Realms

Magic is the supernatural basis of Ars Magica, but it is not the only power in Mythic Europe. Four realms of power exist: Magic, Divine, Faerie, and Infernal. There also exists the mundane, that which is not supernatural. The lines between realms are not drawn simply, with some on one side and others representing a united opposition. Rather, each has some influence over the rest.

Each realm has a distinctive aura, which covers some areas of the world. Within an aura, one realm is stronger than the others, and this local strength affects the use of the powers of other realms. These auras vary in strength, and some only appear at particular times or under particular circumstances.

Creatures can be linked to a realm in one of two ways. The closer link is referred to as 'belonging to' or 'being part of' a realm. These creatures are drawn from the realm's nature, and embody some aspect of its power. The more distant link is referred to as 'alignment' or 'affiliation'. A creature that is affiliated to a realm can draw on the powers of that realm, but is not drawn from the realm's nature. A creature that belongs to a realm cannot be affiliated with any other realm. Most creatures belong to no realm, and can affiliate to more than one. Magi, for example, are affiliated to the realm of Magic but do not belong to it. Christian, Jewish, or Islamic magi are affiliated to the Magic realm and the Divine realm, but, again, belong to neither. While it is possible for animals, plants, or even stones, to become affiliated to a realm, this is most common for human beings. All kinds of creatures belong to the various realms.

No human being belongs to a realm. It is possible for a human affiliated to a realm to transform and become part of that realm, but the person apparently loses their humanity in the process. There are faeries, demons, and spirits that were once human, but the Divine realm never transforms human beings in this world. Perhaps the saints after death become part of the Divine realm, but there is no way to know.

The Nature of the Realms

All four realms are inter-related, and Hermetic theorists have debated the nature of these relations for centuries. It is generally agreed that the Divine realm is more powerful than the other three, possibly infinitely so. As Hermetic magi make use of the power of the Magic realm, they tend to see that realm as more important than the Faerie and Infernal realms. There are two popular views of the relationship between the realms in the Order, one inspired by Platonic philosophy, the other by Aristotelian.

The Platonic view sees the Divine realm as the source of light and being for the universe. The Magic realm is the first emanation of the Divine realm, pure light as emitted from the divine being. The Faerie and Infernal realms both arise from the interaction of the divine light with human beings. The Faerie realm is the reflection of this light from the minds and souls of humankind, while the Infernal realm is the shadow cast by humanity. Thus the Faerie realm tends to make the stories and dreams of humanity real, while the Infernal contains all of humanity's flaws made concrete.

The Aristotelian view sees things slightly differently. The Divine is pure actuality, ultimate existence. The Magic realm is the process of coming into existence, and thus always below the Divine but always getting closer. The Faerie realm is the actualization of the imagination of human beings, while the Infernal is the process of going out of existence. Thus, demons always seek to destroy.

Hermetic theorists have also come up with much more personal theories, but most magi hold some version of one of the two accounts given here, when they think about the issue at all.

Those theologians who give serious thought to the issue tend to have a slightly different view of the issue. They see the Divine as the supernatural realm, the mundane as the natural realm, and Magic, Faerie, and Infernal as together making up the preternatural realm. Opinions are divided as to whether the three components of the preternatural realm are actually distinct, and thus over whether there is really any difference between the Infernal and the Magical. Even among those who accept that the three preternatural realms are truly distinct, there is a debate over whether magic is sinful, and incompatible with a truly spiritual life, in itself.

Realm Auras

The realms exist and interact in various ways. Each has some parts of the world where its powers are strongest. Such areas are said to have an aura, which can be rated in power on a scale from 1 to 10. Most auras rate between 1 and 5, while very intense auras may have a strength of 6 to 10. An aura rating of 10 often designates a gateway to the realm of its affiliation. The aura rating of a given area usually acts as a modifier on supernatural activities that take place there. Many areas of the world have no realm affiliation, and therefore no aura. These places are mundane.

Within a supernatural area, the aura rating is usually uniform, but occasionally energy is unevenly concentrated, causing variable aura ratings. Sometimes conditions result in the development of regiones, areas of increasingly powerful aura sharing a single physical location (see "Regiones" on page @@).

Two realms may have influence over the same place. When this is the case, only the stronger can hold sway at any one time. A change in the relative strengths of the two realms can cause an area to switch from the influence of one to the other. For example, a village might be built on the site of an ancient faerie mound. Normally, the area has a Dominion aura (because the villagers are followers of the Church). However, at night (when Dominion power wanes) or on the days of ancient pagan holidays the Faerie aura becomes more powerful and holds sway. Sometimes only a small area, like the cellar of a tavern, feels the touch of a power different from that of its surroundings.

Realm Interaction

The aura of a given place affects all supernatural activities that go on in that place. The list below defines how aura ratings affect various activities. The Realm Interaction chart that follows indicates the degree to which realms influence powers of other realms. The modifiers shown apply to the effect an aura has on any supernatural act performed within it.

Auras also affect the number of botch rolls for an attempted supernatural act in a foreign realm. For each point of aura rating, roll an extra botch die. Use the original aura rating, not that obtained after multiplying by a factor in the Realm Interaction chart.

