant Casting Tools – Minor House Mystery Virtue

Soon after Fenistour invented casting tools, allowing Verditius magi to cast Formulaic spells, her filii sought to develop a method of enchanting them, hoping to further compensate their brethren for their clumsiness at spell casting. Achieving their goal in the ninth century, Verditius magi began sharing these secrets, developing Scripts so that their fellows could be more easily Initiated into this Mystery. This is particularly useful for those adventurous Verditius magi who like casting spells outside of their laboratory. This is a very common Inner House Mystery among Verditius magi in the thirteenth century.

The magus may enchant his casting tools to mirror certain effects of mastered spells, as well as allowing casting bonuses when he uses them. This is a laboratory process, requiring a season spent working in a Hermetic laboratory. Each casting tool can only be enchanted once, even if it has more than one property, and the magus must be able to finish the enchantment in a single season as if he were creating a lesser enchanted device. Enchanted casting tools cannot be instilled with other magical powers, and cannot be used as a base for a lesser or greater enchanted item.

To enchant a casting tool compare the magus's Technique and Form Lab Total to the level of the spell that the casting tool is associated with. A casting tool is closely linked to the spell through the Verditius Mysteries, and so the magus may carve Verditius runes into the casting tool, adding his Philosophiae score to the Lab Total, even if the tool would not normally have a Shape or Material bonus for that spell. If the magus has a Craft Ability that could include making the tools, you may also add his Craft score. Because enchanted casting tools become permanent Arcane Connections to the magus, add his Hubris Personality score to the Lab Total. The magus also receives a bonus for knowing the spell in the first place, adding the magnitude of the spell to the Lab Total, much like the bonus received from knowing a similar spell (ArM5, page 101). The Lab Total must double the level of the spell plus any additional powers the magus wishes to instill.

**Enchant Casting Tools Lab Total: Technique + Form + Intelligence + Magic Theory + Aura Modifier + Philosophiae + Hubris + Magnitude of Known Spell + Craft (if applicable)**

The base effect level of the casting tool equals the level of the spell it is used for. The effect level increases based upon the additional effects the magus wishes to enchant it with. There is no limit to the number of effects he can add, as long as his Lab Total plus bonuses is double the final effect level.

**Effect level Increase Casting Tool Effect**

+2 Fast Casting (as a mastered spell).

+2 Multiple Casting (as a mastered spell) — this allows one additional spell, additional spells may be added for a +2 effect level increase each.

+2 Quiet Casting (as a mastered spell) — this can be taken twice to cast the spell silently.

+ x Increase spell casting roll by x.

+10 Summon casting tool — the casting tool appears in the magus's hand no matter where he stores it, although this is usually in his sanctum.

+10 Dismiss casting tool — the casting tool disappears from the magus's person, traveling back to a place chosen at the time of enchantment. An Arcane Connection to this place must be bound into the item, and so it is almost always the magus's sanctum.

Enchanting casting tools requires vis. The magus must spend one pawn of Technique or Form specific vis per 10 levels of the final effect level total, rounded up.

**Initiation of Enchant Casting Tools**

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

**Script Bonus**: +9

**Script Details**: The Mystagogue spends a season with the Initiate, creating casting tools one after another (+3). The Initiate must know the exact time and date that she was Initiated into the House's Outer Mystery. On an anniversary of that date, she ritualistically buries all her casting tools in a Magic regio (+3). If the Initiation is successful, the Initiate learns the Inner House Minor Mystery: Enchant Casting Tools. The buried casting tools are destroyed and the Initiate receives the Minor Flaw Hubris if this her first Initiation into an Inner Mystery, or Limited Magic Resistance with Vim if it is not (Ordeal +3).

Ex Miscellanea Traditions

House Ex Miscellanea is not at all unified, consisting of many different magical traditions. A large number are described in *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, including the Columbae, who brought the techniques of warding into Hermetic magic, and the Cult of Orpheus, which may be the heir to an ancient Greek mystery cult. This section provides details of three relatively simple traditions that you may choose for your maga, or you may create your own following the guidelines in the Characters chapter.

Beast Masters

This tradition commands magic which Hermetic Theory finds very hard: the summoning and control of wild creatures. Every apprentice of this tradition was abandoned by his master in areas of wilderness at a very young age, where he had to fend for himself. During this time he developed a particular affinity for a specific group of animals, which forever shapes his magic. Due to this unusual training, all Beast Masters also have the Virtues of Animal Ken and a Minor Magical Focus with a specific group of animals. They are never taught how to turn into animal form, or how to harm animals, which results in the Incompatible Arts Flaw (MuCo & PeAn). They must take at least one more Flaw to balance their Virtues, and then have only 8 points of Flaws available to them to buy another 8 points of Virtues.