Realm Interaction Table

Power Used: Magic Divine Faerie Infernal

Aura Type

Magic + aura no effect + (1/2 aura) – aura

Divine – (3 x aura) + aura – (4 x aura) – (5 x aura)

Faerie + (1/2 aura) no effect + aura – aura

Infernal – aura no effect – (2 x aura) + aura

For example, consider a magus who also has a Faerie-based power to create illusions and a demonic gift causing sickness. His Hermetic spells are based on Magic, his illusions on Faerie, and his sickness power on the Infernal. In a town with a Dominion aura of 3, he must subtract nine from his Hermetic totals, and roll three additional botch dice, twelve from his Faerie illusion totals, with three additional botch dice, and fifteen from his Infernal sickening totals, again with three additional botch dice. If he moves to a forest with a Faerie aura of 4, he adds two to his Hermetic totals, but rolls four additional botch dice, four to his Faerie illusion totals, with no additional botch dice, and subtracts four from his Infernal sickening totals, again with four additional botch dice.

The Divine is not hampered by auras of other kinds. Divine powers have no penalty and no additional botch dice in auras of the other realms.

Supernatural Activity Rolls Modified by Aura

Spellcasting rolls: The aura modifier modifies the Casting Score.

Laboratory activities: The aura modifier modifies the Lab Total.

Ability rolls: The aura modifier affects supernatural Abilities such as Second Sight, or Wilderness Sense. Most such abilities are Magical in origin, although in particular cases they may be Faerie, Infernal, or even Divine.

Magic Resistance: Magic Resistance is altered by the aura modifier. This includes Hermetic Magic Resistance due to the Parma Magica and Forms, as well as the resistance of creatures with supernatural Might. Thus, a magus in a Magic aura of 4 has a +4 bonus to his Magic Resistance, while a demon has a –4 penalty.

Penetration: For magi and characters with mystical abilities, the aura modifies the roll to use the ability, which means that Penetration is modified. The aura modifier does not apply to Penetration twice. Thus, a magus in a Divine aura of 2 takes a –6 penalty to his Casting Score. This automatically reduces his Penetration, as that is calculated by subtracting the spell level from the Casting Score. The aura modifier is not subtracted again from the Penetration total. For supernatural creatures, there is no roll to use the ability (see page @@), so the aura modifier applies to Penetration directly.

Creatures of a Realm

The appearance of a creature is influenced, but not determined, by the realm to which it belongs. The details on each of the realms, below, provide further information on this. A creature's realm of origin does, however, strongly affect the way it interacts with human beings. Creatures of the Infernal are always interested in corrupting and harming human beings, while creatures of the Magic realm need have no interest in human beings for their own sake. Creatures of the Divine serve God, and thus punish, aid, and reward humanity as commanded. Creatures of Faerie all have some relationship with human beings, but the nature of this relationship can vary wildly.

A talking dog, for example, could belong to any of the four realms. As a Faerie, it might be the perfect hunting dog, leading its master on apparently impossible hunts and lending its powers to ensure success. As an Infernal beast, it would try to corrupt its master, leading him into evil. A Divine talking dog would be a companion to its master, offering guidance, but also driving him back from sin by force if necessary. Finally, a Magical talking dog might have no interest at all in human beings, being interested only in hunting for its food in the wilderness.

Magic Resistance and Penetration

Most creatures that belong to a realm have a Might Score, which represents their power. The creature's Might Score is the maximum level. Might points are also spent to invoke supernatural abilities, and Might Pool is the amount of Might that a creature has remaining. Magic Resistance and Penetration are both based on a creature's Might Score.

**Creature Magic Resistance: Might Score + Aura Modifier**

**Creature Penetration: Might Score – (5 x Might Points spent on power) + Penetration Bonus + Aura Modifier**

Magic Resistance based on might functions like Hermetic resistance, resisting the powers of all realms, and all types of supernatural power.

Characters with supernatural abilities other than Hermetic magic also have Penetration.

**Character Penetration: Effect Roll – Ease Factor + Penetration Bonus + Aura Modifier**

The Penetration bonus is calculated in the same way as for Hermetic magi (see Penetration, page @@). Thus, creatures and characters without the Penetration Ability have a Penetration bonus of zero.

The Magic Realm

The Magic realm is often characterized as 'the way the world could be'. Magical things are simply *better* than the mundane versions, but they are better versions of mundane things, not completely new things. There are often many ways in which a thing could be better, and magical things better in each of those ways exist. *Realms of Power: Magic* provides more detail on this realm.

Magical Creatures

Many magical creatures look like particularly fine specimens of mundane things, and although they may have surprising abilities, such as intelligence or the ability to move, these abilities are always suitable to the kind of creature in question. The abilities of magical creatures are explicable, at least after the event, in terms of the abilities of the mundane version, although those abilities may be somewhat hidden. For example, goat's blood can dissolve diamonds, but this ability is only obvious in magical goats. Magical animals, so-called beasts of virtue (see *Realms of Power: Magic,* pages 55–68), are the most obvious magical creatures, but there are also magical plants, most notably among the trees, and elementals, described in the Bestiary chapter. On the whole, magical animals tend to be more intelligent and have more personality than magical plants, which in turn are superior to elementals in those respects. Some magical creatures are shapechangers, and some of these can take on human form. The human form is almost never the natural form of a shapechanger who belongs to the Magic realm, however. The shapechangers are wolves who can become human, and so on.

The Magic realm also encompasses a wide range of spirits. Some are spirits of natural substances, such as water and fire. These are generally classed with elementals, although there is a difference in that elementals are essentially physical, while spirits of the elements are essentially spiritual. Since spirits of the elements can generally create the physical element, this distinction is only of importance to Hermetic magi deciding which Form to use to affect a creature. Other magic spirits include spirits of natural places and natural phenomena, such as the spirit of a mountain or of storms. Many powerful magical spirits can take on any form they wish, including human form, and some have powers based on several aspects of the Magic realm. These spirits are normally completely indifferent to human beings, but some enter into mutually profitable arrangements, particularly with humans who are affiliated to the Magic realm in the first place.

Powerful spirits may take on forms that are completely alien to human beings, and any creature that is powerful, alien, and indifferent to human beings is part of the Magic realm. Such creatures are very rare, but they do exist.

Human beings who have been transformed to become part of the Magic realm are rare, but make up an important group of the realm's inhabitants. Some of them are undead, such as ghosts and animated corpses, although it is just as common for such creatures to be part of the Faerie or Infernal realms. Others still appear human, but are not. Still others have taken on different forms. Finally, some have become powerful spirits. These creatures of magic have more interest in humans than most others, as they were once human themselves. Some within the Order believe that Hermes was originally a great human magician, who became a spirit and was worshiped as a god by the Greeks and Romans.

It is relatively common for human beings to have supernatural powers that derive from the Magic realm, and thus to be affiliated with that realm. Hermetic magi are the most obvious example, but *Hedge Magic Revised Edition* and *Rival Magic*, along with many other supplements, contain further examples. There are human shapechangers who can change into wolves, but the magical ones are affiliated with the realm, rather than belonging to it.

Magical Auras

Magical areas are places that are more real than those around them. Sometimes, after the working of powerful magic or the death of a powerful creature, places acquire a magical aura, but most of the time it is unclear why a certain place is magical. Most magical areas have an aura from 1 to 5. Legendary places are rated around 6, while auras of strength 10 are virtually unknown.

Magical areas are intense. Colors are more striking, sounds more piercing, the day brighter, the night deeper. Magical creatures are particularly common within them, although mobile creatures can wander elsewhere. Immobile magical creatures, such as magical trees, are almost never found outside a magical aura.

Almost all covenants are located in magical areas, usually with aura ratings of 1 to 5. More powerful areas are not only rare but extremely dangerous to live in. The powerful magic there is difficult and dangerous to harness, and mundane covenfolk become warped and strange. Apprentices are often overpowered. Because of this threat, only the most powerful covenants in Hermetic history have based themselves in such places. Powerful Magic auras are even richer in vis than normal ones, however, so magi often want to visit such places.

Magical auras do not tend to have cyclical variations in strength with time, in the way that other auras do, nor do they depend on the surroundings, like Faerie auras. Much more detail is available in chapter 2 of *Realms of Power: Magic.*

Sources of Magical Auras

There are two main ways in which Magical auras arise: from the arrangement of the world, and from magical activities. Weak Magical auras arise in places where the world has naturally become a particularly fine example of something. A perfect mountain, spectacular and ancient forest, and a vigorous active volcano might all acquire a weak Magical aura, normally 1 and certainly no higher than 2. Stronger auras arise from combinations of a superb location and auspicious astrological alignments, or from a combination of excellent examples of the natural world. For example, a coastal valley hemmed in by mountains, in which great storms often happen and which faces the midsummer sunrise might have a Magical aura as high as 4. These alignments never produce an aura higher than 5, at least not by themselves, and such places are popular sites for covenants, as they are easier to find than the other kind.

Magical auras can also arise from magical activities. If a moderately powerful (Might 30 or more) magical creature takes up residence in an area, that place will, over the course of years, acquire a weak Magical aura. Similarly, a place where magicians constantly work magic slowly acquires an aura if it did not already have one. More powerful magical creatures and more powerful magical events create stronger auras, but generally no stronger than level 5.

Auras above level 5 almost always result from a combination of good location and magical activities. If a covenant were established in a location with a natural aura of 5, the aura would rise over the course of decades, but not, in general, any higher than 7. The very highest Magical auras result from spectacular magical events, such as a spectacular magical fight between two powerful magical creatures in which one of the creatures was killed, or the creation of a magical effect worthy of legend. Such events can create an aura of 2 or 3 in a previously mundane area, and if they take place in a location that already has a strong Magical aura they can push it to the highest levels.

The Magic World

There is great debate within the Order of Hermes over the existence of a magical equivalent to Arcadia, Heaven, and Hell. Most magi think that there must be one, and some even claim to have visited it. Others think that those magi have either visited a powerful Magical regio, or have decided to lie. It is rather difficult to see how a magus could distinguish a large powerful regio from a part of a whole magical world, which tends to prolong the debate.

Other magi hold that, while there is a Magic world, it cannot be visited. Some say that it is the realm of Twilight, so it cannot be visited safely, others that it is the realm of the Platonic Forms, where the perfect exemplars for all earthly things are found. Still others argue that, as the Magic realm is constituted by striving towards the Divine, or by the first emanation from the Divine, the Magic world is Heaven. Some of these also believe that Twilight is the Magic world, so that Final Twilight is a way for magi to enter Heaven.

As described in chapter 3 of *Realms of Power: Magic,* there is a Magic world, and Hermetic magi could visit it. They simply have not, in 1220. The magi in your saga might well be the first.

The Infernal Realm

The Infernal realm is the embodiment of evil and decay — of physical destruction and moral corruption. Even as the Church works its divine power to protect the soul and buoy it up to Heaven after the body's death, the forces of the Devil work to steal it away and drag it to the depths of Hell.

Human beings are subject to death and damnation through the sins of their ancestral parents. Once Adam and Eve had tasted the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, all the world came under Satan's influence.