**Major Non-Hermetic Virtue**: Summon Animals

**Minor Hermetic Virtue**: Inoffensive to Animals

**Major Hermetic Flaw**: Study Requirement

**Required Virtues and Flaws**: Animal Ken, Minor Magical Focus; Incompatible Arts.

Summon Animals

This Ability allows the character to summon mundane animals from potentially long distances away. To use this Ability, the character must be capable of making an audible call to the creatures he wishes to summon, and must be within one day's journey of a habitat where the required species are found. The number of animals which respond to his summons is determined by the score in the character’s Ability; see the table below. He must then make a Communication + Summon Animals roll against an Ease Factor of 9. If successful, the animals arrive within 1 hour of the character making the call, although exceeding the Ease Factor by 3 makes them come in 2 minutes, and exceeding it by 6 summons them in a single round.

The character cannot directly communicate with the animals unless he has another Ability which allows him to do so (such as Animal Ken), and they depart naturally as determined by the storyguide. Even if the character lacks the ability to communicate with the animals, they act as if friendly towards him, and if naturally aggressive, may fight to defend him.

Ability Score Number of animals arriving

1 1 animal of Size –2, or equivalent mass (2 of Size –3, 5 of Size –4, 10 of Size –5, 20 of Size –6, etc.)

2 2 animals of Size –2, or equivalent mass (1 of Size –1, 5 of Size –3, 10 of Size –4, 20 of Size –5, etc.)

3 5 animals of Size –2, or equivalent mass (1 of Size 0, 2 of Size –1, 10 of Size –3, 20 of Size –4, etc.)

4 10 animals of Size –2, or equivalent mass (1 of Size +1, 2 of Size 0, 5 of Size –1, 20 of Size –3, etc.)

5 20 animals of Size –2, or equivalent mass (1 of Size +2, 2 of Size +1, 5 of Size 0, 10 of Size –1, etc.)

**Specialities**: a particular type of animal (Supernatural)

Story seed: Animal Experimentation

This Ability can call animals quicker than they could possibly travel under their own speed, and therefore breaks the Limit of Arcane Connection. A magus interested in pursuing breakthroughs in Magic Theory might seek out a character with this Ability.

The Nemthengacha

The Nemthengacha (singular: Nemthenga) are a sect of Ex Miscellanea magi who have the ability to create animosity and dissent in their listeners. Their origins are clouded. Some claim the Irish poet/demigod Bricriu mac Carbada is the progenitor of the line, while others say that the Welsh hero Efnisien is the first of the breed. Asserting an even more grandiose foundation, some Ex Miscellanea say that their tradition descends from Loki, the multi-faceted and often malevolent Norse god. It is true that this tradition is only found in Celtic and Scandinavian sorcerers.

Nemthengacha, also known as "poison-tongues", "bitter-tongues", or "deceivers", were more frequent before the advent of Christianity. In pre-Christian society, Nemthengacha held a devastating reputation. In a society where loyalty and family bonds are everything, a Nemthenga's ability to turn one man against his allies was devastating. People avoided Nemthengacha, but since many lived among the tribe, they could not be entirely ignored and were placated as best as the tribe could manage. While no more anticlerical than any other Ex Miscellanea tradition, they suffered severely from interactions with Christian missionaries. Perhaps it was due to their overt presence. The unGifted Nemthengacha did not need to hide from their tribesmen, and several held prominent social positions as shamans, wise men, and king's champions. Their tradition ebbed, and practitioners retreated to remote parts of their lands.

In the thirteenth century, Gifted Nemthengacha have been systematically accepted into the Order of Hermes, although some unGifted Nemthengacha still remain, living in the far hinterlands of Mythic Europe. Though stretched, they never severed their connections to their clans, so that many are still related to members of a local tribe or kin group. Nor have they abandoned their connection to royal society, with many Nemthengacha still serving their local king.

Powers

Like every Ex Miscellanea character, a magus of the Nemthengacha tradition receives a free Major non-Hermetic Virtue, a compulsory Major Flaw, and a free Minor Hermetic Virtue. The Major Non-Hermetic Virtue is Embitterment, a new Major Supernatural Ability. Embitterment is similar to Entrancement (page @@), but the effects are more specific and potent. Due to this focus, Nemthengacha find it difficult to control other emotions in a target's mind, which spills over into other aspects of Hermetic magic. Each has the Major Hermetic Flaw: Deficient Technique Rego. Since Embitterment depends solely on the Nemthenga's voice, his magic is less dependent on gestures than other Hermetic magi. He receives the Minor Hermetic Virtue: Subtle Magic at no cost.

**Major Non-Hermetic Virtue:** Embitterment

**Minor Hermetic Virtue:** Subtle Magic

**Major Hermetic Flaw:** Deficient Technique (Rego)

Embitterment

Embitterment is a Major Supernatural Ability that allows the speaker to make a listener hostile to a target of the speaker's choice. This hostility can range from simple antagonism to murder. Through simple conversation, the speaker makes the listener dislike, resent, or hate a person formerly considered a friend. The conversation does not have to be long; a round is time enough for this effect to take place.