Demons are fallen angels; they cannot and will not be redeemed because of their very natures. They comprehend the divine order completely and so can never be convinced by new arguments or perspectives to seek salvation. Their envy of humanity's place in the cosmos is without bounds, as is their capacity for evil as rejection of all that is from God. Ultimately, devils seek to weigh down souls with the baggage of sin. They have an eternity to plot and scheme, and a human lifetime is a brief moment in their eyes. Fortunately for humanity, they are completely without virtue, including the virtues of patience and self-control, which makes it hard for them to sustain elaborate plans.

Hell's most potent allies are diabolists, humans who sell their souls in return for powers and favors on Earth. Not only do devils win these souls away from the Divine, they are also able to satisfy their lust for chaos, destruction and suffering through these human agents. The powers that diabolists are awarded can include spell-like abilities and the capacity to summon demons and use them to their own ends, among other things. Diabolists are not completely without virtue, and are indeed capable of redemption, which means that they can provide the patience and self-control that demons lack.

Not surprisingly, the Order of Hermes forbids dealings with demonkind. Any member caught engaging in diabolism is renounced and singled out for destruction. Furthermore, the Church brings down great punishments on those thought or known to be in league with the Devil.

Hell is not a remote force in Mythic Europe. Demons ruin crops, cause back pains, make the wind howl, and manipulate emotions. Some theologians suggest that it is impossible to drop a needle from the roof of a house without hitting an invisible demon in pursuit of a plan of evil.

More details on the Infernal and all its works can be found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal.*

Infernal Creatures

The natural forms of infernal creatures are almost always twisted, vile, and terrifying, the better to inspire fear and loathing in human beings. However, many demons can also take on attractive forms. Different sorts of attraction are better for different temptations; a beautiful young woman is good for luring a man into lust, but an apparently wise old man might be better to lure someone into heresy.

The lies of creatures that belong to the Infernal realm cannot be detected by the powers of the Magic realm. Deceit is a central part of their nature, and hard to overcome. Some diabolists claim that infernal power can pierce infernal lies, but most magi believe that the demons are lying to their servants. The Divine can pierce infernal deceptions, and it seems that some faeries can also do so. This ability to lie with impunity also makes demons hard to detect; they can choose to tell the magic that they are not there, and the magic will believe them.

This does not mean that it is impossible to spot demonic lies by any means. Normal investigation will still reveal whether things are as a demon says, unless the demon has made the effort to fake mundane information as well.

Infernal Auras

Infernal areas are among the most vile places in the world. Growth of natural plants is stunted and warped. Decay and the stench of ill humors abound. Predatory animals kill, not for survival, but for the pleasure of inflicting pain. Most earthbound demons, and many diabolists, prefer to remain in such areas. They are also typical sites for diabolic churches and covens, and for the summoning of demons.

Travelers in or near Infernal areas often find themselves in foul moods. Outlaws on nearby roads act in particularly harsh fashion-the effects of demonic influence in high concentration. Old wounds, especially those received through malevolence, hurt anew. Old conflicts and personality clashes are remembered again, and possibly re-enacted. Of greater concern to magi, Infernal auras interfere with the use of magic.

Infernal auras can be detected by magic, unless an infernal creature is actively hiding their existence. They also tend to reduce in strength during the day, and particularly on holy days, and to increase in power at night. Infernal auras are particularly strong on Easter Saturday, the day between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. More detail can be found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal,* pages 10–17.

Sources of Infernal Auras

Infernal auras arise from sinful activities and from the activities of demons and diabolists. Minor sins, of the sort that people commit every day, do not create an Infernal aura, fortunately. More serious sins, such as vicious murders, or elaborate schemes to corrupt someone, can leave a trace. A single sin only creates an aura if it is particularly vile. The calculated desecration of a church, including the ritual murder of the priest on the altar, might replace the church's Divine aura with a level 1 Infernal aura. In an area with no aura, a cruel and premeditated murder can create a level 1 aura. Repeated sins in one place create Infernal auras, even if the individual sins are less serious. For example, if a pair of adulterers met every couple of days in the same room in order to indulge their sin, that room would slowly acquire a weak Infernal aura, which might reach level 2 if the affair continued for long enough. Repeated ritual sacrifices of human beings to demons, extending over many decades, could create an Infernal aura as high as 5.

Infernal auras also arise from the presence of infernal creatures or the use of infernal powers, in much the same way as for Magical auras. Combining repeated sin with the use of infernal powers can create the highest Infernal auras of all.

The Faerie Realm

Faeries are creatures drawn in some way from the stories of the human race. They are thus as varied and diverse as stories, and can be found anywhere from the depths of the wilderness to the centers of cities, from ancient pagan temples to the newest cathedral.

The realm of Faerie is as diverse and strange as those who inhabit it, and as with all faerie things, appearances can be deceiving. After dawn breaks, a pile of gold may prove nothing more than old leaves, while a single oak leaf can hold within it more magical power than the enchanted staff of a mighty magus.

Much more detail about the Faerie realm can be found in *Realms of Power: Faerie.*

Faerie Creatures

The special relationship that faeries have to humanity means that all faeries are interested in people. They are interested in having humans play out their stories, because faeries gain energy, called Vitality, when this happens. Unlike demons, they do not want humans to be corrupted or destroyed for the sake of corruption, but some faeries do want humans to suffer, if the story calls for it. Other faeries live in imitation or mockery of human beings, and they respond to human intruders as appropriate to their role, bringing the visitors into their story.

Not all faeries know that they are telling a story, and the faerie may be the victim in a story. For example, a faerie may be the giant that is tricked by a clever mortal child. In that case, the faerie, consciously or unconsciously, arranges things so that the child can trick it and survive. If it catches the child or sees through the trick, it does not get any Vitality. This close link to stories means that faeries are very hard to predict if you do not know what their story is — and very easy to manipulate if you do. Nevertheless, a faerie that tells the story of the Wild Hunt carrying people away and driving them mad may remain very dangerous even when you know exactly what it is.

Faeries cannot truly create or change without mortal assistance. However, a faerie might be able to make wine with a word and change its form from moment to moment, as the wine is actually a transformation of something, and the form of the faerie is essentially mutable. It seems to be absolutely true that faeries cannot reproduce themselves, or learn, without mortal aid, and in these cases things do not even appear otherwise.

Faerie creatures can take any imaginable form. This includes appearing as better versions of mundane animals, but also includes giants, chimerae, and humans with animal features. Since faeries arise from the stories of humanity, it is not uncommon for legends about a magical place to give rise to a faerie copy, more closely matching the beliefs that people have. However, although faeries arise from the beliefs of people, they do not always go away or change to match changing beliefs. Once the faeries exist, they are just as real as any other creature, and can, with the help of humans, develop in unexpected ways.

Faerie Auras

Areas of faerie power may cover ancient pagan lands, spring up about faerie monarchs, or protect valued locations. They may have only a few inhabitants, each quite powerful. On the other hand, they may be the domiciles of innumerable faeries with little power individually, but whose numbers give them strength enough to be respected and avoided.

Faerie areas with lower level auras tend to be inhabited by faeries that are merely annoying, or barely more than helpful; they are almost never capable of killing. Such places are relatively common wherever mortals have spread their influence. On the other hand, especially in rural areas, there are auras of immense power inhabited by faeries that can will themselves taller than a church spire or shake the Earth's foundation at a command.

Sites of Faerie aura take as many forms as their inhabitants. They might contain talking trees and owls, strange lights at night, and unearthly eyes peering out of the darkness. An aura may exceed the physical bounds of the locale, depending on how far the resident faeries journey or extend their power.

Regardless of the danger, magi often risk entering Faerie areas in pursuit of magical power. They are places rich in vis — reason enough to challenge many perils, particularly for a magus deprived of magical resources.

Faerie auras tend to vary in strength depending on how closely the surrounding world matches the nature of the faeries within. Thus, a Faerie aura inhabited by beautiful faeries of light would reduce in power during winter and at night, and reach its full power on bright summer days. An aura inhabited by faerie miners would lose strength if there were no miners nearby, but return to full power if a mine was opened. More details on Faerie auras can be found in *Realms of Power: Faerie,* pages 14–18.

Sources of Faerie Auras

Faerie auras can arise from the presence of faeries or the use of faerie powers in a way similar to the ways that Magical and Infernal auras can arise. Faerie auras also arise when stories are told about a place. The strength of the aura depends on the popularity and number of the stories, but also on what is already in a place. For example, many people in western Mythic Europe tell marvelous stories about Constantinople, but as the city is full of people and churches these stories have not created a Faerie aura there. On the other hand, stories about the strange beings who live in the depths of a forest often create auras, as no-one lives in the forest to say otherwise. The combination of these effects means that Faerie auras are often in wilderness areas, even though faeries depend, in some sense, on human beings.

Faerie auras tend to be higher than other kinds of aura, as the two factors reinforce one another. Faeries in an area tend to inspire stories about the area, which in turn raise the aura and attract, or create, more and more powerful faeries, who in turn inspire more stories.

The Faerie Realm

The most powerful Faerie sites are sometimes gateways to the Faerie Realm. Such gateways may be small and unassuming, rarely used and little known, or massive entrances traversed by the greatest of faerie entities. Mortals do not naturally belong in the land of the fay, and those who enter often fail to return. Even if they do come back, they may find a day spent in Faerie is one, ten, even a hundred years, or only a minute, in the mundane world. Magi of House Merinita say that the Faerie Realm can be divided into three “regions”, although they are not geographic divisions: Arcadia, Elysium, and Eudokia.

Arcadia is best described as stories made real. The impossible city paved with gold is found in Arcadia, as is the enormous forest inhabited by talking animals. Everything plays its role within a story of some sort, and all stories can be found here. Elysium is the land of myths, the home of gods and heroes, and Eudokia is the land of tales that teach a lesson.

The Faerie Realm is a physical place, but it is also a sphere of pure enchantment and imagination. Movement is not easily described, being more like the half-remembered travels of a dream, and so magi of House Merinita (who know best) scoff at the idea of making a map of it. Like a dream state, Faerieland is often incomprehensible to mortals who go there. There is not always a logical relationship between cause and effect, and it is easy to become totally disoriented, especially as faeries enjoy using their glamor to lead intruders astray. And yet, some Merinita magi insist that the Faerie Realm is not a chaotic place, but merely has its own rules. Whether this is true or not, the realm is best left to faeries, and to the foolish among mortals.

The Divine Realm

The Divine realm is the manifestation of the supernatural power of God. The most obvious agent of the Divine in western Europe is the Church, and Divine auras, also called the Dominion, or Dominion auras, surround its buildings. The Church does not have a monopoly on Divine auras, as Jews and Muslims also live within a Dominion aura, which appears indistinguishable from that of the Church. The Church, of course, refuses to believe that Islam has anything to do with God, and has severe doubts about contemporary Judaism.