To embitter a target, the player states the exact specifications of how the target will act against the intended victim. He then rolls the character's Communication + Embitterment + a stress die and compares it to a variable Ease Factor, which depends on the level of aggression he wishes to instill, and the level of loyalty possessed between the target and the former ally. Since this is a Supernatural Ability, the roll always uses a stress die. The Embitterment power of the Nemthengacha is a Magic power for purposes of determining its interaction with the other realms of power; it seems likely that an Infernal version also exists.

**Embitterment Roll: Communication + Embitterment + stress die**

Consult the following chart to determine the Ease Factor.

Ease Factor Desired Effect

6 Turn a man against his neighbor, business partner, or co-worker

9 Turn a man against his wife, friend, or cousin (distant kin)

12 Turn a man against his kin (father, brother, and nuclear family)

15 Turn a man against his lord

18 Turn a man against his king

The base effect makes the victim dislike the target, leading to slander, resentment, and a refusal to cooperate with him. Increasing this animosity to hatred adds +3 to the Ease Factor. Victims made to hate the indicated target desire to do some kind of harm to him, but stop short of killing the person. Such a person would destroy someone's fields, ruin a business opportunity, wreck their marriage, or perhaps wound them in a duel. Increasing hatred to loathing adds another +3 to the Ease Factor (+6 in total), and makes the victim try to slay the intended target. For example, the Ease Factor is 18 to embitter a man to commit patricide (base 12 + 6), and 24 to commit regicide (base 18 + 6).

The Range of embitterment is Voice and the Target is always Individual. The Duration is Sun, although this can be increased to Moon by increasing Ease Factor by +3. Because embitterment acts through conversation, the caster must speak a language that the target comprehends.

A character so embittered cannot disobey the command. He is not allowed a Loyalty roll to see if he can ignore the emotional summons, or other quibbling based on the character's Personality Traits. Hermetic magic can cancel the embitterment with a Perdo Vim spell. Rego Mentem magic can replace the feelings of animosity with feelings of loyalty or compassion, Creo Mentem can create feelings of loyalty that supersede the effect, and Perdo Mentem could erase the feelings of animosity. To determine how powerful a Hermetic spell needs to be, consider the effective level of the embitterment to be equal to the Nemthenga's score in Embitterment times five.

Tempestaria (Weather Witch)

This tradition figures prominently in lands occupied by the Saxons, including their homeland in northern Germany as well as in England and Denmark. Weather magic is well-integrated into Hermetic Magic, and the art of Auram is populated with highly useful spells. The hedge witches known as Tempestariae are experts in these very magics. There are weather-witches who can summon rain which can last for days, or who cause no rain to fall at all for an entire season. The fogs summoned by a tempestaria from the sea have bound ships into the harbors all along an entire coastline. The most common type of tempestaria, however, is one who can bind the wind to her service. They require simple improvised tools which have sympathetic relationships to their spells – feathers for snow magic, drums for thunder magic, scattered sand for rain magic, and so forth.

**Major Non-Hermetic Virtue**: Whistle Up The Wind (or similar Ability)

**Minor Hermetic Virtue**: Affinity with Auram

**Major Hermetic Flaw**: Necessary Condition (tools for their magic to work)

Whistle Up The Wind

A character with this Ability is able to create a wind, duplicating the effects of any wind-based Creo Auram spell at Range Voice, Target Individual; similar Supernatural Abilities exist for other weather phenomena. To invoke the wind, the character literally has to whistle, and makes a Stamina + Whistle Up The Wind roll, against the Ease Factor listed in the table below. If successful, the wind immediately starts to blow as commanded by the character. It will continue to blow in the same manner even if the character stops whistling. A character who summons a wind at a particular strength can change that wind to another type with a similar strength (such as from *Circular Winds of Protection* to *Broom of the Winds*), diminish it to a weaker effect (such as *Chamber of Spring Breezes*), or end it entirely. Each of these changes requires a Communication + Music roll, using the Ease Factors for Maintaining Concentration on a spell (page @@). Whistling a new tune in this manner cannot increase the strength of a wind, or return a diminished wind to its former intensity; instead the character must make a new Whistle Up The Wind roll. All effects of this Ability diminish to the next lowest level of strength once every 24 hours, when the sun sets, until they dwindle to nothing.

Ease Factor Strength of Wind

6 Light breeze, strong enough to clear a stench from a room

9 Moderate wind, strong enough to affect the accuracy of arrows

12 Strong wind, powerful enough to propel a sailing ship

15 Gale force wind, strong enough to knock someone over

18 Hurricane force wind, strong enough to uproot trees

**Specialities**: at sea, in mountains, during the winter (Supernatural)