Regardless of opinions, it cannot be denied that the Divine realm has an influence over the other realms, including that of Magic. A Divine aura limits the efficiency and effectiveness of Hermetic magic, and Divine miracles can accomplish feats that magi cannot.

At its best, the Dominion allows the human soul to express its deepest beauty. At its worst, the Church is a repressive force that treads on liberal thought. It makes sense, then, that it is the Church which is the driving force behind the Crusades while it produces the most delightful music, the most enchanting art, and the most transcendent philosophy.

The power of the Church and the boundaries it imposes on the Order of Hermes cause some magi to scorn the Divine. Some magi find pagan religions, based as they are on Faerie or Magical power, more congenial, while others simply have as little as possible to do with religion. Nevertheless, many magi are Christians, with a scattering of Jews and a significant number of Muslims in those tribunals which extend over Islamic lands. Some magi even have True Faith (see page @@), which does not seem to hinder their magic.

More detail about the supernatural aspects of the Divine can be found in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, along with information about the three most important Divine religions in Mythic Europe: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Divine Auras

The Dominion is nearly ubiquitous, and is the only supernatural power that the common folk generally have contact with. It affects magi and their fellows whenever they enter a village, town, or city where there is a place of worship, an ordained priest, and a body of believers.

Though Divine auras are almost always present in areas inhabited by believers, their strength can vary. On Sundays and holy days the power of the Dominion increases; at night and on evil days it wanes. The Dominion is also focused more strongly in places and objects that are strongly associated with faith. People, places, and things that have been blessed by an ordained priest can carry Divine auras, but these are extremely fragile and vanish once exposed to the sinful world. Divine auras somehow transported to another realm are also swallowed by the alien aura.

Entering a strong Divine aura has a definite sensory association. Non-magical people often experience anticipatory nerves and unconscious reverence. Those who are pious feel quiet peace; others feel dread and guilt. Magi and others with magical talents instantly sense a powerful presence, their Gift flickering as a flame exposed to wind. Auras of lesser power might prove a mild irritant to such magical folk, perhaps causing occasional headaches, short tempers and sporadic feelings of physical discomfort.

Sources of Divine Auras

Divine auras can arise from the activities or presence of holy creatures, in a manner similar to the ways in which other auras arise. The overwhelming majority of Divine auras, however, arise from the presence of faithful worshipers of the Divine. Typically, the fields around a village would have an aura of 1, while the village itself would have an aura of 2. A town or city would have an aura of 3 over most of the area, possibly lower in areas where sin and vice are common. Most places of worship have an aura of 4, while places with wider significance, such as cathedrals, important mosques, and the churches of major monasteries, have an aura of 5.

Higher Divine auras are very limited in extent. The chapel holding the relics of a very important saint might have an aura of 6, or 7 for relics of Christ or the Virgin Mary. The site of a saint's martyrdom generally has an aura of 8, nine for the martyrdom of an apostle. Divine auras of 10 arise in places where God Himself has intervened in a direct way. The Holy Sepulcher, where Christ was buried, the ka'aba in Mecca, and the last remnants of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem are examples. There are occasional examples elsewhere; for example, the Lady Chapel at Glastonbury Abbey in England was originally consecrated by Christ Himself, and has an aura of 10.

Particular Divine auras may depart from these guidelines, as God makes them where and how He wants. However, the guidelines given here are the ones that He normally seems to follow. While He could withdraw all of the Divine aura from a cathedral, He almost never does so. For more details on Divine auras, see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition,* pages 10–17.

True Faith

Those who give up mundane pursuits entirely and selflessly dedicate themselves to leading holy lives benefit from True Faith. True Faith is measured in Faith Points, which represent a person's connection to God. Those with True Faith may be Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, and, it seems, need not be wholly orthodox.

True Faith, like Confidence, has a Score and Points. Taking the True Faith Major Virtue grants you a True Faith Score of 1, and a single Faith Point. Only by possessing the True Faith Major Virtue may a character have a True Faith score. Any character may possess any number of Faith Points (gained through the sacraments, a pilgrimage, or other holy endeavors) that once spent, do not return.

You may spend Faith Points like Confidence Points (and may spend as many Faith Points at once as your True Faith Score), as long as you are acting in accordance with God’s will. If you do not possess a True Faith Score, then you may only spend one Faith Point at a time.

A character with Faith Points but no True Faith Score does not benefit from Magic Resistance. A character with a True Faith Score gains Magic Resistance equal to this score multiplied by ten.

**True Faith Magic Resistance: True Faith Score x 10**

Each dawn, you regain a number of Faith Points up to your True Faith Score, although if you already have more Faith Points than your True Faith Score, you do not gain additional Points.

For more details on True Faith, see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition,* page 56.

Relics

Relics are physical objects that, in some way, house part of the power of the Divine. They are most common in Christianity, and often take the form of parts of the bodies of deceased saints. All relics have a number of common powers, listed below:

1. **Faith:** All relics contain a True Faith score, giving it Faith Points that may be used by its bearer as Confidence. A relic also grants Magic Resistance equal to ten times its True Faith score to its bearer. A person can only benefit from one relic at a time; any attempt to do otherwise is a sin, and means that they lose the benefits of all relics. However, a person can humbly carry other relics, while only relying on one for the benefits. A character who normally relies on a particular relic would need a very good reason to swap it for another one.

2. **Divine Might:** All relics have a Divine Might score, which limits how often their powers may be used (effectively preventing characters from over-using their powers). The Might score also acts as Magic Resistance for the relic against any spells or supernatural effects that target it directly. A relic’s Divine Might is equal to the relic’s Faith score (or highest Faith score, if more than one applies) multiplied by 10, and the Might Pool is refreshed with every sunrise.

3. **Scourging the Infernal:** As supremely holy items, relics are anathema to demons and their followers. Relics radiate an aura of hostility to such creatures that extends a number of feet equal to the Might score of the relic. Any creatures belonging to the Infernal realm that seek to enter this aura will be unable to do so if their Infernal Might does not exceed the Divine Might of the relic. Should they succeed in entering the aura, every round that they remain within it they will be assailed by divine energies causing an amount of damage equal to the Might of the relic, although their Soak still protects them as normal. The assault is accompanied by suitably dramatic visual effects, such as holy fire, lightning, or whatever the storyguide feels is appropriate. It ends as soon as they leave the aura. This power does not affect characters or creatures merely affiliated with the Infernal realm, though they will feel discomfort if they handle the relics for extended periods of time.

In addition, some relics have powers specific to them. In the case of relics of saints, these powers usually match those of the saint to whom they once belonged. In the case of other relics, the powers are conferred directly by Divine Will. Two sample powers are given here; more can be found on pages 88 and 89 of *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition.*

*The Faithful Made Whole*, 4 points, Init +15, Corpus. This power cures the recipient of all disease and heals all physical wounds.

*Flabbergast the Impertinent*, 2 points, Init +3, Mentem. This curse causes the target to fall into a deep sleep, lasting the night, and accompanied by loud snores. The sleeper will wake in the morning exhausted from his snoring, down two long-term Fatigue levels. No magic can prematurely wake the sleeper.

Magic Resistance For Church Officers and Sovereigns

The Divine protects the ordained and anointed leaders of Mythic Europe from interference by other supernatural powers. The religious and secular leaders listed below receive a Magic Resistance score as listed here, and a Soak bonus equal to Magic Resistance / 5. Excommunication cancels these benefits (but only if the excommunication is God’s will). Those listed here also have a Penetration 0 *Aura of Rightful Authority* extending to Voice Range. Roughly speaking, a legatus a latere is a cleric authorized to act on behalf of the Pope, with his power. A legatus missus has the same authorization, but for a single purpose. For more details, see *The Church,* page 31*.*

Pope 25

Cardinal or Legatus a latere 20

Legatus missus 15

Archbishop 10

King (once crowned) 10

Wives gain Magic Resistance equal to their husbands’.

Magic Resistance from relics is added to the above, but does not affect Soak.

Miracles

Miracles are the direct intervention of God in the world. As such, they can do anything, cannot fail, and cannot be resisted by any other power. More discussion of their role in the setting can be found in the Mythic Europe chapter, on page @@.

The Mundane

The mundane is the embodiment of all that is normal and mortal. Generally speaking, areas not occupied by another realm are considered mundane and consist of ordinary people and places. The mundane has no aura rating — in fact, it is the absence of aura, so powers used there function without hindrance.

There is a difference between "mundane society" and mundane areas. Mundane society comprises the everyday folk of Mythic Europe, including peasants, townsfolk, and nobility. These people, not being supernatural, would seem to belong to the mundane. However, widespread belief in God, and the fact that most settlements are within the Dominion, means that most "mundanes" actually share somewhat in the Divine. Only complete outsiders who lack faith are truly to be considered part of the mundane.

Regiones

Occasionally, within very special supernatural areas, special types of auras arise. These may exist within larger domains or by themselves, and may be of any type of aura. They are called regiones (singular regio, "realm", pronounced 'REH-ghee-oh' and 'reh-ghee-OH-nays', with a hard 'g' in both cases).

Regiones consist of several levels of aura, layered one on top of another in order of increasing power; the lowest level is connected to the mundane world. To picture this phenomenon, imagine a building with multiple floors. The ground floor is the level of the regio connected to the mundane world, while the higher floors are the higher levels of the regio. To climb, you must use the stairs, and to do that you must know where they are, or wander around until you bump into them. The higher floors have higher auras, and so have more characteristics of their realm.

Just as the various floors of a building occupy the same spot of ground, so do the various levels of a regio occupy the same bit of space. It is entirely possible to pass through the bottom level of a regio without realizing that there are more levels than meet the eye.

Regiones have inhabitants, just like other areas of supernatural aura. These beings tend to cluster on specific levels, though they can cross level boundaries freely. The higher one travels in the regio, the stranger and more supernaturally aligned its inhabitants become.

Entering and Leaving Regiones

Any character crossing the boundary of a regio disappears from the normal world and enters a supernatural realm. There are three ways to enter most regiones: being led, entering voluntarily, and getting lost.

Any being native to a regio and part of or affiliated to the realm can lead any number of characters to any level of the regio. Magi are affiliated to the Magic realm, and if they live in a Magical regio they count as native to that regio.

There are two ways to enter a regio voluntarily, and either or both may apply to a particular regio. The first involves seeing into the regio and then crossing the boundary. This requires some supernatural ability. Second Sight allows a character to see into any regio, as does Magic Sensitivity. Sense Holiness and Unholiness allows a character to see into Divine and Infernal regiones.

To see into a regio level, roll:

**Regio sight roll: Perception + Appropriate Ability + Stress Die**

**Ease Factor: 5 + (2 x difference between current level's aura and sought level's aura)**

If you are in an aura different from the aura of the regio, add the current aura and the aura of the regio level to determine the Ease Factor. Thus, the Ease Factor to see from a level 3 Divine aura into a level 5 Magic regio is 21; the difference between these two auras is 8. The Ease Factor may be modified by large amounts on particular days or by particular activities.

Anyone who can see the next level of a regio can lead any number of people into it.

The second way of entering involves following a particular path or ritual. Sometimes, following the path is enough by itself, and no rolls are needed. In other cases, the rolls specified for seeing into a regio must still be made, but unless the path is followed there is no chance of success. The path can be as simple as walking seven times clockwise around a hill, or as complex as desired, possibly only being available on a particular day, or to a particular kind of person. Some regiones are all but impossible to enter.

Finally, if a character gets lost near a regio boundary, he may accidentally enter the regio. Roll as normal, except that if the character does not have a relevant Ability this merely counts as zero.

At least one of these methods of entry must apply to any regio, at least if it is to have any impact on the game. There are some regiones into which you must be led by a native, and others into which you cannot be led, or enter voluntarily, but rather must get lost. Natives of a regio can almost always enter and leave freely, but even then there are exceptions. The most secure location possible for a covenant is a regio which people can only enter by being led, but getting into such a regio in the first place is very difficult.

Magic In Regiones

Supernatural powers or spells used in a regio level are affected just as in any other aura, determined by the Realm Interaction Table. Use the aura rating of the level occupied to modify spell and other supernatural rolls. However, any power used within a regio of a realm different from that of the power attracts twice the normal number of botch dice.

The Origins of Regiones

Regiones arise in several ways, but two appear to be the most common. First, an inhabited aura might be surrounded by an aura of a different type, and slowly compressed. Sometimes, the aura simply disappears, but if the inhabitants are strong enough the besieged aura might move up into a regio, leaving a lower level aura in contact with the new aura. One or two Hermetic covenants have entered regiones in this way. When this happens the old contents of the aura are normally found on the new regio level, while the base level contains ruined and decaying versions of any buildings.

The other common route is through a spectacular and powerful event. Sometimes, instead of raising the prevailing aura, these events create a new regio level at a higher aura. This sort of event often duplicates all the mundane structures, and people may start scattered between the two new levels. Again, one or two Hermetic covenants have entered regiones in this way.

Hermetic magi would love to be able to create regiones at will, but they have yet to learn how. Attempts to create regiones through spectacular magical events have not succeeded reliably, and have often had very bad consequences.

Vis Sources

Raw vis (see page @@) can often be found in supernatural auras. Sometimes it is found in the bodies of creatures with Might, sometimes it is found in plants, or rocks, or even in the breeze. Often, once the vis has been gathered, it does not get replaced naturally. Sometimes, however, it is possible to take a certain number of pawns of vis from a place every year. These places are known as vis sources, and they are among a covenant's most important assets.

A vis source can produce vis associated with any Art, but a single vis source normally produces a single kind of vis. Vis sources can also produce any amount of vis, although sources providing more than six pawns per year are rare. Some vis sources produce a varying number of pawns each year, but normally somewhere between one and ten.

The vis produced by a vis source needs to be gathered. Sometimes this is a simple matter. The vis might be in the three golden acorns that appear on a tree, and all that is required is to pick those three acorns. Sometimes it is easy provided that you can detect vis. The vis might take the form of ordinary-looking leaves on the tree, so that you have to know which are vis to know which to pick. Finally, spells might be needed to gather the vis at all. For example, the vis might be in the breeze that blows through the branches of the tree at sunrise on the summer solstice.

Tainted Vis

Vis found in non-Magic auras may be tainted by its aura of origin. Faerie vis is generally safe for magi to use, although sometimes it may have strange side effects. It does not, however, tend to distort spells or have bad effects on the magi using it. More details can be found in *Realms of Power: Faerie,* pages 18–19.

Divine vis makes most magi nervous. First, gathering it often has the potential to annoy the Church. Second, using it in magic seems somehow sacrilegious to many magi, who’d rather not invite Divine retribution.

Infernal vis is avoided by all sensible magi. It tends to twist any project to evil ends, and slowly corrupt a magus's personality as he works with it. At the very least, using Infernally tainted vis adds twice as many botch dice as usual to spellcasting, and requires a roll on the experimental results chart for an enchanted item. Magi should be very wary of discoveries made while working with Infernal vis. For information on just how bad it can get, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal,* pages 18–19.

Sample Vis Sources

Golden acorns on a tree (Creo, Herbam, Terram)

The bones of people buried in an old pagan graveyard, as long as they were buried within the last year. (Perdo, Corpus, Mentem)

The first ice to form on a pond in winter. (Rego, Aquam)

The chrysalis cases of butterflies in a magical forest. (Muto, Animal, Imaginem)

The echoes of a shout in a particular valley at a particular time. (Intellego, Imaginem)

The wind fanning a fire in a magical forest. (Auram, Ignem)

Stones in strange shapes, found in a deep labyrinth of caves. (Imaginem, Terram, Vim)

Crystals that diffract the light in dazzling and beautiful ways, growing on the peak of a mountain. (Ignem, Imaginem, Vim)

Catkins that look like kittens in moonlight. (Animal)

Dust that gathers over months on a cobweb in a particular location in the covenant. (Vim)